

THE BANDON LIGHT

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

The Shindler Kidnapping

By Jim Proehl

Hostages, Tommy guns, gangsters, kidnapping, a county-wide manhunt, jail breaks and a passport to China were all elements of a crime that held the attention of Bandon and Coos County through the weeks of September, 1938.

The story first broke on the front page of the *Western World* for Thursday, September 1. Because the type had already been set for the week's paper, the bulletin appeared above the *Western World* masthead in the margin atop the front page.

"Two robbers entered the O.C. Shindler home at 8:30 Wednesday night. At gun point they bound and gagged Mr. and Mrs. Shindler," reported the *Western World*. The brief article sketches out the facts of the crime and mentions a Tommy gun stashed in an abandoned building as being brandished during the course of the crime.

The Evening Edition of the daily Coos Bay *Times* gave the story in greater detail. "Highways and byways of southwestern Oregon were blockaded today by state and local police, as one of the most widespread manhunts in recent years was launched for three bold robbers who robbed Mr. and Mrs. Otto C. Shindler of \$240 in cash and their 1938 Ford sedan last night, and left them bound and gagged in their home here."

The Coos Bay paper explained that Otto Shindler owned a prosperous Bandon drugstore.

"Shindler, city councilman and leader in the drive to rebuild fire-stricken Bandon, was sitting with his wife in their new home on Ocean Drive at 8:30 pm when a knock sounded, beginning a two-hour period of excitement such as the two had experienced only in moving pictures.



SHINDLER HOUSE 1939

"Expecting to find a friend, Shindler opened the door and looked down at two stern-faced men, unmasked and armed with revolvers.

"As the two uninvited guests walked in, one of them told Shindler they were 'desperate men,' advised the couple to 'take it easy,' and then said they expected to 'borrow' the Shindler family car.

One of the robbers took Shindler's car and returned a short time later with a third "gangster."

"The three robbers then decided to have Shindler go to the store to open the safe. One stayed with Mrs. Shindler and the other two took Shindler downtown, adding kidnap to the robbery violations. The store is on the main street, well lighted at this hour of the night. They entered the store, and Shindler opened the safe. A hurried check today places the amount taken at \$240 (current equivalent: \$3,826.68).

"The two robbers and Shindler then drove to the east end of 11th Street, in a lonely neighborhood. One of the men got out, walked away and came back soon with a sub-machine gun and an automatic rifle.

"It was nearly 10 p.m. when Shindler told the men he had promised to pick up his son, Franz, after the picture show was out. Back downtown the three went, and the lad was picked up.

"The robbers then drove to Shindler's residence, bound and gagged the three and roared away," reported the *Times*.

Mary Capps, a museum volunteer and long-time friend of the Shindler family, relates the story that when one of the robbers began to gag Geneva Shindler with a dirty handkerchief, she told the man she had plenty of clean laundry and sent him to a drawer where he found cleaner linen with which to gag her.

The *Times* article continued, "Shindler managed to get hold of a pocketknife in half an hour and cut his bonds and those of his wife and son. When he attempted to phone, the wires were found cut.

"Shindler dashed to the home of his nearest neighbor, Editor L.D. Felsheim, and spread the alarm by telephone. The robbers had a 45-minute head start, he estimates," the *Times* article concluded.

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The Bandon Light
A publication of the
Bandon Historical Society

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Bandon Historical Society Museum

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Andy Christensen, Ron Knox,
Donna Mason, Jim Proehl, Brian Vick

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



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If you have an interest 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 pm. June through September 14th we are open 7 days a week. The Museum closes for the month of January. Our volunteers are waiting to help you and answer your questions about Bandon's history.

Enjoy Bandon's rich and wonderful history
270 Fillmore & Hwy 101
(at the only stop light downtown).

REVENUE SHARING GRANT

The Bandon City Council and its Budget Committee approved a grant of \$2,500 to the Bandon Historical Society at a joint meeting of the two groups April 21. The grant came from the City of Bandon's revenue sharing program.

The source of the revenue is Bandon's portion of a state liquor tax. Most Oregon cities apply the money to their operating budgets. The City of Bandon is unusual in that it chooses to share this fund with local organizations.

The museum was one of 14 local organizations that received a share of \$25,030 in grants that ranged in size from \$650 to \$3000.

In its grant request, the museum requested funds to upgrade fire safety and to raise the museum's visibility through better brochures and signs.

The granted money will be available in July at the start of the City's fiscal year.

CLASSROOM VISITS

By Jim Proehl

Two groups of Scouts visited the museum recently. Both came outside of regular museum hours.

Boy Scouts from Troop 313 came to the museum for a Monday night troop meeting. Bandon's Boy Scouts are working on the Scouting Heritage merit badge. One requirement option of the badge is to visit a museum with a Boy Scout exhibit, which Bandon's museum has.

Cub Scouts from Bandon's Pack 313 visited the museum to complete a "Go See It" requirement for the Tiger Cub rank.

The Cubs were especially interested in interacting with some "touchable" objects, including rotary dial phones, movie cameras and typewriters.

Museum volunteers are available to host openings for groups that want to schedule visits beyond regular hours.

Families or groups holding reunions, and clubs or organizations that would like to have an after-hours session at the museum, can contact Judy to arrange a special opening.



SCHEDULED EVENTS

- June 14:** Civil War talk and old-time music.
- August 12:** Annual Volunteer picnic at the museum, 5 pm.
- August 26 - September 16:** Cranberry Festival Queens and Princesses coronation gowns and memorabilia display.
- September 20:** 78TH Bandon Fire anniversary, 1 pm.
- October 11:** Bandon's Ocean Crest Grade School will be 75 years old. Special activities and displays are planned.
- November:** Honoring Veterans the entire month of November.
- December:** Christmas trees decorated by second grade students, and the Christmas Village, will be displayed again this year. The date of our Open House, in celebration of Christmas, will be announced later. It will be the same day as the Tree Lighting ceremony by the City.
- December:** Annual Meeting – date to be announced later.

FROM THE DESK OF THE DIRECTOR

Welcome to Summer 2014!



Bandon's museum opened February 3 after being closed (as always) the month of January. We have set up new exhibits, new displays, and have spruced up the exhibit area. You will enjoy our great collection of photographs and history. We think we look pretty good, and are ready for you and your family and friends to come visit us.

We lost one of our long-time Bandonians, great friend, and dedicated museum volunteer in Derrill Moody. Our large group of volunteers is like a family, and when one of our volunteers dies, we are all saddened. We will miss him at the volunteer desk.

The museum is open Monday through Saturday 10-4 pm, and beginning May 25 through September 14th, will be open 7 days a week. Admission remains at \$3.00 for adults, members and 12 and under, Free. Memberships have also stayed the same. Your support is vital and helps us keep our doors open.

We are pleased to let you know that we have over 300 members. In this newsletter, we are spotlighting our business, civic group, and organization members. If you are a business, but not a member, we hope you will join us. We hope you enjoy your newsletter. If you have any suggestions, please give the office a call.

THANK YOU ... KEITH YOUNG

At a recent Board of Directors meeting, the directors voted to
“Extend A Vote Of Thanks To Keith Young”
for his dedication to the museum and for promoting his love of Bandon's history.



Keith and Donna Young have been life members forever. Keith was a board member for many years and served as treasurer when the museum was in the old Coast Guard building (1990-1995), before we had a computer system. Keith was very instrumental in our move from the Coast Guard Station building to where we are today (the old City Hall and Library). Keith, along with Hal Matticks, worked together for the end result of Bandon's Great Museum.

We have enjoyed Keith's presence as a volunteer on Saturday mornings at the front desk. (Unless the BEAVERS were playing football at home). He ALWAYS attended the BEAVERS games and he is an alum.
Go Beavers.

Keith has decided to take a break from volunteering. There will always be a place for him when he is ready to return. Keith, we will miss you while you are gone. You are a BIG part of Bandon's museum and Bandon's history. We want you and Donna to know how much we appreciate all you have done for the museum.

FOURTH GRADE HISTORY DETECTIVES

A troop of history detectives, all fourth graders at Ocean Crest School, represented the museum with two shadow puppet plays during “Art from the Heart,” a fundraising variety show supporting the Afterschool Arts and Cultural Club.

The show was at the Sprague Theater April 11.

The process that led to the program began when museum volunteer Jim Proehl was asked to provide some enrichment instruction to an accelerated group of students. Fourth graders study Oregon history, so local history was a logical match.

When Proehl was asked to develop an act for a benefit variety show, the two projects melded.

The variety show was the project of Vicki Affatati, a local artist who has been painting and restoring murals around the community, and Darcy Grahek, who heads the school’s “Go Native” program, a program to teach students to use native plants.

“I was asked to develop something that involved storytelling, students, Native Americans, native plants, local history, earthquakes and tsunamis,” said Proehl. “They also liked the shadow puppet plays I have been doing annually with Linda Sack’s second graders.”

Proehl and the fourth graders worked together and

developed two scripts, “Whale and Thunderbird,” and “How Lighthouse Got So Red.”

“Whale and Thunderbird” combined pieces of several Northwest Indian legends that deal with earthquakes and floods.

“We worked together to learn about the language and imagery that often appears in native storytelling,” said Proehl. “Then we talked about how local legends get started and wrote a myth about Bandon’s more recent history.”

Photographs from the museum’s collection provide background pictures for both stories.

Jen Ells’ Community Arts class at Bandon High produced the shadow puppets. The class provides a lot of material used in the museum educational program.

A grant from the Coos County Cultural Coalition funds museum educational projects.

The play “How Lighthouse Got So Red” is especially dear to the hearts of museum staff and volunteers because it explores the “mystery” of how the lighthouse came to be painted red.

The script of the play follows on the next page.

ARTIFACTS

Artifacts donated to the museum are catalogued, accessioned and either put on display or properly cared for and stored until we change displays. If an artifact is damaged or no longer usable for display, we try to contact the donor to see if the item should be returned. We do not sell or give away any Bandon artifacts. Recent donations:

- ◆ Two 1940’s sewing machine cabinets, used in displays. K. Fergerson collection.
- ◆ Basketball shoes, belonged to Bobby Sutherland. R. Sutherland coll.
- ◆ “Berkshire Nylon Hose” in original box.
- ◆ Cub Scout and Boy Scout memorabilia, owned by David Swenson. G.Swenson coll.
- ◆ 1950’s Bandon High School State Championship football trophy that survived the Bandon High School fire in 1974. B. Elliott coll.
- ◆ Brick with melted black glass fused on it that went through the Bandon High School fire in 1974. D. Moody coll.
- ◆ Fifty Bandon Tiger Newsletters. Kay Holman Voth coll.
- ◆ A 1930’s Sunset Magazine.
- ◆ Kenner Easy Bake Oven from 1950’s. N.Drew coll.
- ◆ Two U.S. Post Office mail box doors. C.Decker coll.
- ◆ Boy Scout canteen. K. Cowan coll.
- ◆ Boy Scout backpack & Scout memorabilia. C. Ward coll.
- ◆ Bandon High School annuals 1977, ’78, ’79. C. Decker coll.
- ◆ A 14” solid glass Catholic cross, belonged to the Edward Fahy family and used by traveling Catholic priest from Roseburg in the 1890’s at the Fahy Home. N. Fahy McNeil coll.

How Lighthouse Got So Red...

A Bandon Legend

By Jim Proehl and The Fourth Grade History Detectives

NARRATOR: Long ago, in our grandfather's grandmother's day, Baby Seal swam the surface of the sea on her own for the first time and came back full of questions.

BABY SEAL: Grandmother Seal, there are so many things I want to know. Why is Moon so white? Why does Windstorm come in the fall? Why is Gorse so angry? How did Lighthouse get so red?

GRANDMOTHER SEAL: So many questions, little one. But most of your questions are easy to answer. Moon is white because it is made of cheese.

BABY SEAL: Cheese? What kind of cheese.

GRANDMOTHER SEAL: Face Rock cheddar.

BABY SEAL: Do you mean vampire slayer cheddar?

GRANDMOTHER SEAL: I believe so. And Windstorm comes in the fall when Duck and Beaver are fighting.

BABY SEAL: What are they fighting about?

GRANDMOTHER SEAL: No one is sure. No one is sure. Gorse is angry because he has to share his home with Golf Course.

BABY SEAL: And Lighthouse?

GRANDMOTHER SEAL: How Lighthouse got so red, that's a troubling story. Go ask Beaver.

NARRATOR: So Baby Seal swam until she found Beaver.

BABY SEAL: Beaver, do you know how Lighthouse got so red?

BEAVER: Long ago, in my grandfather's grandmother's time, Lighthouse was a nice shade of green. Everyone liked it.

BABY SEAL: So what happened?

BEAVER: Duck came along and said the color green belonged to him. Duck's very rich. He thinks everything belongs to him. He even thinks he owns the letter "O".

BABY SEAL: So that's why Lighthouse is red?

BEAVER: That's why it ain't green. And you better call it LIGHTH USE. And BAND N. We have to call the town BAND N. Duck doesn't like anyone using his letter.

NARRATOR: Baby Seal left bad-tempered Beaver and went to talk to Moon.

BABY SEAL: Moon, can you tell me how Lighthouse got so red?

MOON: Long ago, in my great, great, great grandmother's great grandfather's time, Chief Siskiyou, from the far mountains, traveled to the coast to trade goods with the four tribes who lived by the sea they called Wecoma. The chief brought with him his beautiful daughter, Lighthouse. In her honor, the Na So Mah people planned the greatest feast in all memory. They roasted bear, salmon, elk, and deer. Huge quantities of clams and mussels were steamed. Cedar bark trays were filled with honey and red and blue huckleberries. The Na So Mah people feared that an evil god would try to spoil their potlatch, so they warned Lighthouse not to go near the sea at night.

BABY SEAL: So she didn't go, right. I mean, it would be pretty silly to go to the beach right after everyone told you not to.

MOON: But Moon, reflected on the sea, was so beautiful that night. Lighthouse just had to go.

BABY SEAL: So whatever happens next is really kind of your fault.

MOON: I don't see it that way. Anyway, beautiful Moon was full and Wecoma ran silver. Lighthouse swam in the sea, farther and farther from shore. Suddenly, the evil god, Tillamook, rose from the sea. He grabbed Lighthouse and pulled her toward the deep water. "You belong to me now, Lighthouse," said Tillamook. "Your whole town belongs to me. Even the name of your town belongs to me." "Tillamook, Tillamook, I'll never belong to you," cried Lighthouse, and she called upon the Great Spirit for help. In the morning, there was a great cry of alarm. Everyone searched for the missing princess. They found her standing near the edge of the sea. She had turned to stone.

BABY SEAL: What color stone?

MOON: White, of course.

NARRATOR: Baby Seal left Moon to shine and went to find Gorse. He lived with Golf Course near the edge of the sea.

GORSE: What do you want?

BABY SEAL: Don't be angry, Gorse. I only want to know how Lighthouse got so red.

GORSE: Yeah, what's up with that red Lighthouse? Whose stupid idea was that? And why do we need another Golf Course? You know, only about ten percent of the population even plays golf. No one will come here for Golf Course. And who said Bicycle could ride on the road? And who makes white cheddar cheese? Cheese is supposed to be yellow, or orange, like Beaver. And when is somebody going to build me a swimming pool? I want to swim in it. But I'm not going to pay for it. And who has been painting pictures on all our buildings? What's up with that? Walls are supposed to be plain, and red, like Lighthouse.

NARRATOR: Baby Seal swam away from angry Gorse.

BABY SEAL: Oh Grandmother Seal, I asked many wise creatures how Lighthouse got so red, and each told me a different story.

GRANDMOTHER SEAL: So it is, my child, and so it will always be. There are some things in the world we are just not meant to know.

NARRATORS: And so it is, and so it will always be, that no one knows how Lighthouse got so red.

Shindler Kidnapping

A special bulletin in the same Coos Bay *Times* edition reported, “Otto Shindler’s car, abandoned by a desperate trio of robbers who took \$240 from Shindler at Bandon last night, was found shortly before noon today at the extreme south end of the Lampa creek road.”

With the discovery of the car, the county’s attention shifted toward Coquille and Myrtle Point.

“Three once-bold robbers, believed wandering as enemies of the law, are still sought today in the trackless brush lands of the Fishtrap country, eight to 10 miles southwest of Coquille,” reported the *Times* for September 3. “Armed, apparently ready to shoot to kill, and giving evidence of being old hands at the robbery game, the three are desperate quarry.”

The *Times* cautioned, “the officers would present targets for sub-machine gun fire.”

The September 6 edition reported that two of the three robbers had been captured. Oliver Wayne, 29, was taken a mile west of Arago after nightfall Saturday. He emerged from the brush about 50 yards west of a hidden state police car, and the officer occupying the car got the drop on him before he had a chance to use the .45 calibre revolver he carried.

Robert Bowersox, who had apparently shot himself in the foot at some point in the Bandon kidnapping, was found in a barn near Arago.

The two were part of a group of four inmates who had escaped from an Idaho penitentiary.

The leader of the “gang” was identified as Wallace Crews.

As the manhunt intensified, Crews took on a sort of folk hero status. “For the half-starved robber, mimicking Robin Hood of olden times, stole food with an apology on his lips, was sorry he had to bind and gag Mr. and Mrs. Hartley and their son, Kenneth, 5, and would not steal the family car or Hartley’s pocketbook,” said the *Times*.

When Crews bound and gagged a family in the

Fishtrap area, newspapers across the state retold the story of how Crews comforted the little Hartley boy as he tied his family up, by telling him they were playing cops and robbers. However, a closer reading of the account shows it was the boy’s mother who came up with the “cops and robbers” story.

Security in Coquille was beefed up amid rumors that a gang was coming to bust Crews’ accomplices out of the county jail. The manhunt continued in Coos County while crimes across the state were attributed to Crews.

In the September 21, 1938 interview, Sheriff William F. Howell concluded Crews had escaped the county. “We’ll hear from him some place else,” the Sheriff said. “He can’t stay clear of the law and some officer is going to have better luck getting him than we did.”

The Sheriff was right.

“BOLD ROBBER’S SPIRIT BROKEN,” was the headline of a *Western World* article in early October.

“It was the same man, yet a different fellow, that Mr. and Mrs. O.C. Shindler faced at the county jail in Coquille Monday evening when they were summoned to identify Wallace Earl Rule, 34, alias Wallace Crews, leader of the trio of desperadoes that on August 31 held the Shindler family prisoners for several hours while they robbed Mr. Shindler’s drug store of \$240 and escaped. Instead of the cocky, over-confident, superbliuffer who with the aid of a gun directed the robbery, Rule slumped in his chair unable to look any of his victims in the face,” reported the *Western World*.

The article reported that Rule, alias Crews, was captured in Portland by “Oregon G-men” and was the first cousin of a member of the Dillinger gang. The officers who captured Rule said he was carrying a passport to China.

Justice was swift in 1938. On October 14, Judge J.T. Brand sentenced the leader of the gang who kidnapped the Shindlers to life in prison.

No submachine gun was ever found.



MARJORIE STEPHENSON

HAPPY 100TH FROM ALL OF US!

A very special birthday wish goes to Marjorie Stephenson, who recently turned 100 years old. Marjorie was born and raised here, and was a long-time volunteer at the museum

Beginning May 25, the museum will be open 7 days a week through September 14th: 10 – 4 pm.

Financial Contributions, Grants, Annual Financial Request Letter, Donations December 2013 – April 2014

Frances Torbeck, Andy & Lynn Christensen, E.F. Cook, Carol Acklin & Ned Reed,
Ed & Judy Swenson, Maggie Karl, Larry & Pat Hess, Bob Mahaffey, Bain Insurance,
Juanita Watson, Kathy Dornath, Craig & Beverly Tresidder, Ed & Annie Norton,
Ron & Judy Knox, Mary Hargrove, David & Ruth Engelbart, David Barnekoff,
Larry & Margaret Chalfan, Randall & Rianda Domenighini, Marjorie Stephenson,
Bo Shindler, Bob Fisher, Bandon Fitness, Eric & Betty Albertson, Bandon Inn, Inc.,
June Korenko, Ed & Linda Fitzgerald, George & Sharon Reese, Wheelhouse Restaurant,
Barbara Hamilton, Bob & Lenor Stayner, Joye Olson, Jim & Ellen Montalbano,
Linell Seegall, Marilyn Bamford, John & Janet Fogle, Bob & Jerene Shaffar,
Dennis & Vicky Falke, Bob & Jean Wrising, Gina Swenson, Marie Trowbridge,
Bob & Suzanne Webber, Sydney L. Williams, Ron Sutherland, Donna Hawkins,
Bandon Sweets & Treats, Al & Syd Wiesel, Claudia Biggar Harris, Dee Holdsclaw,
Betty Baird, Don Goddard, Jim Proehl, James & Alma Russell, Mick & Nancy Peters,
Shindler's Healthmart Pharmacy, Howard & Audrey Wells, Bob & Rheta Thompson,
Charlie & Karin Kane, Sweet Insurance Agency, Tom & Jan Gookin, Edna Paulson,
Kendall Ridgway, Arthur Owens Evans, Nancy Koontz, Nina McNeil, Tom & Liz Hultin,
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Tom Adams, Reg Pullen, Paul Shelton, Keith & Donna Young, Chuck & Lorna Salt,
Robert Hall, Larry & Jane Germann, Bob & Emily Hall, Horty Joyce, Jane Rittenour,
Mike Kaiser Oregon Community Foundation, Caryll & Norman Sprague, Jr. Foundation.

Thank You, Members!

Thanks to our members - all 330 of you. Your support through the years is immeasurable and we truly appreciate your help in preserving Bandon's history. Because space is limited, we cannot list all our members in this newsletter. However, we would like to publicly thank the business, civic group and organization members who are so important to our continued growth:

Bandon Bookkeeping; Bandon Chamber of Commerce; Bandon Community Youth Center; Bandon Concrete; Bandon Docks;
Bandon Drafting & Design; Bandon Dunes; Bandon Fitness; Bandon Industrial Industries; Bandon Inn, Inc.; Bandon Liquor Store;
Bain Insurance; Bandon School District; Bandon Sweets & Treats; Big Wheel General Store; Cape Blanco Historical Society;
City of Bandon; Coos Historical & Maritime Museum; Coquille Indian Tribe; C&K Markets/Ray's Market; Curry Co. Historical Society;
Dave's TV & Radio Hut; Debbie's Hair Station; Devon's Boutique; First Community Credit Union; Ford Family Foundation;
Farmers Insurance Agency; Haruna Computer Systems; Jailhouse Rocks; Mick's Hair Surgeons; Meyer Memorial Trust;
Oregon Community Foundation; Oregon Heritage Commission; Oregon Historical Society; Oregon Overseas Timber;
Oregon Properties; Oregon Tourism Commission; Price N Pride; Siuslaw Pioneer Museum; Shindler's Healthmart Pharmacy;
Sunset Accommodations; Sunshine Tropical Foliage; Trust Management Services; VFW Post 3440; Wood Sabold Photography.

MEMORIALS

November 2013 – April 2014

A memorial donation may be made in memory of a family member or a friend who has passed away. The name of the loved one is engraved on a plaque, which is placed on our memorial wall. Memorial donations begin at \$15, but can be as much as you would like to donate in memory. The family is notified that a donation was made, and a thank-you is sent to the donor. Since our last newsletter, memorial donations have been made in remembrance of the following:

Clay Holdsclaw; Dean Russell; Alice Boak; Rod Lang; Vincent Kavanaugh; Frances Torbeck;
Norma Robertson; Ken Keeler; SharonLee Danielson; Ron Johnson; and Derrill Moody.

Donors include Pete & Joan Goodbrod; Derrill Moody; the Knoxes; Bob & Lenor Stayner;
the Gambles; and Floyd Danielson.

JOIN THE BANDON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

YES! Please accept my membership in the Bandon Historical Society
Enclosed is my check

(please check one)

\$15 Individual NAME _____

\$25 Family ADDRESS _____

\$35 Business CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

\$250 Life PHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

\$500 Benefactor

\$1000 Patron

If you would like to contribute to the Bandon Historical Society's
Sustainability Fund, please fill out the information below

I pledge \$_____ to be paid _____ monthly or _____ quarterly or _____ annually

A check is enclosed for \$_____

Please make check to BHS and mail to: Bandon Historical Society, PO Box 737, Bandon, OR 97411

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