



South Milwaukee Historical Society

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717 Milwaukee Ave, South Milwaukee, WI

Meetings are held the second Monday in even numbered months at the Museum. Please join us to learn more about South Milwaukee's history.

The Museum is open on the third Saturday of each month from 10am to 3pm. You may also call 414-520-1285 for questions or to arrange for a private tour.

From The President's Pen—October, 2024

Hello everyone. Happy Fall, Halloween, and Thanksgiving! We hope you are enjoying the great weather.

I have some updates regarding your museum, none of which is good news. We had our roof replaced due to the hail storm this spring. While removing the old roof (installed in 2021) we found out that the decking was not fully supporting the roof and would need to be completely replaced. That added to the cost of repairs to the tune of \$8,000 and which we did not budget for, nor would the insurance company cover. Added to that, the siding that was damaged in the storm will need to be replaced. However, the old aluminum siding is not manufactured anymore. The insurance will cover one half of the house (the north & west sides) but not the east or south sides. We will have to pay extra for those. That will add \$18,000 to the cost. We didn't expect this added expense either!

If that isn't enough, our annual inspection of the heating system found major repairs are needed to the boiler system (installed in 2002). That cost was \$1,500. Then we found out that the system had to be drained. Then, after that, the system was not heating several of the rooms. The new parts and labor added another \$1,400 to our bill.

Our reserve funds are being used up at an alarming rate! We need to come up with some way to raise the funds to pay for all of these needed repairs. I wish I had better news to report, but your 131 year old house needs a lot of "tender love and care". Hopefully we will find some way to meet these new and unexpected costs. We need your prayers & hopefully your help!

Richard Thinnies – President

Preserving our Proud Past since 1972

Founders: Dennis Rankin, Penny Rankin

Initial Directors: George Hook, Mary McCarrier, Bruce Rayeske, Dora Lee Szewczuga, William Domoe, Lilia Dishong, Chester Grobschmidt

Thanks to former president Lois Schreiter for representing the Society in the Heritage Days Parade again this year. She and her dinosaur companion were joined by Beverly Reszel in a red Ford Mustang convertible owned by Nadeen Balsis. Tony Bloom and his daughter joined them for this picture.



Open Doors South Milwaukee

The Society participated in Open Doors again this year. We had about 100 visitors and everyone who visited had positive comments. One of our visitors, Virginia Grossman, happened to know how to play the pump organ and treated us all to an impromptu concert. None of us had ever heard it played like that before!!

Historical Society Merchandise Price List

BOOKS:	
Carl Bergmans & the Continental Faience & Tile Co.	\$60
South Milwaukee - Then to Now	\$10
Images of America	\$20
Letters to Mettie	\$10
Growing Up Polish	\$15
When Milwaukee Went to War	\$20
The Forget-Me-Not	\$10
Historical Society Note Cards	\$5
Spatholz Note Cards	\$5
Continental Tile Postcards - \$2 each, Set of 8 for \$10	
Spectacle of Music Books - \$2 each, 3 for \$5	
Sweatshirts	\$15
T-Shirts	\$10
Pewter Magnets	\$5
Midwest Pottery - As Marked	

Come on in...

we're open!

Upcoming Saturdays
10am—3pm

November 16

December 21

(stop by and do some last minute Christmas shopping!)

January 18

February 15

Weather permitting!

Hope to see you there!

Visitors to the
museum get
a coupon for
\$5 admission to the
Bucyrus Museum

TALES & TOMBSTONES



JOIN CITY HISTORIAN

NELS MONSON

**FOR A GUIDED TOUR OF THE HISTORIC
CONGREGATIONAL CEMETERY**

**NORTH CHICAGO AVE & PINE STREET
SOUTH MILWAUKEE**

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2024

6:00 PM

\$5.00 DONATION SUGGESTED

ALL PROCEEDS TO BENEFIT CEMETERY PRESERVATION



South Milwaukee Historical Society

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Telephone: _____

e-mail: _____

☐ I would be willing to receive the newsletter electronically.

Individual: ☐ \$15.00 - Annual

Family: ☐ \$20.00 - Annual

Business: ☐ \$25.00 - Annual

Individual Lifetime: ☐ \$125.00

Additional Donation: ☐ \$ _____

Please send completed form and check to:

South Milwaukee Historical Society

717 Milwaukee Avenue

South Milwaukee WI 53172

Thank you for supporting your local Historical Society!

*Join the
Friends of the Mill Pond & Oak Creek Watercourse, Inc
and the*

*South Milwaukee Historical Society
for our 15th Annual*

Old Fashioned Holiday Tea



Saturday, December 7, 2024

11:30 am - 2:00 pm*

at the

Grant Park Golf Clubhouse

100 Hawthorne Avenue - South Milwaukee

*Enjoy a delicious lunch with tea and dessert
in this beautifully decorated Historic building*

**Note: Doors open at 11:00 am*

Cost: \$35.00 per person. Invite a friend!

Reservations will be taken after 8:00 am on 10/26/24

Phone 414-571-1191 Limit 6 reservations per call

Mail checks to:

Friends of the Mill Pond & Oak Creek Watercourse, Inc

810 Hawthorne Avenue

South Milwaukee WI 53172

Calling all bakers!

We need volunteers to bake cookies for the tea along with goodies for the bake sale held during the tea. Items would need to be delivered to the Grant Park Clubhouse Friday December 6 or Saturday December 7 before 10:00am. You can contact Judy thru the Society phone number (414-520-1285) if you have any questions.

The Treasure Chest

1960ish --1982

As related to Mark S. Draeger by Richard and Lorraine Poplawski September 2022.

Anyone who went to "Richard's Shoe Store" when they were children up to teenagers remembers "The Treasure Chest" (aka The Toy Box)! It was a wood box with a cover and sides brightly stenciled in red with a pirate burying his loot on a deserted island. Once the cover was lifted, inside was a wonderland of small novelties and toys. If you were a lucky boy or girl, and your folks took you to "Richard's" for new shoes, you were allowed to pick out a toy with your purchase! How this exciting experience came to be didn't matter to me as a child, only what cool toy I would get when it wasn't my birthday or Christmas!

Richard Poplawski, proprietor, went to a shoe convention in the early 1960's to preview the new products, equipment, and trending shoe styles. Among the many vendors there, he met Larry Saunders, owner of "Larry Saunders Novelty Co.". Larry showed Richard the "Treasure Chest" and innumerable small novelties available to attract customers with children and teenagers. Well, the idea appealed to Richard, so he bought the "Treasure Chest" and placed his first order for the novelties. This turned out to be tremendously successful, so much so that the first box wore out! So he had to replace it with a new one in the 1970's!

An interesting true story happened when a lady came in with 2 young boys who had cried and made a fit because they didn't want shoes from Boston Store. They only wanted shoes from Richard's so that they would each get a toy!

BUT, the most popular novelty of all time with the High Schoolers, was the "Love Tester"! It was a type of liquid filled tube, like a thermometer. When you pressed your finger at the bottom of the tube, the liquid would rise and stop at one of the marks on the scale. Amazingly, every person was different! The scale read from bottom to top with "Frigid", "Cold", "Not Interested", "Luke Warm", "Maybe", and "Hot"! Both guys and gals loved it! After a while Richard was unable to get this item. Sales may have suffered!

Before the shoe store closed, a lady came in to relate a story about a "friend" of hers that collected every type of toy from the "Treasure Chest". Now that's a serious collector (with a pretty big shoe collection too)!

"Richard's Shoe Store" was in business from 1953 through November 1982 when big-box stores were putting small town stores out of business. During that last November, many people came in and asked, "Where are we going to get our shoes now"? (Inferring also their kids' toys)!

Every place Richard and Lorraine moved, the "Treasure Chest" went with them. Their daughter Laurie proudly displays it in her home today! Richard and Lorraine are now retired and living in Regency Senior Complex, New Berlin, WI.



A few of the original toys donated to the Society by the Poplawski family



TIDS & BITS

We did have some positive things happening at the museum since the last newsletter! C-R Electric was finally able to get our doorbells to work!!

We also had them light up some of the display cabinets making it much easier to view the artifacts inside.

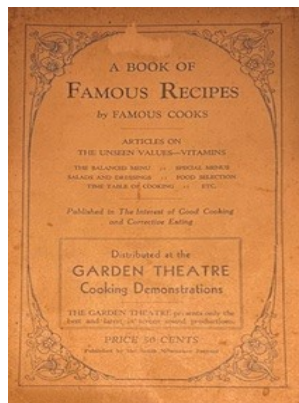


A recent acquisition, copyrighted in 1930. From the forward:

This book of "FAMOUS RECIPES" has been compiled for the modern housekeeper... The aim is to bring more variety to your table, to make your meals more appetizing, to simplify cooking, to help you economize and to be your constant companion and friend.

We offer this book in the interest of properly prepared foods on the table of every American home.

Maybe we'll find some interesting recipes to share in future newsletters!



Another recent edition is a memoir written by Tom Briesemeister who was born & raised in South Milwaukee. The memoir begins in Germany with the Briesemeister and Hermann families and focuses on Minnie's bittersweet life in South Milwaukee. Her life was filled with love and tragic family losses, the *forget-me-not*, surviving the flu epidemic of 1918 and a family secret. Copies of the book are available for sale at the museum, \$10 each.



Since the next newsletter doesn't go out until January.. Happy Holidays to everyone!



Thank you to everyone who signed up for the electronic newsletter. So far it's a big success! If you'd like to give it a try let us know. You can call or text 414-520-1285 or email us at Southmilwaukeehistory@gmail.com You can always go back to a paper copy if you decide you prefer that.

Reminder to New Members...

Your membership comes with one hour of free genealogy research. Contact Steve Schreiter at 414-762-5214 for details.

Tours

The Museum is available for tours to Scout Groups, Civic Organizations and School Groups.

It is also available to individuals for research or tours. For more information or to arrange a tour, please call 414-520-1285



The South Milwaukee Historical Society is a 501.c.3 organization whose mission is "to preserve, honor and promote South Milwaukee's rich history for generations to come."

It's that time again!

Time to renew your
membership for 2025!

Please fill out the
membership form on
Page 3 and mail it in.



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