Night at the Museum with Teddy Roosevelt

This year's annual museum fundraiser was a fun and successful event featuring silent and oral auction, a dinner catered by Black Market Gourmet, and the talents of Joe Wiegand as President Theodore Roosevelt. Arrangements for Wiegand’s presence was made possible through the efforts of Kerry Tymchuk, the director of the Oregon Historical Society, and sponsored by Wells Fargo Bank. The chair of the fundraising event was CHM marketing director Joni Eades who was assisted by committee members Carol Ventgen, Nancy Price, and Toni Poole. “Thank yous” also go out to emcee Steve Greif, CHM staffers Becca Hill, Pam Cottrell, Terri Knight, and Debra Semrau, CHM volunteers Valerie Caskey, Ann Collins, Chris Eades, Jan Stoddard, Michaela and Gary Vonderohe, and Mac Stewart, our auctioneer for the evening, and refreshments provided by Seven Devils Brewery.

Teddy touring the exhibits, standing under an appropriate sign.

Art & Toni Poole win the patriotic centerpiece on their table donated by American Forest Management.

John & Ruth Forrester, lucky winners of the Wall of Wine “big ticket” bottle, donated by Black Market Gourmet, dinner caterers.

Audience hears the story of how the teddy bear got its name.
President’s Message

Carol Ventgen

I am excited to announce that the Coos History Museum has a new Executive Director, **Marcia Hart**. Many of you will know her as she has lived and worked in our bay area community for over 40 years and has a wide variety of public, private, and non-profit business experience, including as Executive Director of United Way of Southwestern Oregon, plus financial experience with Security Bank and Thomas and Sons Distributing. Marcia brings extensive fundraising, human relations, public relations, and strategic planning expertise to the position. Your Museum Board of Trustees members warmly welcome Marcia and are looking forward to working with her.

As the end of 2019 nears and 2020 approaches, we all have reason to celebrate the success of this past year. Kudos to our sponsors, talented staff, and dedicated volunteers, including our working Board Members, for all they accomplish for our community.

In just the month of October, a well-attended free Oregon Writers’ Day event was held on the 12th in the Museum, described elsewhere in this issue by event coordinator and Museum Board Member **Arlene Roblan**. Just prior to that, we had the opportunity to meet the 26th President of the United States as **Joe Wiegand**, considered by many the world’s best Teddy Roosevelt reenactor, greeted a sold-out audience at the October 10th fundraiser, “Night at the Museum” and shared stories of the President’s life and legacy in Oregon. This very successful event was sponsored by Wells Fargo Bank and the Oregon Historical Society. On October 1st, rancher, author and Museum Board Member **Bill Mast** gave an excellent, hugely informative talk to a packed room on “South Coast Agriculture: A Historical Perspective.” Other regularly offered programs, including Second Sunday Free Day, kept the Museum hopping.

Join us for new exhibits and exciting programs at the Museum in the coming year.

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**Coos County Historical Society**

**Staff**

Executive Director: Marcia Hart  
Collections Manager: Debra Semrau  
Education Coordinator: TBA  
Volunteer Coordinator & Store Mgr.: Valerie Caskey  
Rentals Coordinator: Pam Cottrell  
Rentals Assistant: Jamal Jackson  
Marketing Director: Joni Eades  
Visitor Services Assistant: Becca Hill  
Bookkeeper: Terri Knight

**Board of Trustees**

President: Carol Ventgen  
Vice-President: Kristi Pennington  
Secretary: Anne Guerin  
Treasurer: Jan Hooper  
Trustees: Suzy Callery, Steve Greif, Ryan Hogan, Courtney Krossman, David Laird, Bill Mast, Tina Mendizabal, Arlene Roblan

**Museum Admission**

Open Tuesday thru Sunday, 10–5  
Adults = $7, Children 5–17 = $3  
Family Rate (household) = $17  
AARP, AAA, and senior discounts.  
Free admission to CCHS members, NARM program members, and active-duty military.

541.756.6320, www.cooshistory.org

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Interested in historical images?  
Most images from the museum’s collection are available for purchase.

Check our website, www.cooshistory.org, for information regarding user and licensing fees.

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Volunteer coordinator **Valerie Caskey** arranged another quarterly social event in mid-October to thank our many museum volunteers. If you would like to volunteer at the Coos History Museum, contact Valerie at volunteer@cooshistory.org. We are especially looking for volunteers at our front desk to greet our visitors on the weekends.

*Photo by Joni Eades*
By Cory Smith
In the 1870s there was a remarkable dog named Johnny who was so beloved and respected by the residents of the Coos Bay communities that the town of Marshfield passed a special ordinance exempting him from paying taxes. The ordinance read as follows:

Ordinance No. 13. The People of the Town of Marshfield do ordain that a petition having been presented to the Board to exempt a certain dog known as Johnny Sprague, from the tax upon dogs in the Town of Marshfield, that whenever a receipt from the Town Treasurer showing that a majority of the signers of said Petition have paid in to the Town Treasury the sum of fifty cents each to the Recorder he shall issue a (license) certificate stating that said dog is exempt for his natural life from the tax upon dogs in the Town of Marshfield.”
Passed this 6th day of January, 1875
E. S. Scales, Recorder

Johnny was a large animal, probably a Newfoundland. He was popular with the people and considered a privileged character. One resident described him as having “black curly hair, a favorite of everybody and of unusual understanding.” Although he belonged to Elisha W. Sprague, a saloonkeeper, Johnny was afforded unusual liberties in the community, a position he had earned for his heroism in saving two Empire children from drowning in the bay. Johnny (who was sometimes called Grant) was a regular passenger on the small steamboats that plied the waters between Marshfield and Empire. When the whistle would blow for leaving the dock, the dog would board the steamer and accompany it on the round trip, sometimes stopping at North Bend when the craft went on to Empire, and boarding it on the return when the whistle blew for departing for Marshfield. He sometimes became a stowaway on outgoing ships, and always returned with them. Captains of ships would take him with them on voyages if he seemed desirous of going along.

Sadly, Johnny died on a dock in Marshfield sometime in 1881. A local physician, Dr. G. W. Tower, apparently out of fondness for the animal, had the carcass skinned and kept the hide. Rumor had it that a rug was fashioned from Johnny’s pelt, but the fate of any such item has been lost to history.

On November 17, 1881, Ordinance No. 13 was repealed.

Johnny’s story is one of the many from Coos County’s past uncovered by our volunteer researchers, in this case, Cory Smith.

We are always looking for volunteers to help out at the museum.
Contact Valerie Caskey at volunteercoordinator@cooshistory.org or call 541-756-6320 for more information.
Indigenous Names of Coos Bay

By Patty Whereat Phillips

Place names are important. They reflect a people’s relationship to their land, its history and mythology. On Coos Bay, two closely related languages were spoken: Hanis and Milluk. The last Hanis village and first Milluk one (at a point roughly halfway between Empire and Charleston) were separated by just a few hundred yards. The two languages were in constant contact and deeply intertwined. Sadly, the Native names - and the meanings and legends associated with them - are known to few people today. Some other tribal members and I have been working on the two Coos languages as well as Siuslaw/Lower Umpqua to bring back this knowledge.

Indigenous naming conventions were not as ‘romantic’ as many people suppose. In my experience, the more flowery the definition attributed to a Native place name or word, the more likely it’s incorrect. One of my favorite examples from the Oregon coast is Yachats. One explanation some people have attributed to the name is ‘dark water at the foot of the mountain’. It means no such thing – the original Alsea name is Yaxaik, derived from the Alsea verb yax-to go. It appears in nouns such as path, trail. It’s probably a reference to ‘the end of the trail’ - where the coast changes from sand beach to rock. Many of our place names have a straightforward descriptive character or an unknown etymology.

Coos Bay in and of itself didn’t have its own distinct name for the whole bay. It is simply shichdii, a word meaning any river or bay. The Coos country itself is Kuukwis or Kuukuus, which probably is in part the ultimate origin of the modern name ‘Coos’ (helped along by the fact that Lewis and Clark recorded that the Chinook and Tillamook called the region Coo-koo-oose).

This name covers both the bay and the Hanis and Milluk lands around it.

It’s been reprinted several times over the years that “Coos” means either ‘lake’ or ‘place of pines’. I am not sure where this idea originated. The earliest source I can find is “Meaning of Town’s Names” on page 12 of the Morning Oregonian newspaper of August 26, 1902, which simply states “Indian word meaning lake of place of pines”. Where the notion of ‘lake’ comes from I do not know (the word for lake in the Coosan languages is stl’iis or tstl’iis). New Hampshire also has a Coos County, sometimes spelled Cōos and is pronounced Ko-ahss. This name comes from an Abenaki word (goas) for small white pines.

No, our name has one of those straightforward meanings. In Hanis and Milluk, kuukwis simply means ‘south’. The reason for the name is that the Coos Bay people, both Hanis and Milluk, felt more kinship to the people to the north-Lower Umpqua (Quuiich), Siuslaw, Alsea and Yaquina than to the Athabaskan-speaking peoples to the south. Which is not to say we didn’t have trading relationships and intermarry with the tribes to the south - there are even some words borrowed into Coosan from Athabaskan for certain trade items or plants not found this far north and west – but the relationship both cultural and linguistic was older with the Siuslawan and Alsean peoples.

Each slough had its own name. South Slough is Witl’ich, meaning ‘crossing over a divide’. There was a trail from South Slough country south to Whiskey Run. This region was the site of large annual gatherings of Coos Bay and Lower
Coquille people to dig camas and harvest lilies. There is a story that old bay outlet used to be at Jarvis landing, and in those times South Slough and Isthmus Slough were 'like a lake' with just a small creek outlet at today's bay mouth. Joe Ney slough is halch-jinuu, based on a verb meaning 'to wipe oneself'.

North Slough is Ch'hiyaich or Ch'hiyahahich, for 'moving place' or Tlachihi, 'going outside'. Both names are in reference to a time when a whale tried to go up that slough. People tried to capture it (whale blubber, bone and baleen being highly valued) but the whale escaped. Larson Slough is Halais or Ha'lais and comes from the verb hal- to enter a canoe. The village there was known by the same name, and in 1855 when the Omnibus Coast Treaty was signed with the United States, one of the Coos signers was 'Hallice' - probably the chief of this village. Palouse is Qetldi'ye meaning 'getting longer'. No one explained why it was named so, but perhaps it is because it enters at the head of Haines Inlet. Pony Slough is Ttes or Ltes. The village here was called Lwahich, after Lhwai, the cattail plant that still grows plentifully in this watershed to this day. Cattail leaves are very useful for making baskets and twine and in the spring it has an edible bulb.

Largely forgotten today since it is encased in pipes underground, Mill Slough in downtown Coos Bay is Halch, the same root as the name for Joe Ney Slough.

Kentuck is Qalatl, the etymology of which is uncertain. In one version of the great flood or tsunami story, the hill at the mouth was the only place that 'floated' while everywhere else was underwater (another version says Qdet, Glasgow, was the only place that escaped the flood).

Willanch is the only slough to still carry its native name, although the Native pronunciation is a little different, Wule'ench. It means 'good weather place', referring to the valley being sheltered from much of the bay's fog and wind. There is a story that long ago, a monster lived up there. People could hear it holler in the distance and the only escape was to jump in the slough and swim away from it. Then, after a terrible fire swept through, the monster was killed. Its body was found in a burnt tree. They don't say exactly what this strange monster was. But there are many stories of strange beings found in the water or the forests – some friendly, some indifferent, a few helpful.

Coos River, from the mouth to the fork is Kwil'witl'ich or Kul'wut'lich. Where Millicoma and South Fork rivers meet, there was a giant flounder that lived there and could flip canoes over. The river known as Millicoma today is K'uggwiich. Millicoma is a name derived from the Hanis language – but the name is on the wrong river. The original Millicoma is South Fork Coos River. The name is a Hanis phrase, millukw-u-me, meaning Milluk's people. Each village on the main bay had its own seasonal fishing camp upriver. For the Milluk villages on the lower bay, the seasonal fishing camps were up South Fork. There is a story of how one year, some Milluk people went A portion of the journals kept by Lewis & Clark while at Fort Clatsop, Oregon, in the winter of 1805-06. Note that in this list of coastal tribes described by the Clatsop Indians, one is labeled “Cook-koo-oose”. This was the first time the name of the Coos tribe was recorded in print form.

The Barkas Ranch on the Millicoma (North Fork of the Coos River in 1908. [CHM 992.8.0029]
to their fish camp far upriver, above Dellwood. They saw something strange there – a sea lion on a great round rock. All but two men wanted to kill and eat the sea lion. The two men thought something was strange about the sea lion and it ought to be left alone. The others did not listen, and they killed, roasted and ate it. But the two men who had objected refused to have anything to do with it. After the feast, all went to sleep. In the morning, the two young men awoke to find that everyone who had eaten any part of that sea lion had themselves turned into a sea lion.

Isthmus Slough is Gusu or Kusu, derived from the word for south. It’s said of this slough that sturgeon went up it. At the head was a canoe portage into Beaver Slough and the Coquille watershed. Catching Slough is Qatl’iixas. Coalbank Slough is Qaltat, meaning ‘digging down’.

The names of Shinglehouse, Ross and Davis sloughs were unfortunately not recorded. Lottie Evanoff, daughter of Hanisiich (Empire) chief Daloo Jackson, said that Ross Slough had great stands of willow and crab apple, and Shinglehouse had good huckleberries.

Ringed around the bay, sloughs, and river were numerous villages, camp sites and land marks. There are far too many to include in one article, so I will mention just a few of the larger or more important sites. The names of the two Coosan languages were tied to the largest village associated with each language. Millukwich, meaning ‘Milluk place’ (or a more literal translation is Milluk-at) was in Charleston, Hanisiich (Hanis-at, Hanis place) in Empire near the place known as the Hollering Place today. The original Elk’elch (Hollering place) was actually on Xiilalas (North Spit, a name meaning ‘looking over’ in reference to looking out over the ocean from there). When a person on the spit did not have a canoe and needed to be ferried across the bay, they hollered for a ride, hoping someone from one of the Empire villages would canoe over to pick them up. There were several villages packed along the Empire shoreline near Hanisiich – Ntilii, Waiqdi (Mud-Shrimp), Ntise’ich, and Wu’alach. In North Bend’s Ferry Park there is a plaque about the village there, Gahakkich. There were several villages nearby – Da’nis (stranded ashore), Q’allaxaich (white clay), Shuutlich (Burned place). Old Town Marshfield was Atsiiixis (Black stone).

These are just a few of the traditional place names and stories from Coos Bay.

[A brief pronunciation guide: The Coosan languages have several sounds in them that English does not, so we use some extra letters, or letters used in different ways than that in standard English. The q represents a k-like sound pronounced farther back in the throat. The x is raspy h sound, not unlike the ch in German. Some letters might be followed by an apostrophe: k’, q’, t’ and so forth. This means the sound is pronounced with a ‘pop’ of the glottis opening and closing. The l with a bar through it, ł, is a voiceless l. For vowels, the schwa (a) is an ‘uh’. For other vowels, a single l or u is short (like bit, book), double ll is used for ‘ee’ and uu like ‘oo’.]

BIBLIOGRAPHY


By Arlene Roblan

Approximately 50 people, consisting of professional authors, student writers, adult writers, and, generally, people who love to hear good writing, gathered in the Coos History Museum Sprague Gallery to celebrate Writers’ Day on October 12th. The museum worked in partnership with Southwestern Oregon Community College with support from the Coos County Cultural Coalition and the Mill Casino.

Our three guest authors, **Jason Brown**, **Alison Clement**, and **Steve Durham**, shared pieces of their own writing, often whetting the audience’s appetite for “more”. They followed up with an audience question and answer session, describing their own writing process, elements of writing, such as subject development and word choice, and ending with advice about getting writing published. An additional feature of the day was the awarding of cash prizes to student and non-student poetry and short story submissions. The awards went to the following:

**Student Short story**
1st Place – **Aidin Wilson**: War in Bosnia
2nd Place – **Taylor Stevens**: Short and Bittersweet
3rd Place – **Taylor Stevens**: Just an Old Soul

**Non-Student Short Story**
1st Place – **Gina Ledoux**: The Wedding Quilt
2nd Place – **Gina Ledoux**: Bound
3rd Place – **Lauren Negrete**: Aerobic Disaster

**Non-Student Poetry**
1st Place – **Susan Hopkins**: Once, When I Knew I Was an Animal
2nd Place – **William Crombie**: Emblem
3rd Place – **Susan Hopkins**: Resolution Matters

Once, When I Knew I Was an Animal

What was he thinking –
That wild dog in the African bush
Loping along, down the wind,
As he rounded the bend in the trail
And came
Upon
Me?

Ah!
A moment
So full of electricity
And anticipation and
Uncertainty Eye to Eye
But it was only a mere moment
Of indrawn breaths.
Then I stepped off his path
And this vibrant being
Went on his way.

And I have the correspondence
In his eyes
With me
Forever.

— Susan Hopkins

Oregon Writers’ Day

Susan Hopkins reads “Once, When I Knew I Was an Animal.”

Three published guest authors visit with attendees.

Approximately 50 people attended the Writers’ Day gathering at the museum.

Photos by Arlene Roblan
Calendar of Events

We are working hard at bringing new and relevant public programming to the community. The following is a partial list of upcoming events. Check the museum’s website for a full calendar of events, www.cooshistory.org.

Weekly on Wednesdays – Toddler Yoga: 10:30-11:30a.m., $7 Adults/FREE for Museum Members (Family level or above). Kids will learn traditional yoga poses as well as singing songs, playing games, and other activities that challenge their motor and social skills. Please check our website or our Facebook page to check if it’s cancelled on/around holidays. Sponsored by Jim Vick Auto Sales.

NOVEMBER 2019

5 – First Tuesday Talks: 6:30-8p.m. $7 Adults/FREE for Museum Members. Speaker: Nicole Malloy, Chocolate! Sponsored by Al Peirce Co. with additional in-kind support from The Mill Casino.

10 – Second Sundays Museum Free Day: 1-3p.m. Free admission all day plus hands-on activities for kids and the young at heart. Sponsored by Coquille Animal Hospital.

27 – Museum closes at 1:30p.m.

28 – The museum will be closed in observance of Thanksgiving.

29 – Select store items on sale 10-40% off!

DECEMBER 2019

3 – First Tuesday Talks: 6:30-8p.m. $7 Adults/FREE for Museum Members. Speaker: Richard Whitwer, Cape Arago: Life Saving, the Disappearing Bridge and Onions. Sponsored by Al Peirce Co. with additional in-kind support from The Mill Casino.

7 – Coos History Museum Third Annual Holiday Open House and Artisan's Market: 10a.m.-3p.m. Come shop for unique, one of a kind gift items for the holiday season and enjoy free admission all day.

8 – Second Sundays Museum Free Day: 1-3p.m. Free admission all day plus hands-on activities for kids and the young at heart. Sponsored by Coquille Animal Hospital.

24, 25, 26 – Museum closed in observance of Christmas holidays.

29 – Last day to view Vet Ink.

31 – Museum closed on New Year’s Eve.

JANUARY 2020

Mezzanine closed during this month in preparation for new exhibit. Stay tuned!

1 – Museum closed New Year's Day.

8 – First of a series of local history classes taught by Steve Greif on Wednesdays (January 8 through March 18) at the CHM, 6:30-7:30p.m. Class fee is $70 with a 10% discount for CHM members. Class sign-ups begin in December at the CHM.

12 – Second Sundays Museum Free Day: 1-3p.m. Free admission all day plus hands-on activities for kids and the young at heart. Sponsored by Coquille Animal Hospital.

24 – Museum fundraiser at Restaurant O: Details coming soon!

This shot is from the North Bend Safeway that purchased several images to enlarge and hang in their store recently. The CHM extensive photo collection is available to be researched and purchased by any interested parties. Photo by Debra Semrau.
One of the many benefits of getting a Friend membership or higher is being able to gain free access to the 1,013 museums that are a part of that association. More information is available at the museum or on the website: www.cooshistory.org

Annual Fee:
- Student ($15)
- Individual ($35)
- Household ($50)
- Friend ($100)
- Benefactor ($250)
- Historian ($500)
- Curator ($1,000)
- Business membership ($100 or above)
- Donation $_____  

Your annual membership becomes active from date of purchase.

Member Name: __________________________ Date: ______________________
Business Name: __________________________
Mailing Address: ______________________________________________________________________
Phone #: __________________________ Email: ________________________________________________
- Yes, send information about events via email.
- Send information about volunteering and gifting.
If your VISA/MasterCard/DiscoveryCard is by mail: Card Type: __________________________
Card #: __________________________ Exp Date: ___________  3-digit Security Code: __________

Membership Roll Call  
July - September 2019

Renewed Individuals
Greif, Nadiene
Miles, Patsy
Crane, Dave
Gerkman, Laurel
Sandberg, Blanche
Poage, Donald
Davis, Valerie
Borcher, Patricia
Scoville, G. Kent
Simons, Lester
Allen, Nancy
McMann, Ann
Baumgarten, Jane
Conway, JoAn
Matson, Lucille
Gregor, Martha E.

Renewed Household
Christenson, Peggy
Laird, David & Cindy
Hartman, John & Gayla
Zeebuth, Rex & Marcia
Mckillip, Patricia
Batirick, Ray & Sherry
Denton, Ken & Cathy
Ware, Tom & Ann
Ahuna, George & Eva
Edd, Kim & Rosemary
Murray, Wayne & Carol
Nixon, George & Barbara
Booth
Sponner, Yvonne
Perrin, Peter
Weekly, Tina
Erickson, Kathleen
Gregor, Gary & Martha
Richards, Rocky & Lani
Schreiber
Layport, Jim & Alice

Renewed Friend
Stebbins, Mike & Mary Lou
Graves, Jim & Sue
Prefontaine, Linda
Worthen, Patti & Keith
Kroeker
Capehart, Fran
Hogan, Ryan
Stoffel, Joseph
Juul, Rudy & Mary Jo
Ross, Bob & Nanette
Huggins, Robert & Janet
Chaoe Pierce, Patricia
Macy, Robert
Wall, Chuck & Diana
Quick, David & Beth
Semrau, Jim & Debra
Bridgham, David & Shirley

Renewed Benefactor
Smith, Cory
Vigue, Richard
Brend, Orlin & Toni Ann

New Individual
Cooper, Jeanne
Bessey, Patty
Hernandez, Shasta
Fox, Stacy

New Household
Lorenz, Carole
Kusuda, Leo & Paula

New Business
Coos Boat Tours
CNB Security

Pennington, Kristi
Cooper, Beverly
Miller, Shane
Please join us for our
3rd Annual Holiday Open House & Artisan Market
on Saturday, December 7th
Shopping for unique, handcrafted, one-of-a-kind gift items
for the holiday season goes from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m.
and Museum admission is free all day.

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.