



# THE BANDON LIGHT

A PUBLICATION OF THE BANDON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## The Wecoma Baths

by Bea De Costa

~~~~~The completion of a heated, indoor swimming pool was a highly anticipated event in Bandon in the summer of 1925. Records found in the Bandon Historical Society Museum help chronicle the occasion. The *Western World* for June 4, 1925, led with the following: "Wecoma Baths, the new salt water natatorium on Bandon Beach, will be formally opened to the public next Sunday afternoon, beginning at 1 o'clock, according to announcements being made this week by J.F. Kronenberg who is just completing the interior work of the place." The following article records the memories of the bath by **Bea De Costa**.

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The Wecoma Baths was a heated salt water pool owned by **John Kronenberg**. **Rudy Backlund** was a life guard and **Bob Colgrove** took care of the boiler room and they also did other chores. My husband, **Joe De Costa**, sometimes was a life guard for free passes to swim, which I think were \$0.35 a ticket.

Rudy Backlund published a paper every Saturday called "Wecoma Splasher" about all the activities occurring at the pool. It also contained information about the Wecoma Bath cottages close by that were available to rent.



People came from different parts of the state to amuse themselves by taking a plunge in the Wecoma Baths. I remember Joe telling me about college students coming to the baths and doing fancy dives and that is how he learned how to dive like them. The pool tapered from shallow to eight feet of water where they had a diving board. Their dressing rooms were nice and before entering the pool you had to take a shower and step into an antiseptic solution. After you got out you took a shower to wash the salt water off.

On the north side of the pool was a big beautiful fireplace made of

*Wecoma (Continued on page 6)*

A publication of the  
Bandon Historical Society

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

Bob Coraor

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Interested in Bandon's history and want to help preserve our past? Call us—we need you! The Museum is OPEN Monday through Saturday 10-4 and 7 days a week June through September. Volunteers are waiting to help you and answer your questions about Bandon's history.

Located on the corner of:  
270 Fillmore Ave. & Hwy 101  
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Gayle Nix

## From the Desk of the Director

The same week we received a \$2,500 grant from the Coquille Indian Tribe that will be used for back up storage for our computers. The museum hosted the second “old-timers’ day” but I have changed the name to “long-timers’ day.” I think that sounds much better. I would rather be a long-timer than an old-timer!! We had twelve long-timers here talking about the old lost buildings of Bandon. Next time I think we will talk about schools and childhood memories of our school days.

We have had some great programs already. Our first was “Murder at Two Mile” by the Bandon Gaels and was very entertaining. Next up is “Tales from the GAR Cemetery,” a program by Jim Proehl on April 13th. Check our website and newsletter for dates and times of upcoming events. Encourage your friends and family to visit and join the museum. We have a wonderful museum and great volunteers that work hard at making it one of the best small museums around!



### Gayle receiving grant from Coquille Tribal Fund

Gayle Nix  
Executive Director

## Donations and New Members

**Memorial Donations** were received from: **Dick and Donna Mason, Carol Kreutzer, Steve and Cindy Gant, Bob and Susan Coraor, George Domenighini, Fred Carleton and Gloria Haga.**

**In Memory of:** Ron Haga, Ken Kreutzer, Hiemer Kiefer, Jason Tree, James Thom, Mary Carleton, Jim Fisher and Brad Hurley.

**New Lifetime Members:** Katie Heap, Ed and Kristine Stearns Matheson, Don Lyman, and Tom and Marian Gant.

**New Members:** Fran McGuire, June Davies, Bonnie and Jerry Cox, Laurel Gerkman, Bruce Miller, Peggy and Martin Wiand, Kelly Miles family, Charlotte Peterson family and Sheri Wright family.



## A Murder at Two Mile—A True Bandon Mystery

A packed house attended the February 17th performance by the Gaels Readers Theater company to learn about the sad and mysterious murder that occurred many years ago in our community. Performance art such as this is an ideal way to bring the dusty historical events of the past into the present.



Mrs. Ebba Covell, murder victim



The Gaels company : Corrie Gant, Mike Dempsey, John Fink, Neal Davis, Michele Winchell, Amy Moss Strong, Richard Robinett.

The Museum was pleased to host the event and provide an additional viewing for those who were not able to attend several previous sold-out performances. A thank you also goes to our sponsors of the event, The Beverage Barn and Sunrise Carpet Cleaning and More.

## Do You Like to Color?



Museum volunteers are at work on “About a Hundred Years Ago—A Bandon Coloring Book.” The museum has engaged local artist **V. C. Fowler** to convert a collection of local historic photo images into a coloring book format. Above is an example of those images and pages. The museum began developing coloring projects with a grant from the Coos County Cultural Coalition. The **Cardas** family is the sponsor of the new coloring book, which ties into the programs Volunteer **Jim Proehl** shares with classes at Ocean Crest School.





## Thank You — Bandon Crab Fest!

This first annual event created and organized by **Lori Osborne** was a huge success and the Bandon Historical Society is grateful to be the initial charity recipients. Lori plans to repeat the event with a different charity benefiting each year. The Crab Fest was supported by many generous people including **Donny and Anne Godddard, Face Rock Creamery, Edgewaters Restaurant, John and**

**Peggi Towne, Sharon Haga, Coastal Mist, The Beverage Barn, Bandon Rain Cider, Bandon Dunes and the Stillwagon Distillery.** Entertainment by bands **Caught Red Handed** and **Aurora** were sponsored by **Cardas Audio** and **Freedom Graphics.**



**Ann Remy** on duty at the Bandon Historical Society table during part of the Crab Fest



Caught Red Handed



**CT Blumenrother** was born in Bavaria. He served in the Civil War as a drummer boy. At the battle of Chancellorsville, he was shot, bayoneted and left for dead, then was captured by the Confederates.

## Tales from the Cemetery — Grand Stories from the GAR

The man from Bandon, Ireland who “found” Bandon, even before Lord Bennett “founded” it; the last survivor of the Whitman Massacre; Bandon’s most highly decorated war hero; the mayor of Bandon during the 1936 fire; the band leader at the Silver Spray gardens; a local boy who died coming home from an Indian boarding school; a soldier who joined the Union army at age 13; all are among the citizens buried in Bandon’s GAR cemetery.

“Tales from the Cemetery: Grand Stories from the GAR” is the title of a program at the museum Saturday, April 13. Museum volunteer **Jim Proehl** will give the talk, supported with images from the photo collection, about the lives of several of the people buried in the GAR cemetery.



Col. C. T. Blumenrother

The program will begin at 11:00 am and will be repeated at 2:00 pm. Admission to the program and the museum for the day will be free.

The GAR Cemetery is located on Bandon Heights where Harlem Avenue meets Division Street. It is one of three cemeteries on the site. The initials GAR stand for Grand Army of the Republic, an organization of Union Civil War veterans.

“There are so many great stories in Bandon’s history. Using the GAR cemetery as a starting place gives the program focus,” said Proehl. “If the weather is good, people can visit the cemetery before or after the program. They will find many more stories than I have time to share.”



## Eagle Scouts Ethan Butler and Alexander Schulz



## Congratulations!

Congratulations are in order for **Ethan Butler** and **Alexander Schulz**, who received their Eagle Scout badges recently. The museum benefited from their achievement. As his Eagle Service project, Alexander developed a new parking lot for the museum and Ethan cleared, cleaned up and landscaped the strip of property adjacent to the new lot.



## Thank You!

The Bandon Historical Society was the recipient of a generous \$2500 grant from the Coquille Tribal Community Fund to provide for preservation and backup of the Society's digital collections. We have tens of thousands of existing digital images and our current project, digitizing the negatives from the *Western World*, is generating many more. We also recently received a grant from the Coos County Cultural Coalition for \$700 to develop a new History Timeline Brochure to be distributed at the Museum. Here are some examples of the images currently being scanned from the 1987 *Western World* negatives.



Old City Hall Halloween Party—October 1987 *Western World* collection, image 144075.



Janis Wilson at 50's and 60's Rotary Club fundraiser, 4 November 1987 edition *Western World* coll, image 144040.

(Continued from page 1) Wecoma

bricks. The swimmers could relax and enjoy the heat. They also had a balcony where people could watch the swimmers—admission free.

The salt water was piped from the ocean which caused a lot of maintenance problems. They heated the pool water by bringing driftwood up from the beach. A powered winch with a cable attached to a cart pulled up the hill to a platform close to the boiler room. There they piled and cut the driftwood for the boiler and the fireplace. The winch also had a brake that let the cart go back down the hill slowly. On one occasion a woman sitting in the balcony lost her diamond ring in the eight feet of water. A lot of fellows tried diving in the pool to find the ring. Finally, Joe found the ring and it was returned to the woman. John Kronenberg may have had other employees working but at this time I can't remember.

~~~~Additional information about the Wecoma Baths and Cottages is available on the Museum's website at <http://www.bandonhistoricalmuseum.org/wecoma.html>



### Photo Find — Do you recognize this business?



This circa 1930 photo shows **Ruby Sanderson** behind the soda fountain counter on the right. Ruby later married **Melvin LeRoy Bowles** and the couple moved to California. There appears to be candies and chocolates in the counter on the left

**Patricia Bowles Langley** recently donated this image to the Museum and we are trying to identify the name of the business and the identity of the man on the left. If you have any information please contact the Museum at 541-347-2164.



# UPCOMING EVENTS

**Tuesday, March 26, 2019 — Museum Board Meeting**, 4PM at the Museum. All members and guests are welcome to attend.

**Saturday April 13, 2019 — Tales from the Cemetery-Grand Stories from the GAR.** 11:00AM and 2:00PM at the Museum, Free Admission. Stories presented by **Jim Proehl**.

**Tuesday, April 23, 2019 — Museum Board Meeting**, 4PM at the Museum. All members and guests are welcome to attend.

**Tuesday, May 28, 2019 — Museum Board Meeting**, 4PM at the Museum. All members and guests are welcome to attend.

**Sunday, June 16, 2019 — Father's Day Activity**, come to the Museum and build a bird house. We supply the free kit (while supply lasts), you supply the labor and fun.

**Tuesday, June 25, 2019 — Museum Board Meeting**, 4PM at the Museum. All members and guests are welcome to attend.

**Saturday, July 6, 2019 — Bandon High School Burns** program. Event details pending.

## Board Election Results

**Doreen Colbert** was elected President and **Jim Proehl** Vice-President of the Board. Re-elected to Secretary was **Faye Albertson** and **Nancy Murphy** to Treasurer. **Brian Vick** and **Reg Pullen** were re-elected to 3 year terms on the board. Our other board members include: **Kathy Dornath**, **Rick Hinojosa**, **Mary Stewart**, **Donna Mason**, **Mary Schamehorn**, and **Elaine Stohler**. Our nominating committee includes **Carolyn Russell** with Doreen, Donna and Mary Schamehorn.



## Genealogy — Cemetery and Obituary Database

Progress continues with the online database available on the Museum's website at <http://www.bandonhistoricalmuseum.org/genealogy.html>. Local cemetery records have been added to the database and the museum's obituary file has been uploaded for last names "A" through "L" with "M" through "Z" pending.

We always are interested in errors and additions that need to be made so *please contact the museum with any you notice*. We will add them as soon as possible.



## President's Corner...

**By Doreen Colbert, Board President**

There is always much going on at our museum, and I never know what will appear from one day to the next.

This week I was reviewing (in my thoughts) all that was done during the month of January. Several areas have been refreshed and updated in the main part of the museum and are quite beautifully done. You'll want to see them for yourself.

My usual task has been to keep up with the research library - which is never done! Books come and go all the time. I get caught up in stories I pull from the shelf and plan to input them on the computer, but find that I have to read each article or story first.

I've read about children of pioneers, plans for our city after a fire, adventures of locals, laws that we used to have, buildings that no longer exist, shipwrecks, and events that happened here both long ago and recently, such as the Murder at Two Mile! Today it was something else. It was a request given to the public library to help find a record of someone who had died in Bandon around 28 years ago. That request letter was forwarded to me, and I went on a hunt! It becomes like a treasure hunt sometimes....what can we find in the archives that might help solve a mystery. In this case I was successful.

But there is another letter that came to me wondering if we have any clue about a person who apparently had a first wife that no one in the family today had ever heard about. Genealogy studies send people on all kinds of leads, and this case is still open! We'll see if it can be solved! I wonder what may come next?

## 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)

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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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