



The Orcas Islander

Newsletter of the Orcas Island Historical Society & Museum - Fall 2011

"We educate, inspire, connect and involve our community and visitors as stewards of island history."

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Coming Soon...

"History Night Matinee"
storytelling

Orcas Museum Nov. 20th 3pm

OIHM Annual Dinner & Meeting
Thursday Night

December 8th Camp Orkila
6 to 9pm

Reserve your tickets now!

MUSEUM HOURS

Our Museum is **OPEN**

Saturdays Only

11:00 am to 4pm

(during the slow season)

OIHM Office Hours

Monday thru Friday

11am to 4pm



This young man was one of over 150 children who came by on Halloween after school who were treated to home-made caramel apples and popcorn balls, along with a printed page containing a real-life story from the annals of Orcas history. If you'd like to learn all about the only Kodiak bear who ever lived (and died) on Orcas Island, go to our website at www.orcasmuseum.org and click on 'History Corner' ... you'll get all the 'grizzly' details! Many thanks to Denise & Dan Wilk who provided the narrative as characters from this interesting story.

the Presidents Corner:

If I and the OIHM Board Members thought we would have a quiet fall season where we could catch up on a few lingering projects, how wrong we were! First you may have noticed the new cedar shake roof, nicely done by Duke Construction. For this we used some monies in our Capital Improvement account, aided by a grant from OICF. By the time you read this, we should have completed a major clean-up and re-grade of the southwest corner of the property. Bruce Wiscomb offered to do this using equipment Orcas Excavators has on site at the adjacent Eastsound swale project. He will also bury our hard-to-landscape propane tank, with San Juan Propane donating the underground tank. Many, many thanks to these island businesses for this help.

The OIHM Board recently took a look at our planning priorities, and considered three major projects: 1) removing the old vault (located behind the quilt at the

museum front desk, in case you didn't know) and also the artificial pass-throughs between the cabins, resulting in the homestead cabins being stand-alone and centrally accessible, 2) building an equipment storage shed and associated landscaping at the back of our building, and 3) hiring as close to full-time as possible, a Director. The Board chose getting a Director as our top priority, and we are actively looking into some possible funding mechanisms to accomplish this.

Lastly, I recently met with the Visual Arts Committee of the Orcas Center, and I am delighted to announce that the Museum was selected to be the featured display for the month of February. This will kick off with an official opening at Orcas Center on Friday February 3rd. More on this exciting news later.

That's all for now. Hope to see you at Camp Orkila on December 8th!

Bill Buchan, OIHM President

“History Night” commences this month!

With the coming of the slow season on Orcas, the OIHM would like to initiate a series of events we have dubbed “History Night”, an evening once a month when we can get together with one or two Orcas ‘old-timers’ to tell stories and talk about what life was like in days gone by on these islands. The first event will actually be a “History Night Matinee” and will take place on Sunday afternoon Nov. 20th with Abby Rueb and Virginia Dalley. Abby is the daughter of Charlie Arnt, a movie and television character actor whose real love in life was farming. He bought what

is now Driftwood Ranch in 1950 and gradually moved his family to the island as he retired from a career in the entertainment industry. Virginia Dalley will be coming over from Bellingham and is the daughter of George Gow, who owned Orcas Lumber. Her family moved to Orcas Island from New York City in 1948. We hope you will join us for this first gathering of reminiscence and discussion meant for Orcas residents old and new, young and not-so-young. Come enjoy hot apple cider in the heated Main Exhibit Hall at the Orcas Museum starting at 3 pm. Donations of any amount will be gladly accepted at the door.



Dashia Ortega, a 4th grader from the Shaw Island School, was one of twenty-two students, ages five to twelve, who visited the museum with a special interest in the Native American & Artifacts Room last month on a field trip related to their Washington History studies.

Welcome Two New Board Members

Carl Twentier and Edrie Vinson both have much to offer to our cause.

Carl and his wife Pat just recently moved to Orcas Island from Arizona. They became Museum members and he started helping out by committing to a weekly stint at the front desk during the late summer. We soon realized his skill with people and his strong background in business, and inquired if he'd like to join the Board. Happily he accepted and was quickly elected.

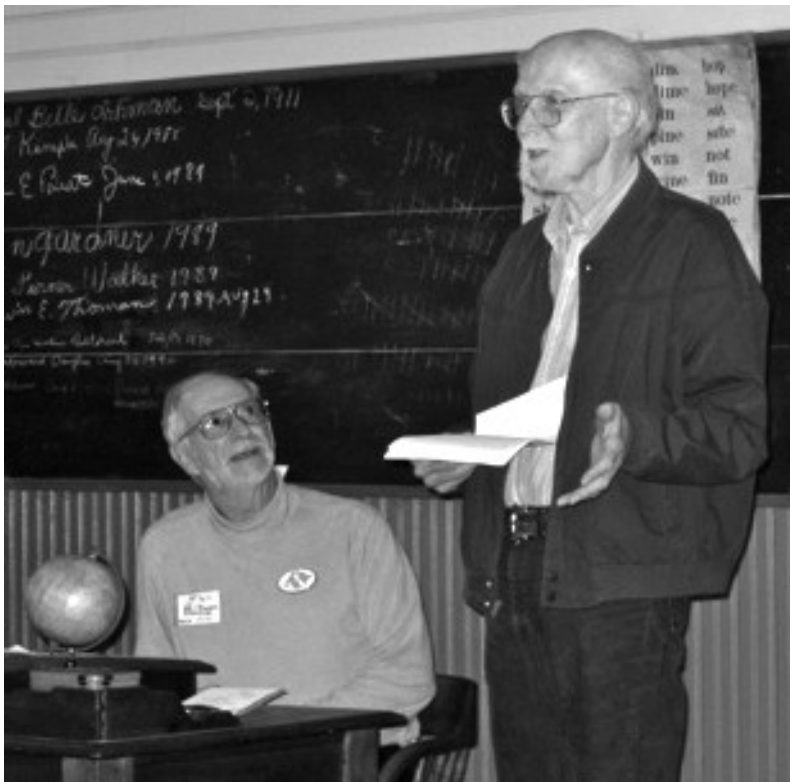
Edrie Vinson is already familiar to many of you; she has worked for OIHM, before doing grant-writing and research, and put in a lot of time helping with the archives. As a matter of fact, she was the one who found and presented to us the Smithsonian Institute's traveling exhibit called Journey Stories in the summer of 2010, which was widely received as a high point in the history of a small museum like ours. Edrie has a degree in archeology and a strong background in preservation and, after spending most of this year in Alaska, has come back and will be helping us once again with organizing and accessioning. She too was quickly voted onto the Board. Welcome to both!

Saying ‘Goodbye’ to Jim & Kay Clark ...

We are sorry to let you know that Jim and Kay Clark will be leaving us this month. After a summer of health challenges they have made arrangements to live with their daughter and her family in Bellingham to be closer to medical services. Kay has worked at the OIHM for over three years doing office administration and archival work, and Jim has been our number one volunteer throughout this past year as he single-handedly covered every Saturday that the museum was open during the slow season, and then some. Jim took great delight in studying the many details of our permanent

exhibit and coming up with a spoken tour of the museum, which became very popular with returning visitors. Kay has lately been concentrating on archiving one hundred historic photos for a grant from the Washington Rural Heritage Foundation (see the link on the OIHM website) and photos from the James Geoghegan collection. Jim and Kay have been well-loved throughout their involvement with the Orcas Museum and they will both be sorely missed. We wish them the best of luck with their new lives in Bellingham and hope they will have the opportunity to visit us as often as is possible.

A Big Thank You . . . to Heather Wallace, Enid Blanc, Barbara Born, Margot Shaw and Teri Williams for lending their capable hands to making nearly one hundred caramel apples for our Halloween event . . . and to Susan Fletcher & Barbara Wheeler for footing the bill!



Former CVS owner Richard Schneider speaks as OIHM Board President Bill Buchan looks on from the teachers desk.

Crow Valley School Dedication

It was like old home week at the Crow Valley School Museum on Sunday September 18th. The weather was lovely and every school bench was filled with guests who came to commemorate the transfer of the CVS property from Bud McBride and Richard Schneider to the Orcas Museum. We invited both to attend but unfortunately Bud was not able to, so Richard came on his own and gave a very informative and heartfelt talk about the history of the old school during their decades-long stewardship of it. In attendance were many of the faithful volunteer docents who have greeted visitors to the 19th century one-room schoolhouse for years. Also present were the daughter (Betty Hedge), grand-daughters (Traci Snaring and Sharon Harvey) and great-grandson (Ben Harvey) of Ethel Lohman, who was one of original teachers when it was a functioning school. Too many to name were members of the Nigretto and Bodenhamer families who are also relatives of Richard. We are thrilled that this legacy of island history has been gifted to OIHM and look forward to years of care for it.

SPECIAL THANK YOU'S

- ◆ The Orcas Museum staff and Board would like to thank **Dan & Denise Wilk of Orcas Island Eclipse Charters** for once again generously donating the proceeds of the **Cruise into History** tour to O.I.H.M. The weather was great and the tour went very well despite not having **Tom Welch** on board to narrate, due to a medical emergency which took place the day before. We know Tom is on the road to recovery and we wish him the very best of health. Some of our dedicated Board Members were able to fill in on the microphone on very short notice, and **Irene O'Neill** contributed a story or two. Thanks for your history knowledge!
- ◆ A big thank you to **Jim Jonassen FAIA** for a generous monetary donation and an offer to help with our long term plan for the OIHM building and landscaping layout. We look forward to working with you!
- ◆ Cheers to the **Turtleback Ceili Ensemble** for adding lively Irish music to our end-of-season Volunteer Appreciation party.
- ◆ We are always grateful to our **Volunteer Greeters** who committed to being at the front desk of the Orcas Museum and the Crow Valley School Museum throughout the busy season. We hope you enjoyed the experience and look forward to seeing some of you for the occasional Saturday shift until we begin again in earnest next Spring.
- ◆ We want to extend appreciation in advance for **Antionette Botsford** who has offered to do work organizing our Oral History interviews starting this month.
- ◆ Thank you to **Washington State Parks Department** and **Dan Meatte** for presenting a fascinating lecture on prehistoric hunting technology to a full house on Oct. 29th at Oddfellows Hall.
- ◆ We are very glad to have **Virginia Jensen** and **Joanne Johnston** who have both done stellar work this year on family research.
- ◆ Thanks to **Nancy Knapp** who connected us up with **Bob Beckner** who donated a really nice new desk for our Archive Room office.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Lee Erickson

Betsy Evans

Rebecca Frisino

Orcas Island Historical Society & Museum

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Staff

Edrie Vinson ~ Archivist
Eirena Birkenfeld ~ Office Administrator

Members who would like to receive this newsletter via email in PDF format please email the museum with your name and current email address.



The Orcas Island Historical Museum is now on FACEBOOK. Become a fan and stay current with up-to-the-minute news and information!

The museum is a recipient of Hotel/Motel Tax dollars. Many thanks to San Juan County, the Islands Lodging Industry and lodging guests for their very generous support.



Our archeologist presenter, Dan Meatte, sent us a photo (left) of a figure that was found recently on Sucia Island. It is now the property of the Burke Museum. Our own ancient figure, on display at OIHM, is on the right. Both are estimated to be around 2000 years old.

Don't Miss the Annual Dinner & Meeting !

It really does help us to know how many people we will be having at the Annual Meeting & Dinner, so we're hoping you will book your reservations early this year! It's always been a fun, down-home gala event and this year we will part with tradition and have it on a Thursday night instead of a Monday (this has something to do with the undisputed importance of Monday night football . . .) This year the OIHM Board chose Thursday night December 8th, which just happens to be the 98th birthday of our long-time supporter Jane Barfoot-Hodde. We hope she will come so we can help her celebrate! The Annual Dinner is open to the public, but OIHM members get sent invitations . . . so stay tuned for these, including menu options and prices . . . coming soon!

LAST CALL FOR BRICK ORDERS & QUILT TICKETS!

The drawing for the gorgeous patchwork quilt on display at OIHM will take place at the Annual Dinner so it's time to stock up on chances to win! Also, January is when we turn in this years orders for engraved commemorative bricks, so if you'd like to be in on this years addition to our walkway, please turn in your order form (available on our website or the OIHM office or at the Annual Dinner event). Gift certificates available.