WATERWAYS

COOS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY • FALL 2016 • WWW.COOSHISTORY.ORG

Coos Historical Fund on the Ballot

This November, eight history museums in Coos County have a ballot measure for you to consider. A "yes" vote on Ballot Measure 6-153 would create a county-wide Historical Fund to provide funding for non-profit history museums located within Coos County in order to assist with expenditures such as paid staff, office and preservation supplies, utilities, fixed costs and equipment. The eight legally eligible museums are: Bandon Historical Society Museum (Bandon),

Coos County Fairgrounds Museum (Myrtle Point), Coos County Logging Museum (Myrtle Point), "Coos History Museum" (Coos Bay), Coquille Valley Historical Society Museum (Coquille), Marshfield Sun Printing Museum

LET'S MAKE

VOTE YES MEASURE 6-153

Eight independent history museums cooperating to secure stable funding through a Coos County Historical Fund.

(Coos Bay), Oregon Coast Historical Railway Museum (Coos Bay), Wagner House and Rail Depot (Powers). An appointed

authority, subject to approval by the Commissioners, to impose taxes to a maximum rate of \$.10 per \$1,000 of assessed value of real property, which would raise approximately \$500,000.00 in the first year, based on the County Assessor's estimate. This rate would produce a tax of \$10 on a property assessed at \$100,000. Each fiscal year the Advisory Board will propose a detailed estimate of the funds each museum requires for approval by the Commissioners. A portion of the fund will be annually held in a contingency reserve for collaborative projects among the participating museums, such as for grant writing or shared equipment, and for emergencies. No portion of the fund is proposed for use in administration of the fund itself. If this measure passes, and so long as the fund is viable, admission to the eight

Advisory Board consisting of five

members collectively representing

the eight museums will have the

LET'S MAKE HISTORY!

Supporting Measure 6-153 creates the first grassroots effort in Oregon to strengthen a group of independent history museums in a collaborative way for improved access and sustainable service, and to improve the entire fabric of our county as a whole.

At a modest cost, \$10 on a \$100,000 home, the Coos County Historical Fund will do great good. When we support history museums, we support Coos County – its people, its economy, its future.

The Fund is an investment in our history museums to collect and share our greatest treasures – the memories and stories of the real people and events shaping our unique region. The deeper our knowledge of our past, the better we understand its connection to the present and its influence on charting our future.

Learning about and celebrating our past through our history museums helps us focus on all that has been accomplished in Coos County, aiding us in finding direction and pride in our communities.

Strengthened by stable funding, our museums will be able to contribute to regional prosperity and promote tourism by drawing in more visitors, and to create a more thriving, vibrant, and diverse cultural life for Coos County residents.

The history museums' ability to expand educational programs for children with new funding will present exciting opportunities for life-long learning.

WHAT ARE OTHER BENEFITS OF A COOS COUNTY HISTORICAL FUND:

- Creating a mechanism for museum cooperation similar to our public libraries.
- Strengthening museum exhibits countywide, including interactive features.
- Establishing regular open hours at all history museum with the addition of part-time staff.
- Providing money for joint projects that will benefit all, such as grant writing, or children's programs.

IF MEASURE 6-153 PASSES,
ALL COOS COUNTY RESIDENTS AND
THEIR FAMILIES WILL HAVE FREE
ADMISSION TO ALL COUNTY HISTORY
MUSEUMS – FOREVER!

Free Night at the Museum

eligible museums will be free of charge

for Coos County residents and their

families.

The eight local history museums that are supporting local Ballot Measure 6-153 (Coos County Historical Fund) invite the public to attend a free event at the Coos History Museum (1210 N. Front St., Coos Bay) on Thursday, October 6th starting at 6:30 pm. Several representatives from local history museums will make a short presentation about the ballot measure in the main community room after which attendees may view the Coos History Museum exhibits with no admission charge. Those who attend the presentation can also join a tour "behind the exhibits" by visiting rooms normally not open to the public where exhibit prep and other museum operations take place. Light refreshments will be served.

Interim Director at the Helm

George B. Wright assumed the position of Interim Executive Director for the Coos History Museum back on June 13 of this year. He was known to have had a long and productive career in the not-for-profit sector in Oregon. He served for 26 years with the American Lung Association of Oregon, working at every level from program staff to state Executive Director. Subsequent to that noted tenure, George and his wife Betsy created the consulting firm of C3 Strategies and for another 14 years he concentrated on work with 501(C)(3) organizations focusing on board development and strategic planning. He was also noted for his written work on organizational management, developing effective boards, and executive director education.

George says of his time in Coos County, "I was wonderfully welcomed by virtually every person I met from day one. The passion and enthusiasm for their brand new museum was consistent and genuine by everyone in Coos County, whether it be the person on the street, the mayors, president of the college, ...everyone."

He added that, "The sparkling new building on the bay which houses the new incarnation of the Coos History Museum is grand, has a superb collection, and now serves as one of the county's most sought after gathering venues." He also had high praise for the museum's staff and board of directors, both of which are digging in and working hard to expand the mission and purpose of the Coos History Museum to the betterment of the county's venerable history.

The Executive Director Search Committee reports a very robust response to the position offering and will be interviewing several applicants in the near future. The Board hopes to have a new director by the end of fall.



During the Railroad Centennial weekend, this drone photo was taken by <u>OregonDroneWorx.com</u> of the CBR going past the CHM.

Six Months of Museum Attendance

A total of 1408 admissions have been recorded from January to July of 2016, many from out of county, totaling \$8297. That admission number does not include the hundreds of attendees at events in rooms rented for various reasons, such as classes, birthdays, weddings, showers, conferences – or simply any reason that people might want to gather in such a scenic location with a view of the bay. Answers to questions regarding room rentals can be found at the following: rentals@cooshistory.org

Coos County Historical Society

Staff

Interim Director: George Wright Collections Manager: Vicki Wiese Assistant Collections Manager: Michelle Nash Education Coordinator: Amy Pollicino Store Mgr., Volunteer Mgr.: Valerie Caskey Rentals Coordinator: Jeanne Hart Bookkeeper: Terri Knight Maintenance: Bay Area Enterprises

Board of Trustees

President: Bill Mast Vice-President: Carol Ventgen Secretary: Anne Guerin Treasurer: Karen O'Donnell Trustees: Toni Ann Brend, Ann Collins, Steve Greif, Jan Hooper, Darla Lesan, Toni Poole, Sally Prouty, Arlene Roblan,

Carl Siminow, Joe Slack

Museum

Open Tuesday thru Sunday, 10–5 Adults = \$7, Children 5–17 = \$3 Family Maximum = \$17 AARP and AAA discounts Free to members and active-duty service 541.756.6320, www.cooshistory.org

Railroad Centennial

By Steve Greif



The Coos Bay Rail Link carried hundreds of visitors past the Coos History Museum during the railroad celebration weekend.

The Coos History Museum was actively involved with the Port of Coos Bay during the first weekend of August 2016 to celebrate the centennial of the arrival of rail service to Coos County. Volunteers at the museum sold tickets for weekend passenger train rides between the Coos Bay boardwalk and the railroad bridge span. Valerie Caskey created a nice display of railroad centennial T-shirts and other merchandise in the Museum Store. Vicki Wiese and Joan Greif prepared a new exhibit on county rail history in the Forrester Exhibit Case in the museum lobby. Board member Steve Greif gave a free presentation in the museum's Sprague Room, attended by about 50 patrons, about the history of railroads in Coos County. Steve also worked with Martin Callery to produce a 50-page history booklet about the history of County rail. Copies of this history booklet are still available at \$15 in the Museum Store. Education director Amy Pollicino led activities for children about transportation history. Volunteers Carol Ventgen, Darla Lesan, and Art and Toni Poole helped the Oregon Coast Historical Railroad Museum extend their museum hours over the centennial weekend. A special thank you to Port staffers Fiona Bai and Charlotte Menten for their efforts in creating centennial events. Overall, the celebration was a great success, bringing many visitors to the community and the museum.



A special Railroad Centennial exhibit case was created in the CHM lobby for the event.



Valerie Caskey set up a nice display of Centennial merchandise for the weekend.



Amy Pollicino, CHM Education Director, led children's activities during the Railroad Centennial.

South County Tour a Hit



The tour started at the Logging Museum in Myrtle Point.

By Anne Guerin

On Saturday, July 9, 2016, 52 guests toured historical sites in south Coos County as part of an educational event and fundraiser for the Coos History Museum. Organized and led by historical society president Bill Mast and secretary Anne Guerin, the bus tour included visits to the Myrtle Point Logging Museum, the Wagner pioneer home in Powers, and several barns and ranch sites associated with the Dement, Guerin, and Powers family ranches. Al Powers, a descendant of the namesake for the county's southernmost incorporated town, also led some of the historical narrative along the route together with Kassandra Rippee and Bridgett Wheeler, representatives of the Coquille Indian tribe. Lunch was provided by Gary and Diane Simon and Ron and Joan Harpole of the Dement Ranch at their ranch home at Eckley in the Coast Range up Salmon Creek out of Powers. The trip was partially sponsored by

Country Natural Beef, a cooperative of ranchers in the western states who adhere to specific guidelines, such as low-stress cattle handling and removing animals from the program if antibiotics must be administered for health reasons. The Myrtle Point School District provided a bus for the tour, driven by Cheryl Hermann, a regular bus driver and wife of a descendant of the pioneering Hermanns in Coos County.

A one-hour visit to the Myrtle Point Logging Museum was scarcely enough to examine the wealth of logging artifacts accumulated there. The round building itself, formerly an LDS church, is an intriguing piece of architecture providing a lesson in acoustics. Volunteers promise some new exhibits in waiting for a subsequent visit.

Elizabeth Hamlett organized four volunteers at the Wagner House to lead groups through the well-maintained home, built in 1867. The Wagner ranch and home were purchased by Albert Powers in 1912

after his arrival in 1907 to manage Smith-Powers Logging. In 1912, the logging company constructed a railroad to transport logs to the Coos Bay port. Formerly known as Wagner or Rural, the community was named Powers around 1914 after the loggers voted to honor their employer. The Powers family later donated the Wagner House to the town, along with the old train depot. The Railroad Museum, temporarily closed, houses old logging photos and relics of early logging equipment.

Al Powers related an anecdote regarding his grandfather, who was in a speeder heading up Salmon Creek while a log train was heading down. A foul up in communications with Coos Bay Lumber Company using the same dispatcher led to a head-on collision on a trestle. The resulting injuries sidelined Mr. Powers for at least a year.

The Dement Ranch headquarters is called Eckley, named by postmistress **Priscilla Guerin**, a pioneer in that region. Eckley was



Tour participants enjoyed visiting the Wagner House in Powers

once a community with several families, including the Joseph Haines family of 15 children. Around 1870, Haines built the large ranch house that stands today. It served for a while as a stagecoach stop for passengers traveling between Myrtle Point and Port Orford, with nine bedrooms to accommodate family and travelers. The home retains much of its early flavor, from the myrtlewood oxen yoke on the fireplace mantel to the hallway lined with cowboy boots, hats, and coats. A variety of old, rusty brands line the wall by the entry, including the original Dement brand, a straight D, the first registered cattle brand in the state - in the early 1850s. Samuel M. Dement, the first Dement settler in Oregon, came on the Oregon Trail in 1851.

Not far from the house, in the Graveyard Pasture under stately oak trees, stands a tombstone of an original resident, Liberty Haines. The story of his violent and early demise evokes images from Western movies. As a child, Liberty was kicked in the head by a horse, which caused him to be "not right" thereafter. He accused his brother-in-law, Hugh Hampton, of stealing one of his pigs, then shot at him down in front of the barn. Hugh returned fire, hitting Liberty twice, who was then carried to the bed in the downstairs bedroom, where he eventually died. Hugh was not charged with the killing, as it was self-defense. The original barn doors show the bullet holes. The barn, built around 1890, was built mostly of hand-hewn Port Orford cedar, the frame put together with oak pins. A central section was used as a threshing floor for wheat, with grain storage bins in two corners.

Al Powers related several stories as he led us to the Guerin Barn, on the former Guerin homestead in the Eckley community, now part of the Powers Ranch. The barn houses an old horse-drawn milk delivery wagon used in Powers. Al recalled that the horse became so used to the route, the driver could get out and cover the block while the horse moved to the end of the block and stopped – without a driver. At the Goat Barn (long missing any goat inhabitants), Al explained the operation of the two beef wheels, so efficient that one man could hoist a large animal to butcher.

We passed the once beautiful "Big House" at Deer Park on the Powers Ranch but did not explore the home now moldering in advanced decay.

Travel to the far flung high prairies in these Coast Range ranches was not possible, although tour participants could enjoy, during the lunch period, the view of Sugarloaf Mountain to the west and Salt Lick Prairie to the east, rising several thousand feet in elevation.

Fall 2016 5

ROLL CALL

June through August, 2016

New Individuals

Glasgow, Joan King, Gary & Darlene Newhouse, Kathryn Thornton, Peggy Richardson, Pat

Renewing Individuals

Long, Elgen & Kay Simmons, Marjorie

New Family

Roush, Virginia L Gossard, Derry & Mary Whitwer, Richard Edwards, Marsha & Robert Dayton, Steve & LaVerne Sherley, Rebecca Potts, Laurie Laird, Alan & Heather Pickering, Donja Mikowski, Judy Cunningham, Hank

Renewing Families

Contino, H.S
Bloom, Melanie
Cooper, Jon &
Catherine Shindler
Engels, John D.
Abel, Bryan & Linda
Hartman, John & Gayla
Kohler, Eric & Mary
Newhouse, Kathryn
Griffin, Thomas & Barbara
Robertson, Daniel & Mary
Crane, Dave
Stebbins, Mike & Mary Lou

Memorial Donations

In Memory of Mike Sickels: Audio Video Partners John & Colleen Bushmaker Gal Pals Betty Lavelle

Thanks to
CNB Security
for donating their
services during the
July 4th festivities
at the museum.

Coos Web Cams Installed

By George Tinker

The web cams installed on the navigation channel side of the Coos History Museum are a project initiated by South Coast Anglers, a local chapter of the STEP program. The vision was to offer two web cam views that show the working waterfront of Coos Bay modeled after what the ODOT web cams offer for highway traffic. In Coos Bay this is our "water highway" both historically and currently. While they may be referred to as the "fish cams" seasonally during the fall salmon fishing season, they offer a greater view to the tourist economy visiting our area year round. Research data supports that our tourists come to the Bay Area for the natural resources and recreational opportunities. These visitor activities frequently result in multi-day stays in local motels and visits to local attractions like the Coos History Museum.

Presently, there are only a few specialized web cams in the Coos Bay area. Current reliable web cams showing the Coos Bay water areas are the ODOT camera on the McCullough Bridge looking south, the BLM camera looking across a portion of the airport runway and chip pile, and the NOAA camera at the Coos Bay bar looking at the transit area between the jetties. The two new Coos History Museum cameras will point north toward the Mill Casino and eastward to the Marshfield channel.

The project vision included the tourism industry sponsors with primary financial



support with grants from the Coos Bay/ North Bend Visitor Convention Bureau, Coos Bay/North Bend Rotary Club, Coos Bay Chamber of Commerce, South Cost Anglers and a few individuals. A most important sponsor is the Coos History Museum by providing the ideal location to offer a first-class view of our bay. The web cameras are an effort to support our destination tourist and local population that may want to have a look at the waterfront from their computer or smart phone. The project represents a donation to the Coos History Museum in excess of \$6,500. The camera views will be available to the public on a variety of websites and has the flexibility to add a link to an additional website. As an initial site offering, the web camera links can be viewed on www.OregonsAdventurecoast. com, www.cooshistory.org, and www. morgancreekfishhatcherv.org.



In early August, the North Bend City Council held a work session at the museum (above) and Congressman Peter DeFazio held a town hall meeting attracting about 90 citizens. These are two examples of how the CHM has actively been involved in community affairs.

Be scared... be very scared... (or curious & amused!)

Fall Fun Tricks & Treats in the Museum Store

By Valerie Caskey

The season will soon be upon us for ooey gooey, spooky and odd, mysterious and hard to believe.

It may, in fact, be hard to believe that one of the best-selling books in the museum store is Mysteries and Legends of Oregon: True Stories of the Unsolved and Unexplained. This is a selection of fourteen stories from Oregon's past. It explores some of the Beaver State's most compelling mysteries and debunks some of its most famous myths. Some of these stories are, indeed, pretty spooky.

Other spooky reads include Ghost Hunting Oregon, a guide to where and how to find our Oregon ghosties, Ghost Pirates, and Strange Monsters of the Pacific Northwest. Strange Monsters covers the lore of aquatic, terrestrial, and airborne unknowns from prehistory through the first decade of the 21st century. They say "know thy enemy". If these particular monsters exist, it might be a good idea to read this book right about now... Halloween coming and all...

For the younger reader there's *The Scary Places Map Book.* Kids take a tour of seven spooky places. They need to avoid booby traps, search for hidden objects, and along the way they learn basic map reading skills. Goosebumps and giggles for all.

If pirate inspiration is needed for this year's Halloween costume, *Pirateology* is a gorgeously designed book. From the compass on the cover to all the charming elements within, it's packed with information that promises to enthrall pirate-loving children and adults everywhere. This book is not only educational but a work of art as well.

If you know a little or large person who wants to be a mermaid



Some museum guests, as well as staff and volunteers, would say that the spookiest of all in the Museum Store is Seatco, a blown glass piece by Coquille tribal member William Murphy. If by chance you aren't familiar with the story of Seatco, come down to the shop and read about him, and I'm sure you'll agree that the artist's depiction of Seatco is astounding.

for All Hallow's Eve (or forever more), The Secret History of Mermaids and Creatures of the Deep: Or the Liber Acquaticum comes highly recommended. This is a lavishly illustrated resource featuring sundry flaps, booklets, and gatefolds that offer insight into the lives, origins, language, and magic of the elusive merfolk. It is gorgeous. So gorgeous in fact, that it is listed under 'Art' in some catalogs.

Among other spooky odd items that are seasonally appropriate, there are the History's Mysteries cards, a fun and educational card game for adults based on the History Channel's show of the same name, or adorn your walls with one of Bandon artist Laura Brownfield's fused glass skeleton fish. Quirky and beautiful, they are sure to bring a smile.

Some museum guests, as well as staff and volunteers, would say that the spookiest of all in the Museum Store is Seatco, a blown glass piece by Coquille tribal member William Murphy. Mr. Murphy crafts exquisite hand blown glass pieces such as whale tails, salmon, and jellyfish paperweights, but Seatco is historically not a nice sea entity. Mr. Murphy has captured his menace and power. If by chance you aren't familiar with the story of Seatco, come down to the shop and read about him, and I'm sure you'll agree that the artist's depiction of Seatco is astounding.

And last but not least, the creepy gross ooey gooey bit mentioned in the first paragraph. It's nearing Halloween after all. Slimy rubber jellyfish, squishy stretchy starfish that light up inside, little frogs that stretch to many times their size, and I ask you, who on earth would not want to possess for their very own, a squashy squishy yellow rubber banana with slimy little (banana) slugs inside?

I, for one, am in line at the register.

A very happy fall and Happy All Hallow's Eve to all.

Fall 2016 7



1210 North Front Street, Coos Bay, OR 97420 (541) 756-6320 • www.cooshistory.org

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
North Bend, OR 97459
Permit No. 48

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Calendar of Events

(see <u>www.cooshistory.org</u> for more information)

Knot Club: every Tuesday of each month, 2-4 pm at CHM Basket Weaving Class: every Thursday, 1-4 pm at CHM Oct. 8: Oregon Author Event, 10-3 at CHM

Oct. 9: Video "How Oregon Women Got the Vote," 34:30 pm at CHM

Oct. 19: regular CHM board meeting, 4-6 pm

Oct. 22: Forest Appreciation Day, 12-5:30 pm at CHM

Oct. 29: Rock Talk – Fossilized Wood, 4-5:30 pm at CHM

Nov. 5: Halloween Holdover "Wear your costume one more time," 2-4:30 pm at CHM

Nov. 8: Election ballots due. Please vote "yes" on History Fund #6-153 Don Philo polished the
Cape Arago Lighthouse
lens every Wednesday
from 1960 thru 1962
while on duty at the Coos
Bay Coast Guard Station.
Don visited the Coos
History Museum in early
August and was thrilled
to see it on display in
the exhibit hall.



WATERWAYS is the quarterly publication of the Coos County Historical Society and sent to all members.

Funding for this newsletter is generously provided by Ann Collins who serves on the CCHS Board of Trustees.