

Waterways

Coos History Museum • Winter 2014-15

Watch Us Move!

We are inventorying the collection to prepare for our upcoming move. Part of that inventory is going on right here in this exhibit.

Watch us "behind the scenes!"
Ask us questions!
Share your thoughts!



Audrey Blair, a university intern, became an "interactive" part of the "Watch Us Move" display at the museum this summer. She worked extensively with the textile collection and answered visitors' questions while describing artifacts and evaluating them for conservation issues.

Meta-Museum Movement on Display

Visitors to the museum this past summer saw an unusual exhibit — museum staff on display inventorying and meticulously packing our collection for a safe journey to the new site. The exhibit was called *Watch Us Move!* and is an example of what we call the Meta-Museum Movement.

The Meta-Museum Movement is a current and growing trend in museums across the country. It is fueled by the concept that the staff of museums should endeavor to explain what they do and how they care for collections as well as present those collections to visitors.

Early examples were called "fish-bowl labs" in natural history museums. Incoming archeological specimens were processed in glass rooms in the exhibit hall as visitors watched. The concept has expanded to include

visitor experiences such as behind the scene museum tours, spaces in art museums where people create their own art, and participatory exhibit building where visitors are encouraged, for example, to offer suggestions for artifact labeling.

The Coos History Museum is excited to participate in this growing movement in the new facility. The door to the collections workroom on the ground floor will be glass creating our own little "fish-bowl lab" where new donations will be processed before moving into permanent storage. The volunteer space on the upper floor

will also be a large glass "fishbowl" which will not only allow our visitors to observe our volunteers but give our volunteers a beautiful open space to work in. We also plan to have a Meta exhibit in the main hall as one of the first of many frequently changing exhibits.



Logan Shields, museum intern, speaks with summer visitors about preparation of artifacts for the move to the new building.

Grant Launches New Museum's Marketing and Merchandising

Thanks to a \$45,000 grant from the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, the Coos History Museum has been able to gain some of the best help in the Pacific Northwest as we put together our new operation.

The Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, founded in 1988 by Paul Allen and his sister Jody Allen, has invested nearly half of a billion dollars into improving communities throughout the Pacific Northwest and beyond.

In 2013, the Coos History Museum asked for help in two areas, marketing and merchandising. Our first objective in marketing is to present ourselves in a consistent and identifiable way, and a way that speaks to who we are, the character of the organization that we present to the public.

This broad effort, called branding, will help visitors feel like they've come to the right place, from seeing us online, to approaching the building, to finding their ways around once they're inside.

To aid us with this, we hired CreativeThink, a partnership based in the Seattle area. **Karyn Holyk** was project manager for the multi-million-dollar Indigenous Pavilion at the 2010 Vancouver Olympics among other projects. Her partner, **Lisa McCrummen**, helped develop the brand for Starbucks. Yes, *that* Starbucks.

"With CreativeThink, we've really had a deep collaboration," says CHM director **Frank Smoot**. "They've been very receptive to the work we've already done, and it's helped a bit that I've come to the museum from a marketing background. That's how I cut my teeth fifteen years ago in the museum world."

They have created what's called a Brand Book, which covers many aspects of the museum's public presentation from an update to our logo, to signage on the building, to the look of the newsletter (it's look will change to fit the brand with the next issue), to stylesheets to cover what fonts we use and whether we use an apostrophe when we write "the 1920s" (we don't use an apostrophe). The Brand Book will also change the look of our website, as well as make it easier for us to manage and more useful to web surfers to navigate, whatever device they use to visit us.

In merchandising, through the Paul G. Allen grant, we've gotten tremendous help from Andrew Andoniadis Retail Services, the nation's leading museum store consultant firm and based right here in Oregon. Andrew has helped more than 350 museums across the U.S. and Canada design and stock their stores, increasing revenue while staying true to their missions. Nearby clients you may have visited include the Portland Japanese Garden and the Columbia River Maritime Museum in Astoria.

"While Andrew is quite a modest guy, his experience and knowledge are unbelievable," Frank notes. "He can draw out on a napkin ideas for design or budget that would have taken us months to work out."

Andrew has been to Coos Bay twice during the process: first, meeting with a sizable group of CCHS board members, donors, and other stakeholders; next, to see the retail space,

*Museum store consultant, **Andrew Andoniadis**, presented a well-received, two-day seminar for museum staff and board members which covered every facet of museum store design and content.*



design and order retail fixtures, help staff craft a mission statement especially for the retail effort, to give advice on the kinds of products we should carry, and to help us create a budget and buying plan.

Although it's possible it will launch earlier as we test the point-of-sale systems and show it off to locals, the store should be at full sail in April.

Coos County Historical Society

Staff

Executive Director: Frank Smoot
Collections Manager: Vicki Wiese
Assistant Collections Manager:

Michelle Nash
Education Coordinator: Tabettha Myatt
Bookkeeper: Terri Knight

Board of Trustees

President: Joe Slack
Vice-President: Bill Mast
Secretary: Anne Guerin
Treasurer: Karen O'Donnell
Trustees: Toni Ann Brend, Ann Collins, Lucinda DiNovo, Steve Greif, Jan Hooper, Darla Lesan, Jon Littlefield, Jerry Phillips, Toni Poole, Sally Prouty, Arlene Roblan, Carl Siminow, Barbara Taylor, Carol Ventgen, Paul Walton

Help Wanted - Volunteers -

Scanning

We are always looking for volunteers to help scan our image and archive collections. Digitally converting all of our images protects the original photographs and negatives from handling and makes them more accessible to researchers. Scanners get to be the first to see photographs many people haven't seen!

Education

The education program depends on a large number of volunteers to assist with classroom presentations in schools, at the museum, and at outdoor sites. Training is provided and scheduling is flexible.

Describing

We need observant people to describe photographs and three-dimensional objects. These descriptions are extremely important for research and identification purposes and help museum staff identify specific objects for exhibit purposes.

Data Entry

Data entry volunteers help us pull everything together. They add descriptions and photographs into our museum database making everything searchable. We need several of these volunteers as we work to make our database more accessible to the public.

In the future, we'll be looking for volunteers in the Museum Store and at Admissions as well as assistance as Gallery attendants (security) and at special events.

Interested? Contact Vicki Wiese
vwiese@cooshistory.org
541-756-6320



Kendra Larson prepares a woman's garment to be wrapped and boxed for storage.

Volunteerism Rises at CHM

As the new Coos History Museum has risen on the Coos Bay waterfront, so has the number of community volunteers helping museum staff to prepare for the upcoming move. Many volunteers have committed to a regular schedule, from a few hours to several days a week. Monday mornings find **Vicki Wiese**, collections manager, and **Michelle Nash**, assistant collections manager, prioritizing the many tasks that this vital cadre of history lovers undertake.

Though closed since September, the museum has been a beehive of activity with this army of volunteers five days a week, eight hours a day. Lately they have been wielding hammers and crowbars, dismantling

current museum exhibits to create additional, necessary work space. With volunteers' help, artifacts coming out of storage are checked to determine if objects have yet to be photographed and described for entry into PastPerfect, the museum's inventory database. Each of the objects is assessed for any conservation issues. Some items may need to be gently vacuumed to remove dust and debris that has built up after sitting in storage. A few recently donated objects have been placed in our new freezer to prevent any potential pests or mold outbreaks from spreading to the rest of the collection. The freezer was purchased with funds from the Oregon Heritage Technical Assistance

Program. The final processing step for these objects is to pack them in new archival materials and boxes. Additionally, photographs and archival documents continue to be digitally scanned and described to enter into PastPerfect.

The hours of volunteer work has been a boon for our organization. From September to the beginning of December, volunteers have logged 874 hours of service to CCHS with 8,049 items added to the museum's searchable database this year.

John Engels, a retired forestry engineer with computer skills, has been a dedicated volunteer for four years. John's engineering background has been put to good use in many ways. He has described a major portion of the wooden casting patterns used at the North Bend Iron Works. These carved wood forms were pressed into damp sand, then removed carefully, creating a void into which molten metal was poured. Once cooled, local iron workers and blacksmiths produced gears, tools, machine parts, and hardware. John's descriptions provide searchable terms in the database for research.

John's engineering handiwork can be seen in the specially designed storage boxes he makes for odd-sized objects, ledgers, journals, and fragile paper documents. At last sighting, John was building such a storage box for a leather-bound, handwritten ledger titled "Oregon Land Book A." The book has over 300 pages of entries listing parcels of land deeded to the Menasha Woodenware Co. The pages include legal descriptions and deed references in court records, several dating back nearly 100 years. "I love looking at these old ledgers. The records were recorded by hand. It's fascinating to an old surveyor. I really enjoy browsing and carefully handling artifacts that are not accessible to the regular museum



John Engels designs a storage box for one of the ledgers in the museum's document collection.

visitor. My work here puts many of my past employment skills to good use. Hopefully these items will be protected for another 100 years."

John played a large part in our library inventory project earlier this spring. He described hundreds of books and entered them into our computer database, increasing their accessibility to researchers and staff. John has also indexed 24 regional history books whose contents had not previously been searchable. Museum staff use these indices to research people; object, business and place names; events; and photos.

Kendra Larson is an enthusiastic newcomer to Coos County and to the CCHS volunteer corps. Before retirement, Kendra worked for several years

in exhibit construction at the High Desert Museum in Bend. With nearly five decades of experience in garment design and construction, Kendra is lending her unique talents to the textile collection. Kendra writes detailed descriptions of women's delicate handwork, household decorations, accessories and clothing. She gently vacuums and wraps the objects for storage.

"Volunteering at the museum has offered me a fascinating introduction to this area. There is so much history here and I am learning that history through each textile piece. Many of these artifacts have illustrated to me the resourcefulness and thoughtfulness of the owners. A dress I recently described had an underskirt repurposed from an old pillowcase. The

hem had lace edging and the piece was monogrammed 'Mrs'. Another item was a piece of beadwork once owned by a prominent sea captain's wife. She had taken great care and attention in removing the piece from the original garment, perhaps a cape, and preserving it for a future use. This museum is a treasure trove of local history and the museum's stewardship of its collections is bringing the history home in a real way, especially through the children's education program."

In the future, Kendra sees the pos-

sibility of replicating garments for use in living history programs to help bring local "characters" to life in historically correct attire modelled after garments in the collection that are in fragile condition.

Steve Samuels, a steadfast volunteer for over eight years, is currently scanning a 45-year collection of photographic slides, which were indexed by the Coos County donor. The slides range in subjects from Shoreacres to the North Bend Air Show. These images will augment other artifacts in

the museum collection to tell stories of aspects of life on the Oregon's South Coast.

Wiese is ecstatic about the new museum's numerous storage areas and the variety of specialty shelving options she will have to house the collections. Thanks to the work of the generous and hard-working CCHS volunteer army, contents of archival storage containers will be indexed and coded by location and artifact category and digitally registered in the PastPerfect software.



This Valentines Day, show your museum some love by attending...

Just off the Pallet

Saturday, February 14, 2015 1-5pm

It's a move-in-progress preview party!

Be among the first to see inside the new Coos History Museum on the waterfront in Coos Bay – even before we've finished unpacking. See the new exhibits under construction. Check out the whole building, including the upstairs staff offices, volunteer workspace and research wing.

Take a look at our new collection storage spaces as we shift the collection over from the old site.

All staff will be on hand to talk about the different areas of the building
And it's a PARTY so there will be pizza and door prizes!

\$7 for members, \$14 for non-members:

Call 541-756-6320 for questions or to purchase in advance.

For this event, we will also be extending member pricing to friends of members at members' request.

The Big Picture: Volunteering in America

More than 62.6 million Americans – about one in five of us – volunteered nearly 7.7 billion hours in 2013, according to the Corporation for National and Community Service. Even calculated at Oregon's minimum wage (and volunteer help is worth much more than that), the value of this time to the American economy would be more than \$70 billion. Put another way, the hours that volunteers log in the U.S. equal almost 4 million full-time jobs.

Almost 140 million Americans also engaged in "informal volunteering" in their communities, – helping neighbors with such tasks as watching each other's children, helping with shopping, or house sitting.

Top volunteer activities included fundraising; mentoring, tutoring, and teaching youth; collecting, preparing, distributing, or serving food; providing transportation and general labor support; and lending professional and management expertise.

Volunteers are almost twice as likely to donate to charity as non-volunteers. Nearly eight in 10 volunteers donated to charity, compared to four in 10 non-volunteers. Overall, half of all U.S. citizens donated at least \$25 to charity in 2013.



Local History Class at New Museum Starts January 2015

Learn about the history and heritage of Oregon's south coast. Join local historian and CCHS board member **Steven Greif** for an informative SWOCC Community Education class this winter term. The first class starts January 7th, 2015; the last class is on March 18th. Course fee is \$50.

Meet Wednesday evenings from 7:00 to 8:20 pm in the community room of the brand new Coos History Museum on the waterfront in Coos Bay. Class members will explore the geography, native cultures, Euro-American settlement, historic occupations, effects of the two world wars, transportation history, and late 20th century developments on Oregon's South Coast.

There are no tests or required textbooks for this non-credit course. Most of the course fee will go to support museum operations.

Students 12 and older may sign up at the Student First Stop Centers at the Coos campus or at Brookings, Gold Beach, or Port Orford locations or by registering on-line at "myLakerLink." For more information on registration call SWOCC at 541-888-7328. To contact the instructor with questions call 541-756-7871.

Welcome New and Renewing Members

July 2014 - November 2014

Maggie Brown - new benefactor

Wilton Bunch - new family

Hannah Cooney - new individual

John Engels - new family

Craig Hatcher - renewing family

George & Karen Kenyon - new family

Karen Lind - renewing individual

Paul & Brooke Walton - new family

New Donations

June-November 2014

Allen, Nancy - Wedding Dress, Child's Coat and Hat, Hatbox, Teddy Bear

Barklow, Ronald - Book

Bjarnson, Norm - Blueprints

Blakeley, Joe - Book

C. Dean Mason Insurance - North Bend Draw Bridge Log Books

Collins, Ann - Book, Directory

Colorado Railroad Museum - Panoramic Photograph

Coos Bay Public Library - Ledgers

Crossley, Ron - Book

Emmanuel Episcopal Church - Table Runner

Gazeley, Ralph and Marian - Dishes

Humphrey, Thomas and Lois - Yearbooks, Photographs

International Port of Coos Bay - *New Carissa* items, Posters

Ivy, Gladys - Photographs

Jones, Zachary - Manuscript

Lane County Pioneer Museum - Photo Album, Photographs

Lansing, Bill - Book

Lesan, Darla - Menu

Livingston, Roxie - Digital Photograph

McCash, Bill - Newspaper Article

Newlander, Ron - Book

North Bend Swimming Pool - Photographs

Phillips, Jerry - Booklet

Retired & Senior Volunteer Program - Photographs, Programs, Ephemera

Roner, Robert - Abstract of Title

Spring, John - Photographs

Stanger, Kathy - Cape Arago Documents

Stephens, Chris - Photographs

Taylor, Phil - Airplane Engine Cylinder

Worthen, Francine - Running Shoes, Photograph

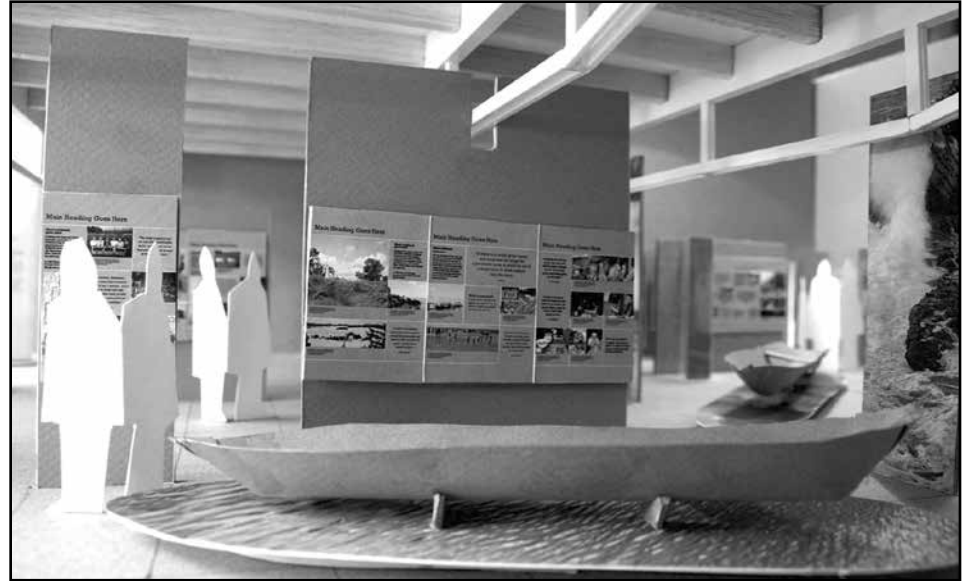
Exhibit Design – New Ideas and Many Voices Tell Our Stories

Although the keys to the new waterfront museum building won't be ours until December 22, the museum's exhibits committee has been making steady progress on developing, designing, and writing exhibit content. We've given direction to David Jensen & Associates, our exhibit design leads – "facilitators" is a term Jensen likes to use, since the firm wants to teach us how to design our own exhibits. In turn, Jensen has helped us think about, and lay out, the space both on paper and in a three-dimensional model getting ready for the day the real exhibit hall will be ours to fill with magic.

The space will be filled with objects, photographs, maps and other documents, words, and activity spaces. All of these things help visitors understand the character of the South Coast.

How? Well, in our discussions we arrived at the notion that most, if not all, the human activities and stories take place at the seashore, in the uplands, or in the tidewater area between, where people have lived for thousands of years and still live and thrive today. Within this framework, we can tell many stories well over time; we should not attempt to tell every story in the first chapter of the new building.

Jensen, in business for 34 years and last year's winner of the Award of Distinguished Service from the Canadian Museums Association, has designed



3-D model of the main exhibit hall.

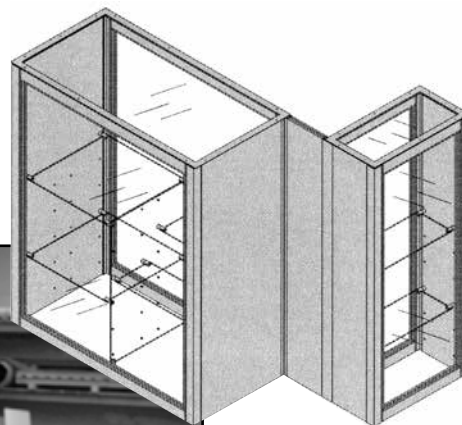
a system of exhibit cases, widely used in Canada, that will allow us to change exhibits often and inexpensively, to change the very footprint of the exhibit floor ourselves. CHM will be the first museum in the Pacific Northwest (at least south of the Canadian border) to adopt what may signal a new direction in American museums.

But it's not just about the design of the glass cases and wall panels. As a committee, we've also decided to

develop content in a leading-edge way. We don't want exhibits to stand static for years at a time. We want to change them. And as we change them, we want many voices to tell the stories of Coos County and the South Coast.

In keeping with our framework – seashore, tidewater, and uplands – if we want to tell the story of Bandon as a seashore community, for example, then we want Bandon's help. The first upland community we chose was tiny Dora, and so we went to Dora and listened. We asked both the Coquille Indian Tribe and the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw what stories they wanted to tell and how they wanted to tell those stories.

As we have pushed on toward opening – toward our initial collection of stories – we've had to do a bit of the work ourselves. But when we open, we'll have a model to show everyone in our many communities what we're trying to accomplish, so when the next groups help us develop content for the next round, they can see examples of how others have taken on this challenge. We hope the groups that help us over the years will be as diverse as the South Coast itself.



Components of the "Logic Exhibit System" from D. Jensen and Associates can be reconfigured in many different ways to create walls, cases or combinations of the two.



A craftsman at 3DS speaks with exhibit facilitator **David Jensen**, left, as parts for the CHM exhibit cases are gathered prior to assembly.



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Calendar of Events

- Jan. 7** SWOCC Community Education weekly class - "South Coast History" - starts at the Coos History Museum on Coos Bay waterfront, 7 - 8:20 pm
- Jan. 21** CCHS Board Meeting, 4 pm
- Jan. 31** South Coast Striders guided walk of historic North Bend, starts at museum in Simpson Park, register by 9:45
- Feb. 14** "Just off the Pallet" event at Coos History Museum, 1 - 5 pm; \$7 members, \$14 non-members
- Feb. 18** CCHS Board Meeting, 4 pm
- Mar. 18** CCHS Board Meeting, 4 pm



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