



THE BANDON LIGHT

Sponsored by: The Joe and Frances Naumes

Family Foundation Inc.

A PUBLICATION OF THE BANDON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A New Era Begins for the Holy Trinity Catholic Congregation

Sunday, May 11, 2025, was the final mass in the present Holy Trinity Catholic Church building which will be demolished in preparation for the building of their new church.



Museum volunteers and congregation members are using the building project as an opportunity to gather, preserve, and share historic information.

The museum and church presented a program at the May 20 Bandon Fisheries Warehouse "Meet and Greet." Mary Schamehorn featured Holy Trinity in her May 21 "As I See It" column. Others are updating the files and taking pictures. This edition of *The Bandon Light* is a step in the process. Others steps will come.

We invite readers who may have a photo to share or a story to tell to join in.

The Church on the Hill

By Elaine Stohler

Holy Trinity Church has been through a number of transformations in its 142-year history. As families began settling in the Bandon area the desire for church services grew. In 1868, Father Alphonsus J, Glorieux traveled on horseback from Roseburg to say Mass in the home of early settlers. In 1878, the Bandon Postmaster, John Lewis and his wife, Ellen, sold four acres of land to the Archbishop of Oregon City for \$1.00. Their hope was to use the land to "glorify God." Historical records indicate that John Lewis spearheaded the project and the idea for a "Church on the Hill" was born. A small church was financed and built by members of the Parish. In 1883, the church was dedicated and named, "Mary, Refuge for Sinners." It was the first Christian church building in Bandon and at that time, the only Catholic church on the coast between Astoria and the California border. For a time, the church congregation grew and prospered. The location on the bluff allowed the church to survive the fire of 1914 that destroyed downtown Bandon. In the 1920's, the church was re-named, "Holy Trinity." Then in 1936, tragedy struck. A disastrous fire in September of that year engulfed the entire town in flames. The church on the bluff burned to the ground. Once again, Mass was said in

homes, and occasionally in the high school gym on the east side of town. The present church was built in 1937 at a cost of \$5000. While it was meant to serve an immediate need, it was not intended to be a



Holy Trinity Catholic Church stands on the hill above the First National Bank building in this photo taken before the 1936 fire.

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THE BANDON LIGHT

A publication of the
**Bandon Historical Society
Museum**

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The Board meets the fourth Tuesday of each month,
4:00 pm, at the Museum. All members and guests
are welcome to attend.

Newsletter Layout Jim Proehl

Bandon Historical Society
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a 501(c)(3) organization

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.
**On the corner of
Fillmore Ave. and Highway 101**



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FROM THE DESK OF THE DIRECTOR



Gayle Hankwitz
Executive Director

It's good to be home and
back at work—just returned
from a seven-day Alaska
cruise, my first one, with my
husband Dave and my nephew
Dave and his wife Penny. We
had a wonderful trip. I can
cross seeing Alaska and going
on a cruise off my bucket list!

Alaska is beautiful, but coming from the Southern
Oregon Coast, I already know beauty.

I want to mention one of our long-time volunteers,
Horty Joyce, just had her 97th birthday. She does a
fantastic job at the front desk and we are so glad to
have her. We wish her many more Happy Birthdays!

Spring is "field trip season" and we have had sev-
eral class visits. Always enjoy having the kids visit
and appreciate the volunteers who help.

We are on our summer schedule, open seven days
a week, and featuring "Free Summer Sundays"
through the weekend of the Cranberry Festival in
September. Free Sunday admission is provided by
Best Western Inn at Face Rock and First Interstate
Bank.

I'm looking forward to the "Meet and Greet" at the
Bandon Fisheries Warehouse June 17 (the programs
begin at noon). Jim Proehl will talk about "The Other
Bandon Fire." His programs are always informative
and entertaining. We appreciate Lori Osborne for giv-
ing us a Tuesday each month to share Bandon Histo-
ry.

Lance Wade, Chief Inspector, U.S. Customs, re-
tired, presented the museum with the ship's barometer



and ship's clock from the
Cigale, a ship seized off the lo-
cal coast in a notorious drug
smuggling operation in 1978.
Bandon Mayor and Museum
Board Vice President Mary
Schamehorn received the dona-
tion on the museum's behalf.

We continue to move for-
ward with the project to build the Don and Joan
Lynam meeting room addition to the museum. We
hope to break ground in July or August. We just re-
ceived the bell from bell tower of the Sixes School on
the Sixes River, donated by Raymond Helmken.
Wouldn't it be great if we could incorporate the bell
into the design of the new addition. Stay tuned!

We are looking forward to a busy summer. Stop by
and check out your home-town museum.

Evening Summer Programs at Bullards Beach State Park

Museum volunteer Jim Proehl opened this summer's slate of evening programs at Bullards Beach State Park Memorial Day weekend by talking about the people buried in the cemetery within the park, a story which also explains how the property came to be Bullards Beach State Park.

Because the park population is ever-changing, the evening program content repeats through the summer. The general public is also welcome to attend.

Programs typically begin at 7:00 pm and are in either the outdoor amphitheater or the "Big Yurt," both located near the entrance to C-Loop in the campground. The museum has provided speakers for evening programs at Bullards for many years.

The schedule of remaining programs for this summer follows:

June 7, big yurt – Shipwreck Stories: Tales of the Treacherous Bandon Bar

June 20, big yurt -- Shipwreck Stories: Tales of the Treacherous Bandon Bar

July 12, big yurt -- Shipwreck Stories: Tales of the Treacherous Bandon Bar

July 26, amphitheater --Who's Buried at Bullards Beach?

August 9, amphitheater -- Who's Buried at Bullards Beach?

August 22, amphitheater -- Who's Buried at Bullards Beach?

Grant Funds Two New Images

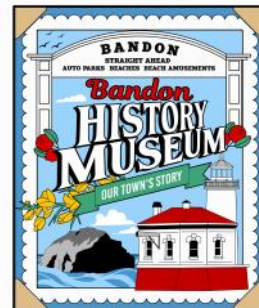
Catching the eye of potential customers is important to any organization that measures its success by how many people it engages.

The museum worked with local graphic artists Joan and Andrew Coleman, who operate as Ink Wonderland, to develop two new museum logos. The Colemans produced a new logo for the Bandon Cranberry Festival in 2024 which caught our eye. They not only produce attractive artwork but provide it in formats that work in a variety of media.

A grant from the Coos County Cultural Coalition helped pay for the commercial art. The eye-catching logos work well in both print and online advertising.

With new images in hand (actually, in the computer), we will rebrand our letterheads, desk brochures, etc. and purchase some products, such as lapel pins and window stickers, that we can share with our membership, volunteers and visitors to increase our visual presence with the public.

Drawing the public's attention to the museum is a component in sharing "Our Town's Story."



New Puffin Stuff Provides the Local Birds a Larger Presence in the Museum

Our desk volunteers noticed an uptick in questions about puffins and in response we added more "puffin stuff" to our exhibit space and gift shop.

A first step was to obtain photos from local photographers Susan Dimmock and Mark Grissom to be sure we were depicting local puffins. The puffin-wise



A pair of puffins on the rocks by Susan Dimmock.

point out that pictures of easier-to-film Atlantic puffins are sometimes passed-off as being taken on the Oregon Coast. It takes local knowledge and a long lens to capture the elusive Bandon birds.

Bandon's Shoreline Education for Awareness organization provided wildlife information. Volunteer Donna Mason punched-up our seabird exhibit to be more puffin-centric and developed an entry-way display to coincide with the "Return of the Puffins" party SEA put on in May.

Volunteer Jim Proehl developed a couple of puffin post cards and a puffin mug, now on sale in the gift shop.



Building Project Kindles Interest in the History of Holy Trinity

Excerpts from *Holy Trinity Catholic Church "100 Years as a Parish" 1883—1983* compiled by Kathryn Cowan and Kathleen Phillips

The next resident priest at Bandon was Father Louis LeMiller whom many older parishioners remember as being a good gardener. Some recall the doubts they occasionally harbored while taking Communion from his often garden-soiled hands. He is also recalled as having been an excellent cook and many remember the wonderful pot of stew that he



Father LeMiller visited parishioners from Powers to Brookings in his "puddler jumper" car.

usually had simmering on the back burner of the cook stove to share with a visitor. Hugh McNeil remembers Father LeMiller always had a plug of lico-rice in his pocket for the youngsters when he came to visit. Glenna Whitsett recalls Father LeMiller visited parishioners not only as a priest but as a friend.

According to Theresa Devereux: "Father LeMiller was the mission priest and drove his puddler jumper old car diligently from Powers to Brookings saving Mass and caring for his flock at each little place along the way. His black satchel, holding his

Mass requisites, medicine and bottles of gasoline (a precaution since service stations were quite far apart) was as much a part of Father as his old black overcoat.

On one occasion, Sister Loretta Mary and Sister Mary Bernard, two Holy Name sisters, were among the witnesses at the Baptism of John Devereux, Jr.



Wally McMahon, Hugh McNeil, and Theresa Devereux at the 100 year celebration at Holy Trinity in August of 1983.

All went well until the holy water was poured over baby John Jr.'s forehead, then, almost in unison, everyone sniffed and sniffed again and the word 'gasoline' was audible throughout the church. John Jr. awoke and screamed as the gas traced a white film on his tender skin. Father LeMiller had mistakenly opened the gasoline bottle instead of the Holy Water bottle. He apologized and took it good-naturedly and insisted that the Baptism was valid.

"In 1939, however, Father LeMiller returned to ask the Devereux family to have John Jr. quietly re-baptized as he had searched the usual Baptism records for years and while he had found tea and coffee accepted, nowhere had he found an instance validating gasoline. He seemed much relieved when we told him that at the Sisters' insistence we had the second Baptism performed by Father Sheridan in Coos Bay shortly after the 'gas ceremony.'"

In or about 1926, a dispensation was extended to the Sisters teaching schools enabling them (the nuns assigned to Bandon) to reside at the Devereux home on Bear Creek east of Bandon.

Theresa Devereux continues: "One time, however it was necessary for the Sisters to stay at the rectory in Bandon. At that time, the rectory was a good sized two-story house adjoining the church on the bluff. Two days later, however, the Sisters were again un-

Continued on Page 5.

The Church on the Hill

Continued from Page 1. permanent church. Even so, it has served the community for 88 years. Today the old building is plagued with all the problems that come with age. The time has come for another transformation. Holy Trinity will soon be breaking ground for a new building. Just as in the past, it is being financed by donations from parishioners. Even though there will be a new structure, the spirit of the church community members and the service to Bandon will remain the same. The church on the Hill will continue to be an important part of the Bandon community.

Excerpts from *Holy Trinity Catholic Church "100 Years as a Parish"*

Continued from Page 4. der our roof.

"It seems that they were frightened the first night by weird sounds and since they had no close neighbors or telephone, they spent a very troubled night. They locked the door of their bedroom and pushed all the furniture against it. The next morning, Father LeMiller arrived for early Mass and was amused because the Sisters were not present. He excused them, feeling that they had traveled quite far and needed the extra rest so he resisted the impulse to



Sisters of Atonement, Sister Superior Walburga, Sister Mary Jude, Sister Aidan, and Sister Mary Louise lived in Bandon in 1965 and served the southern Oregon coast.

call them. However, the Sisters had been up early but found that they were imprisoned in their room because the big rusty lock on the door had frozen tightly shut during the night. Their calls for assistance were drowned out by the surf and they only managed to disturb some seagulls in the area. Was this the answer to their prayers for protection that they had fervently uttered the night before? The Sis-

ters thought not and falling back on their innate resourcefulness, they unsuccessfully tried to remove some of the rusty screws from the door hinges with a metal file. Their plight was finally discovered when they opened the window and hollered for help. Their neighbors, the De Costas, heard them and Joe came and removed the door hinges. They were in the classroom ready to teach with time to spare.

"Their second night in the rectory proved even more terrifying as a prowler attempted to climb the drain spout. They watched from their bedroom as the drain spout broke and the figure attempting the break-in fell to the ground. A few seconds later he disentangled himself from the wreckage and dashed off into the darkness.

"This was enough for the good Sisters and although it was nearly midnight, they left the house in a military stride and made for the local hotel some five blocks distant. It was dark, of course, and they were dressed in black and as they marched along they must have appeared as fearful avengers because two men who were fighting in the street stood transfixed and crossed themselves as the nuns strode by. Nuns, by any standard, were a rare sight anyway in this most western part of the country, but, seeing them at midnight striding along with a single-minded purpose, apparently without fear, possibly converted a couple of reprobates. They finally reached the hotel where they spent the night. They wondered later and laughed, thinking of what the startled clerk thought of two sisters appearing at that time of night without any luggage.

"The next day they showed up at the ranch on Bear Creek. We welcomed them and I took them back and forth to the mission summer school for the rest of the season."

Want to Own a Piece of History?

The *Bandon Light* is sharing the following in the hopes of reaching former parishioners who may want to own "a piece of the pew."

Holy Trinity has created hand-made commemorative plaques from the wood of the church's original pews. Each plaque has an image of the church, the church's name, establishment date, and the motto, "A Light by the Sea."

A plaque costs \$50, shipping included.

If interested, please send a note that includes your name, mailing address and check for \$50 payable to Holy Trinity, 355 Oregon Avenue S.E., Bandon, Oregon.



Sixes School District Bell Lands in the Museum's Collection

A bell that once called students to school along the Sixes River is now in the museum's collection. Raymond Helmken of Grants Pass delivered the bell to the museum May 24.

Sixes School District #20 in Curry County was established in 1890. The school house was on four or possibly five different sites before the district merged with the Langlois School District and the Sixes School closed in 1947.

The final school building was about a quarter mile up Sixes River Road, visible from Highway 101, on the opposite side of the road from the Sixes Hotel.



A May Day celebration at the Sixes School in 1946. Photo courtesy of Bonnie Jensen Cox.



The bell and hardware to mount it. The words "NO. 20 YOKE" correspond with the bell's 20-inch diameter. There is no manufacture's name on the bell.

Helmken's family owned the property when the building was demolished, .

When the school district acquired the bell is an open question. The date "1888" is inscribed on one of the uprights that support the bell's yoke, suggesting it could have been used in the district's first building. The date could also be a patent date, or the bell could have come to the district from a previous owner.

In her book *School Evolution*, Bonnie Jensen Cox writes, "In 1949, Rae Capps Helmken Rundberg purchased the school property—the site where she, her sister Helen and brother Bill had attended as students; where her mother, Ada Capps, had taught; and where her father, Raymond Capps, had served on the school board."

The Capps family name is prominent in the history of Northern Curry County and Bandon and in the heritage of the Bandon Historical Society.

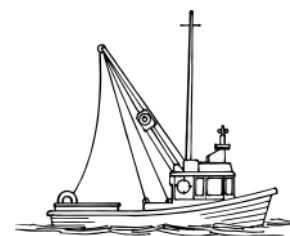
Memorial Donations

Memorial donations have been made in the name of:

Emmett Devereux	James Reilly
Joanne Ellis	Judy Knox
Marian Gant	Ronny O. Haga
Grace and Elmer Gant	
Bartol (Bart) Domenighini	
John K. (Jack) Bowman	

Memorial donations have been made by:

Rebecca Johnson
Donna Reilly
Jim and Alyce Cawdrey
Melody Gillard Juarez
Sharon and Jeff Haga
Robert and Susan Winnop
Laurence and Jody McDuff
Kristy Bowman



New Members:

Life Members:

Joan and Ken Loveu



Individual and Family Members:

Kate and John Wheeler	Fred Klein
Ted and Carolyn Russell	Fred Hultin
Fred Hultin	Jack Yager
Carol Laub Meltzer	Steve Wright
Alexandra Higgins	

Revised G.A.R. Obituary Guide on Sale in the Museum Bookshop

By Jim Proehl

Before I got involved with the Bandon's Museum, I became involved with Bandon's history by way of the obituary books put together by Paul and Jewell Shelton. Paul and Jewell began with a straight-forward but monumental task: match the headstones in Bandon's cemeteries with obituaries. A further step was to compile and print "by-the-cemetery" obituary compilations.

More volunteers got involved, grants were written, someone was hired to do the word processing. The work filled several notebook binders, copies of which were available for sale in the gift shop.

They weren't the best sellers likely envisioned, but I bought the one for the Averill and GAR cemeteries, which are just down the street from my house. I found them to be curiously good reading. The entries are occasionally sad but never morbid. There are just enough accounts of murders and gruesome accidents to keep things spicy. Mostly, the obituaries tell the stories of well-lived lives.

In the quarter century since the guides were first published, fuller access to information and easier word-processing allow us to add to Paul and Jewell's original work.

The latest offering is a revised version of the obituary collection for the G.A.R. Cemetery. It's probably not going to become a best seller, but the newest G.A.R.

obituary book is available in our gift shop.

Below is a typical entry.

PARMENTER, JOHN R.

P

April 11, 1870--August 23, 1929

Western World--August 29, 1929

Military Burial For "Dick" Parmenter

John Richard Parmenter, better known locally as "Dick," died at his home south of the city Friday morning after a short illness. Funeral services were held at the Schroeder & Gano chapel Tuesday morning and burial took place at the G.A.R. Cemetery. He was given a military burial, having been a veteran of the Spanish-American War. Members of the Coast Guard acted as pallbearers and George P. Topping sounded taps at the grave. Deceased was a member of the crew of the Maine that was blown up by the Spanish. He was rescued from a piece of floating wreckage. He was also a member of the Son's of Union Veterans of the Civil War.

Parmenter came to Bandon about eight years ago and engaged in the restaurant business. He conducted what was known as "Dick's" place for a number of years and established a wide acquaintanceship and made many friends. He leaves a wife and family at The Dalles. Two of his sons, David of Walla Walla, Washington, and Richard of The Dalles, came to Bandon to take charge of the body.



John Richard Parmenter's last name is misspelled on his headstone.



John R. Parmenter was aboard the Battleship Maine when it blew up in Havana Harbor. He survived.

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)

\$20 Individual _____ NAME: _____
\$30 Family _____ ADDRESS: _____
\$250 Life _____ CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____
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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