



# THE BANDON LIGHT

A PUBLICATION OF THE BANDON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Mack Handsaker Awarded “Bandon— 50 Years Later” Scholarship



Mack Handsaker

MacKenzie Earl Handsaker, a third generation Bandon resident, was awarded the \$10,000 **Bandon—50 Years Later** scholarship at Bandon High’s graduation Saturday, June 10. The Bandon High Class of 1967 was the moving force behind the scholarship.

Handsaker, who goes by Mack, will attend Corban University in Salem where he will enroll in an accelerated master’s degree program for pastoral studies. His high school resume reflects a strong mix of athletics, church involvement, music, and community service. He has a 3.88 grade point average and ranks seventh in his class.

Handsaker is the son of Mark and Naomi Handsaker and the grandson of Earl and Norma Handsaker. In his application essay he wrote, “I have lived in Bandon my whole life. Asking what living in Bandon has meant for me is asking about everything I have gone through and grew from in my life. Bandon has from the beginning always kept me grounded to family and sticking to my roots. I remember Dad driving by the location of the old Bandon hospital and telling me he was born right there and then would tell me of all the things that he had watched change in his town, giving me this portal to the past, so to speak, where I could

see through his eyes a world that is the same as the one I am in but yet very different. This connection between my family’s past and the town’s past has always reminded me to keep humble and remember the important things in life.”

The scholarship was the largest single community scholarship awarded to a member of the Class of 2017. Handsaker received additional scholarship help from other community groups and from Corban University.

The idea to give a scholarship was broached at a meeting to plan the Class of 1967’s fifty year reunion. When everyone at the meeting agreed they would contribute if a scholarship program was in place, class member Bo Shindler took up the job of building a scholarship program.

Shindler asked the Bandon Historical Society to administer the project. The museum banked the scholarship money and the museum staff kept track of donors and issued receipts. Shindler established a “Go Fund Me” account that deposited funds with the museum. Museum volunteers worked with Bandon High’s counselor to develop a scholarship application and make it available to the class.

A committee of museum board members evaluated applications and chose the scholarship recipient. Museum Board President Jim Proehl made the scholarship presentation at graduation and threw out a challenge to the Class of 1968 to continue the program.

Class of 1967 members donated the most, but donations also came from other alumni and the community at large. The museum received ten percent of the amount collected to cover the cost of administering the project.



Mark Handsaker, ca. 1987



Earl Handsaker, ca. 1952

A publication of the  
Bandon Historical Society

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# Newsletter Layout

Bob Coraor

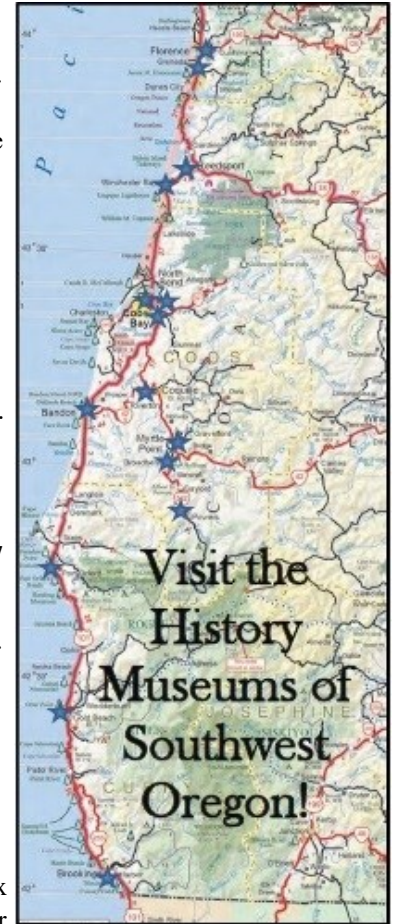
**Bandon Historical Society**  
**PO Box 737**  
**Bandon, OR 97411**  
**Phone/Fax 541-347-2164**  
**E-mail:**

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



A big thank you and much appreciation to the Coos History Museum for giving the SWOMA (Southwestern Oregon Museum Association) members training for the Past Perfect program. Past Perfect is a computer software program designed to help small museums keep track of Coos Museum had a grant from the Oregon Heritage for the training and purchased the actual software.

Gayle Nix  
Executive Director



**New Members** include Mindy and Steve Arnold, The Hann Family, Micky Franks and Jackson Marvin, Mike and Karen Hahn and Ron Panter.



## Betty Hiley-A Friend to All

When **Betty Hiley** passed away June 13, the community lost one of the cornerstones of the Bandon Historical Society.

Betty was a long-time member of the museum's board of directors, but she was more than that. Her work on fund-raising projects and her good sense on finances and spending helped keep the museum financially stable.

She played an instrumental role in organizing and creating the exhibits for the museum in its current setting. Visitors often comment on how well organized our museum is. When they do so, they are complimenting Betty's work.

Betty's husband **Harvey** spent his career in Bandon's electric utility department. Harvey literally helped build the town. His contribution to preserving local history has been enormous.

Betty's influence was felt well beyond the museum. She was a good neighbor. She was a good mother. She was dedicated to seeing that Bandon's children were well educated, while serving many years on Bandon's school board.

Several people have given donations in Betty's memory. The money donated on her behalf will be dedicated to hiring a student to work at the museum during the summer, a program that was begun while she was on the board.

This summer, **Ally Richert** will work for us again. A sophomore at the University of Oregon, this is the third summer Ally has worked for us. Her employment helps pay for her schooling.

A program that is good for the museum, good for education, and helps a student continue her education is a fitting tribute to Betty Hiley.



Harvey and Betty Hiley at a "Fire Survivor" Presentation.

## Arkansas Traveler

by **Mittie Smith Edgmon**, July 26, 1998

My father, **John W. Smith**, moved his family from England, Arkansas to Oregon in August 1929. This was the beginning of the depression years. We lived at Coquille for five months before he found employment at **Walter Panter's** car repair shop at Bandon. He rented a house on Eleventh Street out near the ball park. We loved the place. We started to school at the old grade school at the corner of Eleventh Street and the highway 101. My father was a naturally talented musician and was always seeking musicians to join him. He teamed up with a fiddler named **Al Baird** and started playing for dances. When I was fourteen, he bought a piano.

In 1933, he moved the family to down town Bandon to an old house at the bottom of the hill just kitty corner from the Arch, "Welcome to Bandon by the Sea." He traded a cow for this property and built his own car repair shop near Highway 101; but his main interest was music. He formed a band named "The Arkansas Travelers." He hired my Uncle **Loy Reed** on the banjo, **Sid Mynati** on the harmonica and vocal, **Tight Willard** on the fiddle, myself on the piano (I could chord along and could play "Moonlight on the River Colorado") himself on the rhythm guitar and a drummer (whose name I can't recall). We played for dances up and down the coast: 2 Mile, 4 Mile, Dew Valley, Langlois, Ophir, Gold Beach, and Marshfield.

In 1934, he rented the Azalea Gardens, east of Bandon, toward Coquille on highway 101. This was a huge building but not as large as the "Silver Spray on the Bluff." By now, I was playing quite a few tunes by "ear" on the piano.

In December 1934, a good looking young man came to the stage with a guitar and asked if he could play and sing with us. He played and sang the style of the "blue yodeler" **Jimmie Rogers**. Later, I took a break and went on the dance floor to dance a "Paul Jones" (a dance where everyone changes partners). I got him and found that his name was **Henry Edgmon**, son of **Jess and Susie Edgmon** who operated a dairy farm, the Al Sweet place, near Riverton.

Henry and I courted through the year 1935 and part of 1936. He often played for the dances with us. He hitchhiked from Lafferty's place, (where he was employed), once to Bandon to see me. He brought me a bantam hen, twelve little chickens and a bouquet of snowballs. Lafferty's dairy farm was near Myrtle Point.

In July 1936, my father found employment at North Bend and moved the family there.

By now, Henry and I were talking marriage. I was eighteen and he was 20. He gave me a beautiful engagement ring. We decided to elope to Coquille, where we applied for a license, hired a preacher, rented a room at the old Coquille Hotel and were married September 26, 1936.

When we walked out of the hotel after the marriage vows, about 9 PM, the atmosphere was heavy with smoke and cinders. The town was filled with refugees, someone yelled, "Bandon is burning!" People were huddled with their belongings on log-trucks, cars and pickups. Tents were pitched

*(Continued on page 4)*

## Bandon Burns...again

*Bandon Burns*, a book produced by the Bandon Historical Society, is being adapted for readers theater by The Gaels, a local acting company.

"The first-person accounts in *Bandon Burns* are a perfect match for readers theater," said **Neal Davis**, a local playwright and Gaels member. "We've performed twice before, at the library's Sprague room, with great results and audience feedback."

*Bandon Burns* is a collection of survivor's accounts of the 1936 Bandon fire. The group plans to stage the performances next fall, to coincide with the time of year the fire took place. The company will use images from the museum's collection of fire photos to complement the production.

The company calls its performances "staged readings," a form of reader's theater that focuses on character, voice and language with minimal scenery and movement. Sound and musical background enhance the narrative.

The Gaels company describes itself this way: "We are a small group of actors, writers, and theater veterans producing staged readings of powerful, lesser-known works in beautiful Bandon, Oregon."

"The words are performed, not simply read, by experienced actors. By avoiding the costs of staging full productions, we create an opportunity for artists and audiences that otherwise wouldn't occur. Our smaller venues allow focus to remain entirely on the actors and the writing, forging a more personal and intimate theater experience."

The Gaels last production, "The Sufferings of Ann Saunders" (an original play written by Davis), had three performances in April. The play told the story of an 1830's shipwreck and its aftermath framed in the idea of the story being adapted into a movie.

The acting company will invite the museum to sell books and memberships and promote itself at their performances. The publicity generated by the production should spill over to the museum's fire anniversary program, which will be at about the same time.

# BANDON BURNS!

Survivor Accounts of the  
Bandon Fire of 1936



Compiled and edited by  
Jim Proehl and Carol Acklin  
from the files of the  
Bandon Historical Society

GRAND OPENING OF

## Azalea Gardens

With a Reconditioned Floor that  
is better than ever, and excellent  
music by . . . . .

"Arkansaw" Smith's Orchestra

SAT., SEPT. 29, 1934

All under the management of "Ar-  
kansaw" Smith himself. Lunches  
will be served in the hall and ev-  
erything done to make folks have a  
good time. Come and bring your  
friends. You'll enjoy this dance.

Admission FREE

NICKEL a Dance

(Continued from page 3) *Arkansas Traveler*

everywhere in yards.

The next day we went to Bandon to see for ourselves. The whole town was destroyed. The surrounding countryside lay in blackened ruins. The old home place and all the out buildings were leveled; even the cabbage in the garden were blackened stubs. Since we hadn't prepared for a place to live, I had to go back home to North Bend, to wait 'til one was available. Henry stayed on where he was boarding at Coquille. He was employed at Smith Woods in the Venetian blind department. It was two weeks before he found an apartment for us.

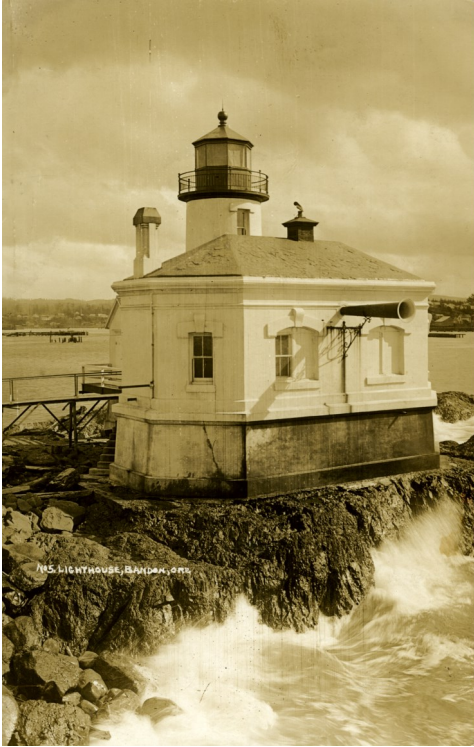
We were married 60 ½ years, had four daughters, Carol, Beverly, Linda and Sally; seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

It all started the night Bandon burned, September 26, 1936. Henry passed away March 28, 1997, at the age of 81.

**Side note:** The museum does not have a photograph of the Azalea Gardens, at least not one that is identified as such. We also don't know exactly where it was, though this description suggests it was near where the Bear Creek Apartments once stood or near the community known as Wintersville, before Highway 42 drops down toward Bear Creek. Have information? We'd love to learn more.



## New Post Cards Available At The Museum Gift Shop



Four new post cards, bearing historic images of the Coquille River Lighthouse, are on the rack in the museum gift store. The new cards are the products of a suggestion by a desk volunteer and cooperation with the gift shop at the lighthouse.

A Bullards Beach State Park employee approached the museum about working with the park to supply post cards for the lighthouse gift shop. Museum staff prepared a collection of potential images that could be turned into postcards. Park staff selected the four that best fit the lighthouse needs.

Quantity is the key to being able to produce the cards at a price that makes a profit. Cards need to be printed in lots of 500 or more to keep the per-card price viable. Having a partner in sales keeps the museum from having an overwhelming quantity of back stock. The museum will look for other wholesale partners and may expand the collection.

The museum got a little head start on the project during the election campaign for a county museum fund. The campaign paid for a run of post cards to be used as campaign mailers. The Bandon museum provided the pictures and experimented with printing methods and vendors. It was nice to try the

process out on someone else's dime. We learned some things that made this run of lighthouse cards easier. The cards are printed by **gotprint**, one of several online vendors.

The idea to print postcards with the museum's own images was broached by desk volunteer **Ardis Ann Szala** (better known as Z) who is herself an enthusiastic postcard user and had seen the idea at other museums. A number of the museum's best historic images originated as postcards, a popular photographic format in the nineteen-teens and twenties. Museum volunteer **Dave Pratt** has been at work converting the museum's postcard collection into digital images. And so the pictures have come full circle, from postcards to historic images and back to postcards for sale in our gift shop and other gift shops in the area.



## World War II Bandon Vets Information Wanted

Museum volunteer **Rick Hinojosa** is collecting photographs and information about local service men and women who served in World War II for submission to the Spirit of '45 Coalition's "Wall of Honor."

The Spirit of '45 Coalition describes its mission as "to commemorate the achievements and virtues of the World War II generation on the second Sunday of every August, as to inspire future generations."

In addition to holding celebrations in August, the organization collects and displays photographs of WWII veterans. Hinojosa is looking for Bandon veterans, both living and deceased, to enroll in the "Wall of Honor."

The process involves finding and scanning a service photo, collecting some basic facts about the veteran's military service, and the uploading the photo and information to the Oregon Spirit of '45 web site.

Hinojosa uses the museum's scanner and computers to complete the process. The photograph and service information are also added to the museum's military collection.

The project to collect photos of World War II veterans is a part of a larger museum project to collect service photos of all local veterans. The museum invites any veteran who considers Bandon as home to add a service photo to the museum's files.

Hinojosa has headed up the museum's Veterans Day celebration for the last couple of years and recently added a display of items brought home by WW II veteran Carol Lovejoy to the military exhibit.

Patrons with photos and information can contact Hinojosa through the museum.



## History Hike with Summer Recreation

by Jim Proehl



Summer Recreation History Detectives search the maze in the Port of Bandon's boardwalk.

More than 40 students in the Bandon Summer Recreation program became History Detectives for the day and went on a history hike that ended at the museum Thursday, June 22.

The group gathered at Harbor Lights Middle School where volunteer **Jim Proehl** showed a brief slide show and set out the day's challenges.

Volunteers **Adrienne Smith**, **Ardis Ann Szala** (aka Z), **Micky Franks** and **Jackson Marvin** joined the group that set out to investigate several Bandon history mysteries.

When the group reached the Masonic Temple, **Micky Franks** shared the story of **Evelyn Manciet's** historic stand at her telephone switchboard in the upstairs of the building during the 1936 fire. The highlight of the trip, from the kids' point of view, was getting to visit the dark and scary cellar of the building, built in 1910.

The museum offers huge thank you to **Peter Braun** and company at the Cobbler's Bench for hosting the visit.

It was a great stroke of fortune that **Kassandra Rippee**, Coquille Tribe archeologist, was in the area when the group stopped by the Na-So-Mah memorial garden across from the Coast Guard Building.

Rippee shared the story of Grandmother Rock, told the story of the piece of artwork at the center of the garden and answered lots of questions about local Indian history.

Another highlight was being invited aboard the Coast Guard boat in the harbor. Three Coastguardsmen welcomed the kids aboard, gave them a tour, and let them sit in the pilot's seat.

Not much time was left to spend at the museum. Volunteers **Bill Smith**, **Doreen Colberg**, **Donna Mason** and director **Gayle Nix** helped them perform some final History Detectives' tasks.

The group ranged in ages from six to 12. The city sponsored program runs throughout the summer. Several local groups and organizations provide themed activities.



Finding and sitting on Grandmother Rock was one of the challenges volunteer Jim Proehl set for the group



## Eagle Scout Projects Aid the Museum

Bandon's Boy Scouts **Alexander Shultz** and **Ethan Butler** are proposing to help the museum expand its parking as part of the process of earning the rank of Eagle Scout.

The lot, south of the museum, had been used by Bandon's public works as an outdoor storage space for wire, pipe and building materials. With public works moving its shops to higher ground, the city gave the lot to the museum.

To earn the Eagle Scout rank, a Scout needs to lead a significant community service project. The Scout needs to prepare a detailed project proposal that is then approved by both the group benefitting from the project and the Boy Scout district.

Each Scout needs to lead a separate project and must involve other volunteers in the commission of the project.

Though both projects are related to developing the parking area, the two boys are focused on different parts of the property.

Shultz's project would be to develop the parking area of the property. He would need to remove the large pieces of debris left by the city, clean up the scrap embedded in the gravel, spread and compact the gravel surface and establish parking barriers.

Butler's project would be to landscape the area adjacent to the parking lot, a strip of land currently covered with invasive plants and old fencing, and incorporate it into the museum's existing landscaping.

Shultz and Butler are both juniors at Bandon High School. **Chris Butler** is Troop 313's Scoutmaster. The troop is sponsored by the Bandon Lions Club.

Other Eagle Scouts, including **Trever Jackson**, **Dustin Baum**, **Austin Carrero** and **Max Underdown**, have done service projects in connection with the museum.



# UPCOMING EVENTS

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

**Thursday, August 3, 2017**— Volunteers Picnic, 5PM at the Museum.

**Tuesday August 22, 2017** — Museum Board Meeting, 4PM at the Museum. All members and guests are welcome to attend.

**Friday, September 8, 2017**— Class of '67 reunion gathering at the Museum, 5PM-7PM

**Sunday, September 24, 2017**— 1936 Fire Anniversary Program at 2PM.

**Tuesday, September 26, 2017**— Museum Board Meeting, 4PM

## Volunteer Picnic—August 3

The museum's volunteer picnic will be Thursday, August 3, at 5:00 PM at the museum. If you volunteer please come.

The museum will provide broasted chicken. Bring a side dish or a dessert. If you don't have time to cook, come anyway. We always have more than enough.

Bring your own beverage.

We will send out invitations, but we may not reach everyone who should be invited. If you know a volunteer, please encourage that person to come. If you'd like to volunteer, please come. If you don't get an invitation, come anyway.

We're celebrating our many volunteers. Everyone who helps, or would like to help, is invited.

## Class of '67 Reunion Gathering

An after-hours gathering at the Bandon museum will be one of several activities for the Class of '67 as they celebrate their 50-year class reunion during Cranberry Festival weekend.

The class will gather in the museum between 5 and 7 p.m., Friday, September 8. Community members who would like to connect with '67 class members are welcome to drop in. Museum admission will be free.

Museum volunteers will add some special exhibits specific to the class and its era for the occasion.

Class members and others who have photographs pertinent to the class are invited to share them with the museum, either in advance of the reunion or at reunion time.

"What we are really looking for are candid photos of people and action photos of events," said volunteer Jim Proehl. "We don't really need newspaper clippings, yearbook pictures or class photos, because in most cases we already have those in the collection. But images that show the class members growing up together in Bandon are something the museum should preserve."

"It used to be a decision about giving pictures away," said Proehl, "but now we only need them long enough to scan."

Members of the Class of '61 held a social at the museum last fall. The museum encourages classes to find ways to involve the museum at reunion time.

The Class of '67 will be in Bandon all weekend during the Cranberry Festival and are expecting a good turnout of classmates.

## President's Corner...

By Jim Proehl

### Board President



I was honored recently with an award from the Coos History Museum. At that museum's annual meeting June 17, I received the **Nathan Douthit Historian of the**

**Year** award.

The Coos museum has given historian of the year awards before but this is the first year Nathan Douthit's name was coupled with the award.

Douthit taught history and political science at Southwestern Oregon Community College from 1969 to 1997. Though he now lives in Portland, he holds the title professor emeritus at Southwestern. He was a founder of the Marshfield Sun Museum and was on the board of the Coos County Historical Society. He wrote several books. He is respected as a historian of southwestern Oregon.

"Historian" is not a title I had ever given myself. I'm much more accustomed to thinking of myself as "Teacher." Teachers spend a lot of time gathering and organizing material. When I research local history, I see myself as gathering content to teach with.

When I retired after 30 plus years of teaching, I looked for a volunteer position which would allow me to use the skills I developed during my career. This is what brought me to the Bandon Historical Society.

People often ask me if I miss teaching. Museum work allows me to do the parts of teaching I like best, without having to take attendance or break up fights in the hall. Working with the museum gives me lots of chances to go back to school for short periods of time and be that guest who breaks up the routine and leaves before he becomes part of the routine. I'm still teaching.

It's a great life.

It feels a little like cheating to get an award for that.

I still feel honored.



February 29, 1984, *Western World* photo: "Museum curators from throughout Coos County recently gathered at the Coquille River Museum\* in Bandon to discuss ways they can cooperate. From left, Greg Dilkes, Coquille River Museum; Curt Beckham, Coos County Logging Museum; Doug Borgard, Coos County Historical Museum; and **Nathan Douthit**, Marshfield Sun." (\*the Coquille River Museum is now the Bandon Historical Museum)

## 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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