September 2024

The Bandon Light

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A PUBLICATION OF THE BANDON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

State Librarian Tells Interesting Story of Books Taken to Bandon

From *The Capitol Journal,* Salem, October 15, 1936

Books for Bandon! That was the thought which immediately came into the mind of Miss Harriet C. Long, state librarian, when she returned from Chicago a week ago Tuesday and realized the serious situation at burned and desolate Bandon.

She realized the plight of these people, left suddenly without their homes and existing in tent houses. She knew their love of books and the fact that the Bandon library had the highest circulation per capita of all the libraries in the state last year. She knew what books meant to these home-loving people. They must have them.

She went to see state officials and to present to them her idea. They thought it a marvelous one and almost at the crack of dawn Wednesday morning Miss Long, with 500 books ranging from fiction to travel and nature books, started off for Bandon in her own car. Miss Long and the state library staff worked like demons the night before assembling the books.

Oregon State Librarian Harriet Long drove to Bandon with 500 books in the wake of the September 26, 1936 fire.

She arrived there a little after noon. True enough, people were housed (if one could call it that) and fed. The Red Cross and various relief organizations were functioning smoothly. Miss Long became even more aware that books were sorely needed to take the minds of the people from their overwhelming troubles and into books which would take them far away.

The first person she sought was Miss F. Amelia Henry, who for many years had been the Bandon Librarian. To the Red Cross headquarters went Miss Long. She inquired for Miss Henry and was told that she had not registered with the Red Cross. "She must be a popular person," said one of the officials in charge. "So many persons have asked for her."

Then Miss Long went to the telephone office. The operators told her that after the fire Miss Henry had gone to Myrtle Point with her 94-year-old mother and her brother who, incidentally, is a poultry man and had presence of mind enough to save seven dozen eggs during

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Lynam Estate Closes in August: Building Project Moves Forward

In an email dated August 5, 2024, attorney Robin Miller wrote the following to David Mark Drillock, the personal representative of the Estate of Don Lynam, and to the museum's board of directors: The Estate of Donald Eugene Lynam is now closed. Judge Andrew E. Combs has signed the Supplemental Judgment Closing the Estate and Discharging the Personal Representative on August 2, 2024. Thank you to Don and Joan for their thoughtful bequest, and thank you all for your role in realizing their charitable vision.

Don Lynam passed away in September of 2022 and shortly afterward Miller informed the museum of the Lynam bequest. The estate stipulated that the museum board commit to building an "auditorium" for programs and events. The museum board has since worked with Miller to meet the conditions of the will and with Sheri McGrath of Coos/Curry Consulting to get the building process underway.

With the closing of the estate, $741,391.52 moved into the historical society's building fund.

Robin Miller was always clear that his client was the Lynam estate, but we appreciate working with an attorney who also shares an interest in local history and who has been a long-time supporter of the museum.

At its July board meeting, Board President Elaine Stohler appointed board members Berta Dargen, Jim Proehl, Donna Mason and Nancy Murphy to serve along with her and Executive Director Gayle Hankwitz as a building sub-committee to work closely with Coos/Curry Consulting to guide building process.

Miller's email moved the museum another step toward adding the "Joan and Don Lynam Annex" to our facility. We hope to break ground in the spring of 2025.

The Bandon Light

A publication of the
Bandon Historical Society Museum

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Native American Consultant… Reg Pullen

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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

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Web: www.bandonhistoricalmuseum.org
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!

On the corner of
Fillmore Ave. and Highway 101

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From the Desk of the Director

Gayle Hankwitz
Executive Director

On May 17, I received an email from a lady named Anna from Fort Lauderdale, Florida. She said she found an army footlocker at a flea market which has been in her home for several years. When she decided to relocate to Washington State, she researched the name on the trunk, and found a connection between that name and our museum. She thought she would bring the trunk along as she was moving closer to its rightful home. She sent a picture of the footlocker with the name "Homer B. Millard" stamped on it and asked if the museum would like to have it. Oh my gosh—We would be thrilled to have it.

After many emails back and forth, Anna said she could get it as far as Vancouver, Washington. As luck would have it, my daughter lives in Vancouver. Homer's footlocker made it to my daughter Mindy's house and in June Mindy came to visit me. So, Homer's footlocker found its way from a flea market in Florida to Bandon. Also stamped on the footlocker is the word "Nuremberg." We know that Colonel Millard went to Germany for the Nuremberg war trials post-World War II. That's where he acquired the cannon that adorned the military academy he opened in Bandon which now adorns our museum. What an exciting addition the foot locker is to our Millard School Display.

A family in Bookings recently brought a copy of a letter to us. It was written by the wife of a couple who, on a whim, decided to come to the coast and visit Bandon. They spent the night of Saturday, September 26, 1936, in the Queen Anne Cottages, and left a vivid description of the night Bandon burned, a night I'm sure they never forgot.

We also received a pristine 1902 Singer sewing machine owned by Minnie Smith, a lady who did seamstress work in Bandon in the 1920s and 30s. The sewing machine is in such good condition because it needed to be refurbished after the '36 Fire.

Our Bandon Fire Anniversary program is coming up Saturday, September 28 at 2:00 pm at the museum. Mayor Mary Schamehorn will be narrating the program. She does a great job!

Student Summer Employee Comes Highly Recommended

Bandon High student Mikeal Sisco-Esquibel has been working at the museum three days a week this summer. He came highly recommended by Nina Minkler, last summer's student employee. Mikeal will be a senior at Bandon High this fall.

We haven't been able to pry much personal gossip out of Mikeal but he is a diligent worker who is not

afraid of computers and has quickly mastered anything we have asked him to do. His most time-consuming task has been to digitize our collection of grade school class photos.

Mikeal's salary is sponsored by Joseph Bain Insurance, the Remy family, and the Coquille Tribal Community Fund.

The Bandon Playhouse to Present a Local History Themed Play

Coquille River Anthology is a new comedy-drama with Bandon's past colliding with its present. An elderly woman, living with her grandson, is visited by four ghosts from Bandon's past - Henry Baldwin, Geneva Shindler, Ruby Pershbaker, and her old friend, Ruthanne. As they share their histories, can they help her complete her own life's story?

The Bandon Playhouse production is written by Neal Davis and directed by Mike Dempsey.

Performances will be in the Galley Room, in the building shared with the Wheelhouse Restaurant.

Performance dates will be November 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, and 10. Friday and Saturday performances will begin at 7:00 PM and Sunday performances begin at 2:00 PM.

Visit the Bandon Playhouse website for further information.

Fun Event Coming in October

The "Night at the Museum," the fourth edition of this fun social gathering, will take place at Bandon's History Museum Thursday, October 17, from 6:00 to 8:00 PM,

Tickets for a chance to visit the museum "after hours" are $10. Enjoy hors d'oeuvres by Sharon Haga. Have a taste of On the Waterfront Wine and Bandon Brewing Beer provided by Lori Osborne, and, if you dare, take our special adult version of "The History Detective's Challenge."

Contact Gayle at the museum to purchase advance tickets. Call 541-347-2164 for more information or to see if tickets will be available at the door.

Join us for your chance to see Bandon's Museum in a different light.

Singer Sewing Machine Donated

Minnie Leah Webb was born in Kentucky in 1895 and moved to Bandon with her parents as a small child. She married Carl Smith in 1911. Minnie purchased a Singer Sewing machine around 1916 and used it for many years doing work as a seamstress. The sewing machine survived the Bandon Fire of 1936 and suffered some smoke damage, which was repaired. Carl died in 1947.

When Minne moved to Coos Bay, she gave the sewing machine to her granddaughter Dorthy (Smith) Sinclair. Minnie died February 8, 1988, aged 92, and is buried in the Bandon IOOF Cemetery. Dorthy Sinclair was the caretaker of the machine until 2024 when she donated it to Bandon's History Museum.

“Miss Long is anxious that Bandon have an ideal new library.”

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the fire, which fed the hungry refugees the next morning.

Miss Henry was contacted by telephone at once. The next morning Miss Long went to fetch her at Myrtle Point and back they came to Bandon. A tent which had been used by the state police and abandoned was given to Miss Long and Miss Henry by Mayor Ed Capps as the site for the new Bandon Public Library.

What was left of the library executive board, several members having sought refuge in other

points, was assembled. One took the job of getting lumber: another the job of getting a carpenter. Miss Henry and Miss Long had the man-sized job of directing the erection of shelves, of placing books according to fiction and non-fiction, and all the odds and end that running a library entails.

A conical-shaped sheet iron stove was placed in the middle of the tent. There was not enough room for many shelves—in fact three shelves high was all that tent could accommodate.

Miss Long, when she was directing the choosing and packing of books in Salem, insisted they be bright new and attractive. The Bandon people had enough of the grim and black. And glad she was then she saw the improved shelves filled with fine new books.

The Bandon people, when informed a public library was functioning, felt that a miracle had happened in the bleak lives. At first, they could not believe it. The first patron of the “tent” library was a little old man, who stalked it with his cane in hand. He had lived in Bandon for 41 years and in the 24 years Bandon has had a library he has been a constant borrower.

Before Miss Long left for Salem Thursday, after establishing the library (October 8), Miss Henry promised that she would send reports regularly as to its progress. Her notation on penny post cards, given to her by Miss Long, are interesting. Here are a few.

October 8. Have just arranged for a door for our tent. Will try to report again Wednesday. One gentleman said, “Well, I wondered when we’d have some books. I’m going to tell everybody.” After dinner 15 boys and girls were in.

One woman came in and said, “Oh, I’m so thankful for the library. Donald, my boy, is ill and you know he is lost without a book.”

Another man in a serious moment asked a friend if he should bring him a book. The friend thinking the inquirer facetious said, “No, not for a LONG time.” The inquirer thought it great fun to take his friend a book from the new Bandon library. The friend, although he had been told there was a library in town, thought it just a ‘gag’ and when presented with one said, “Well, I guess I’d better get acquainted with my own town.”

Miss Henry, in writing October 9, said, “An attractive sign for the library arrived early. It has no legs yet but is standing on a black drum. Mr. Richardson and Mr. Gillette came in this p.m. to announce a gift of 40 children’s books from the San Francisco Junior Red Cross. We have our shelves now arranged by authors. The non-fiction arranged in boxes at the back. A small boy arranged the children’s books. He had fainted at the first aid station when his hand was dressed. The nurse had him fed and then sent him here. He has quite forgotten his troubles.

Miss Long is anxious that Bandon have an ideal new library. Her whole heart and soul are in the rebuilding of that fine library. Library workers are being asked throughout the state to voluntarily contribute something toward its furtherance. And if you have any fine and interesting books the writer suggests that you send them on to the Bandon library. It had only $500 insurance—and that won’t do much to rebuild the new library, which is to be housed in the new city hall, or buy many books.

Memorial Donations

Memorial donations have been made in the name of:

Mary Hargrove
Heather Brown
Jeanne E. Joyce
Dr. John Abbott

Memorial donations have been made by:

Horty Joyce
Ann Remy
Jim and Alyce Cawdrey

History Minute: Heroic Telephone Operator Awarded Medal

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

Once the smoke cleared and rebuilding was underway, the Bandon community gathered at the Minute Café to honor a heroic telephone operator for her actions during the 1936 Bandon Fire.

The banquet audience was entertained by radio and screen star Roy Atwell. Bum Gartin and his Silver Spray Gardens Swing Band played. Mayor Ed Capps introduced the speakers. Oregon's Public Utility Commissioner presented the Vail Medal, an award given to heroic Bell Telephone employees.

The medal citation read: "Evelyn Manciet was at the switchboard on the night forest fires swept over Bandon, almost entirely destroying the city. With the office quarters filled with smoke and with heat so intense that it cracked the windows in the telephone building, Miss Manciet courageously continued to furnish telephone service to the public as long as it was physically possible for her to do so."

Today, Evelyn Manciet's medal is part of the '36 Fire exhibit, a piece of history on display at Bandon's Museum.

Bandon "History Minutes" play on station 96.5FM and other Bicoastal Media stations.

TO BE HONORED

MISS EVELYN MANCIET
who will receive the Theodore N. Vail medal at formal ceremony in Bandon tonight.

Milestone: "New" Southern Coos Hospital Turns 25

Southern Coos Hospital and Health Center has been celebrating 25 years in its "new" location with a series of activities in 2024. Construction began in January of 1999 to move the local hospital, dedicated in 1960, from a site on Ocean Drive to the east end of 11th Street. A highlight of the dedication ceremony September 9, 1999, was hospital board Member Steve Bowman and administrator Jim Wathen revealing that the nursing center would be dedicated to long time nurse Edie Beckner.

Western World photo by Mary Schamehorn

An Old Bandon Tiger Finds a New Home

A piece of Bandon High history has been rescued from the scrap heap through the efforts of a family with long ties to Bandon and its schools.

Lynn Martin

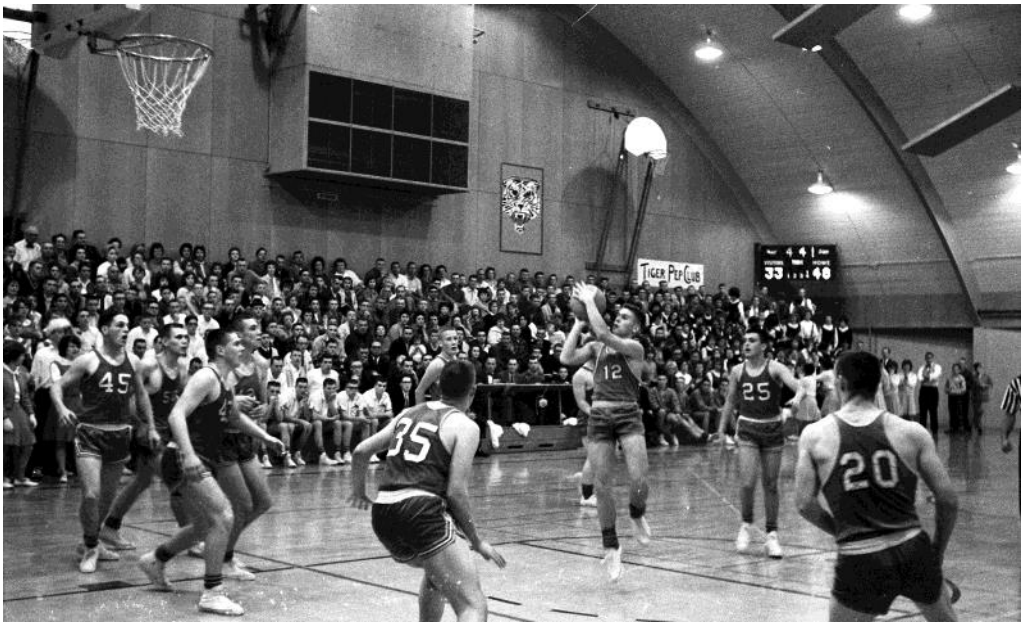
Student Lynn Martin painted a tiger on a plywood background to hang above the student section in the Bandon High gym in the early 1960s.

Today the community thinks of that facility as the middle school gym. When it was built in 1957, the gym was the jewel of an addition to the school campus, attached by a breezeway to the high school, a replacement for a 1930s era gym on the east side of town.

When an arson fire destroyed the high school in 1974, the fire department saved the gym and the attached junior high classrooms.

In 1975, Bandon High was rebuilt a block west, and the junior high building and gym were expanded to become a middle school.

Across Ninth Street, Otis Murray Court, also built in 1975, housed the new cafeteria and a more spacious gym. But the community still felt connected to the not-so-old Harbor Lights gym so the portable bleachers that once stood on the stage were incorporated into the new gym as seating for the home crowd. Martin's Tiger hung above the student section in the "new" gym.



Lynn Martin's tiger hangs above the student section in the gym during a 1962 game against Coquille, When the high school team moved to another gym, the tiger went with them.

When the "old" bleachers were replaced about 2010, they were repurposed as benches in the high school hallways. But during one of the later renovations of the nearly 50-year-old building, workmen took down the tiger and it didn't get put back up.

Over time, alumni noticed and the whereabouts of the painting became the subject of social media, which piqued the interest of a retired teacher Bill Wehner and his son Adam, the school district's IT Director. Both grew up in Bandon and attended its schools. They decided to do some looking.

After failing to find anyone with knowledge of the demise of the painting, they reasoned that since it was painted on a sheet of plywood, it just might have been taken to the plywood storage/recycle bin in the school district maintenance building.

While searching through the stacks of plywood, they noticed a tiny bit of the bright blue background, and the mystery was solved. The painting was still in good condition and even had the wooden frame in place.

Lynn Martin's tiger has a new home, in Bandon's Museum.

New Members:

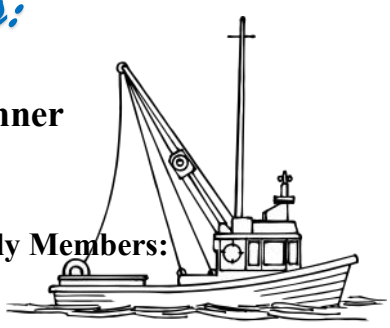
Life Members:

Bill and Lora Wehner
Theresa Snyder

Individual and Family Members:

Connie Nelson

Jane and Peter Dyndiuk



A Windy Afternoon at the Ocean View Cemetery

By Jim Proehl

I felt privileged to be invited along on a work party to clean up the Ocean View Cemetery in early June.

Museum volunteer Kristy Bowman, who has family ties to the people buried in the small, private cemetery east of Langlois, organized the trip.

Kristy picked the date with the expectation it would be a pleasant spring day. It turned out to be one of those days the weather forecasters predicted an "atmospheric river" would hit the coast with high winds and a couple of inches of rain.

Kristy's nephew, Dennis Bowman, arranged permission to enter the private property the cemetery lies within and obtained combinations for the gates on private roads. We met at the Langlois Cheese Factory and were joined by 4 teenagers from the Seaview Chapel youth group: Sarah Slater, Nena Minkler, Craig West and Kyzer Nighswonger.

We headed up Langlois Mountain Road and then onto private roads. When we got out of the vehicles, we were blasted by the wind ahead of the atmospheric river. I couldn't keep a hat on. We could only communicate by shouting.

Only the top of a headstone showed above chest high brush at the start of the project at Ocean View Cemetery.

We found the little cemetery, about half the size of a city lot, grown chest high with blackberry, ivy and salmonberry.

The teenage boys were lifesavers. They plunged into the brush with a weed eater, a chainsaw and a farm boy's work ethic.

The rest of us followed with rakes and clippers. One advantage of the windy conditions was that if we threw the brush in the air, the wind would carry it over the fence.

The earliest burial in the Ocean View Cemetery was in 1893: the nine-year-old son of R.N. and Eliza Smith. The last was Norman Smith, buried in 1984. Six people are recorded on headstones. There are rumors of others.

The rain arrived just at the point when the work was finished. Or did we quit working when the rain arrived? It amounted to the same thing.

There was no view of the ocean that day but a person could once again see the headstones.

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:

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For more information on benefits of memberships go to

http://www.bandonhistoricalmuseum.org/membership.html

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