



THE BANDON LIGHT

Sponsored by: The Joe and Frances Naumes

Family Foundation Inc.

A PUBLICATION OF THE BANDON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

They Danced in the Street to Celebrate Bandon's New Museum

Bandon's Museum is celebrating its Golden Anniversary in 2026. Our *Bandon Light* March edition covered the Society's first year, ending 1976 with the news the museum had found a home.

"It's grand! Bandon's Historical Museum is now open to the public after a day-long gala celebration Saturday, June 4, to applaud the event," reported the *Bandon Western World*, June 9, 1977.

Brainchild of the Bandon Historical Society, the Museum had been in the design since the Society's beginning in 1976. Hard work and perseverance by members inspired them to overcome a number of obstacles along the way.

With the sincere desire to preserve Bandon's past, the movement gained momentum and the Society finally selected the Masonic Lodge building on Second Street for the museum site.



Joanne Metcalfe gave the dedication address. *Western World*, June 9, 1977.

The building was a historic landmark itself. Since its construction in 1910, the structure survived the 1936 Bandon Fire and had housed the *Western World* newspaper, Bank of Bandon, a liquor store, and a fish processing plant. The Historical Society leased the downstairs from the local Masonic Lodge.

The museum dedication events began with a welcoming address by Terry Tiffany, president of the Historical Society, who greeted about 85 people at the onset of the ceremony. By the time Nick Fennel, designer of the Museum interior, cut the entrance ribbon, nearly 150 gathered to view the opening exhibit.

"Come forward, don't hang back," urged Joanne Metcalfe, exhibit committee chairman, in her dedication address. "Join us in expanding and enlivening our museum, help with work, bring any old photos or relics or donate money. Community effort in Bandon is historical and we, as the living reality of Bandon, should share in preserving its past," she continued.



Bandon's Museum opened in 1977 in a building in Bandon's Old Town.

"*We've Gota Good River, Why Do We Need a Road*," was the theme of the maiden exhibit, a history of maritime Bandon.

"I remember riding on the milk boats when I was a kid," one elderly viewer recollected. The nostalgia of the exhibit was apparent, but young people and newcomers were equally fascinated by the old boats and the effect they had on Bandon's growth.

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THE BANDON LIGHT

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

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Native American Consultant... Reg Pullen

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Nancy Murphy	Reg Pullen
Berta Dargen	Sheri Wright
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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

Bandon Historical Society
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Phone/Fax 541-347-2164
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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



**Gayle Hankwitz
Executive Director**

Everything is coming along nicely at the museum. Our new Don and Joan Lynam Event Center is looking good. We are hoping for a completion date sometime late this summer, perhaps August or September. Some of us have been taken inside the new construction a few times. It's bigger than I thought. It will be so nice to have programs and events in there!

We want to thank Lori McNamara Osborne for allowing the museum to host a Tuesday program each month for a "Meet and Greet" at the Warehouse Coffee Café. That opportunity came at a perfect time as we have not been able to have events at the museum during construction. Lori is a wonderful museum supporter and we really appreciate her.

On April 29, myself, Berta Dargen and Ardisann Szala (aka "Z") were able to attend the 2026 Oregon Heritage Excellence Awards banquet in Mt. Angel, Oregon, to support volunteer Jim Proehl as he received his award. It was wonderful to see Jim receiving statewide recognition for his work for the museum. He is truly remarkable in all that he does for our community. Congratulations Jim—"Well Done!"

It has been awesome to have Nena Minkler and Elli Schulz working part time this spring and summer. They both are of the younger generation and are fun to be around. Inspiring Kids!

We look forward to seeing everyone at our combined Event Center Grand Opening and 50th Anniversary Celebration! Watch for the date. Exciting times for us!



**Museum Board Member Faye
Albertson on a construction
tour of the Don and Joan
Lynam Event Center.**

We Soon Will Be Celebrating --Twice as Hard-- In 2026

Coming Soon!!!

The Bandon History Museum is celebrating two exciting events in 2026. Not only is the Historical Society celebrating its fiftieth anniversary, but we will be pleased to celebrate the grand opening of our newly constructed auditorium, the Don and Joan Lynam Event Center.

Construction of the new facility, which began in October, is nearing completion.

But, we are taking care to not get ahead of ourselves by scheduling events before the building is ready.

So, when the time is right, YOU WILL BE INVITED to a joint celebration marking not only 50 years of history but also new beginnings.

Coming soon!!!!



Drone view photo of construction by museum volunteer Pat Honstain.

Student Employees Bring Energy, Fresh Perspectives, to Work

The Bandon History Museum is fortunate to have two former student employees returning to work for us this spring and summer.

Born and raised in Bandon, Elli Schulz worked for the museum after her sophomore year in high school. Upon graduation from Bandon High School, she attended Stanford University in California where she studied English and Political Science. After her 2025 Stanford graduation, she returned to Bandon. Elli has been busy greeting students at the front desk, welcoming students during school field trips and researching the history of churches in Bandon.



Nena Minkler

inspired her to rejoin the museum team. She has found it fulfilling to see the dedication of so many people working toward a common goal. Her focus this summer is to research the history of the Coquille River lighthouse, especially the stories of the

lighthouse keepers and their families.

Both bring the combination of prior experience with the museum plus recent college training to their research work.

Funds to employ students at Bandon's museum have been provided for several year by Joseph Bain of Bain Insurance, Ann Remy, and other donors.



Elli Schulz

Save that "Sort of Spooky" Date

Save the date. Our popular "Night at the Museum" program is on the calendar, scheduled for Thursday, October 29, from 5:00 to 7:00 pm. The ticketed event (\$15/person) is a fundraiser that features appetizers, beverages, a membership mixer and a special "History Detective's Challenge" just for adults. While not exactly a Halloween party, it does fall in the Halloween season. It's a fun opportunity to share the museum after dark.

Watch for more details.

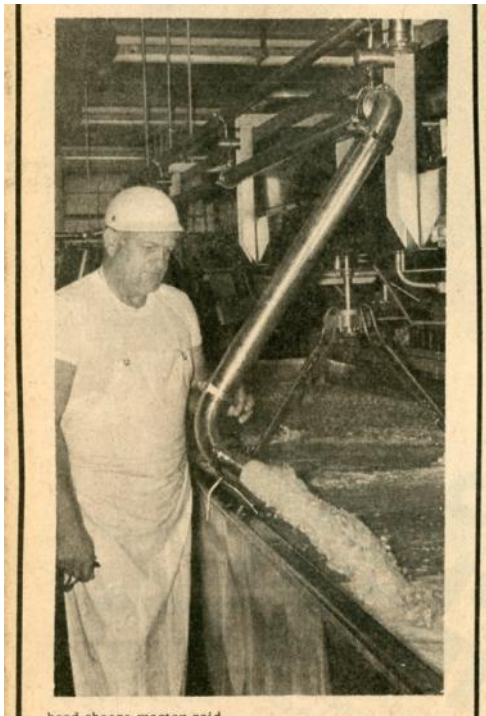
Volunteer Potluck
Thursday, August 20
5:00 PM
Call or Visit for Details

Bob Howard . . . Master Cheesemaker: A Story Worth Repeating

This article ran in the Bandon *Western World* September 8, 1977. It records a story worth repeating.

By Christine Wright

In 1941, a young Bandon boy washed milk cans at the Bandon Cheddar Cheese Factory, certainly a dull job among all the other interesting aspects of cheese



making. However, the young man performed his job well and with dependability. While his brothers went off to work in the woods, he remained at the creamery.

Thirty-six years later, the young can washer, Bob Howard, is the "big cheese" at the Bandon Creamery.

As head cheesemaker, Bob supervises

the production of three batches of cheese a day; that is 11,000 pounds of cheese from 105,000 pounds of milk. Bob has come a long way from rinsing ten-gallon cans.

Along with Bob's gradual success, the cheese factory, too, has gone through improvements.

The original 1927 home of Bandon Cheese, de-

stroyed in the fire, was across the street from the present 101 location and all of the work was done by hand. A new building, electrical operations and a co-operative dairymen effort rebuilt the burned-out business.

Mr. Howard has made cheese for over half of his life and like any seasoned cook, he knows when his product is right just by feel.

The cheese "recipe" has four basic steps and Bob explains that the cheddaring process is crucial for good flavor.

Cheddaring the cheese is a series of kneading, squeezing and stacking the curd slab in uniformity until all the whey is drained off. The whole cheese process takes about four hours; cheddaring is the final step before blocking and readying the cheese for aging.

Bob and his 11-person crew are often "on stage" while viewed working through the glassed-in factory area.

"I felt like a monkey in a cage at first, but I'm used to it now," Bob admitted.

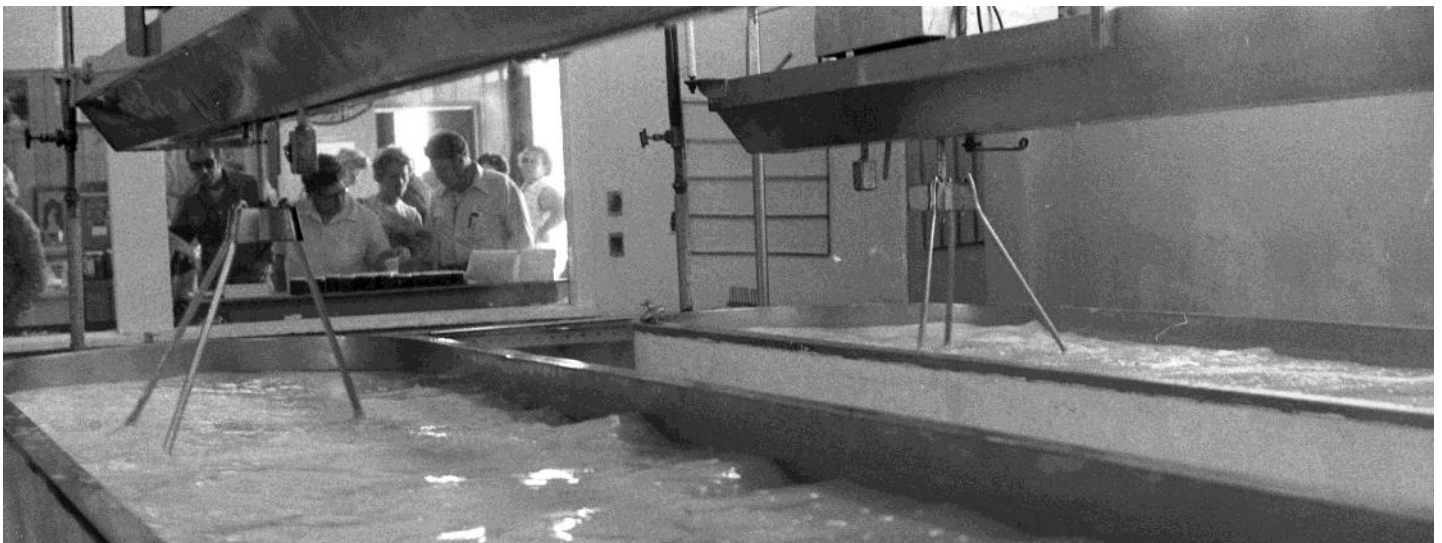
Cheese making is an absorbing procedure and visitors and newcomers to Bandon seem very interested in watching the "show."

Bob and his wife Rita both enjoy cheese and prefer mild or medium. All of their four children have sampled their father's line of work and plenty of his wares.

"I have no regrets after 39 years of cheese making and hope to work until retirement age," the head cheese master said.

All factory work has its health hazards and cheese making is no exception. The constant monotone, vibrating hum of the motors is hard on the

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Watching the cheese making process was always part of the experience of visiting Bandon's Cheese Factory.

“Where’s Randolph?” Program Revives Coquille River Memories

“Where’s Randolph?” was the museum’s May “Meet and Greet” program at the Bandon Fisheries Warehouse. Our Facebook posts promoting the program drew this response from museum member Stewart Cameron:

Don’t forget to introduce Mr. Tom Hultin, who currently enjoys the title of “The Old Man of the River”!! This Title was handed to Tom by my Father, Stewart Cameron, who held the title along the Ran-



Ed Norton and Tom Hultin at a volunteer picnic.

dolph/Rocky Point/ Prosper section of the Coquille River for a number of years prior to his passing!

I can remember my father, a logger, building his own fishing boat in one of the old-time boat building facilities on the up river section of Prosper, with the help of some of the remaining Prosper Boat Builders!

Master Cheesemaker

Continued from Page 4.

ears, and packing and stacking hundreds of 42-pound blocks of cheese a day pulls on the back muscles. Bob and his crew can testify to literally taking pains with their work.

Bob agrees, however, that it is nice to know the product a person spends time making is the best, and Bandon Cheese is, according to the man who has been part of its making since he was a 14-year-old can washer.

The final proof is in the eating, and at the rate of 700 pounds of cheese sold daily over the counter and 15 pounds sampled ever day by perspective buyers, is proof enough even for head cheese maker Bob Howard.

He housed that boat in a boathouse dock in front of the small house we lived in in Prosper!

After he purchased the property (from Orville Barrows), and built the house along North Bank Road, we moved over to that new house just downstream from Rocky Point in 1952, just in time for me to start school in 1953!

His fishing boat (with an inboard 6-cylinder engine) he moved over to the slough in Randolph, and docked in front of the Sr. Hultin’s house, later the home of the Felsheims! Many miles that old boat sped up and down that river, fishing all of the salmon holes from Riverton to Bandon, including back in the days of gill netting along the river!!

Great Life I had growing up along the Coquille River, first in Prosper, and then along the North Bank, Rocky Point and Randolph!!

Be sure to acknowledge Tom Hultin as “The Old Man on the River” (*which we did*).

Thank you,
Stewart (Stu) Cameron
Murrieta, CA



Hearing from Stewart Cameron reminded us of this photo, from 1962, of Stu and Steve McCue promoting a Bandon High spring band concert. Photo courtesy of the Mary Schamehorn collection of Western World negatives.

We recommend a visit to the Coos County Logging Museum in Myrtle Point.

You’ll step into a world of donkey drivers and whistlepunks, high-riggers and hashers, fallers and choker-setters.

Find the museum in the heart of Myrtle Point. Look for a big wooden logger.

The **Coos County Logging Museum** is open daily from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

“What celebration is complete without dancing?”

Continued from Page 1.

The grand opening hosted several hundred spectators all day and Bandon Mayor George C. Steddom declared June 4, 1977, as “Bandon Historical Society Day” in tribute.

“What celebration is complete without dancing?,” Linda Dowble, international dance teacher at SWOCC announced. Dance they did! Colorfully clad in ethnic costumes, dancers from SWOCC, Bandon and the Coos Bay Runebrg Dancers flurried in the street. Members of the Bandon Dance Class, Alice Stadelman, Beth McCurdy, Lorna Cameron and Eileen Yager, joined in the fun much to the onlookers’ toe-tapping delight.

Participation was invited and the street vibrated with dancing feet. The dancing crowd overflowed the museum confines and moved into the street for festive moonlight entertainment.

The music for the evening was presented by the Old Time Fiddlers and Ernie Osborne.

“All in all, the turnout was very pleasing and I was so happy to see everyone having fun and in such a holiday mood,” said Marge Goddard, Historical Society vice president.

“You know, we are preserving our past primarily for our children, and when my 6-year-old grandson said he thought was Museum was ‘neat,’ I was touched,” Marge added warmly.

The Director of Bandon’s “New” Museum

Shannon Applegate Mueller, pictured with her daughter Jessica, was director of the museum when it opened in 1977.

A descendent of the Applegate family connected to the Applegate Trail, Shannon is a noted author who brought experience working in heritage organizations to the job.

She curated Bandon’s Museum until 1979, two critical years in the museum’s development.

She was appointed to the Oregon Committee for the Humanities.



Other 50-Year Milestones

As we researched the first fifty years of the museum, we ran into some other Bandon 50-year milestones.

The Bandon Playhouse selected a name and formally organized as a non-profit in 1976. Sharon Hennick and Alice Stadelman were instrumental in getting the organization off the ground. Playhouse



members marched in the 1976 Cranberry Festival parade.

The Friends of the Bandon Library organized 50 years ago and elected Dee Elledge as its first president. One of the organization’s early events was a reception to welcome Judy Romans as the new librarian. The library was located in City Hall.

Ground was broken in 1976 for a new building



on Port of Bandon property to become the home of Bandon Fisheries, a seafood processing plant run by Graydon Stinnett.

Researching our own story has been a good exercise in reconnecting with Bandon’s not so distant history.

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

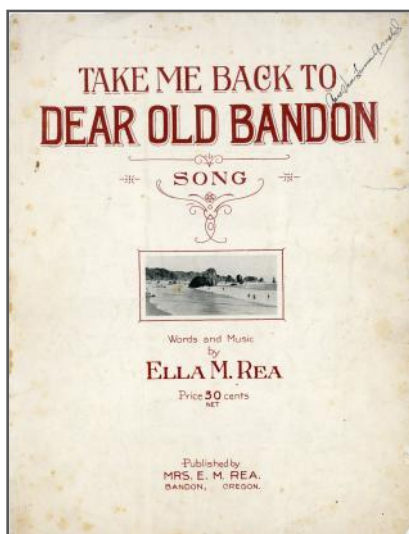
A Hundred Years Ago-- Bandon Has a Song of Its Own

Bandon has the honor of a song of her very own, written by a Bandon woman, reported the *Bandon Western World* in June of 1926. Mrs. Ella M. Rea's composition, "Take Me. Back to Dear Old Bandon," had recently been published

Mrs. Rea wrote both the words and music. Copies of the song sold for 30 cents in 1926.

Ella Rea, the widow of Judge George Whitfield Rea, a Civil War veteran buried in Bandon's GAR Cemetery, served as Bandon High School's principal before she married Judge Rea. She published several novels during her lifetime including *Mutiny on the Long Trail*, *King Chinook* and *Witchery Isle*.

Copies of "Take Me Back to Dear Old Bandon" can often be found near the piano at Bandon's History Museum.



The first verse:

Take me back to dear old Bandon,
Sunset land of beauty rare,
With its streams and mines and forests,
Nature's storehouse rich and fair.

I have trod the frozen reaches,
Desert sand and grassy lea,
But my heart still clings in memory
To dear Bandon by the sea.

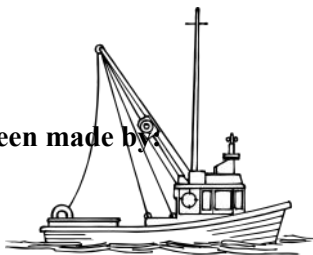
Memorial Donations:

Memorial donations have been made in the name of:

Jackie Bush
Bill Rylander
Brian Vick

Memorial donations have been made by:

Bill Bush
Vivian Nash Kelly
Melody Gillard Juarez



"The Cheesy Challenge" Is Among Tasks Students Face During Field Trip Season

Bandon's museum is eager to accommodate students of all ages from all configurations of schools and youth organizations. Our volunteer corps contains a contingent of retired educators.

We like kids.

Spring is "field trip season" and we have hosted several classes in the run up to summer vacation.

Third grade classes from Ocean Crest School completed the "Passport to the Past."

Grade school students from the Pheonix/Talent school district, who stayed overnight at Bullards State Park, took a historic walking tour that ended with ice cream sundaes with volunteer Sharon Haga.

Ocean Crest fourth grade classes took "The Cheesy Challenge," then went for ice cream at Face Rock Creamery.



Miss "Z" invites Ocean Crest fourth graders to sample some "historic odors" with the aim of smelling blue cheese and learning about the Langlois Blue Cheese famous in the 1950s. It's one task in meeting "The Cheesy Challenge."

New Members:

Individual and Family Members:

Marshall Kinnard
Patrick Honstain
Susie McNaughton
Marian Briggs



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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