



THE BANDON LIGHT

Sponsored by: The Joe and Frances Naumes

Family Foundation Inc.

A PUBLICATION OF THE BANDON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Cutting the Ribbon Opens the Don and Joan Lynam Event Center

The Bandon Historical Society cut the ribbon opening the new Don and Joan Lynam Event Center to the public at a well-attended gathering in the new facility the afternoon of August 3.

Museum Board President Elaine Stohler conducted the ceremony inside the new auditorium. Elaine thanked Robin Miller, the attorney who



Director Gayle Hankwitz, surrounded by board members and friends, cuts the ribbon to open the Don and Joan Lynam Event Center on August 3.

helped Don Lynam prepare his will and assisted the Historical Society through its execution. She recognized Sheri McGrath, of Coos Curry Consulting, who guided the museum with the permitting process and who designed the events center building. Elaine thanked contractor Stephan Gederos and construction foreman Bob Newman, of Morrison-Gederos Construction, who built the building.

She then invoked Don Lynam, who left his estate to the Bandon Historical Society in 2022 with the condition the society add an "auditorium" within five years of his death. Don and his wife Joan were society members and Joan was a volunteer. Elaine concluded by reading a letter by David Drillock, executor of the Lynam estate.

Board members Sheri Wright and Berta Dargen held up a large red ribbon. Executive Director Gayle Hankwitz, wielding an enormous pair of scissors, made the ceremonial opening cut. The group

then moved outside to the front porch to cut the ribbon again, initiating a new era for the museum and historical society.

The following is a letter from David Drillock, the executor of Don Lynam's estate.

August 2, 2026

Here we go....

Good day everyone.

Susan and I had known Don and Joan since we were still dating and that goes back to the late 70's. They sort of adopted us and we visited them several times in Laguna Beach and over the ensuing years they were often at our family Holiday gatherings.

Don made a great bartender too! I'm betting many of you might know that.

Joan and Don were patriots, both having served in the military. Joan was a nurse in Vietnam and Don



City Councilor Don Lynam was representing the city when he cut the ribbon to open a new section of Bandon's Museum in 1999. He is flanked by Historical Society President Pat Powell and Director Judy Knox.

an Officer and Pharmacist. I always saw them as grateful Americans who believed hard work and a positive attitude were key to a good and fulfilling life.

Don so wanted to leave a legacy of some sort from Joan and himself. They loved Bandon and made many friends. Don, in particular, was also in-

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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



**Gayle Hankwitz
Executive Director**

We are not millionaires
anymore!

For a time, when we had the
money from Don Lynam's es-
tate in our building fund, we
had over a million dollars in
the bank.

We are not millionaires to-
day because construction on the Don and Joan Lynam
Event Center is finally finished. It turned out lovely.
We definitely used every penny of the money Don
left us on the project he intended.

It has been an exciting and fun-filled summer
made more so by the ongoing construction.

First Interstate Bank and Best Western Inn at Face
Rock have once again sponsored our "Free Summer
Sundays," allowing visitors to tour our museum at no
cost every Sunday from Memorial Day through the
Cranberry Festival.

Kids and adults alike en-
joyed two special Sunday
activities—gold panning and
ice cream socials. What
could be more enjoyable
than finding gold and eating
a delicious ice cream sundae
provided by Sunset Ocean-
front Lodging? We really
appreciate our sponsors!



On August 20, our muse-
um family met to celebrate
another successful year and to honor our volunteers
who made our success possible. It was a wonderful
evening of good food and friends in our new event
center.

Check out our newly updated website at [https://
bandonhistoricalmuseum.org/](https://bandonhistoricalmuseum.org/). Volunteers Andy
Christensen and Bob Coraor developed and main-
tained the site for years. But the time came when we
needed to hire a professional web designer to do an
update. A grant from the Bandon Dunes Charitable
Foundation funded the process and volunteer Sheri
Wright worked with McDuff Design to bring the new
site online.

Anyone who has visited our new Don and Joan
Lynam events center likely noticed the acoustics are a
bit rough. As we furnish and fill the building, we are
looking for strategies to soften the echoes.

The sharp sounds are a reminder that just because
the construction has ended, the job is not done.

Remembering a Member of our Museum Community

John Gamble, a long-time Bandon resident, died August 11, 2026, after a battle with cancer. A member of the Bandon High School Class of 1958, Gamble served on the Bandon City Council for some years and worked in administration for the Coos County Sheriff's Department before retiring. He is survived by his wife, Chele, who worked for the City of Bandon in the finance department before retiring.

John's commitment to Bandon ran deep. He served as a City Council member and volunteered with the Bandon Historical Society, including a term on its board and a stint as board treasurer. Perhaps his proudest civic achievement was spearheading the Bandon Sister City partnership, a project that took him on a memorable trip to Bandon, Ireland - one of his favorite corners of the world. Those who knew John remember him as a great conversationalist with a gift for making everyone he spoke with feel better.

A more complete obituary is available online. Per John's wishes, no services were held. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made in his name to the Bandon Historical Society.



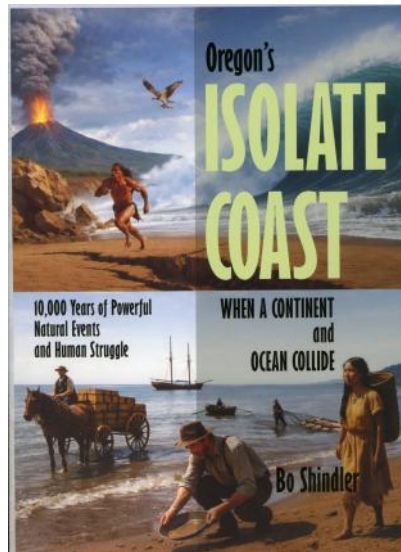
John and Chele Gamble

Bo Shindler's *Oregon's Isolate Coast* Available in Museum Store

Bo Shindler, Bandon High Class of 1967, recently published a book, *Oregon's Isolate Coast*, which is on sale in our museum gift shop.

Robin Miller, local attorney and museum member, left this review online:

"Just finished, hot off the press, Bo Shindler's marvelous tribute to what he calls the "Isolate Coast," the rugged geographic center of Curry County, Oregon. This is a "history" book, but it's history told engagingly in the grand manner of the nineteenth-century, history as literature, an author's sincere and deeply-felt personal account. Bo's enthusiasm is evident; no detail or fact is unimportant. At first I was wondering why I must endure so many foundational paragraphs on the science – plate tectonics, flooding and hydrology, wind patterns, fire ecology, native anadromous fish, the transition from the Pleistocene to the Holocene ... But patience rewards. You come to appreciate that no ethnography or human or political history can be properly told without understanding the singular natural facts of the place. As Bo writes, 'One overriding theme I kept circling back to was how the



area feels like a secure box, secluded and at the margins of society from the rest of the world, figuratively and metaphorically at the end of a road, and how this shapes, defines, or has a role in almost everything that has ever been here.' A good book to have in your library, a go-to one-volume reference history for Curry County."

The full price of *Oregon's Isolate Coast*, when purchased in the museum's gift shop, stays with the museum, thanks to the generosity of Bo Shindler.

Another New Chapter for Our "Night at the Museum"

Our popular "Night at the Museum" event is 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.

Because of our construction project, last year's "Night at" was held at the Bandon Fisheries Warehouse as a "Night FOR the Museum."

The 2026 edition will present a new twist because it returns to the museum and will include our new Don and Joan Lynam Event Center.

Not exactly a Halloween party, it does fall in the Halloween season. It's a fun opportunity to share the museum after dark. Visit or call the museum to purchase tickets.



A Change in Name and Location Marks Era in Our 50 Year History

The Bandon Historical Society is celebrating 2026 as its Golden Anniversary. In our March issue, we told the story of the society's birth in 1976. In June we covered opening a museum in the Masonic Hall building in 1977.



"Growing Pains" might describe the next phase, the period beginning in 1983 when the museum was renamed and located in the old Coast Guard building.

The *Western World*, April 6, 1983, reported that the "Grand-Reopening" day for the Bandon Historical Society museum would be Saturday during the (short-lived) Festival of the Phoenix.

The museum had been in boxes while a new home was being prepared in the second story of the old Coast Guard building. The opening exhibits included six main areas.



The museum reopened under a new name and in a new location in April of 1983.

One would spotlight the cranberry industry. The area's logging industry would be covered in photos and displays of logging implements and wood products. The museum's Indian exhibit would feature an excellent basket display donated by Hazel Fahy-Fetters and artifacts from the personal collection of Reg Pullen, an archeologist for the Bureau of Land Management. The Grandma's Attic exhibit featured early household artifacts and clothing. An ever-popular feature of the museum was its marine collection.

And, of course, the reopening exhibits included photos of before and after the fires of 1914 and 1936.

For the Port of Bandon to gain possession of the old Coast Guard building, it had taken a complicated

deal among several government agencies and included an act of congress. Housing the museum seemed like a perfect fit. But, over time, a dispute over rent soured the relationship between the Historical Society and the Port of Bandon.

When the Historical Society was celebrating its 20th Anniversary in 1996, Mary Capps summarized that era this way: "In April of 1983, we were invited by the Port of Bandon to move to the old Coast



Reg Pullen built displays when the museum was in the Port of Bandon's building. Reg is currently on the boards of both the Historical Society and the Port.

Guard Building. We then named our museum the Coquille River Museum because our history grew along its banks. We stayed in that location until we were evicted by the Port of Bandon in the fall of 1995. We put all the artifacts in storage. At our annual meeting in November, 1995, things looked mighty glum for the Society."

In hindsight, we know a fresh start in a new location was just around the corner.



Jim Cawdrey made a presentation to Bob Sutherland when the museum was on the second floor of the old Coast Guard building.

Bandon's Cranberry Festival Gets State Recognition

The Oregon Heritage Commission recently recognized the Bandon Cranberry Festival as an "Oregon Heritage Tradition." Bandon's Chamber of Commerce led the designation process. The Festival began in 1947. Bandon's History Museum documented information that helped the Chamber apply for the state designation.

The Oregon Heritage Tradition designation recognizes events more than 50 years old that represent what it means to be an Oregonian. Designated events are unique locally, regionally, and statewide. In short, these events add to the livability and identity of the state.

The 80th Anniversary of the Cranberry Festival will be celebrated September 10 through 13, 2026. The museum is participating by joining in a storefront-decorating contest, displaying our collection of Cranberry Princess gowns in the museum, and offering free admission Friday, Saturday and Sunday of Cranberry Festival Weekend.



Fire Program Set for 90th Anniversary Date

A program to commemorate the 1936 Bandon Fire will be held in the Don and Joan Lynam Event Center at the Bandon History Museum, Saturday, September 26, 2026, the 90th anniversary of the disaster. The program will begin at 2:00 pm



and admission to the program and to the adjacent museum will be free all day.

Museum volunteers Mary Schamehorn and Jim Proehl will narrate the photo-rich program. At the end of a dry summer when drought and forest fires have been so much in the news, Bandon's 1936 fire seems like a timely bit of history.

Be sure to leave time, before or after the program, to visit the museum's "1936 Fire exhibit," open 10:00 am to 4:00 pm.

Bandon's First Cranberry Festival DID NOT include a parade

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

A parade was not part of the first Cranberry Festival.

The parade was added in 1948, the second year of the celebration.

Thirty entries, including floats, horses, and farm equipment, formed-up near the Coast Guard Station.

The VFW posts from Bandon and Coquille provided the color guard. Lou Wright conducted the Bandon High marching band.

Bandon History Minutes play on KBDN-FM 96.5 and other Bicoastal Media Radio Stations.



Queen Lois Blakely and her Cranberry Court rode in a Packard convertible driven by Martin Kranick.

Judy Brown, later Bandon's Mayor, won an award for the best children's entry with her decorated tricycle.

About the time the parade reached Lloyd's Café, a box in the street was set on fire and the fire department provided, "a Keystone Cops style demonstration of how NOT to put out a fire," reported the newspaper. The smoke eaters put on a wild show with men running up ladders with disconnected lengths of hose."

A parade has been a part of the Bandon Cranberry Festival ever since.

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

Bill Lansing Publishes a New Book About Prohibition

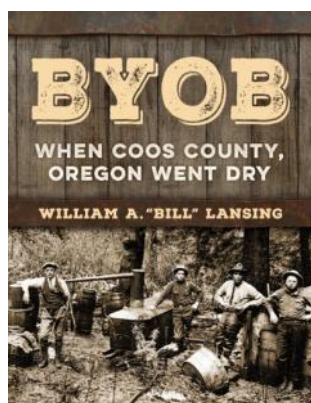
Coos County did not have an Al Capone or Lucky Luciano, according to local author Bill Lansing, but they did have boot leggers and moonshine murders.

Lansing's newly released book, *B. Y. O. B. (When Coos County, Oregon Went Dry)* traces the evolution of prohibition in Oregon from the initial effort to control intoxicating liquor in 1844 to the passage of the state-wide ban on manufacturing and consumption of all liquor in 1914. The Local Option and the new Referendum laws provided confusing opportunities for Oregon cities, counties and smaller voting precincts to directly control the sale of liquor. The local Coos County sheriffs, city police and prohibition officers struggled to enforce the ever-changing laws.

The book is sprinkled with stories and photos of the war between the saloons of Oregon and the Temperance movement that tried to shut them down. And finally unravels why Oregon is one of several states in the country that only allows hard liquor to be sold in state-regulated and owned stores.

Bill's previous books, rich with historic photos, range across Coos County subjects including logging operations, early schools, cheese production, doctors, mills, rivers, and labor relations.

To find Bill's books, including *BYOB*, visit <https://billlansing.com>.



Ribbon-Cutting Opens New Era

Continued from Page 1

terested in US history and this contribution to the Bandon Historical Society is a perfect match in many ways.

Susan and I are sorry we could not make this event, but we hope to be out later in the fall to see the vision come to fruition. It's not the end, but a new chapter for the Historical Society that we think many will enjoy for years to come.

It has been a long project. Many thanks to all involved for making this happen. There are big smiles on Joan and Don faces in heaven!

All the best,
David and Susan Drillock

Item Sparks Author's Interest

Author Bill Lansing collaborates frequently with Bandon's museum. He cites an item he found among our exhibits as piquing his interest in Coos County moonshining.

We're not sure of the story's source or its accuracy, but it's a fun story to share:

Exploding Milk Cans

Though Bandon has earned a well-deserved reputation for fine cheeses throughout the years, old time Bandon dairymen and cheesemakers remember a few problems with milk cans exploding.

During the prohibition 1914-1933, Bandon cheese had a little more "zing" than cheesemakers intended. When the milk cans holding the condensed milk began exploding, tests were run to determine the problem.

Words came back to the cheesemakers that local cows were contributing milk with a high yeast content which expanded and blew the lids off the milk cans. The test traced the problem to the cows' water source.

Testers said that as soon as Bandon's leading citizens dismantled their whiskey stills on Ferry Creek, the milk would be less explosive.

Grant Helps the Event Center

The Judith Ann Mogan Foundation of Coos Bay awarded the museum a \$5,000 grant as part of its 2026 grant cycle. Museum Board members Charis McGaughy and Sharon Haga guided the historical society through the application process.

With the construction phase of the Don and Joan Lynam Event Center complete, the challenge turns to furnishing and operating the new addition. The Mogan grant funds will be used to purchase equipment and appliances for the kitchen, chairs and tables for the auditorium, and interior and exterior signs.

Memorial Donations:

Memorial donations have been made in the name of:

Jeanne Joyce
John Gamble
Bill Rylander
Alan Goodell

Wayne Campbell
George and Kate Williams
William James

Memorial donations have been made by:

Sandy Butler
Sandra Weaver
Maud Capps
Ann Remy
Lisa King Reed
Kimberly Johnson
Jeanette Todd
Patrick and Roberta Donaldson

Jim Proehl
Horty Joyce
Theresa Thornton
James Rylander
Gary Ratcliffe
Stan Goodell
Jim and Alyce Cawdrey



A Recent Donation: An Opportunity to Share More Local History

An item arrived in the mail August 10, 2026, with this note attached.

Bandon Historical Society:

As per my phone call, enclosed is a card that was found in my great-great-grandfather's document box. Not sure of the year of publication but given the history of the cottages, I know it was not after 1936. In any event, it's yours for display.

John Crenshaw

Fresno, California

don Museum" in every edition since the launch of the *By the Sea Bulletin*.

It's a winning proposition for both groups; the publication gets content that is not advertising and the museum gets space, at no charge, to pursue its mission of sharing local history.

This winter, we worked with the Curry County Historical Society to facilitate the same relationship when the Baltimore Center added a Gold Beach edition to their family of advertising publications.

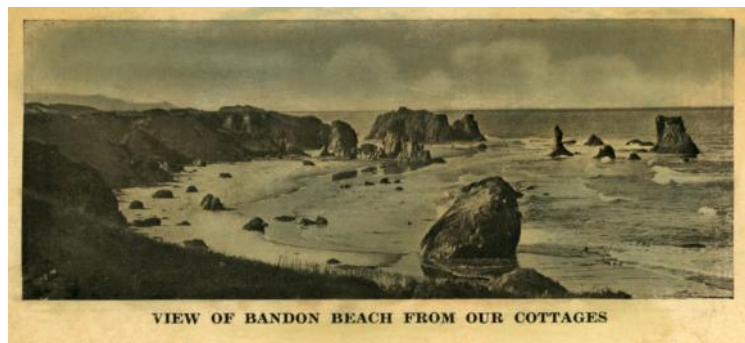
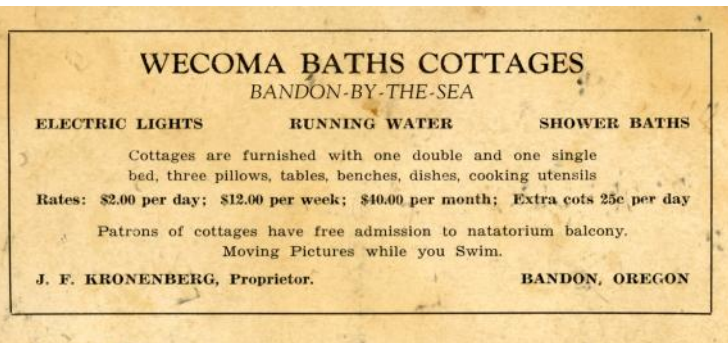
This item ran in the Bandon *Bulletin*, August 10. **A little history from Bandon's Museum**

Miss Helen Brown, 16-year-old Portland girl, was rescued from drowning in the surf at the local beach near the natatorium Monday afternoon, August 9, 1926, by Edward Cardinel and Jack Dean, lifeguards at Wecoma Baths.



Miss Brown had been "riding the breakers" but was drifting out toward the big rocks when her plight was discovered by those on shore. She fought bravely and except for her courage would have been lost. Word was sent to the natatorium. The two guards, both excellent swimmers, arrived. Cardinel was the first to reach the girl's side, soon joined by Dean, and she was safely brought to shore.

Look for "**A Little History from Bandon's Museum**" in each week's *By the Sea Bulletin*.



In August of 2024, Leo Johnson of the Baltimore Center Mail & Ship stopped by the museum to introduce himself and explain that he was starting a new weekly "shopper," the *By the Sea Bulletin*, similar to the *Coffee Break* once published by the Bandon *Western World*. Leo asked the museum to consider contributing some historical content each week.

There has been "**A little history from the Ban-**

Join us for

A Veterans Celebration

Saturday, November 7, 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM
The Don and Joan Lynam Event Center
and the main museum.

Special Collections and Military Vehicles.
Watch for details.

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!

New Members:

Individual and Family Members:

Mark Havill
Bob Pickel Family

Rhonda Nowak

Life Members:

Faye Albertson
Robert and Jean Wirsing
Gary Shaffar Family
Charles and Annette Weisenseel
Patrick and Roberta Donaldson



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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