



# THE BANDON LIGHT

A PUBLICATION OF THE BANDON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Riverton School Desk — A Museum School Exhibit Lesson

By Jim Proehl



At first glance, it's just a wooden school desk. But a talk with museum volunteer **Careen Pierce**, who donated the desk, and a closer look at the desk itself reveals an artifact that shares a great local story and is significant as a piece of American history.

When the museum was closed in January, the volunteer crew concentrated on rebuilding the exhibit dealing with schools. **Donna Mason, Nancy Murphy, Kathy Phillips and Kathy Cowan** worked to refurbish the schools exhibit with funds from a Trust Management Services grant.

In January, volunteers also worked on redoing the museum's memorial boards. Among the volunteers who worked on that project were **Doreen Colbert, Carolyn Russell, Elaine Stohler, Ann Remy, Barbara Scherer and Shirley Pratt**. The memorial boards are still a work in progress. At the museum's annual meeting in February, **Donna Mason** was recognized for the significant time and leadership she provided during the January work session.

When rebuilding the schools display, a lot of attention was spent on preserving and displaying information about the area's country school districts, none of which still exists. In most cases the buildings are gone. The schools only remain in memories, photographs, records and artifacts.

The Riverton School desk has a prominent spot as a featured piece in the museum's newly refurbished schools exhibit.

Compared to the size of the town, Riverton had a large school population, especially in the high school, during an era when it was easier to travel by boat than road. High school age students from Randolph, Parkersburg, Bear Creek and Lampa Creek traveled up river to Riverton rather than having to navigate the potentially stormy lower Coquille to come to Bandon.

The desk was first used in a Riverton elementary school classroom. This particular style of desk was first sold around 1905 and the Riverton School was built in 1909, so it is a good guess that the desk was part of the Riverton School's original furnishing. Careen Pierce used the desk (or a similar one from the same set) when she attended Riverton school. She later taught elementary grades at Riverton. When the Riverton school board "retired" the desks, they gave one to Careen.

Careen, who moved to Bandon with her husband Don, a Bandon public works employee, taught at both Bandon Heights Elementary and Ocean Crest Elementary. The "old time" desk was a part of her Bandon classrooms. It was used as a reward. Students earned the privilege to use it for a week. When Careen retired from the



Careen Pierce

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Bandon Historical Society

### Bandon Historical Society Museum

Executive Director..... Gayle Propeck Nix  
Native American Consultant... Reg Pullen

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Doreen Colbert	Mary Schamehorn
Donna Mason	Carolyn Russell

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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Web: [www.bandonhistoricalmuseum.org](http://www.bandonhistoricalmuseum.org)

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. Enjoy Bandon's rich, wonderful history! Located on the corner of:  
270 Fillmore Ave. & Hwy 101

2018 Newsletters sponsored by **Goddard Energy and the Sweet Insurance Agency.**

## From the Desk of the Director



Gayle Nix

Special thanks to **Ann Remy** who, after she started volunteering at the museum, wanted to help us with our fundraising. This led to **Jim Proehl**, myself, and Ann developing the idea of sponsorships for our museum programs and events. Ann hit the streets asking businesses to be sponsors. Businesses receive recognition on our website and in event marketing on the radio, newspaper articles, Facebook and our newsletter.

This yields funds to be used for more programs and events, a win-win for sponsors and us.

So far, we have 14 sponsors who have committed and a few more in the “let me think about this” stage. **The Beverage Barn** and **Sunrise Carpet Cleaning and Janitorial** were the brave first sponsors of our “Tales of Coos County” event, a very successful program with a huge turnout. We have learned from that and decided to have two presentations in the same day for those programs where that is possible.

**The Human Bean** of Bandon is sponsoring the “Tales from the Cemetery: Who’s Buried at Bullards Beach State Park” event at 11AM and 2PM on Saturday April 21st. **Southern Coos Hospital and Health District** is sponsoring our “Mobile Exhibit Programs.” Exhibits at the Gorse Blossom Festival and a window exhibit at First Interstate Bank are the first two mobile exhibits with and plenty more to come. **Goddard Energy** and **Sweet Insurance Agency** are sponsoring our newsletters. **Bain Insurance Agency** and an **anonymous donor** are sponsoring student summer employees. **Face Rock Creamery** and **Chas Waldrop Real Estate** are sponsoring digitizing the *Western World* negatives collection and Technology Support. **Best Western Inn at Face Rock** and **First Interstate Bank** are sponsoring “Free Summer Sundays” providing free admission for all guests on Sundays during the summer. **Bandon Inn** is sponsoring our annual “Bandon Fire Anniversary” program in September. We also have an **anonymous sponsor** supporting our Web site. If anyone is interested in sponsoring any other events or programs, please call me at the museum. We can discuss what events are in need of sponsorship.

We are planning a “Night at the Museum” sometime in October, where you can ask the experts questions on Bandon history. We will also have similar activities available for adults that we currently have for kids to do during their field trips to the museum.

We are always thinking of new ideas for programs and we welcome your ideas and suggestions. Here are some we have developed thus far:

- A program about the history of the “Coast Guard in Bandon”
- “All about Cranberries” — We are looking for a cranberry “expert” to speak for this program.
- A “Big Fish” program about the history of salmon in the area
- A “History of schools in Coos and upper Curry County” program

As you can see, we have lots going on and we appreciate Ann Remy for all her hard worked and for the sponsors willing to give it a try this year! We believe it’s going to be a very successful program for years to come. This a very good start to the new year. Thanks for all your support!

Gayle Nix  
Executive Director

## Dean Conyers

Former Bandon Historical Society Board President **Dean Conyers** passed away recently. We will miss Dean's energy, skills, and enthusiasm for helping others.



"Dean got me started working with the photo collection," said volunteer **Jim Proehl**. "He helped teach me to use the scanner and Photoshop. I was vice-president when Dean was the board president. He didn't take the president's job because he wanted to be in charge but because he believed everyone should be willing to do every job. Dean always stepped up when he was needed."

Dean was one of those people who seems to be active in everything. In addition to his volunteering at the Museum, he was an active musician and involved in many volunteer groups including The Barn Committee, Bandon Main Street, Bandon Playhouse, the Bandon Police Support Services and the Bandon and Coos Bay Lions clubs. He received the Volunteer of the Month Award in September 2017.



## Rewards Programs

### Help Support Your Museum

Did you know that you can support the museum at no additional cost to you?

**McKay's Markets** generously donates 1% of the value of your purchase to the museum if you save your receipts and drop them off at the museum. We collect them and turn them in for the donation.



In addition, if you buy from Amazon you can also use their **Amazon Smile** website for your purchases instead. By

designating the Bandon Historical Society as your preferred charity, they will donate 0.5% of your purchase to us. Just use <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/93-0671618> (you must use your web browser to get to the Smile site, not the Amazon app on your phone or tablet.)



## Boats, Roads and Growing Up in Early 20th Century Coos County

An appreciative crowd that exceeded the seating capacity of the Bandon Historical Society Museum gathered on February 17 for a program by noted Coos County historians **Roger Ott** and **Lionel Youst**. The event, along with free admission to the museum for the day, was provided through sponsorships from **The Beverage Barn** and **Sunrise Carpet Cleaning and Janitorial**. Over 130 people signed in during the day.



Lionel Youst autographs one of his books.

Museum volunteer **Jeff Moore** invited the speakers, two men whose families settled "Above the Falls" on the upper Millicoma River early in the 1900s, to the museum. They shared stories of the steamboat era on local rivers and the days when the road through Allegheny was the route to travel from Coos Bay to the Willamette Valley.

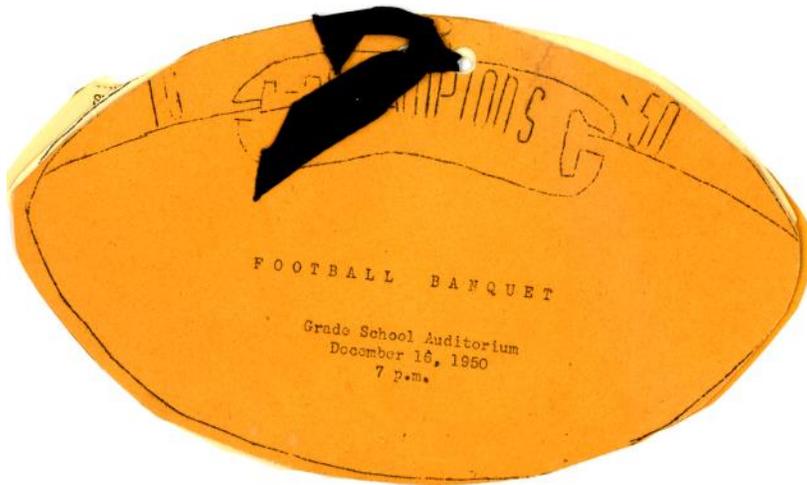
The program was rich in photographs, country history, and personal stories. "We love the interest the program generated but feel badly if anyone walked away because of crowding or was disappointed to not get a better seat," said **Jim Proehl**, museum board president. "Next time we do a speaker program, we will experiment with having two sessions so we can accommodate more visitors."



Roger Ott chats with visitors following his presentation.

# Bandon Tigers Football and Nike Inc. What Do They Have In Common?

By Jim Proehl



A little scrap of gold construction paper, printed on a mimeograph and cut out by hand in the shape of a football, sits inside an exhibit case in the museum's updated school section.

It's the program for the banquet to celebrate the 1950 football season that ended with the Tigers beating the Union Bobcats 19—18 and winning the State B Football title.

The object got a second look recently when the museum, via the athletic director at Bandon High, was asked to research the 1950 Tiger football team for an article in the *Oregonian*. The 1950 Tiger team ranked eighth on the *Oregonian's* list of the all-time top 25 Oregon small school football teams.

The added surprise that the program holds is the name of the guest speaker at the banquet: **William Bowerman**. The program identifies him as

the University of Oregon's freshman football coach.

The sports world remembers him better as the track coach who raised the U of O track program to an elite level and as the co-founder, along with **Phil Knight**, of Nike Corporation.

Bowerman coached **Steve Prefontaine** and a number of other future Olympians.

Bowerman introduced America to jogging, a concept he encountered on a trip to New Zealand.

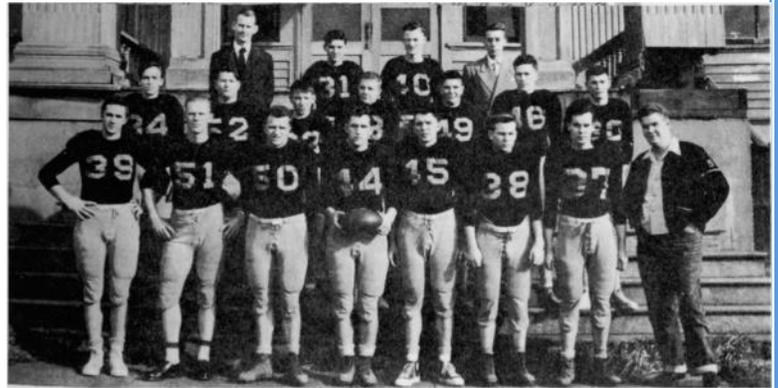
But when he came to Bandon in 1950, all of that was still to come.

Two hundred people gathered in the grade school (later Ocean Crest) gym on that December night to celebrate a state football championship. Food was served by the Bandon Business and Professional Women's club. The band, under the direction of **Lou Wright**, played.

Coach **Harry Therkelsen** was given a deer rifle and a fishing rod. Police chief "**Big Mac**" **MacDonald** showed motion pictures of some games. **Mr. and Mrs. Raleigh Greene** gave free movie passes to the Bandon Theatre to everyone connected to the team.

The *Western World* for December 21, 1950, covered Bowerman's speech:

"Being a champion carries a responsibility along with the honor, Bandon high school athletes were told Saturday night by Bill Bowerman, University of Oregon freshman coach who was guest speaker at the banquet honoring Bandon's championship football team and high school band.



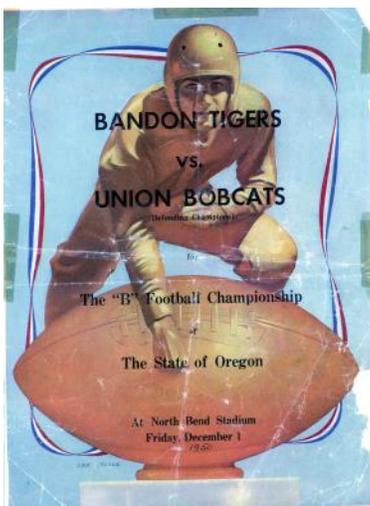
**1950 Bandon High School Championship Football Team**

T. Young	G. Ward	J. Foster	B. Armstrong
E. Devereux	D. Van Leuven	D. Moody	B. Smith
D. Hess	B. Yost	A. Dornath	Dean Van Leuven
E. Wehner	J. Thom	F. Pepion	B. Domenighini
D. Stevens	J. Neideigh	R. Swingle	D. Myers
D. Franson	D. Harris	B. Porter	F. Ingram
D. Ward			
Coach Therkelsen	Assistant Coach Jorgenson	Manager W. Fowler	

"Bowerman advised the members of the championship squad that as champions they will be 'looked up to' by younger children who will want to imitate them. Consequently, the champions have the responsibility of maintaining high standards of conduct and training, as examples to the younger children.

"The speaker also emphasized the importance to high school students 'planning to go to college.' He said 'go at least one term—expose yourself to it at least,' adding that the problem of funds should not stand in the way. Bowerman mentioned the many part time jobs available at college, and pointed out that, "If you want an education bad enough, you can earn it."

The museum's artifact got a mention in the paper too: "At each banquet place was a clever souvenir program representing a gold football tied with black ribbon. Besides the program it contained names and data on the team, band, rally groups, words to the school song and a unique menu."



(Continued on page 7) Nike

(Continued from page 1) School Desk

Bandon schools, she took the Riverton desk with her and now it is in the museum.

The Riverton School building no longer stands, but with a photograph, Careen can show the places where she attended grade and high school, posed for class pictures, and taught combined grade elementary classes.

The free-standing wooden desk features a top that can adjust to several writing angles, a holder for inkwell and chalk slate and a wooden drawer under the seat. Traditionally, school desks were bolted to the floor but this desk was not.



Starting with information on a manufacturer's plate, volunteer **Bob Coraor** discovered that the desk, A Moulthrop Movable Chair, represented a progressive step in American education.

A website blog from a museum in northern Vermont shared this information: “. . . The desk was designed by Samuel Moulthrop, an educator in Rochester, New York. The Moulthrop Movable School Chair, manufactured by Langslow, Fowler Co. of Rochester and introduced around 1905, was an innovation in school seating and emblematic of a new attitude toward children and learning at the turn of the century.

“Why are children restless in school?” asked a 1909 pamphlet. ‘Principally because of the uncomfortableness of the seats and desks. The mental development of the child is conditioned by its physical well-being. Yet most of our children spend the years of their school lives in seats ill adapted to bodily comfort.’ But now the Moulthrop Movable School Chair had arrived, bringing about ‘the emancipation of the pupil from the rigid iron framed school seat. It has accomplished the natural evolution from the old-fashioned severely criticized school seat to the **Modern, Comfortable, Sanitary, Movable and Adjustable School Chair**.

“However, the advantage of the movable chair was not just in its superior comfort. ‘The appearance of the room is much less formal, and *more inviting*.’ It ‘permits of the most elastic arrangement, and the teacher can get the utmost service from a given amount of floor space. In recreation periods or calisthenics, the chairs can be quickly cleared from the floor, the pupils in each grade being easily able to handle chairs used in that grade.’ Moreover, the ‘hygienic and sanitary benefits derived from its use are many and varied.’ It was easier to clean around and under movable chairs, and ‘the pupil having no place in which to stuff papers or other rubbish, is forced to keep his belongings in order, and slovenly habits are not formed’ In short, the Moulthrop Movable School Chair was a key to the reform of education.”

The school in Riverton was furnished with the latest development in educational technology. We have Careen's desk to prove it.

### Duffy is Dead

While scanning obituaries for the museum's database, we came across one with the headline as seen above! It reads as follows:

“The town dog, “Duffy” has passed away, the cause of his death presumably being old age. He was owned by Frank Blackerby, but everybody in town had a claim on him. He could do most anything that any ordinary man could. He could play ball like a professional, and was a great favorite around the berg. The end came last Friday morning, and everybody was sad. Duffy was given a decent burial and a base ball and the colors of the Bandon ball team were laid in the casket with him. May he rest in peace is the wish of all.”

23 September 1909, *Bandon Recorder*

### Cemeteries and Obituaries

#### On-line Database Available



Now available on the Museum's website is a database of Bandon cemetery burials and the Museum's obituary file. This database is built upon the work done by many museum volunteers over the years. Two especially diligent volunteers, **Paul and Jewell Shelton**, collected burial records and obituaries from the area, producing a number of books available in the Museum's research library. Volunteers have clipped, pasted, filed and then scanned obits for many years. This database incorporates the information from the Shelton books and the Museum's obituary file cards along with tombstone photographs taken by Museum volunteers. **Susan and Bob Coraor** are currently scanning and entering obituaries and photos into the database.

The link to the database is <http://bandonhistoricalmuseum.org/genealogy.html>

# The Scandinavian Navy

By Dick Hancock

If the railroads were the backbone of the nation, the steam schooner fleet was the backbone of Bandon. These sturdy little ships carried the daily necessities in and the products of the coast out to the rest of the world. The coastal dwellers fondly referred to it as "The Scandinavian Navy" due to the large number of Swedes, Norwegians, Danes and Finns who made up the crews. The Larsons, Jensens, Jorgensens and Olsons were Captains, Mates and Seamen on the low powered vessels that often had to raise sails to augment their little steam engines. Before year-around roads penetrated into the Bandon area there were only two choices for travelers - fight the muddy, rutted trails that passed for roads or take either a steamboat to Coquille or a ship up or down the coast.



Steamship Elizabeth at the Bandon dock

For those who could afford it, the steamer Elizabeth was prime transportation. Regular staterooms and dining facilities were available for the princely sum of \$10 for passage to San Francisco. In one or two days, depending on sea conditions, you could be in the city. Of course if you couldn't afford such a steep tariff, alternate transportation was available on one of the many steam schooners that called into Bandon. Two or three dollars would get you into a three bunk high stateroom (really little more than a large closet) and you took your chances with who your roommates would be; the captain didn't care if the other two passengers were honeymooners or drunks – fill the bunks with paying passengers! If you were doubly unfortunate and were the last to arrive at the room, you got the "Aunt Mary" bunk - the top one! Of course, the higher up the bunk was located, the more the sway and roll of the ship would affect you - certainly the occupants of the two lower bunks poked their heads very cautiously out of the shelter of their spaces if there was any indication of seasickness above their heads.

All of those old "squarehead" skippers were long on experience and seamanship but some were less than expert on formal navigation techniques. They sailed close to shore and relied on their knowledge of the coast and their instincts to know where they were and how to best get to their destinations. One old-timer when asked how he found his way in the fog replied "Vell, I heads to da beach und gets close as I can get und listens. Ven I hears dogs barking, I listens real goot. If I hear da pekinese bark I knows I yam off Port Orford and dats Mrs. Murphys house. So den I steers Vest so I vill miss da Cape Blanco. Und if I hears da sheepdogs barking I yam off Crescent City and I gots to miss daSaintGeorgeReef." Dog barking Navigation may not have been satellite GPS steering, but it worked!



Schooner Bandon stuck on the South Jetty

Many ships served Bandon but the longest service for a wooden ship was undoubtedly the "Bandon". Built in 1907 on Coos Bay, she carried goods, passengers and lumber to and from Bandon until late in the 1940s. At 172 feet long, she was a large steam schooner, carrying nearly a million board feet of lumber when fully loaded including a large deck load. She was a lucky ship, hence her long life. In 1909 she was crossing the Bandon bar under tow of the tug Klihyam when strong current and wind pushed her onto the submerged part of the South Jetty.

The tug cast off her lines to save herself. When the Life Saving crew arrived, they ran hawsers to the ship but they both parted. They then took off the nine passengers and part of the crew and landed them safely in Bandon. They then returned to the wreck and ran a fourth and last hawser which held. They towed the steamer off the rocks and inside the bar where she sank, decks

awash. Finally, after several days of off-loading cargo, the ship was able to be towed into the harbor, patched and pumped out, and was soon back in service. Other mishaps, including going aground and nearly foundering off the South coast, occurred but the doughty Bandon kept sailing until economics drove her out of business. Even then, about 1950, she was sold to Mexican interests and continued her life as the "Atrevado".

The bar and harbor are quiet now, the boisterous bars full of rollicking sailors and the not quite respectable houses that took care of their other needs are long closed. The days when three or four ships were loading at Bandon and another couple at Prosper won't return. The Life Saving Service no longer exists and the Coast Guard only comes for a few months a year but the spirits of those long gone sailors are still with us; they were the spirit of Old Bandon and they live on in all of us who are descended from them. Old sailors never die, they just drift away on an ebb tide into the setting sun. And that's the way it was.....

# UPCOMING EVENTS

**Tuesday, March 27, 2018**— **Museum Board Meeting**, 4PM at the Museum. All members and guests are welcome to attend.

**Sunday, April 15, 2018** — **Crab Feed** benefiting the Museum held from 1 to 4 PM at the Old Town Marketplace-Port of Bandon. Tickets are \$30 for adults (free “kids menu” that does not include crab) available at the Museum and The **Beverage Barn**.

**Saturday, April 21, 2018** — **Tales from the Cemetery** a presentation by **Jim Proehl** at 11:00AM with a second showing at 2:00PM. Hear the story of Red and Black John Hamblock and learn about the cemetery located at Bullards Beach. Admission is free thanks to our sponsor **The Human Bean**.

**Tuesday, April 24, 2018**— **Museum Board Meeting**, 4PM at the Museum. All members and guests are welcome to attend.

**Tuesday, May 22, 2018**— **Museum Board Meeting**, 4PM at the Museum. All members and guests are welcome to attend.

**Sunday, May 27, 2018**— **Free Summer Sundays**, thanks to our sponsors **Best Western Inn at Face Rock** and **First Interstate Bank**, the Museum will be open with free admission on Sundays through the summer months.

**Tuesday, June 26, 2018**— **Museum Board Meeting**, 4PM at the Museum. All members and guests are welcome to attend.



(Continued from page 4) Nike



An unanswered question is how Bowerman came to speak at the banquet. Did Coach Harry Therkelsen, or someone else at Bandon High, know and invite him? Did the school contact the University of Oregon and ask for an inspirational speaker? Did the university, as a recruiting tool, send their freshman coach on the high school athletic banquet circuit?

For now, it's a history mystery attached to a small object in the museum's collection.

To find the Oregonian story follow this link: [http://www.oregonlive.com/sports/index.ssf/2017/11/the\\_all-time\\_top\\_25\\_most\\_domin.html](http://www.oregonlive.com/sports/index.ssf/2017/11/the_all-time_top_25_most_domin.html)

## President's Corner...



Bandon high students are at work turning local historical photographs into coloring book images as part of two different grants that will help the museum to restock, develop and expand its

educational programs.

The Coos County Cultural Coalition, which distributes funds from the Oregon Cultural Trust to local non-profits, awarded a grant of \$650 to develop a “coloring bag” project.



The Coquille Tribal Community Fund awarded a grant of \$2,250 to supply the museum's History Detective's program, a title that covers many activities for both classes and individual children that visit the museum.

Both grants fund collaborative programs between the museum and schools and provide hands on projects without depleting any teacher's supplies.



**By Jim Proehl**  
**Board President**

## Donations and New Members

**Memorial donations were made in memory of:** Joyce Edwards Wright, Keith Young, Dean Conyers, Dennis Chesselet, Terrie Loomis, Betty Bullard Baird, Mark E. Handsaker, Catie Shindler Cooper.

**Memorial donors include:** Sharon Ward Moy, Gayle Propeck Nix, Sandra Handsaker, Carolyn Russell, Jim Proehl, Craig Hospital-Occupational Therapy Dept., Janet English Young, Judy Knox, Careen Pierce, Debbie's Hair Station, Carol Acklin, Barbara Dodrill, Kathy Dornath, James and Mickey Dupuis, Bob and Susan Coraor, Carol Ventgen and George Perkins, Terry and Joy Tiffany, Marjorie Stephenson, Sally and John Johnston, Suzanne and Robert Webber, Charles and Jane Luthi, Jeff and Linda Trower, Delores Barkley.

**New Life Members:** James and Paula Smith, Mark Smith.

**New Members:** Katie Heap, Linda Fults, Brian Kraynik family.

## 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>

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