



THE BANDON LIGHT

Sponsored by: The Joe and Frances Naumes

Family Foundation Inc.

A PUBLICATION OF THE BANDON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Historical Society's First Year Ends with a Bandon Bang!

It started in 1976, the year of America's Bicentennial, when history was in the air.

2026 is the "Golden Anniversary" of the Bandon Historical Society.

We're using our fiftieth anniversary to research and retell our own story.

The first chapter begins with a February 12, 1976, story in the *Western World*:

Plans for a new visitor's information center and Bandon historical museum were revealed Tuesday night at the Bandon Chamber of Commerce's monthly meeting at the Face Rock Golf Course restaurant.

Those plans, as outlined by Bandon Bicentennial chairman Jim Knox and Nick and Nancy Fennel, drew vocal and financial support and encouragement from chamber members.

Kicking off the donations to build a structure for **\$12,000** on a site near city hall, was downtown merchant Sterling Welch, of The Big Wheel. "I'll donate the first \$25 in memory of my mother, Maude



*Cranberry Parade
1976*

Loomis," said Welch.

To finance a new center, Knox said, the money could come from the federal government via a grant through the Oregon American Revolution Bicentennial Commission. "I'm going up to Portland Tuesday and Wednesday to personally seek this grant."

Fennel outlined the three sites under consideration. They are on city property north and south of City Hall and another diagonally north across the street from City Hall. She said the third site has the best conditions.

Plans call for the structure to include a visitor's information area, museum space, meeting space and an observation deck. The latter would offer a broad view north across the Coquille River to Bullards Beach State

Park.

The deadline to apply for the \$5,000 federal grant was March 31 but an organization to receive the grant would need to be in place first.

"Bandon May Form Historical Society" was the headline of a *Western World* article February 26.

Interest for a proposed Bandon Historical Society has prompted Jim Knox and Nancy Fennel, to call a

"Bandon Tea Party" for Sunday afternoon to formulate plans for a Bandon Historical society. "We hope enough people of pioneer families and others interested in preserving Bandon's unique history will attend," Mrs. Fennel said.

Added Knox, "This project has more support than any other I've ever seen in Bandon." Knox indicated he would like to see the building finished in time for the annual Cranberry Festival in September. "There's no reason we can't do it by then," he said enthusiastically.

More than 60 people interested in establishing a Bandon Historical Society attended the "Tea Party." Nick Fennel displayed a model of the proposed building, which featured an observation deck looking north

Continued on Page 4.



Roland Parks, Coos County Bicentennial Committee chairman; Frank Quinlan, Oregon Bicentennial Commission member; Bandon Mayor Don Goddard; and Jim Knox, Bandon Bicentennial committee chairman, prepare to raise the Bicentennial flag over Bandon.

THE BANDON LIGHT

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

Executive Director.....Gayle Hankwitz
Native American Consultant... Reg Pullen

Board of Directors Board Officers

President.....Elaine Stohler
Vice President..... Mary Schamehorn
Secretary.....Faye Albertson
Treasurer.....Jim Proehl

Additional Board Members

Rick Hinojosa	Donna Mason
Nancy Murphy	Reg Pullen
Berta Dargen	Sheri Wright
Sharon Haga	Charis McGaughy

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

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

bandonhistoricalmuseum@yahoo.com
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.
**On the corner of
Fillmore Ave. and Highway 101**



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FROM THE DESK OF THE DIRECTOR



NOT WRITTEN BY
Gayle Hankwitz
Executive Director

Creaky knees used to be a
fact of aging. But the advent of
knee replacement surgery has
changed that equation.

On the same day the museum held its membership
annual-meeting, Director Gayle had her second knee
replacement procedure. All went well. She was up
and walking in no time. But for a few weeks, she is
only allowed to
“visit” the muse-
um.

The following
week, volunteer
Donna Mason
went “under the
knife” for her
knee replacement
surgery. Her pro-
cedure went well

too. Donna's domain is the day-to-day job of main-
taining our exhibits. The rest of us have been trying to
pick up the slack.

“Absence Makes the Heart Grow Fonder,” because
during absences is when we realize all the jobs the
“absent” do. Dozens of operational questions come up
in a day and “ask Gayle” or “ask Donna” has not been
the answer.

And yet, we've managed, somehow, to keep the
museum going.

Board members Elaine Stohler, Berta Dargen and
Sheri Wright have especially stepped-up and stepped-
in. Desk volunteer Mary Ellingson's experience run-
ning a business is often a quiet game saver.

***We are celebrating the museum's Golden Anni-
versary in 2026.***

It's a good year to appreciate all the people who
worked to put our museum together and keep it going
for 50 years. It's a good year to expand the member
and volunteer base that will carry us through the next
50 years. It's a time to appreciate all the jobs that go
into the mission of collecting, preserving and sharing
Bandon's history.

But what we're really looking forward to is Gayle
and Donna getting their new knees back to work.

Jim Proehl



Membership Annual Meeting Held in a Fun, Open-House, Style

The Bandon Historical Society's open-house style annual meeting was held at the museum Thursday, February 5. The evening was an opportunity for members to learn about the museum's 2025 accomplishments and to preview what is ahead in the coming year, a year that promises to be very busy.

Not only will the Historical Society celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2026, but we look forward to the opening of the Don and Joan Lynam Event Center, which is currently under construction.

At the open house, members had the opportunity to vote for the 2026 board, review the financial status of the museum, visit with fellow members and enjoy delicious snacks. Many guests participated in a fun activity called "What in the World" prepared by new board member Charis McGaughy. Carolyn Russell took the prize for playing "What in the World." Anna Bell and Betty Albertson were the recipients of door prizes donated by Mary Ellingson.

A very special feature was a living exhibit—a

view out a museum window to see the construction of the event center. A scale model of the finished building was part of the feature. It was created by one of our very talented members, Jay Forsberg.

A very special thank you to all members who attended and helped make this event a success!

Voting for museum board officers and three-year terms for four board positions took place at the annual meeting. Elected as board officers were Elaine Stohler, president; Mary Schamehorn, vice president; Faye Albertson, secretary; and Jim Proehl, treasurer. Re-elected to three-year board terms were Berta Dargen, Mary Schamehorn and Rick Hinojosa. Also elected was Charis McGaughy, our newest board member, who fills a position previously held by Brian Vick, who passed away in 2025. The 12-person board of directors are elected in staggered, three-year terms.

The board looks forward to a productive and exciting year!

Board Members Gather for a "Ground Breaking" Occasion

Director Gayle Hankwitz, in the center wearing a hard hat, joined several board members for an obviously ceremonial "ground-breaking" for the Don and Joan Lynam Event Center in January. We say *obviously*, because the ground was clearly well-broken by the time of the photo.

Joining Gayle are board members Elaine Stohler, Sheri Wright, Donna Mason, Mary Schamehorn, Berta Dargen, Jim Proehl and Sharon Haga. Board members Reg Pullen, Rick Hinojosa, Faye Albertson and Nancy Murphy were not present for picture day.

That interesting shovel was donated by the City of Bandon Public Works department. Look for it on display in the museum. Volunteer Pat Honstain took the photo.



Fourth of July was the peak of America's Bicentennial Celebration

over the Coquille River. Nancy Fennel, who has spearheaded the effort, was elected interim chairman of the group."

A March *Western World* headline read, "Group Hopes to Raise 15,000."

What started as a simple project of raising money for a new **\$15,000** museum has grown more complex. "We've found it's not as simple as we thought," smiled Nancy Fennel, chairman of the newly-formed Bandon Historical Society.

The remainder of the article was in a question-and-answer format meant to "dispel rumors."



David Acklin pins on his historical society Junior Member badge as Winnie Evans and his mother, Carol, look on. Western World, March 4, 1976.

A sign with "The Future Site of Museum and Information Center" went up on the west side of Highway 101 between City Hall and the entrance to Old Town.

Committees met to write bylaws and file for non-profit status.

The Bandon Historical Society, as it exists today, was chartered at a meeting in April.

Bandon Historical society members elected Terry Tiffany, "a fisherman with a master's degree," as the young group's first president. Tiffany was an alumnus of the Millard School in Bandon, University of Oregon and the University of Michigan. His wife, Joy, was city recorder.

Joining him on the new board of directors were Carol Acklin, vice president; Winnie Evans, treasurer; and Leola Hultin, secretary.

Also serving on the 12-person board of directors were Jean Albrich, Robert Burch, Lou Felsheim, Jim Hanna, Ruth Lennon, Joanne Metcalfe, Peter Toll and Hap Ward.

Earlier in the meeting, Nancy Fennel was named executive director of the society. As the only member of the staff in the young organization, "her salary, if any, will be determined later," Tiffany said."

News came in April that the new historical society would receive a \$2,500 federal grant from the Bicentennial Commission.

Well attended Historical Society meetings were held monthly in the downstairs room at City Hall.

Typical was a "Nostalgia Night" program led by Joanne Metcalfe. She showed slides made from the collection of old photos in the Bandon Library. High school photo journalism students Donna Davis and Mark Mallory converted the photos into slides. Locals who remembered Bandon prior to the 1936 fire, such as Howard Tucker, Carl Stephenson, Chester Bullard, George Welch, Ruth Lennon, and Hap Ward, fondly filled in details.

The Fourth of July was the peak of America's Bicentennial Celebration. A full day of activities were on the slate for Bandon, capped off by the biggest fireworks display the city had ever seen.

Among other Bandon activities, official dedication ceremonies were held on the Fourth at the site of the proposed museum.

Terry Tiffany, president of the society, gave the welcome from the platform.

Following the welcome and invocation, flags were presented to the historical society from the VFW then raised by members of the Bandon Boy Scout troop, followed by a trumpet salute to the colors by Lou Felsheim, and the playing of the Star-Spangled Banner by Ernie Osborne. The group then sang "God Bless America."

In September, Shannon Applegate Mueller, a new Bandon resident and a direct descendant of the pioneer Applegate family, presented a program.

In October, the \$2,500 check arrived from the Bicentennial Commission. Director Nancy Fennel said the check amounts to about one-tenth of the **\$25,000** needed to build the new museum.

Bandon's Bicentennial year came to a dramatic conclusion at the Historical Society's first annual membership meeting.

The headline read: "Historical Society Selects Temporary Museum Site; Nancy Fennel Resigns."

Election of a board of directors, reports on past and future activity and the announcement that a temporary museum site location is imminent highlighted the meeting, which also saw the resignation of Nan-

President Tiffany indicated the society “overestimated success”

cy Fennel as executive director.

President Terry Tiffany indicated the society “overestimated success” in trying to raise \$25,000 for the new museum and visitor’s information center. In 1977, he said, the group will focus on locating a museum and visitors’ center in a temporary home.

Joanne Metcalfe said negotiations with the Masonic Lodge to lease space in their Second Street building appear favorable. “We might even be in there this weekend so get your paint brushes ready,” she said.

Tiffany indicated the first year showed a great deal of promise.

He cited the \$5,000 raised in the group’s first 10 months, more than 100 members enrolled, that the society will co-sponsor with Southwestern Oregon Community College a special course on Bandon history, and that a “strong felt need” has been shown for the society.

As for the future, he said, the society “should temper expectations with realistic goals.” including doubling the society’s membership, raising an operating budget not to exceed \$10,000 and promoting the history class to be taught by Shannon Applegate Mueller.

Tiffany praised Nancy Fennel’s leadership, enthusiasm and example by giving her the society’s first honorary life membership.

Peter Toll, said a publication called “*The Bandon Light*” is planned to begin in January.

Serving with Tiffany on the board, with staggered terms to allow for rotation, were Marge Goddard, vice-president; Andrea Gatov, secretary; and Winnie Evans, treasurer.

Also on the board were Carol Acklin, Dan Deuel, Don Goddard, Jim Hanna, Ruth Lennon, Joanne Metcalfe, Shannon Applegate Mueller and Peter Toll.

We’ll close the chapter on our first year with excerpts from a letter in the *Western World*.

To the Editor:

To date, the things I will say here regarding the Bandon Historical Society could not be said by me while I was holding the position of the Executive Director. Now I have resigned that job I can finally speak my mind.

The community was asked formally what their feelings were regarding a new Visitors’ Information Center and Museum in February of this year. At that time, we received an overwhelming amount of enthusiasm for the proposed project. Letters of support from all areas of interest were forthcoming. To say the least we were encouraged. We were also greatly impressed by the turn out to

the “Bandon Tea Party,” held in March. Judging by this, a dozen or so people started in getting the wheels going to make all this a reality.

But now, 10 months later, the Historical Society is abandoning Bandon’s “new” Museum for a “temporary” location in the Masonic Building downtown.

The question is why has it become a necessity? To answer simply, the project was NOT supported by the community . . . the community who said this was something they all wanted and saw a need for.

If only the two or three local mills in the Bandon area had answered the call and divided up the building

materials list . . .

If only the local Bandon Chamber of Commerce had backed the project with not only a “pledge” of \$2,000 but had really gotten behind the project . . .

If only the individuals who supported the project in the beginning were more involved personally taking a big part off the shoulders of the few hardcore workers.

If only they had all done THEIR PARTS, each one in their own way, we could be planning the grand opening for this coming tourist season.

All is not lost! We can still make it happen but it must start now. It’s really up to you now.

Nancy A. Fennel



Boy Scouts raise the flags at the Fourth of July dedication of the proposed museum site. Western World, July 8, 1976. Hindsight tells us this location did not become the museum’s home.

Volunteer Spotlight-- Rick Toth



Volunteers are essential to having our museum run smoothly and efficiently. The museum extends a special thank you to long-time volunteer, Rick Toth.

Rick has worked at the front desk greeting visitors in a welcoming and professional manner. His commitment to the museum is greatly appreciated.

Thank you, Rick!

Elaine Stohler

Newly Acquired-- Hand-Crafted Slingshots

The museum recently acquired two hand-crafted slingshots made by Cliff Thorn.

His daughter, Donna Mason, remembers she and her sister Linda using them to shoot at balloons across the Sixes River when they were kids, likely in the 1950s or 60s.

Though simple, the slingshots display a meticulous attention to detail. "He was a carpenter, so everything had to be just right," said Donna.

Look for the slingshots in our "kids' stuff" section.



Remember to bring your receipts to redeem through the McKay's Market Advantage Sales Receipt program. All receipts must be dated within the past six months so check those dates!

Model Helps Visitors "See" the Project Out the Window

By Elaine Stohler, Museum Board President

It all began with a visit to a small-town museum in Virginia. The museum had a beautiful model of their building. When the plan for the Don and Joan Lynam Event Center became a reality, I thought we might create a model of our own. I was quite certain building it would be a simple task.

Several attempts later, I realized that without help, I would be unsuccessful.

Fortunately, my neighbor, Jay Forsberg, is a very creative and talented craftsman. When I asked for his guidance, he stepped up and, using the blueprints for the new structure, began to assemble a replica of our new building. As much as I would like to take credit, I was truly just an assistant. With Jay's attention to detail and his careful, meticulous artistry, he created a true representation of the Don and Joan Lynam Event Center.

Many thanks to Jay for his hard work. His contribution to the Bandon History Museum will be prominently displayed for years to come. The model sits beneath a window, showing visitors what's being constructed on the other side of the glass. Be sure to stop and have a look for yourself.



Jay Forsberg with a model of the Don and Joan Lynam Event Center.

Grants Fund 2026 Projects

Several grant-supported projects are underway in the early months of 2026.

A new security camera system was recently installed by technicians from Reese Electric, who also updated the fire and burglar alarm systems. The Braemar Charitable Trust, administered by Trust Management Services, funded the upgrade, which will extend to the security needs of the new Don and Joan Lynam Event Center once built.

Braemar Charitable Trust grants have funded major projects at the museum for over a decade.

A Coos County Cultural Coalition grant is helping to fund the museum's Golden Anniversary celebration. Grant funds are being used to pay for banners, advertising space, and radio spots with the goal of using the 50th anniversary to raise the museum's public profile.

"Identify, preserve and promote county heritage," is one of the Cultural Coalition's priorities.

This edition of *The Bandon Light* is sponsored through a grant from the Joe and Frances Naumes Family Foundation based in Jackson County.

Lori Osborne of the Bandon Fisheries Warehouse helped connect the museum with the Naumes Foundation.

A grant from the Bandon Dunes Charitable Fund is being used to develop a new museum website. Board member Sheri Wright is working with Justin Macduff of Macduff Design. Look for a launch in the coming months.



A technician from Reese Electric installs a new smoke detector. A grant from The Braemar Charitable Trust paid for security system upgrades.

Memorial Donations:

Memorial donations have been made in the name of:
Marian Gant
Ann King
Greg Crew

Memorial donations have been made by:
Steve and Cindy Gant
Barbara Coulson
Doug and Sharon Ward Moy

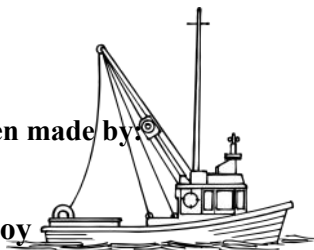


Photo Find--

Post Yields a Great Catch

We were just fishing for a name when we posted this unlabeled photo on the museum's Facebook page. Museum Member Steve Howard responded with this story:



"Oh great, this picture has come back to haunt me. I was about nine, and caught this Silver in the Coquille River for the annual fishing derby. It was large enough to get me first place in the juvenile category. I won a fishing pole donated by Lans Leneve. When we got home, Mom made me put that old worn life jacket back on to take the picture."

New Members:

Benefactor Members:
Ben and Rosemarie Fisher



Life Members:
Ann and Brent McCaleb
Michelle and Rick Felkins

Individual and Family Members:
Jan Hester **JJ McLeod**
Chuck Klemer **Peggy Goergen**
Marlys Collier **Dan and Sheila Kelly**
Suzanne and Pam Kuhlman
Kelly Cooper and Michael Giorgio
Michael and Anna Bell

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:

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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