



# THE BANDON LIGHT

A PUBLICATION OF THE BANDON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## “I LOVE A PARADE”

### BANDON’S CRANBERRY FESTIVAL

By Jim Proehl

The debut of “I Love A Parade” was 1931 but a parade was not part of the first Cranberry Festival in 1947.

The parade was added in 1948, the second year of Bandon’s cranberry celebration.

The first festival was put together in the fall of 1947. An article in the October 9, 1947, *Western World* invited the heads of all the organizations in the community to a meeting to hear a proposal about a Cranberry Festival.

A week later, the *Western World* reported that the Cranberry Festival Association had been formed, officers elected and the festival date set for November 14 and 15.

A full page ad in the October 30 *Western World* advertised the “Big Three Events” to make up the first festival: the queen coronation and ball, the Cranberry Bowl football game and the Cranberry Festival dance to be held at “The Barn.”



A VFW color guard led the way through downtown Bandon in the first Cranberry Festival parade in 1948.



Dayton Turner and Hank Dufort wore suits made of newspaper to represent the *Western World*. Judy Brown won the prize for the best children’s entry in the first Cranberry Festival parade.

A parade was not on the agenda.

Ruth Kreutzer was crowned the first Cranberry Queen in a coronation held in the elementary school gym and attended by 700 people.

Myrtle Creek edged out Bandon, 13-9, in a football game to determine which team would represent Coos, Curry and Douglas counties in the state B-League football playoffs.

At halftime, the new Cranberry Bowl Athletic Field west of the elementary school, being used for the first time that season, was dedicated to Bandon High School. Previous football seasons had been played in the City Park.

*(Continued on page 6)*

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A publication of the  
Bandon Historical Society

**Bandon Historical Society  
Museum**

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

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**Nominating Committee**

Andy Christensen             Jim Proehl  
Donna Mason                 Brian Vick

The Board meets the 4th Tuesday of each month, 4 pm at the Museum. All members and guests are welcome to attend.

**Newsletter Layout**

Bob Coraor



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If you are interested in Bandon’s history and would like to help preserve our past for future generations, call us—we need you. The Museum is OPEN Monday through Saturday 10-4 and 7 days a week June through September 11th. Volunteers are waiting to help you and answer your questions about Bandon’s history. Enjoy Bandon’s rich, wonderful history! Located on the corner of:  
270 Fillmore Ave. & Hwy 101

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**Judy Schultz Knox**

**From the Desk of the Director**

Well, this happens to be the last letter from me to you as the Executive Director. You might have heard I am retiring at the end of September. I was hired in 1996 when we first moved into this building—April 2016 was my 20 year mark. How wonderful to say that you were part of Bandon’s past as well as the future.

Bandon’s museum continues to grow and thrive with all the support we receive from our Board of Directors, office staff, and our very capable and helpful volunteers. This could not be possible without you and your dedication and love of Bandon’s history.

We have become a family, working so very hard to keep this building open 6 and 7 days a week for Bandon’s people and all who come to visit us. New and old friends have been working together daily to better preserve the history of Bandon for future generations.

I was born in Bandon in 1946 and spent my entire life here. My husband, Ron Knox, who passed away in 2015, was also born in Bandon. We went to Bandon schools and both graduated from Bandon High School.

It has been my honor to represent our wonderful community and our very unique history. I appreciate all the dedicated people who have made this museum what it is today. I know all of you will continue to make this museum something to be very proud of.

Leaving is kind of bittersweet. I am a little sad and happy about retiring. My life has changed a lot this last year or so; a change is due. I will still volunteer in the research room and help identify photographs and help with the transition if they need me.

Thank you again for letting me represent Bandon’s wonderful history.

Judy Schultz Knox  
Executive Director

## Gerry McCue Shares Her 1936 Fire Story

Long time area resident Gerry McCue recently sent museum executive director Judy Knox a letter. She wished Judy a happy retirement and complimented the museum's newsletter.

Geraldine Guerin was born on the Sixes River and remembers when traveling to Bandon from there was an overnight trip. Her letter to Judy included a memory of the 1936 fire. The following is an excerpt from her fire account:

**"I was 12 years old and lived across from Riverton on the third farm up from the Ferry road that connected to the Riverton Ferry. Alton and Lela McCue were moving to the Alton and Martha Kay place on the upper North Bank Road. They had a team of horses hooked up to a wagon with all their household stuff. They were afraid the fire was going to come over the hill from the street. My Dad, Allie Guerin, let me go out with Lela and sleep on the wagon in the middle of an alfalfa field near the Coquille River. Later in the evening on the radio we heard that Riverton burned (thank goodness that was not true). I was crying--where would we go to school? Smoke was so thick. Humidity down to 8 or 9. We did not build a fire in the cook stove for a day or two. One of our hired men lit a match to light a cigarette and it was like the match exploded.**

**Grace Hull and I went up the hill on the other side of the North Bank--we just got to the top and over to the west the fire had crowned and it was like an explosion. We were so scared we practically rolled down the hill to her house and turned on the hose from their well and put water on the roof and around their house.**

**To this day, my nose, when smelling smoke, *wow*, Sept. 26, 1936."**

Eighty years after the fire, the museum continues to add to its store of 1936 fire accounts.



Geraldine Guerin was a sophomore member of the Riverton High School Glee Club. This picture appeared in the 1940 Trojan yearbook.

## BANDON BURNS!

Survivor Accounts of the  
Bandon Fire of 1936



Compiled and edited by  
Jim Probst and Carol Achlin  
from the files of the  
Bandon Historical Society

## Remembering the 1936 Bandon Fire

"Remembering the 1936 Bandon Fire" will be the subject for a special program at the Bandon Historical Society Museum Sunday, September 25, at 1:00 PM. The museum will open at noon and the program will be free and open to the public. Bandon Mayor and Museum Board Vice President Mary Schamehorn will be master-of-ceremonies for the program.

Survivors of the fire and their families have been invited. The chance to meet fire survivors is always a highlight of the annual event.

This year's program will give special emphasis to the aftermath of the fire. The story of how the community coped with the disaster and rebuilt in 1937 will be told through accounts in the *Western World*, excerpts from first hand survivor accounts and numerous photographs.

## “Cheers to 70 Years”

### Bandon’s Cranberry Festival

“Cheers to 70 Years” is the theme of this year’s Bandon Cranberry Festival. Because this year’s theme is a salute to cranberry festivals past, the museum has been especially busy collaborating with the Bandon Chamber of Commerce and others working on this year’s festival.

The museum will be open both Saturday and Sunday, September 10 and 11, and will extend its hours until 6:00 PM Saturday.

The class of 1961 will gather at the museum Saturday afternoon for its fifty-fifth reunion and invites everyone, especially those in the classes just ahead and behind, to drop in and join them.

The museum’s collection of Cranberry Court gowns will be on display through the weekend and the museum has loaned gowns for display at Friday evening’s coronation.

Pete and Joan Goodbrod will be the Grand Marshals of



1949 Queen Joan DeCosta and escort Pete Goodbrod



1957 Festival Square Dance at Tanglewood

the 2016 Cranberry parade and will be honored at the coronation. The museum helped prepare a photo tribute to the Goodbrods that will be on display at the ceremony.

As always, the museum has a permanent display showcasing the Cranberry Festival and the cranberry industry.

In its photo archives, the museum has literally thousands of photographs of the Cranberry Festival. Between the Mary Schamehorn photo collection and the collection of negatives donated by the *Western World*, the archives have most of the pictures taken over the years by the local newspaper. The paper spends more film on the festival than any other event.

Though only a small portion of those images are on display, it makes the museum the primary source for festival history.

# 1936 “Temporary” House Demolished After 80 Years

By Jim Proehl



A house with ties to the aftermath of the 1936 fire was demolished today (August 1, 2016). The small house was set at the back of a lot in the 800 block of Division Street. One similar house still stands in the neighborhood.

The house was once part of a complex of structures built by the Works Progress Administration to house families after the 1936 disaster.

The October 1, 1936, *Western World* reported, “Baby Bandon’ will be built on the hilltop near the high school building, city and state officials decided here last night, subject to approval of the WPA or any other agency that supplies funds with which to build the family-unit type of building to house residents through the city.”

In 1936 Bandon High School was on the east side of town, on the property where the baseball field now sits. An aerial photo shows the horseshoe shaped sets of housing lining the street that ends at the GAR Cemetery. The high school and gym are to the right. A Google Map image of the same location in 2016 provides an interesting comparison of structures today and 80 years ago.



“The hilltop location was chosen because of its proximity to the high school building in which grade school classes will also be held temporarily,” reported the October 1



*Western World.*

The October 8 paper reported work was under way. The October 15 edition exploded with indignation with a story that only people who had been on “relief” before the fire would get help from the federal government.

The October 22 paper included a letter from E J Griffith, the state administrator for the WPA, clarifying that “working people” could also stay in WPA housing. The paper also reported the first nine-family unit was almost complete.

The WPA units were intended to be bare-bones, temporary housing structures. In time, they were torn down or moved to reduce them to one dwelling per lot.

Today one more “temporary” structure was torn down, 80 years after the 1936 fire.

(Continued from page 1)

The parade was added to the second Cranberry Festival. The festival was again held in November to mark the end of the cranberry harvest.

A headline in the November 11 *Western World* read, "Firemen Add Thrills To Large Parade."

Thirty entries, including floats, horses, and farm equipment, formed near the Coast Guard Station.

The VFW posts in Bandon and Coquille provide the parade's color guard. Lou Wright conducted the Bandon High marching band.

Judy Brown, later Bandon's Mayor Judy Densmore, won an award for the best children's entry with her decorated tricycle.

About the time the parade reached Lloyd's Café, a box in the street was set on fire and the fire department provided, "a Keystone Comedy style demonstration of how NOT to put out a fire," according to the *Western World*.

"The smoke eaters put on a wild show with men running up ladders with disconnected lengths of hose, etc. in a mock effort to squelch the blaze," reported the November 11 edition.



Queen Lois Blakely and the Cranberry Court rode in a Packard convertible driven by Martin Kranick in the 1948 Cranberry Parade.



The *Western World* described the entry from the Bandon Variety Store as a girl-bedecked car.

Events have been added, the dates have changed, but the parade has been a part of the Bandon Cranberry Festival since 1948.

A set of photographs donated to the Bandon Historical Society Museum by Carol Vedder documents the first Cranberry parade.

The Bandon museum's photograph collection includes over a thousand images of the Cranberry Festival.

Jim Proehl is a Museum volunteer and the current Museum Board President.

## Coos County Memories: The Early Years

The museum has been collaborating on a book, *Coos County Memories: The Early Years*, to be published by Pediment Press and *The World* and *Western World* newspapers. The coffee table style book should be available in November. Pediment Press, based in Battle Ground, Washington, works with local newspaper publishers and historical societies to document history county by county around the Pacific Northwest. The book currently in production features Coos County through 1939 and draws heavily on the Bandon museum's photo collection.

The Bandon Museum, Coos History Museum and individuals in the county have contributed to the book which is heavy on photographs. Museum volunteers Jim Proehl and Mary Schamehorn have been helping the publishers with the editing process.

"We've seen the proofs. There is more Bandon in the book than any other community in the county," said Proehl, who attributes the fact to the photogenic nature of Bandon's past and the accessibility of the museum's photo archives.

The books should be available in the museum gift shop in time for Christmas.

## Donations and New Members

### Memorials:

Bob Howard, Phyllis Stinnett, Jean Laub.

### Donors:

Careen Pierce, Jane Haga Gibbs, Judy Knox

### Recent Donations:

C.K. Markets, McKays and Price n' Pride, City of Bandon, Larry and Joyce Hardin, Coos and Curry County Drilling Group.

### Recent Artifact Donations:

Four-piece Pyrex bowls; cut glass salt and pepper shaker set; collection of old glass bottles from Pat Richert.

Two Bandon High School annuals for 2015-2016. Bandon High School football and 1964 football schedule from the Rex Nuttbrock collection.

A hand-made wooden basket, 18x30, with canvas straps for carrying which once belonged to Hazel Colgrove.

A Bandon High School Columbia blue and white band uniform hat, circa 1960, donated by Martha Lane

A collection of journals, albums and manuscripts from Ralph Fuller Williams, an early immigrant to Bandon from Ireland donated by Teresa Linda Persyn Durham of Post Falls, Idaho.

This is small sample of items we have received in the last few months.

**Errata:** Our last newsletter contained errors in the names of Memorial Donations in memory of: Nadya Rogers, Norma Levrets and Phyllis Lonberg Stinnett and for donor Careen Pierce. Our apologies.

### Recent New Members:

Gary and Kathleen Mark (life); Fred Carleton, Attorneys Law Office (business); Brendan Gallier McCauley; Shannon and J.D. Baker; Richard Hancock; Art and Toni Poole, William and Caroline Halfwassen, Carol Ventgen and Mike Perkins; Dick and Grace Horning; James Lundy; John and Elaine Skeet; Adrienne Smith; George and Judy Sombart; Guy and Libby Wyatt.

If you are not a member and would like to become one, visit the museum or call us at 541-347-2164.

We would love to have you help us in preserving Bandon's rich history.



## President's Corner....

**By Jim Proehl  
Board President**

In the weeks ahead, the museum will experience a major transition. Gayle Nix will assume the role of Executive Director in October, following the retirement of Judy Knox, who has given 20 years of devoted service to the museum.

Eileen Scott will remain in her role as the assistant to the director.

Gayle, as Gayle Propeck, grew up in Bandon and attended Bandon schools. She moved away for a time and then returned to work at one of Bandon's clinics. She brings a strong background in office management and recordkeeping.

Gayle has deep roots in Bandon. When she and I look at the collection together, I continually discover she has a family story that connects her to a photograph or object.

Judy and Gayle have been working together to ensure a smooth transition. Judy is not leaving us; she is changing her role in the historical society.

We are so fortunate Gayle and Judy are working together to make this change easy for the rest of us.

***Something that might make Gayle's transition a little easier would be if she could be certain the museum can pay our employees!***

We create a budget, but to be honest, we have no idea at the start of each year how much money will come in by the end. We have faith that the membership and the community will meet our needs, but not a penny is guaranteed.

Voters in Coos County have a chance to make history at the November election. On the ballot will be county measure 6-135, a measure that will create a fund to support museums in Coos County, the Bandon Historical Society Museum included.

If the voters approve a rate of ten cents per thousand of assessed value (\$10 a year for a \$100,000 dollar property), every community will have a museum, every Coos County resident will get free admission to every county museum, and our museum will start each year with almost as much money as we annually operate on now.

And it will be the smallest money request on the ballot.

Okay, our employees are going to get paid even if that ballot measure does not pass. But a major focus of Gayle's job, just as it has been Judy's, will be finding ways for the museum to raise money.

All of us involved with the museum wish we would spend more time exploring and sharing Bandon's story and less time fundraising.

A YES vote on Coos County measure 6-135 can make that wish come true.

YES  
 NO

# 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: \_\_\_\_\_

Please check  to Receive \_\_\_ Newsletter and Museum Info by E-MAIL

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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