



THE BANDON LIGHT

A PUBLICATION OF THE BANDON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2017 Museum Season Opens with Shipwreck Stories Event

The opening event for the season was a great success with over 100 visitors registering during the day. When it came time for the presentations, it was a standing room only crowd. **Jim Proehl** introduced *Shipwrecks of Coos County* author **H. S. Contino** who was on hand to speak about the schooner *Bandon* and its fateful adventures and eventual demise on the Oregon coast. She is currently working on a second book, *Shipwrecks of Curry County*, and was answering people's questions and signing books following the event.



H. S. Contino



Bob Fisher (left)

Reg Pullen introduced **Bob Fisher**, a long time seaman from the Bandon area, who told of his first hand experiences while aboard the tug *Rebel* when he and Captain A. T. "Red" Pederson rescued ten of the eleven crewmen from the capsized *Elizabeth Olson*. The ship had struck the north jetty and capsized on November 30, 1960. The eleventh man saved himself by swimming to the north jetty and getting ashore. Unfortunately, Bob and Red were to experience their own tragedy when, four months later on March 27, 1961, the *Rebel* was capsized as they tried to enter the Bandon harbor. Bob described his struggle to escape from inside the capsized tug, hang onto it in rough seas, and then attempt to swim to shore. He was eventually pulled from the water by his brother-in-law Ralph Davidson and employees from the Moore Mill as he approached the beach at what is now Bullards

Beach State Park. He credited his survival to being very fit and just doing what "anyone would do to stay alive." Unfortunately Red Pederson did not survive the wreck. **Mary Schamehorn**, who was also present that day, read from the news article that she wrote at the time.

Bob will return to the Museum on Saturday, May 6, to hold a second telling of the events since the first time around was so crowded that some were not able to hear the stories. Join us in May; admission will be free.



Bob Fisher at the hospital following his rescue. From the March 30, 1961 *Western World*



The small tug REBEL risks all to rescue 5 remaining ELIZABETH OLSON crewmen after her back breaks and cabin parts from hull. REBEL and her skipper, A. T. "Red" Pederson were lost in this same area 4 months later. Crewman Bob Fisher survived. Photo by Lou Felsheim

A publication of the
Bandon Historical Society

Executive Director.....	Gayle Propeck Nix
Staff.....	Eileen Scott
Native American Consultant...	Reg Pullen

Miraculous Rescue Story...

A traveler with a miraculous story visited the Bandon Historical Society Museum on August 20, 2016. **Richard and Sandy Howell** of Grants Pass were in Bandon to escape the triple digit heat in the Rogue Valley. Richard handed former museum director **Judy Knox** a crumpled page from the February 4, 1937 Western World. "I'm the baby in that story," said Howell.

"Infant Lost in Flood Found Alive," read the headline and the article told the story of the three-month-old infant washed away in a flood who was found lodged in the fork of a tree.

"This proves whiskey is good for medicinal purposes," said Howell. "I'm living proof." Howell explained that R. H. Chistensen, the neighbor who found him after the flood, took the three-month-old back to his house and gave him a tablespoon of whiskey.

"They never put the part about the whiskey in the newspaper stories," said Howell, who shared accounts of his rescue from two other newspapers.

"I hate whiskey to this day, and I hate water. I haven't taken a bath in 60 years," said Howell. "I take showers."

The Howells came to the museum to see if the Bandon Historical Society had a better copy of the article he shared and had any further information on the 1937 flood. Volunteer **Jim Proehl** agreed to produce a reprint from the museum's microfilm collection and search for more articles on the flood.

Howell's story may hold the key to explaining an unlabeled set of photographs from the Felsheim photo collection, recently scanned by museum volunteer **David Pratt**, that appear to have been taken after the '36 fire but seem to be focused more on water damage than the fire.

The text of the February 4, 1937 Western World article follows:

"Lodged in the branch of an alder tree beneath the roof of what had been his home, a three-month-old baby son of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Howell, who had been given up as dead, was found alive by searchers following the storm of Sunday night.

"The Howells, father, mother and three children—a son aged six; a daughter two; and their three-months old son—were living in a house built in a canyon on Lowe creek on the North Bank Road near the R. H. Christensen farm. Above them was a dirt dam some 20 feet in height, the water of which had been used for irrigation purposes on the Christensen farm.

"The terrific downpour of rain caused the dam to give away during the night. The sudden onrush of water swept the Howell home from its foundation and carried it down the canyon some 800 yards to the main road. The walls had collapsed and the roof had fallen in.

"Trapped within the enclosure of their wrecked abode, the Howells grasped madly for the hands of their children. The mother quickly gathered the baby in her arms, but in the topsy-turvy trip down the canyon, half submerged in icy water, she lost him. When the wreckage came to a halt at the main road, there were father and mother and the two older children, but the baby was gone.

"Madly, they searched in the pitch darkness, falling and calling, searching every inch of mud soaked ground on their hands and knees. Frantically they jerked at branches of trees and wreckage of lumber and shingles, but all to no avail. Finally giving up in despair, firm in the belief that their baby was dead, the motley four, water soaked and



(Continued on page 6)

Museum Memories by Mary Capps

The following article was originally published in January 8, 1992, *Western World*.

We had a Xmas card from Raymond Garfield who now lives in Paradise, Ca. For the old timers, he is now married to Beatrice Jorgensen (sister of Jinks Jorgensen.) Bea was a classmate of Dorothy Bell Endicott Spreckles, Camilla Laird Ulett, and a cousin of Clara Haga Perkins Sweet.

Raymond told the story of his plane crash in Bandon in the summer of 1935:

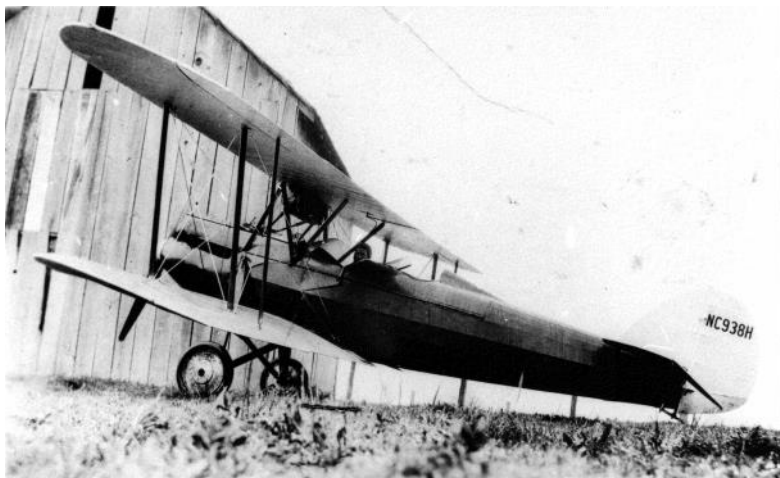
"Ray Wilson was visiting in San Francisco at the time. He and I flew up to Bandon during my vacation. We flew up the Sacramento Valley and then over to the coast. When we got to Bandon, there was a terrible turbulence near the ground, and we couldn't land. We flew back to Coquille and landed in a cow pasture, alongside the dike road. The next morning early, we flew back and landed in a plowed field across the river from Ray Wilson's place. The next day, Archie Rosa and his daughter, Betty, came out and I gave them a ride.

"Our last flight of the day, as we were low on gas, I took two young men from Coquille as passengers. As we circled over the bluff, I put the plane into a steep vertical bank to give them a little thrill. The plane went into a spin, and there was insufficient altitude to recover. We hit some trees and cut off one pine tree. It was one ft. in diameter, and we cut it off ten feet above the ground. One of the Coquille boys had some damage to his forearm. Hitting the trees, apparently saved our lives. To cap it all, I was fined \$10. for landing on a public beach. Mr. Topping helped me with that.

"The fuselage of the plane ended up in a vacant building near Ray Wilson's place. His little son, Raymond, had fun "flying" it and fantasizing as small boys do"

I talked to Raymond Wilson who was a six year old boy at the time. He remembers taking a ride in the plane, before the crash and well remembers playing in the wrecked fuselage. He also said his name is Raymond Garfield Wilson, named after his Dad's good friend, Raymond Garfield.

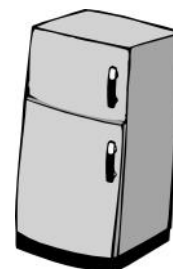
Raymond Garfield is 85, and blind but knows Bandon history. He has pictures to give to the museum. Raymond Wilson even has some pictures of the plane which we will copy for our museum collection.



Ray's parents, Al and Camilla Lorentzen Garfield in front of Ray's plane.

Refrigerator Needed

The Museum is in need a replacement refrigerator. Our current one has served us well but is failing. It is used for storing refreshments used during and after our events as well as for drinks, snacks and lunches for volunteers and staff. If you have a gently used one you would like to donate we are looking for one approximately 64" high x 30" wide x 32" deep.



Museum Has an Uplifting Experience!

If you did not know it, the building that the Museum is occupying was built shortly after the 1936 fire destroyed most of the city. It was the second building constructed following the fire and served as the town's city hall until 1970. After that it was a restaurant and bar until the Museum acquired the property about 1996. We recently rediscovered a scrap book of those early days showing the first renovations made to the building prior to the Museum occupying it.

It is not surprising that after eighty one years the building could use a little more help. The floor was sinking in the center of the exhibits area and in need of stabilization. We were fortunate to find contractor Greg Butler who began the work of lifting and stabilizing the structure. It required closing the Museum for a week, opening up the floor and doing some digging, shoring, and lifting but at the time of this newsletter's release it is almost completed. It was clearly hard work for those fellows doing the "under the floor" work! Its also giving us a chance to spruce up that part of the exhibit area. The work is complete and we are OPEN!



100 Years Ago

Advertisements from the *Western World*

Obey that impulse and get your Ford car to-day. There's no valid reason why you should deny yourself the pleasure and profitable service the Ford gives. Obey that impulse. 'Time is money,' and the service of a Ford doubles the value of your time.

TOURING CARS	\$430
ROADSTERS	\$415

DELIVERED IN BANDON

A. GARFIELD

Agent Bandon, Ore

Cut This Out

REGULAR 20c CAN FREE

Containing enough varnish to cover 25 sq. ft. of surface

THIS COUPON

is good for one 20c can of Chi-Namel Varnish upon the purchase of one new 10c brush (merely to insure a fair trial) during the---

CHI-NAMEL DEMONSTRATION

Thurs., Fri. and Sat., March 15, 16, 17

If larger can is desired, Coupon will apply as 20c against purchase price

Name

Address

McNair Hardware Co.

Bandon, Oregon





Grants to the Museum

The **Oregon Community Foundation** awarded the Bandon Historical Society a grant of \$1,800 as part of the foundation's Small Arts and Cultural Grants program. The Bandon Museum titled its application "Sharing Bandon's Story." The museum earmarked the grant money for communication with its members, visitors and the general public. The funds will be used to produce newsletters, maintain the museum's website, and pay for postage, phone and Internet.

The grant to the Bandon museum is supported by the Fred W. Fields Fund of the Oregon Community Foundation. Ninety-six Small Arts and Culture Grants were awarded throughout Oregon, totaling \$300,000. Nonprofit arts and cultural organizations with operating budgets under \$100,000 a year were eligible to apply.

"Many grant programs only fund new projects," said Museum Board President Jim Proehl. "This program recognizes that small organizations often simply need operating money. We appreciate the Oregon Community Foundation for recognizing our needs."

The **Coos County Cultural Coalition** awarded an \$800 grant to the Bandon Historical Society to purchase materials and develop exhibits that will provide historical displays beyond the walls of the Museum. This generous grant will help the Museum expand its ability to create exhibits that will benefit those who may not have the opportunity to visit the Museum. One of the early exhibits developed

under this grant was displayed at the Gorseblossom Festival on February 17 – 19, 2017 at the Bandon Old Town Market. Bandon High School students, in a recent visit to the Museum, helped put the exhibit materials together.



The **Coquille Tribal Community Fund** awarded the Bandon Historical Society a grant of \$3500 to purchase materials and supplies to provide for archiving of the records, pictures, newspapers and negatives that the Society has in its Museum collections. The Tribal Community Fund was created to share the profits from the Mill Casino and Hotel with the community. An early project that these funds will support will be archival storage of the *Western World* newspapers and negatives that were recently received.

The ***Bandon Western World*** owned by Lee Publishing recently donated their bound archived newspaper copies the Museum. The donation was initiated and coordinated by *Western World* editor **Amy Moss Strong** and Museum board vice president and former *Western World* editor **Mary Schamehorn**. The bound volumes were located in the Bandon office.

(Continued from page 3)

numb with cold made their way to the Christensen home.

"After rebuilding the fire and making the victims comfortable Mr. Christensen hurried to the home of Maurice Ray, superintendent of the Moore Mill & Lumber Co. logging operations, Howell's employer. Aided by a flashlight and lantern, Christensen and Ray rushed to the scene of the wreckage to find the body of Baby Howell.

"An hour had elapsed since the dam broke and the Howell home made its sudden descent down the canyon. Doubt was in the minds that they would even be able to locate the body of the child, when suddenly after upturning what had been part of the roof of the modest abode they saw Baby Howell. His left arm and his head were firmly hooked over the limb of an alder sapling that had been washed from its moorings by the rushing torrent, and he was alive, breathing; in fact gurgling as they gently lifted him from his anchorage to the arms of rescue."



Jim Proehl, Amy Moss-Strong and Mary Schamehorn with bound *Western World* archives for the Museum



UPCOMING EVENTS

March 28, 2017— Museum Board Meeting, 4PM at the Museum. All members and guests are welcome to attend.

April 25, 2017— Museum Board Meeting, 4PM at the Museum. All members and guests are welcome to attend.

May 6, 2017 — Bob Fisher will be present again to discuss his participation in the rescue of the crew from the Elizabeth Olson and his survival of the sinking of the tug Rebel. The event starts at 2:00PM on Saturday at the Museum. Admission is free!

May 23, 2017— Museum Board Meeting, 4PM at the Museum. All members and guests are welcome to attend.

June 27, 2017— Museum Board Meeting, 4PM at the Museum. All members and guests are welcome to attend.



Class of 1967 Officers

President's Corner...

By Jim Proehl

Board President



The museum is working with the Bandon High Class of 1967 to create and raise money for a college scholarship. The **"Bandon High School—Fifty Years Later Scholarship"** will be awarded this June to a member of the Class of 2017.

The idea for the scholarship came up at a meeting to plan the Class of '67's reunion. When someone broached the idea of giving to the Class of 2017, everyone at the table agreed to contribute. The group was already talking about including the museum in their reunion so using the museum as a conduit for scholarship giving was a natural.

Class of '67 member Bo Shindler has done the lion's share of the work of setting up the scholarship program.

The museum will do a special opening for the Class of '67 as part of their reunion weekend during next fall's Cranberry Festival. The Class of '61 gathered at the museum last fall as part of their reunion celebration and everyone had a great time. We hope more classes will involve the museum in their reunions.

Bo established a Go Fund Me account for the scholarship as a means to provide an online giving method for contributors. You can also mail donations to BHS 50 Years Later Scholarship 2017, c/o Bandon Historical Society, P. O. Box 737, Bandon, Oregon 97411. Visit the Go Fund Me page, type Bandon High into the search, and our scholarship will come up. The direct link follows:

<https://www.gofundme.com/bhs-50-years-later-scholarship>

Donations are not just coming from the Class of '67. Some members of the Class of '66 are giving \$51.00 as a way of commemorating their class. Others are using the fund as a way to giving back to Bandon High.

The museum will handle the logistics of picking a scholarship recipient, of tracking donations and distributing the money.

The class decided up to ten percent of the money raised would go to the museum to help cover the administrative costs and as a way to give back to the museum.

We hope other classes will carry on the practice and a "Fifty Years Later" scholarship will become a tradition. The groundwork Bo and his class have done will provide a template for the future.

Awarding a scholarship is not exactly a part of the museum's mission, but we look for ways to branch out and collaborate with others who care about the community and its story. After all, we are all a part of Bandon's history and we're glad Bo and his class thought of us.

JOIN THE BANDON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

YES! Please accept my membership in the Bandon Historical Society

Already a member? Please consider a donation to help support your museum.

(please check one)

\$15 Individual _____ NAME: _____
\$25 Family _____ ADDRESS: _____
\$35 Business _____ CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____
\$250 Life _____ PHONE: _____ E-MAIL: _____
I'm a Member _____ and would like to make a tax deductible donation in the amount of \$ _____

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>

A P U B L I C A T I O N O F T H E B A N D O N H I S T O R I C A L S O C I E T Y

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Bandon, OR 97411
Permit NO. 61



Bandon Historical Society
PO Box 737
Bandon, OR 97411