



# THE BANDON LIGHT

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A PUBLICATION OF THE BANDON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## The End of an Era for Bandon Newspapers

An era came to an end when the Bandon *Western World* announced that its July 30, 2020, issue was the last edition of the *Western World*. A *Western World* section will be included in editions of the Coos Bay *World*, but for the first time in over 130 years, Bandon no longer has its own newspaper.

The fate of the *Western World* is not unique. Newspapers are disappearing all over the country. The *Western World* lasted longer than many.

Amy Moss-Strong had been promoted to editor of the *Coos Bay World* by Lee Publications, the owner of both *The World* and *Western World*, shortly before the company sold both papers to Country Media. We have to wonder if there would be a Bandon section in *The World* if someone else were editing.

Amy wrote in the final stand-alone edition, "I'm sad to say a newspaper that has published continuously since 1912 and even prior to that in other iterations will no longer be printed. I've been involved with the Bandon *Western World* for more than 30 years, coming here fresh out of the UO School of Journalism to work as a reporter for Melody Gillard-Juarez and taking a couple of years off here and there to get married and nurture and raise my growing family. During that time, as it has been since it began publishing, the *Western World* has been the go-to paper for local news, sports, features, events and opinions."

Bandon Mayor, museum board member, and long-time local journalist Mary Schamehorn wrote in her "As I See It" column, "I can certainly understand how Amy must have felt when she learned that *Western World* would no longer be publishing a

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*Western World owner/publisher L.D. Felsheim presents a watch to subscription sales contest winner Ron Sutherland.*

## Thank you for "A Little Help . . ."

In our June issue of *The Bandon Light*, we asked members for "A Little Help" with an extra donation to sustain the museum through the COVID virus.

The response was generous. Just right to get us through 72 closed days. We don't have a precise "COVID Relief" figure, because a number of people supported the museum by buying a membership or giving a more generous memorial donation, but we received roughly \$5,000 in response to our request for help.

We would like to thank Margaret Pounder, Chamber of Commerce director, for keeping us and the community informed about COVID relief grant programs. The museum received a \$2,500 State of Oregon COVID-19 Emergency Business Grant through CCD Business Development Corporation that Margaret directed us to.

We would like to thank others for finding creative ways to raise money during a pandemic. Volunteer Sheri Wright made and donated cloth face masks which have been brisk sellers in the gift shop. The Capps family celebrated long time-museum mainstay Mary Capps' 96th birthday with a drive-by birthday celebration and a request to donate to the museum in lieu of gifts.

To date, we have kept "in the black" for the year and have not had to dip into the museum's reserve funds.

The response was *not so generous* that we can afford not to do our annual donation drive in the fall (It's our largest single source of income). But once again, "Thank you," for supporting the museum through this historic stretch of time.

A publication of the  
Bandon Historical Society

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

President..... Doreen Colbert  
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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.

Jim Proehl

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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. 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

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Gayle Nix

## From the Desk of the Director

We have made it this far with the COVID-19 virus. We quietly reopened our doors June 8<sup>th</sup> and have been as busy as we want to be during these unusual times.

We are exploring different ways to keep sharing our history with the

community.

I wanted to make sure everyone knows about the “History Minutes” we have on the radio. They are on Bi-Coastal Media mostly on KBDN 96.5 and The Tee, KTEE, 94.9 and 95.7.

If you live out of the area and have Alexa you can say “Alexa learn KBDN” and she will play KBDN. Our multi-talented board member, treasurer, and volunteer Jim Proehl writes and records the history minutes. If you have not heard them please try to do so and give us your feedback. We’re always looking for more “History Minute” ideas.

Jim has also developed guides to four, family friendly, self-guided, history hikes which are available at the museum and the Chamber of Commerce Visitors' Center.

We have been busy trying to stay relevant and keep our history alive.

Keep watching and listening.

We have some other ideas up our sleeves.

Stay Safe,

Gayle Nix

## Bandon's Favorite Drum Finds a New Home

A big “Thank You” to Caroline McKemy and Ed and Beth Wood for helping the Cranberry Cadet Drum find its way to the museum.



Caroline and Bob McKemy found the drum in the attic of one of the Old Town buildings they renovated. The drum has been on display for many years at Ed and Beth's store, Bandon Mercantile (formerly The

Country Merchant).

The Cranberry Cadets marched in parades and performed in talent shows in the 1950s and early 60s.

We hate to see Bandon Mercantile “retire,” but are grateful Caroline, Ed and Beth took the time to see that the Cranberry Cadet Drum found a new home—with us.



# One Harvest Captured in Photographs

The museum acquired a significant addition to its photograph collection when Susan Dimock donated a collection of photographs taken in 2013 of a cranberry harvest on bogs owned by Kathleen and Daniel Mrotzek.

Susan Dimock is a retired clinical social worker and psychotherapist who channeled her energy into a second career as a fine art nature and travel photographer. She specializes in wildlife and seascape images of the coast where she and her husband have lived for 16 years. Her travel images of Oregon are seen throughout the world in print and in on-line publications due to her tourism contract work and her affiliation with Circles in the Sand of Bandon. Susan has enjoyed solo exhibits of her images in various coastal venues over the last seven years and is represented by Second Street Gallery in Old Town, Bandon.

The 59 high resolution images will help the museum tell the story of how cranberries are grown and harvested.



*Daniel Mrotzek shows his brother how to beat a bog.*

Kathleen and Daniel Mrotzek moved from California and bought a cranberry farm on Prosper Road a few years before the photo shoot. They were pursuing a dream of operating a cranberry farm as a second career. As well as operating the bogs, the Mrotzeks were refurbishing the farm buildings and restoring historic



*The Mrotzeks invited family to help with the harvest.*



equipment. They invited family to join them for the harvest Susan Dimock documented.

Sadly, Kathleen was in cancer treatment at the time of the photo shoot and shortly afterward Dan was diagnosed with an aggressive form of cancer. Kathleen died in 2014, and Daniel also succumbed to cancer.

We are fortunate that one Mrotzek harvest was so professionally and creatively recorded in a set of photographs preserved and shared through museum's collection.



# A History Minute Sampler

## Here's a little bit of history from the museum in Bandon.

Whiskey Run is a popular beach access point a few miles north of Bandon. People still pan for gold in the black sands at the mouth of the creek. But how did "Whiskey Run" get its name?



*Mining debris in Whiskey Run Creek.*

One story says a miner dropped his keg upstream and *everyone* ran for their cups as the creek ran with whiskey.

Another version is that when Randolph was a gold mining boomtown in the 1850s, the creek was lined with saloons, a place where miners could go on a "whiskey run."

And some locals *insist* the area got its

name during prohibition when bootleggers could use the lonely stretch of beach to smuggle whiskey from off shore boats.

The tannic acid that leaches out of the forest floor often tints coastal streams a warm brown, the color of good whiskey.

These may all have played a role in giving, and keeping, Whiskey Run its name.

**And that's a little history from Bandon's museum.**

## Here's a little bit of history from the museum in Bandon.

During World War 2, submarines were on people's minds on the South Coast.

Commercial fisherman Cliff Thorn was running his boat, just off Bandon, when an **ominous shape** caught the corner of his eye.

Not wanting to give himself away, Cliff killed his engine and slowly pulled in his lines.

As he drifted with the current, the sub, periscope cutting the water, kept pace just aft.

When it was time to make a run for it, Cliff kicked his engine to life and laid on the throttle. Finally, he looked behind him. A log, bare except for a single limb, receded in his wake.

A submarine really did sink a ship off Port Orford and torpedoed another leaving Coos Bay.

Cliff Thorn *enjoyed* telling *his* World War 2 sub story, even *if* the joke was on him.

**And that's a little history from Bandon's museum.**



*Young Cliff Thorn, after a hunt, wearing his special fishing boots.*

## Here's a little bit of history from the museum in Bandon.

Bandon High School was once the Capitol building for the state of Oregon.

At the time, Bandon High was on the east side of town, in a place that now sits in the outfield of the Tiger's baseball park.

The two-story building that overlooked Bandon's harbor was built in 1915 as a grade school. It became the high school in 1922.

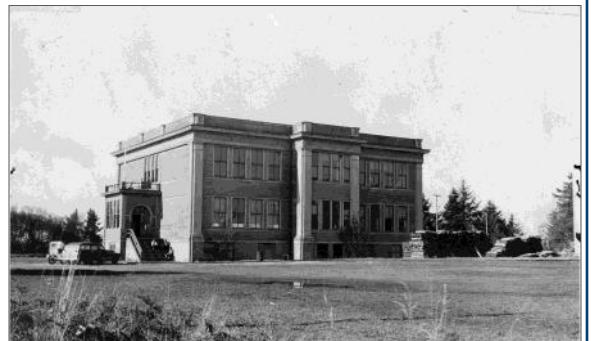
The Bandon Heights neighborhood was the one part of town that didn't burn when a fire swept through Bandon in 1936.

Governor Charles Martin and his cabinet made an emergency visit shortly after the fire. To take be able to take immediate action, they declared Bandon *to be* the state's capital. They met in the town's only standing public building.

So, for the day of October 29, 1936, Bandon High *was* Oregon's state capitol building.

A new high school was built in '49 and the old "capitol" was torn down in 1950.

**And that's a little history from Bandon's museum.**



### ***Here's a little bit of history from the museum in Bandon.***

During the riverboat era, the steam paddle-wheeler, the *Telegraph*, was the biggest boat on the Coquille River, but the gas-powered *Charm*, was the fastest of the boats that made runs between Bandon and Coquille, with many "stops" in between.

The word "stops" needs to be taken with a grain of salt. What the riverboats did was slow down for freight to be handed aboard and passengers to jump on.

One day in 1915, the *Charm* was making a "stop" at a Jarman's landing



when the *Telegraph* rammed it from behind. The air turned blue as words, milk cans, oil cans and fists flew. All for a 15-cent fare.

Captain Panter, of the *Telegraph*, had his license suspended.

In the end Cap Panter won the battle. He bought the *Charm*.

When highways



brought the riverboat era to an end, the *Telegraph* and

other Panter boats were left to rot on the banks of a river they once so proudly served.

**And that's a little history from Bandon's museum.**

Bandon History Minutes are  
broadcast on radio station  
KBDN, 96.5 fm



A new version of our "Sons of the Beaches" coffee mugs recently arrived at the museum gift shop. The logo on cup is bigger and bolder and the photograph sharper than on previous SOB mugs.

### ***Here's a little bit of history from the museum in Bandon.***

"Bandon Beachmen will meet Friday evening at the city hall. Bring parasols," reads a notice in the August 28, 1924 edition of the *Western World*.



***The Beachmen at Port Orford with Humbug Mountain in the background***

Though not exactly superheroes, the Beachmen were a band of caped crusaders who worked to promote Bandon in the 1920s.

The *Western World* described what the Beachmen wore—"an original costume consisting of a bathing suit, a cape and a turban and the whole topped by an umbrella."

Though officially "The Beachmen," the group was more popularly known as the "Sons of the Beaches."

The Beachmen were members of the Oregon Hospitality club and were one of many groups competing for tourists.

They marched in parades and made public appearances, often alongside other costumed groups like the Marshfield Pirates or the Grants Pass Cavemen.

Early photos of tourists on Bandon's beaches document that men really did wear the singlet bathing suits that the Beachmen wore, though seldom with the knee socks, capes and parasols.

**And that's a little history from Bandon's museum.**



## SF Maritime Museum Panel Finds a New Home in Bandon

An interesting artifact was recently dropped off at the museum by Richard Joslin of San Francisco. Joslin is a descendant of William “Arkansas” Smith whose band, the Arkansas Travelers, played music at the Azalea Gardens just east of Bandon in the 1930s.

A Bandon related-object caught Joslin’s eye at an estate sale in the bay area and he bought and held it for the museum. Labeled “Hazards of the Coast” the wooden panel tells the story of the “Wreck of the Onward” on Bandon’s beach in 1905. The panel is illustrated with photographs that likely were taken by Septimius and Octavius Wrenshall who had a studio in Bandon in the early 1900s.

Joslin suspected the panel was once part of a display in the San Francisco Maritime Museum. Director Gayle sent a query to the museum and Gina Bardi, Reference Librarian, San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park Research Center, confirmed that the panel was from their museum and likely produced in the 1960s.

The panel, now on display in the museum’s shipwreck section, reinforces the historic connection between Bandon and San Francisco.



## New Members

### New Members:

The Schulz Family  
Robert Nichols  
Darrin Quillen Family  
Mike Anthony Family  
Karin Sorsensen  
Doug Strain Family  
Davidsen Family

### New Life Members:

Amy and Patrick Bullard  
Sharon Montgomery

## New Museum Program Encourages History Hiking

The museum is using a grant from the Coos County Cultural Coalition to promote “Healthy, Historic, Hiking” with brochures, recognition and promotion.

The spark for writing the grant was a local parent who pointed out that the community has wine walks, pub crawls and bloody Mary strolls but seems to have fewer family-oriented activities. One feature of the program is “History Hiker” awards kids can earn by walking with their families.

The roll-out for the program came at an opportune time as people search for more self-guided, activities where social distancing is easy.

Four hiking routes have been developed so far. Each brochure features a map, a guide to some historic spots along the route, and a “challenge” to qualify as a “History Hiker.”


The maps are available on a brochure rack outside the museum entrance and also at the Chamber of Commerce Visitors’ Center.

Volunteers Jim Proehl and Tom Orsi worked together to map out the hiking routes and produce the brochures.

Tom has promoted the healthy hikes by linking them to the Coos Trails website and the Southcoast Striders hiking group. The website at [www.coostrails.com](http://www.coostrails.com) includes a **Walkable Bandon** section that allows people to download the maps and learn more history by following virtual walking tours.

In addition, the museum produced a “**Graveyard Explorer’s Guidebook**” to lead walkers to and around the Averill, GAR, and Holy Trinity cemeteries. Listen for the museum’s “What’s More Fun than a Walk in the Cemetery” radio ad on KBDN.

*Healthy History Hikes*





**To the Bogs And Back**

Walk a route along quiet streets to see the cranberry bogs along Ohio Avenue and consider several inviting side trips.

Length: 2.5 Miles  
Allow 1 1/2 hours

The Challenge: To behold the bogs.

The Prize: Claim a “History Hiker” award at the museum.



Sponsored by the Coos County Cultural Coalition

# The End of an Era for Bandon Newspapers

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newspaper each week .... as has been done for more than 100 years. And it hit me equally as hard.

"My grandfather, the late L. D. Felsheim, was a partner in the *Western World* when he arrived in town in 1912. Shortly he bought out the other man and continued to operate the *Western World* until 1962 when he died of a heart attack on the 9th green at Bandon Westmost Golf Course at the age of 75. I had gone to work as news editor in 1959 and my uncle, Lou Felsheim, and I carried on after the death of my grandfather.

"Warren Strycker later bought the paper and my uncle retired. Over the years I worked for 12 different owners but for many of those years I was the one constant ... like Amy has been for many years and Melody Juarez before her.

"I certainly would not have had all the neat old pictures that I've shared over the years.... had it not been for *Western World*. This is truly a sad day, particularly for people like Amy Moss-Strong, Melody and me who gave so many years of our lives to our favorite weekly newspaper."



**Mary Schamehorn went to work for the *Western World* in 1959.**

The museum's oldest copy of a Bandon newspaper dates to 1890.

That copy of *The Bandon Recorder* is Volume 6, Number 52, suggesting the paper had even earlier editions.

J.M. Upton and P.O. Chilstrom published *The Southwestern Oregon Recorder* for two years in the community of Denmark in 1883 and 1884, then moved their press to Bandon to publish *The Bandon Recorder*. The *Recorder*, in some years, put out two editions a week.

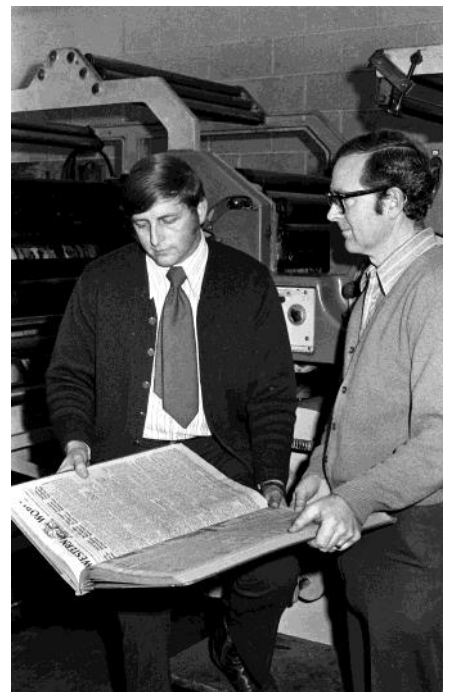
The *Western World* began publishing in 1912. For a time in the nineteen teens, the town had two competing newspapers. The *Western World* got a jump on its rival when it put out an edition the day after the 1914 fire. The *Recorder's* building burned in the fire. The *Recorder* returned to print but abruptly went bankrupt in 1916.

The end of the local paper raises some interesting questions. What will become the official source of Bandon news? Where will future historians turn to find the record of our lifetimes?

The museum acquired "The Morgue," the bound past editions of the *Western World*, at a point when the paper's employees sensed management no longer wanted it to take up storage space. We have a fairly complete archive of Bandon newspapers in print, microfilm, and, increasingly, digitized formats.

Additionally, we have collections of the photographic negatives from the 50-year period when *Western World* photographers took and processed their own film. We have Mary Schamehorn and Amy-Moss Strong to thank for preserving this resource.

Despite the fact that we call this "The Information Age," information is stored in less and less tangible forms. It's a challenge for us as a museum to figure out how we are going to continue to preserve the record of life in Bandon when we no longer can put a copy of each week's newspaper in a box to share with the future.



**Warren Strycker bought the *Western World* from Louis Felsheim.**

## Memorial Donations

### A Donation Has Been Made in Memory of:

Carole and Leonard Vedder, Sonja Cram, Marjorie Stephenson, Janell Ebert, Donald Goddard, Tom Edson, Hazel Lester, Harvey Hiley, Darry Van Leuven, Chume Hunt, Rose Pullen, Kay Vincent, Alice Brown McMahon, Otto Erickson, Isabel Hagarty McMahon, George McMahon, Hazel McMahon Lakey, Hap Lakey, Valda Johnson McMahon, Wally McMahon, Patrick Duval, Joyce Duval Strain, Barbara Norton McMahon, Jill Chappell Sumerlin, Dean Van Leuven, Jack Chappell, Harold Montgomery



### Memorial Donations Have Been Made by:

James Jackson family, Mary Ellingson, Sally and John Johnston, Robert and Susan Webber, Gina Swenson, Barbara Dodrill, Edith Winters, Bob and Emily Hall, Carolyn Russell, Kristy Bowman, Alma Russell, Jim and Donna Reilly, Judy Knox, Ann Remy, Mary Jill Titus, Nancy and Ray Murphy, Kathy and Bill Phillips, Edward J. McMahon, James and Claudia Harris, Doug and Sharon Moy, Dylan Levrets, Jane and Larry Germann, Gayle Nix, Bo and Kathy Shindler



## 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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