



THE BANDON LIGHT

Sponsored by: The Joe and Frances Naumes

Family Foundation Inc.

A PUBLICATION OF THE BANDON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Another Bandon Fire: When the Bandon High Gym Burned Down

By Jim Proehl

When the gym at the high school burned down in the fall of 1933, the immediate concern was the football equipment destroyed in the fire.

The Tiger grid squad had just beaten Coquille and was preparing to host Myrtle Point on the field in City Park. Coquille loaned the locals uniforms for the

tion, running the ball on an end sweep, and place kicking an extra point. The well attended game earned \$25 for the football program.

If not for a zero to two loss on a muddy field at North Bend, the freshly equipped Tigers would have won the 1933 Coos County football title.

With no gym to practice in and only away games, Coach French's Tigers faced a tough 1933-34 basketball season.

The school board collected the insurance money, then explored seeking federal funds to build a big-



A tough season for the 1933-34 Tiger basketball team.

game against the Pointers, which Coach Curt French's Tigers won in a rout.

Bandon High and the gym were located on Bandon Heights in 1933, a site now used for high school baseball. The gym that burned was not very old and not large enough for a regulation basketball court. The source of the fire was a wood-fueled hot water heater. We don't have a photo of the gym lost in October 1933.

A benefit dance at the Silver Spray Gardens helped raise funds to replace the lost football equipment. A benefit football game in City Park was played between local ex-high school and college players and a team from the Fairview Civilian Conservation Corps camp. Father Roller of the Catholic Church coached the Bandon squad and the high school's Coach French scored all the points, scoring on an intercep-



A "smoker" in the Bandon Heights gym in 1959.

ger and better gym on Bandon Heights. Previously, community leaders had resisted applying for the alphabet soup of "New Deal" depression relief programs, arguing that government assistance encouraged laziness.

The need to build a gym led to some rethinking. The *Western World* reported, "... this district will have a new gymnasium with a standard size basket-

Continued on Page 7.

THE BANDON LIGHT

A publication of the
**Bandon Historical Society
Museum**

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Native American Consultant... Reg Pullen

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Sheri Wright	Sharon Haga

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 gen-
erations, 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

We tried something new
this year and it turned out to be
both lots of fun and informa-
tive for our membership. We
had an “Open House” annual
meeting on February 4, 2025,
and used exhibits and displays
to report the information a non-
profit typically shares at an an-
nual members meeting.

We decided this idea is a keeper and will continue
to do our annual meetings in this fun and innovative
way.

At the annual meeting, members visited the
“Voting Booth” and chose this slate of board officers:
President, Elaine Stohler; Vice President, Mary Scha-
mehorn; Secretary, Faye Albertson; Treasurer, Jim
Proehl. Members also re-elected Elaine Stohler, Don-
na Mason and Nancy Murphy to three-year board
terms and elected Sharon Haga to fill an open board
seat. We are looking forward to what Sharon will add
to our board.

We continue to get new members to the museum
and our existing members are good about renewing
their dues. We appreciate our members both old and
new.

We were very sad to hear of Judy Knox's passing.
She was Executive Director of the museum for twenty



years and did a
wonderful job. I
always told Judy
that she and her
crew did all the
hard work--moving
the museum into
our current location
in 1996 and getting
the museum on sol-
id financial ground.
When I came on
board in 2016, it
was easy to step in
because of all the
prior hard work she
had done.

On a personal
note, I will miss Judy as a friend and family member.
She was married to my cousin Ron Knox. She was a
sweetheart and we considered ourselves fortunate that
she was a family member. Rest in peace, Judy. You
are missed.

Grants Keep Projects Going

The Joe and Frances Naumes Family Foundation, Inc. of Medford awarded a \$1,000 grant. The museum will use the Naumes grant to underwrite our newsletter and fund other outreach efforts. Lori Osborne of the Bandon Fisheries Warehouse was instrumental in connecting the museum with the Naumes Foundation for a second year.

The Coquille Tribal Community Fund granted the museum \$3,900 to replace outdated electronic equipment, including a new public address system for use in the new museum addition.

A \$650 grant from the Coos County Cultural Coalition will help the museum work with local commercial artists to develop a better brand image.

The museum has received annual grants from the Coos County Cultural Coalition and the Coquille Tribal Community Fund for over a decade.

Museum Wall Gets a Face-Lift

We tell the public that the museum is taking its “Long Winter’s Nap” between Christmas and the end of January. But for some, that “nap” is the busiest work period.

The focus of this winter’s project was to redo the exhibits on the north wall of the Pioneer Room which was stripped to bare wood and resurfaced.

Volunteers rebuilt the exhibit space with a special



Volunteers Donna Mason and Dave Wright

focus on telling the story of the beach resort colony during the 1920s and 1930s.

Volunteer Dave Wright cut and mounted Slatwall panels and re-trimmed the windows. Jim Proehl printed photos. Donna Mason arranged and rearranged the artifacts, pictures and captions. Director Gayle coordinated the work.

The Bandon Dunes Charitable Foundation sponsored the “facelift.” Dunes grant funds were used to buy curio cases and Slatwall panels, restock foam-board, mounting tape and photo paper, and pay for carpentry incidentals.

The exhibit space has a brighter, cleaner look. Be sure to visit.

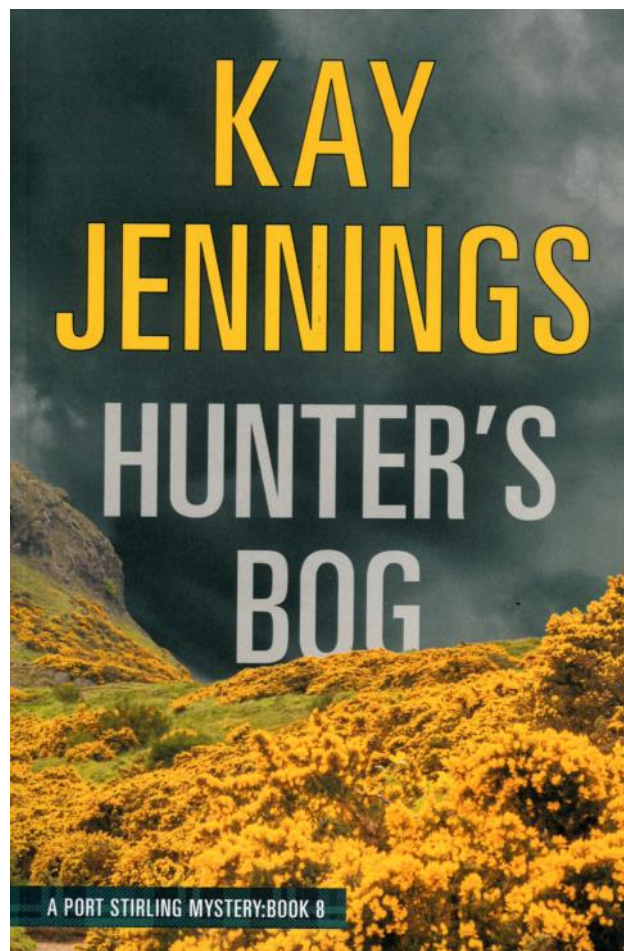
Don and Joan Lynam Project Moves a Step Forward

The “go ahead” given by the Bandon Planning Commission at a public meeting February 28 moved the historical society another step closer to adding the Joan and Don Lynam addition to the museum. When Don Lynam passed away in 2022, the museum learned he had left the bulk of his estate to the museum with the caveat we add an “auditorium” to the museum campus.

Sheri McGrath of Coos/Curry consulting has volunteered her time and is guiding the museum through the building process. Her help has been especially important in navigating the permitting process. Sara Palmer, Tribal Protection Officer of the Coquille Tribe, has expressed her support for the project.

Museum board president Elaine Stohler is leading the building committee.

Latest Kay Jennings Book Is Available in our Book Shop



The eighth book in Kay Jennings' mystery series is available in the museum's book store. We can tell Port Stirling is Bandon from the flowers on the cover.

When "The Beach Season" Had an Opening Night

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

The start of the annual beach season, it was proclaimed at the end of May in 1934, will be Saturday, June second, when the Silver Spray Gardens has its formal opening for the summer.



The large pavilion on the bluff at Coquille Point, with its 10,000 square feet of dance-floor space, was put in first class condition for the event. The Silver Spray orchestra, led by "Bum" Gartin, would provide the music. Everybody was looking forward to a good time.

Opening night in 1934 brought one of the largest crowds ever to the dance hall, known far and wide for its music, fine floor and lighting effects. Traffic Officer Ambrose estimated there were one thousand, five-hundred automobiles parked within blocks of the pavilion.

Bandon today likes to advertise, "Our attractions are always open," but there was a certain romance to the era when tourist season had an opening night.

That's a little history from Bandon's Museum.

Why Are We Stuck in 1934?

Editor's Note: Does it seem as if this edition of the *Bandon Light* is stuck in about 1934? I don't remember what I was looking for in the '30s *Western Worlds*. I don't think I found it. But one story leads to another. All the stories in this edition have also become radio "History Minutes." **Jim Proehl**

Beach Walk Is Restored

Bandon Western World, December 20, 1934

Memories of Bandon in "the good old days" are aroused by the announcement that the beach walk is once more rebuilt and ready for use.

In years gone by the beach walk was the most popular avenue in this community. Before Bandon had improved streets and before automobiles were common, everybody walked and the favorite strolling place was the board walk from Edison Avenue to the south jetty.

Week-end visitors who came to Bandon by river boat, found it the ideal avenue to the beach on Sunday. Along the way was a popular resort place* conducted by the late Emil Lewin, and one ambitious



former chamber of commerce secretary by the name of Poole, erected a home-made merry-go-round for the kiddies. Everyone frequented the south jetty, whether to fish off the rocks, shoot sealions, or meet the girl friend.

The new board walk, three feet wide, built of planks laid length-wise has just been finished, with the exception of a railing for part of the distance, by the local U.S. Coast Guard crew under the direction of Commander Goodman.

It is built primarily to give ready access to the lookout station south of the south jetty where a member of the Coast Guard is constantly on guard. It is understood that an effort is to be made to have the walk electric lighted.

**The Wigwam*

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Mr. and Mrs. Thos. Thorn Jr. of Klamath Falls have been visiting at the home of former's parents,

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Bandon Girl Red-Head Queen

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

We only have black and white pictures of Elaine

Jacobs, but we know she had stunning, naturally red hair. She was the queen of the Redhead Round-up in 1934.

In the 1930s, the Redhead Round-up was one of the wackiest, yet most successful, promotional events on the Oregon Coast, bringing thousands of visitors annually to the communities that would become Lincoln City.

Elaine was chosen as the Coos County candidate at the "Redhead Special Dance" at the Silver Spray Gardens on Coquille Point. Dance patrons bought a 75-cent ticket, good for ten points in the name of their town's candidate, and 12 dances.

Miss Jacobs made the trip to Taft with Miss Gladys Edwards of Langlois, representing Curry County. The seven girls in the Redhead Court came from the seven coastal counties.

World War 2, when travel to the coast was discouraged, ended the Redhead Round-up, but Elaine Jacobs retained her natural crown.

That's a little history from Bandon's Museum.



**BICOASTAL
MEDIA**

Bandon "History Minutes" play
on KBDN, 96.5FM, and other
Bicoastal Media radio stations.

Little Girl Saves Brother from Drowning

Bandon Western World, June 7, 1934

The A. E. Robbins family of Prosper are very proud of little Opal, aged six, who rescued her two-year-old brother Oral from drowning Friday. The little boy had tried to climb into a boat that was tied alongside of the log boom on the Coquille River, and as the boat swung away from the dock, he lost his footing and fell into the deep water. Hearing his frantic screams, part of the family and friends who were nearby rushed to the top of the hill in time to see the little boy come up and go down again. While the rest were wondering what to do, Opal ran down the hill, out on the log boom, and pulled her small brother to safety. The little girl said that she wasn't afraid because she just knew she had to save him.

Cougar Encounter Makes the Paper--Ends in a Draw

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

"An exciting encounter with a cougar was experienced last week by Nick Marsh of Port Orford," reported the Bandon *Western World* in May of 1934. "While returning to his home from Langlois, late at night, a large cat jumped directly in front of Marsh's car. When the brakes were applied, the car skidded along the pavement and one of the front wheels pinned the animal's tail to the surface.

Screaming, the animal turned and set its teeth into the tire, which exploded in its face, and tore the rubber to shreds. Seeing this did not release it, the cougar gave a furious leap. Marsh still has the ripped tire plus the tip of the cougar's tail," reported the Bandon newspaper.

Each lost something, but both man and cougar survived this encounter on Oregon's south coast.

That's a little history, from Bandon's Museum.

Bandon Begins to Celebrate Neewollah in 1934

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

Bandon first celebrated Neewollah in 1934. Neewollah, Halloween spelled backwards, was coined by the American Legion of Marshfield, according to Bandon's newspaper, and was meant to turn the vandalism associated with Halloween into wholesome fun by filling the streets with families. The idea spread to American Legion posts around the country.

American Legion Post 26 and its auxiliary organized Bandon's first Neewollah parade and invited all, from Riverton to Port Orford, to participate. Eighty-one parade prizes, in adult and kids' divisions, were donated by merchants and ranged from a Mince Pie by the Minute Café to a carton of Luckies from the Westland Hotel. The legionnaires lit the streets with flares. The parade wound through downtown, passed a review stand, and ended with popsicles for all the kids.

A Neewollah parade has been held continuously in Roseburg since 1933. Bandon's Neewollah tradition ended with the 1936 fire.

That's a little history from Bandon's Museum.

Photo Find: Bandon Hopes to “Strike it Rich” in 1936

In October, the museum received an unlabeled photograph from cranberry grower Jim Jackson and his family. This article, excerpted from the Bandon Western World, November 19, 1936, provides the context for the photograph.

Drilling Starts on Bandon Oil Well “Spudding In” Ceremony on Friday, the 13th, Attracts Large Crowd of Interested Spectators to the Scene

“We don’t know whether there is oil here or not, but geologists say there is and if there is we are here to find it.”

With these simple words, expressed by John Ewell of the Pacific Petroleum Corporation, the prime mover in the oil drilling prospect in this section, what is believed to be the first adequate test well was spudded in on Friday, the 13th of November, on the cranberry farm of A. T. Morrison, 1 1/2 miles east of Bandon. (*“Spudding in” is the term for starting the process of drilling an oil or gas well.*)

It was a simple ceremony but its significance was apparent by the gathering of nearly 100 people to witness the event.

“Jim” Jenkins, who signed the first lease, begged permission to introduce Mr. Ewell.

“I take no credit for this,” said Mr. Ewell as he addressed the visitors. “If there is anything here it was put here by some power greater than that of any human.” After brief remarks by the driller, Mr. Jenkins called on Mayor Ed Capps, who expressed the appreciation of the city of Bandon.

L.D. Felsheim, editor of the *Western World*, concluded the formalities. “If there is anything to the law of compensation, Bandon, after its past few weeks of experience, is entitled to an inning of good fortune, and perhaps, this will be it.” *

Mr. Jenkins was given the honor of turning on the steam that started the machinery in operation.

The big drill was gradually dropped into position and for 10 minutes the vast gears ground to the tune of hissing steam and Bandon’s newest adventure was on its way.

**Editor Felsheim was referring to the forest fires that had devastated Bandon a few weeks earlier. In hindsight, we can conclude either that the law of compensation is not just, or that striking oil was not meant to be Bandon’s inning.*



This unlabeled photograph was found among photos from the cranberry farm Jim Jackson purchased from Charles St. Sure. The St. Sure bogs were near the A.T. Morrison farm.

New Members:

Life Members:

Amy and Brian Robertson
Randal and Lynn Schulhauser

Individual and Family Members:

Thaddeus and Julianna Konar
Will and Doreen Wright
Bob Pickel and Rebecca Trapnell

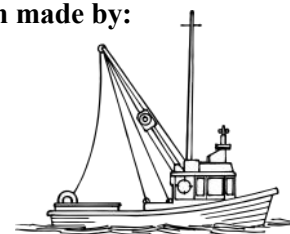
Memorial Donations

Memorial donations have been made in the name of:

Judy Knox	Paul Tiffany
Susan Nelson	Linda Robertson
Margaret Carver	Richard “Dick” Handley

Memorial donations have been made by:

Will and Vickie McCreery
Jim and Robin Martin
Jim and Alyce Cawdrey
Ann Remy
Kristy Bowman



History Minute: The Tigers Win the County Championship



The rivalry was intense between Coach Curt French's Tigers and Coach Vic Adams' North Bend teams.

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

"The supreme test of the football season will unfold for both the Bandon Tigers and the North Bend Bulldogs when they meet on the local field Saturday," reported the *Western World*, October 18, 1934. North Bend has a fine coach in Vic Adams. But the Tigers have their fangs sharpened to a fine edge. Coach Curt French has his squad mentally ready to tear up the toy Bulldog from the bay. A whale of a game is in store."

Still fresh was the memory of a zero to two loss, to this same gang of North Benders, that denied the Tigers the Coos County title the previous season.

So, it was poetic justice that Bandon beat the Bulldogs, two to zero, in Bandon's city park.

The Tigers tied Marshfield to finish undefeated.

But the sweet spot of the 1934 football championship was the victory over Vic Adams' Bulldogs.

That's a little history from Bandon's Museum.

"Work on the gym began in July on Friday the Thirteenth."

Continued from Page 1.

ball ball floor, plenty of bleachers and all the other features necessary in a modern plant of this kind, without practically any additional cost to the tax payers. Herbert Brown is drawing the plans for the board." An article in the same edition was headlined, "Chamber Endorses Gymnasium Project."



Grade school classes were held in the high school gym in the wake of the 1936 Bandon Fire.

The Public Works Administration approved the grant and set hiring guidelines.

Work on the gym began in July on Friday the Thirteenth. Contractor R. J. Hillstrom of Marshfield said he was not superstitious and "believes things will go in apple pie order."

October 4, 1934, the *Western World* reported, "The construction work on the new gymnasium at the high school is completed. An auditor for the PWA arrived from Portland yesterday to check the work." The following week's paper gave a detailed description of the new facility.

The first event in the new gym was a "smoker," an evening of boxing matches, put on by the Future Farmers of America. The 1934-35 basketball season opened with a home game against Port Orford.

Following the 1936 Bandon Fire, grade school classes were held in the Bandon Heights Gym until a new elementary school opened in the fall of 1939. (During that stretch, Bandon High played home basketball games in Riverton.)

A new high school in a new location was built in 1949, but it didn't have a gym until 1957. One generation of students remembers traveling across town for P.E. classes. Another generation remembers playing in the Bandon Heights gym while attending the "Quonset Hut" school which closed in 1974. Others remember sneaking into the spooky old building.

The gym on Bandon Heights ended its days as a "Burn to Learn" exercise conducted by Chief Lanny Boston for area fire departments in 1980, one more fire in a community shaped by fire.



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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