



THE BANDON LIGHT

A PUBLICATION OF THE BANDON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MUSEUM CELEBRATES – JUDY KNOX'S 20 YEAR ANNIVERSARY AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Judy Schultz Knox, Executive Director

A special event to celebrate 20 years of Judy Knox's service as the executive director of the Bandon Historical Society was held at the museum Saturday, April 23. A steady stream of visitors congratulated Judy throughout the event.

Over 140 people attended and many left special messages in a guest book hand-made specifically for the celebration by Kathy Cowan. Visitors from several other area historical societies attended.

Bandon's Mayor Mary Schamehorn read a proclamation declaring April 23, 2016, Judy Knox appreciation day and presented her with a plaque.



Mayor Schamehorn presents Judy's proclamation



Melissa Kistner Morrill presents flowers to Judy

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A publication of the
Bandon Historical Society

Executive Director.....Judy Knox
Staff.....Eileen Scott
Native American Consultant...Reg Pullen

President..... Jim Proehl
Vice President..... Mary Schamehorn
Secretary..... Faye Albertson
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Andy Christensen	Jim Proehl
Donna Mason	Brian Vick

Newsletter Layout

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It's hard to believe that summer is just around the corner and this is our second newsletter for 2016. There have been many new changes in our exhibits and gift shop and more to come, so stop in and visit us soon.

Judy Schultz Knox On April 23, the Board of Directors planned a small party to honor my 20 years at the Museum. I was surprised when over 140 people attended! What a wonderful honor for me and my family. To all who were able to attend, I thank you from the bottom of my heart. This was truly a very proud moment for me and I know my Ronnie was right beside me. Thank you to all my wonderful family of friends from Bandon, other museums and all around the area. To be so honored by so many wonderful people kept me a little teary-eyed most of the day.

After 20 years as the Executive Director, I will be retiring in October. As most of you know, I was born in Bandon and have lived and worked here all my life. Having worked at Perry's Box Factory, my father's Bandon Plumbing & Heating business and Dave and Gina Swenson's Bandon Pharmacy, being hired in 1996 by the Bandon Historical Society has been my most rewarding job. I have thrived and lived this job, putting everything I could into it with pride and love. I will not be leaving altogether, but will be volunteering in the research room, identifying photographs, doing family research and other fun jobs!

The Board of Directors has selected my replacement, Gayle Propeck Nix, who will work with me until I retire in October. I know she will do a great job as your new Executive Director and will love what she does. Please welcome her to the Museum.

A Note from the Board of Directors

As you read in Judy's note above, the Bandon Historical Society Museum has chosen Gayle Propeck Nix to become its new Executive Director; she will assume the position in October.

Nix is a Bandon native. Her father, Bob Propeck, appears in many of the museum's cheese making photos. We find pictures of Gayle at Ocean Crest and Bandon High. She left the community for a time but returned about 18 years ago. She has many years of experience as a medical clinic office manager.

“When we decided to celebrate Judy’s twentieth anniversary at the museum, we did not know she planned to retire,” said Board President Jim Proehl. “We still get to have a retirement party!”

“We know we can’t replace Judy. She has cared for the museum so well the last twenty years. In Gayle, we think we have found someone in whose good hands Judy can comfortably leave the museum,” said Proehl.

Board members Reg Pullen, Betty Hiley and Donna Mason were on the museum's hiring committee and brought the hiring recommendation to the board.

Eileen Scott will continue in her two day a week position. Knox's retirement timeline will allow a smooth transition.

The Other Bandon Fire

By Dick Hancock

*E*veryone knows of the great fire in 1936 which destroyed most of Bandon but on June 11, 1914 a fire destroyed a good share of the downtown district. Three blocks along Main Street were leveled and but for the use of dynamite to stop the flames, the entire downtown area might have been destroyed.

A restaurant operating in a condemned building



caught fire at about midnight and the flames were quickly extinguished by the Volunteer Fire Department. However, about 3 AM, the flames rekindled and quickly jumped the street. By morning three blocks of the oldest businesses in the city lay in ruins. Only the use of dynamite on the Neilsen Hardware store stopped the flames and saved the rest of the city.

As usual, the Lifesaving Service were called to help in the emergency. The daybook of Axel Sandstrom tells the story: "Thursday, June 11th, 1914. All hands turned out at 3:45 this morning. Number 2 coming home from the lookout calling us on account of a big fire down in the L&E Restaurant. We had no gear to fight the fire with and short of water, so consequently could not do very much. The tug *Klihyam* got his pump started and two connections of hose attached, and the steamer *Dispatch* also helping in the same



Hartman Building and the Bandon Recorder

manner.

With the combined efforts of water and dynamite the fire got under control at seven o'clock in the morning. All of us station boys were wet, and all I had to put on was my duck suit. Three blocks burned down and the damages will probably reach above \$300,000. We moved furniture, clothing, books and sick persons even. From the hospital to private houses and some of them to the other hospital. A little baby a few days old and the weight of this being was two pounds. I carried it in a basket."



(Continued on page 6)

**BEGINNING MEMORIAL DAY MAY
WEEKEND THROUGH CRANBERRY
FESTIVAL WEEKEND (SEPTEMBER
11TH) THE MUSEUM WILL BE
OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK 10AM—4PM**



Thank You Trish Conyers!!

Trish has done the design and layout for our newsletter for several years, making it look great! Thanks for a job well done!

Plane Crash at the Bandon Aero Club Crab Feed and Fly-In—1972

by Mary Schamehorn

I can still remember how close I came to never experiencing the thrills of flying.

Even though I am hardly a world-class flyer (does four trips to Hawaii count), I might never have had those experiences had I listened to my inner self that day in April of 1972.

I had gone to the Bandon Aero Club crab feed and fly-in with Jim Wilson, manager of Coos-Curry Electric and a pilot with his own plane. He knew that I had never been in the air ... even in a small plane, and he promised that as soon as the crab feed was over, he'd take me on my first plane ride. I was in my 30s, so it was probably long overdue. And I was looking forward to the new experience.

I remember that we had finished eating, and people were standing around outside or in the hangar talking.

As a number of planes had flown in from other airports to join the group, they began taking off. But as one small plane (from Portland) took off from the runway right in front of us, heading south, we sat



there in stunned silence as we watched it plummet into the gorse at the end of the runway.

Today, that would have meant the plane would have crashed into Oregon Overseas Timber's mill ... but 40 years ago, it was only acres of dense gorse. And there was no

doubt in anyone's mind that day that the gorse had saved that family's lives.



Aero Club members screamed, "is everyone Ok?" But the pilot yelled back that they needed an ambulance as, I believe, his wife and daughter were injured.

The next question was how to get into the gorse to help them. At least one man had access to a machete and others used whatever they could to chop through the impenetrable gorse. People used big sheets of plywood, stored in the hangar, to form a pathway through the gorse to reach the plane. Aero Club member and local pilot Lowell Meyer and Don Pierce, also a member of the club, were among the first to reach the family, which included the husband and wife and their 11-year-old daughter, who suffered a broken arm.

I was among those who used the plywood pathway to get back to the plane as I was a reporter for Western World and needed to get photos. Fortunately, because of the thick bed of gorse, the injuries were not serious, but the plane was badly damaged.

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Send us your E-Mail address if you are interested in receiving the Newsletter and/or Museum information via E-Mail. Three ways to sign up: 1) the form found on the Newsletter last page or 2) you can email the information to: info@bandonhistoricalmuseum.org or 3) sign up on our webpage www.bandonhistoricalmuseum.org.

(Continued from page 1) **Judy**



Nancy Drew serves the refreshments



Mary Capps, Judy Knox and Robin Martin

Jim Proehl, Nancy Murphy and Donna Mason put together a special photo exhibit dedicated to Judy that was enjoyed by all.

Donna Mason and Kathy Dornath organized the refreshments and volunteer Nancy Drew served the cake. Board member Faye Albertson attended the front desk and signed-in visitors as they arrived.

The event was the best-attended museum event in many years.

"We can't say we were surprised by the attendance," said Museum Board Chairman

Jim Proehl. "We know there are lots of people out there who know of and appreciate the work Judy does for the museum. We knew they'd come."

A Bandon native, Judy and her husband Ron co-chaired Bandon's Centennial celebration in 1991.

That experience led to her involvement with the museum.

In 1996, Judy took the Executive Director's position with the non-profit historical society and, if a new job was not enough of a challenge, it was also the same year the museum moved from the Port building into its current location of Bandon's old city hall.

"Judy has taken care of the museum's collection and overseen the preservation of the town's history," said Museum Board President Jim Proehl. "She is the center of our museum community."

Knox has also been instrumental in forming and maintaining SWOMA, the Southwestern Oregon Museum Association.



**Patricia Seidler and
Marjorie Bullard**



Judy at 6 months

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE 1914 FIRE

2 PM, JUNE 11 AT THE MUSEUM

"The Other Fire, the Bandon Fire of 1914," will be the topic of a program at the Bandon Historical Society Museum Saturday, June 11, at 2:00 PM. Admission will be free. Attendees will also be given a free poster depicting the fire.

Mary Schamehorn, Bandon's mayor and museum board vice-president, will lead the program. A copy of the *Western World* published the day after the fire will be her primary source. Schamehorn's grandfather, L. D. Felsheim, published the *Western World* in 1914.

The program will be generously supported by photographs, both of the fire and the downtown before and after the fire.

The 1914 fire started in the kitchen of a restaurant and destroyed three blocks of downtown Bandon in June of that year.

"We'd probably consider the 1914 fire the great fire in Bandon's past, if another fire in 1936 had not so completely demolished the town," said museum board chairman Jim Proehl. "This is an interesting story that tends to get confused with or overshadowed by the '36 fire."



(Continued from page 3) **FIRE**

Fortunately there were no deaths in the fire and insurance adjusters estimated the total loss at over \$206,000. Only \$42,000 was covered by insurance. After the fire, the city passed building codes and demanded fireproof roofs but the fire of 1936 was too much for even those measures in most cases.

And that's the way it was.....

Dick Hancock was born in Bandon at the old Leep Hospital in 1940. His parents were also born in the Bandon area and his family were river people - commercial fishermen and tow boaters. His grandfather served in the Lifesaving Service at Bandon between 1905 and 1915.

Welcome to New Members (April – May)

Dave Hankwitz	John & Renee Felsheim
Kate O'hara	Richard Hancock
George & Judy Christensen	Gary & Kathleen Mark
Susanna Neale Duke	

Summer Interns Wanted!!

The museum is looking for student employees for the summer of 2016. Bandon students currently enrolled in high school or college may apply for the positions. A grant from the Oregon Community Foundation will fund most of the employment program.

One hundred fifty hours of work are available at \$10.50 per hour. The museum will likely divide the hours among more than one student employee.

Last summer, three Bandon High students, Ally Richert, Samantha Dow, and Darby Underdown, each worked 50 hours for the museum. The student employee concept was initiated through a grant from Bandon High's Community 101 program.

The student employees were involved in all aspects of the museum's operations. Students performed jobs that included sorting and filing, scanning photos, serving museum visitors, typing, running copies, sprucing up exhibits, data entry, writing articles, and keeping the plants watered.

Employment applications are available at the museum front desk, at Bandon High School or on the Museum website www.bandonhistoricalmuseum.org.

**Student
Interns
Wanted**

(Continued from page 4) **PLANE**

After all the excitement had died down, Jim turned to me and said: "Are you ready to take your first plane ride?"

You can imagine my reaction. "No way," I said (or something to that effect, but he knew very well what I meant.) I was extremely frightened after seeing that plane do a nose dive at the end of the runway and didn't think I needed any more excitement that day. But Jim emphasized that if I didn't go up that day, I would probably never fly.

And I knew he was right.

To this day, I am glad he forced me to put my fears aside and enjoy what has provided a number of great experiences over the years, including two trips to Boston and a trip to Savannah.

Several days after the plane crash, I was back out at the airport taking pictures as Earl Robertson of Robertson's, Inc., (sand and gravel business) used his big crane to lift the plane out of the gorse. But that was one crab feed that those of us who were there will never forget ...

Mary Schamehorn, Museum board vice-president, was the speaker at the January Aero Club meeting; she shared the history of Bandon's airport through pictures and stories.

Memorials

Memorial donations have been made in remembrance of the following:

Nadya Rogers, George and Georgia Chappell, Margaret Maher, Bob Howard, Jean Laub, Phyllis Lonberg Stinnett, Norma Levrets, Ruthanne McSurdy-Wong, Brad Jarvis

Memorial Donors include:

Pete and Joan Goodbrod, Jane Chappell German, John and Nancy Drew, Judy Knox, Jane Haga Gibbs, Jim and Robin Martin, Careen Pierce, Carolyn Russell

President's Corner....

By Jim Proehl, Board President



The voters of Coos County will have an opportunity to provide our museum, and all the museums in the

county, with a stable source of funding. Oregon law allows counties to ask voters to approve an annual, tax supported, county historical fund. The fund can only be used to operate historical museums accredited by the Oregon Historical Society.

A vote on the fund in Coos County will be on the November ballot.

If the ballot measure passes, Coos County residents would pay 10 cents for every \$1,000 in real estate valuation. For a property assessed at \$100,000, the tax would be \$10. The tax would raise a projected \$500,000 in its first full year.

Getting the measure on the ballot has been the work of an ad hoc committee made up of representatives of the county's eight museums.

The Bandon Historical Society's board of directors voted to support the concept.

We believe the measure would be good for not only us and the county's other museums, but for the county as a whole. With the historical fund in place, every community's museum will have the resources to pay staff and be open regular hours. Well-run museums bring visitors to a town and expand a town's cultural and heritage activities.

Let's get behind this measure. Let's start spreading the word that this is important to us and a good deal for the county.

All of us who work with the museum dream of spending less time on fundraising and more time on history. This measure is our best shot at making that dream come true.

JOIN THE BANDON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

YES! Please accept my membership in the Bandon Historical Society

Note to Current Members: We are developing an E-Mail database,

please send us your E-Mail information if you would like to receive the Newsletter and /or Museum Info by E-Mail

(please check one)

I'm a Member _____ and I would like to receive the Newsletter and Museum info by EMAIL

\$15 Individual _____ NAME: _____

\$25 Family _____ ADDRESS: _____

\$35 Business _____ CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

\$250 Life _____ PHONE: _____ E-MAIL: _____

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Please make check payable to BHS and mail to:

Bandon Historical Society, PO Box 737, Bandon OR 97411

For more information on benefits of memberships go to

<http://www.bandonhistoricalmuseum.org/membership.html>

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