



# San Juan Historical Society & Museum

Winter 2018

## *Christmas comes early to the museum*

Preserving, interpreting and exhibiting the history of San Juan Island are key components of the Society and Museum's mission.

While it is easy to focus in on those key components there are other facets of the equation which may not come readily to mind. Namely, what is needed to fully fulfill our mission and the overall operations of the Museum.

With the maintenance of 1.6 acres of property, eight buildings averaging 90 years of age, insurance and utilities, there are many expenses involved with the overall day to day running of the Museum.

Utility costs make up a large portion of our expenses each year with our three power meters and two water meters. We conserve as much as possible, but the hard costs still remain. Fortunately, help has arrived!

An extremely generous, long-time museum member who wishes to remain anonymous, found a solution. A donation of all costs to install solar panels on the roof of the Museum of History and Industry (MHI). The cost savings will have a significant impact on our bottom line for years to come.



*Mounting grids being installed on the roof of the MHI.*

The MHI has the largest roof surface of all the buildings on the Museum campus. The south facing side receives maximum sun exposure thereby making it the ideal location. The panels will generate enough energy to power the MHI as well as other electrical needs. The solar panels have a life span of 30 years and the projected value to the Museum will be close to \$80,000!

We are very thankful to this most generous donor. Not only for the immediate savings of energy costs, but for her foresight to devise a solution to help the Museum. Thank you for your most generous gift! You have and will make a significant difference well into the future.

**In this season of giving, please remember the San Juan Historical Society and Museum in your end of year giving. Your community asset since 1961 needs your continued financial investment. We look to the generosity of people like you to support our efforts of preserving the treasures of our island's past. You can use the handy form on the back page or donate online at [sjmuseum.org](http://sjmuseum.org). On behalf of the Board of Trustees, staff, volunteers and thousands of annual visitors, we offer our sincere gratitude and appreciation for your support. Happy Holidays.**



*Rain Shadow Solar from Orcas Island installed 36 solar panels on the roof of the MHI. Let the sun shine!*

## MHI Updates



*You can't miss this red Fosston No. 24 fanning mill. Fanning mills were a staple of farm life for decades. Farmers wanted to plant clean grain seeds without the weeds of the previous year's crop. Different screens could be inserted for different kinds of grain (oats, barley, etc.). It was a task often performed in winter months, so the process of cranking the machine could keep one warm during the colder months of the year.*

*Partial funding of the MHI has been made possible by grants from the Heritage Capital Project Fund administered by the Washington State Historical Society.*

Early 2018 will see the Farming exhibit area beginning to take shape. The space is the largest of the five MHI exhibit areas and will feature several large artifacts from the collection. Those large artifacts will consist of two items from the collection, a fanning mill and a hit and miss engine.

A donation of a vintage John Deere tractor will be coming from the estate of the late E.J. Thorndike. Mr. Thorndike amassed a large collection of vintage agricultural equipment which he liked to use on his farm. Many will recall that during the summer months Mr. Thorndike would display rows of John Deere tractors on his property off of Cattle Point Rd., also known as the Big Red Barn. The tractors always attracted much interest and attention to those passing by. We offer our thanks to his daughter Gail Mosk, for the gift of an item from her father's collection for use in the MHI.

A recent grant award from the San Juan County Lodging Tax Fund will further assist in developing the space. We extend our thanks to the San Juan County Lodging Tax Advisory Committee and the San Juan County Council for approving this grant request.

Additional funding is still needed to continue the development of the MHI. Custom engraved commemorative bricks are a great way to help. Please consider a gift today!

## Breaking jail news



*San Juan County Sheriff Eric Erickson poses outside the jail in this July 1968 image, which appeared in the Bellingham Herald. Photo by Jack Carver. Courtesy Whatcom Museum, Bellingham, WA*

The first San Juan County jail was constructed in 1894 and has been a popular attraction at the museum since being moved from behind the courthouse 1981. The stout little jail locked up local lawbreakers from its inception until 1971.

The current exhibit in the jail has become rather historic (i.e. it needs an update). Thanks to a recent grant award from the San Juan County Historic Preservation Grant Program, a new exhibit plan is in the works to be unveiled next year.

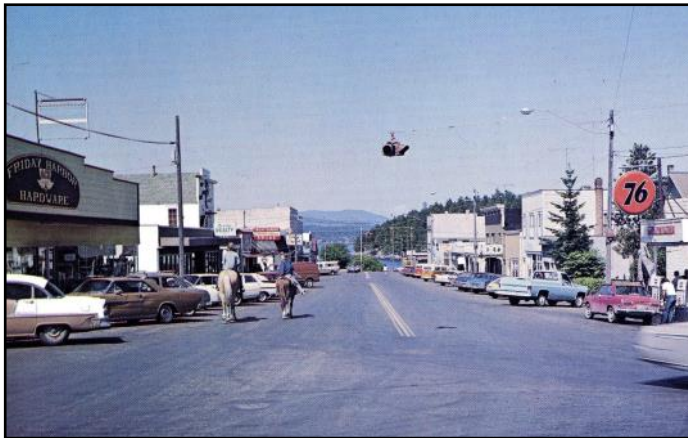
The jail has three cells and each one will provide a space to learn more about smuggling, notorious characters, notable trials, tools of the trade (hand cuffs, etc.) and more. If you have jail stories to tell (your own or others) we would like to hear about them. Much new information about the fascinating history of the building has come forth during our recent archival assessment project and will be included.

We thank the San Juan County Council for making these funds available for historic preservation. Previous funding from this grant program has been used for oral history projects, interpretive signage, exhibits and building preservation.

## *Have you “liked” us on Facebook yet?*

The rapid rise of social media has made its way into the museum world as well. We started a Facebook page a few years ago and the page has become quite popular. To date we have 739 likes. The photo below has generated over 6,600 views. We post images from the collection to provide more of the collection for public view. Posting elicits comments which are helpful in providing further details. It is also a way to engage a wide audience and generate interest in the Museum.

The image below is a postcard from the 1970's showing the intersection of Spring St. and Argyle Ave. We are finding that images of the more recent past generate the most feedback. Many of the comments evoke personal connections to elements depicted in the image.



Here are a sampling of the comments:

*The 3 fire lights were set to come on with the fire siren next to the fire station. Every Monday night the siren would turn on and the volunteers would drive the trucks through town with lights and sirens going. People would lose their minds if that happened now.*

*I remember someone kept shooting out those traffic lights!*

*I use to sit with Vic Capron in the 76 station and "Shoot the Bull." Sometimes he'd give me a little "NIP" from the good stuff in the desk drawer!!*

*My dad's VW orange van is in this famous photo.*

*I remember this well, in fact I think I might recognize some of the cars. This is a view I saw a 1,000 times every Friday and Saturday night while out cruising looking for trouble.*

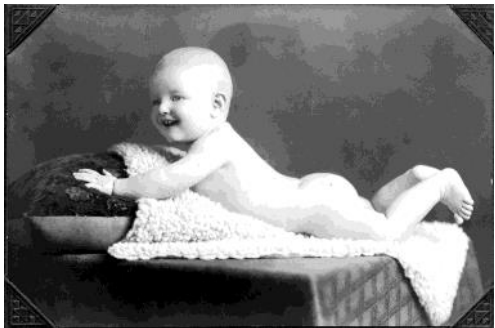
*I bought the blue Chevrolet pickup on the right from a catalog at Vic Capron's Chevrolet dealership in 1973.*

*I remember this postcard from when I was a kid! I lived up there in the summers! Oh, how I miss the San Juan Islands.*

*Back then you could take in a movie, have popcorn and a Coke, seem to recall it was only 50 cents for all!*

*Yes, but Mrs. Bave would stop the movie if the kids got too loud and go on stage to warn us....no more movie if it wasn't quiet.*

## *UFO's seen at the Museum!*



Before you head to your survival shelter, understand that UFO is our museum term for “Unidentified Fotos”. During the recent Archival Project, volunteers uncovered hundreds of photographs in the collection that have no identification on or around them. Sometimes a photo will simply say “Grandpa” or “Me” or “Claire” and it is not even possible to tell if the photo has any connection to San Juan Island. They are photos of babies, children, adults, families, animals, houses, boats, landscapes... and we are not discarding any of them! Want to be involved in solving these mysteries? Let us know. This UFO column will continue to appear in upcoming newsletters.



## Our new exhibit at the library



A new partnership with the San Juan Island Library has brought forth a space for rotating exhibits. In the local history section, new display cabinets have been installed providing a way for showcasing parts of the collection to the public.

The current exhibit features postcards with a theme of: How Islanders communicated before Twitter, Facebook and Texting.



San Juan Island Library Assistant Director Leslie Baker, inspects the new exhibit. Leslie is also a member of the Museum Board of Trustees and developed the idea of the exhibit space. Thank you Leslie!!

Go and have a look and let us know what you think!

## Moments in Time ...

Notes gleaned from vintage newspapers, family scrapbooks, and historic records in the collection:

- *During the Iran hostage crisis that began in November of 1979, the Friday Harbor Presbyterian Church rang the church bells every day for 444 days to remind the citizens of Friday Harbor to pray for the hostages.*
- *The first Pioneer Picnic was held in August 1915 on Lopez Island.*
- *In 1971, the Friday Harbor Post Office had 442 patrons and 350 rural route boxes.*
- *December 1995, the Courthouse lawn was filled with wild turkeys; it was suggested that since the turkey droppings were difficult to remove, a good use should be to fill potholes on the Town streets.*
- *January of 1983, found the San Juan Island Library considering three sites for their new home: Woods Interior Building at Blair and Spring, new construction at Guard and Tucker, or the "Shrimp Boat" restaurant on Guard St. The Shrimp Boat won out!*
- *The February 23, 1983 front page of the Friday Harbor Journal showed an unknown man walking his goat on a leash in downtown Friday Harbor.*

## Ongoing Projects Update and thanks to our team of volunteers

Since converting the Resource Center to a volunteer and research work area, the space has seen extensive use by a number of volunteers who are plugging away at a variety of projects.

All of these projects stemmed from the Archival Project conducted January – April 2017. Each project manager has a good structure and

methodology in place, with how-to manuals they created. Anyone interested in helping with these projects, or who has an idea of their own to begin, please contact us for details.

*Please see Projects on opposite page*

## ***Projects (continued)***

### ***Buildings: Now and Then***

Concentrating on the downtown block of Spring Street, between Front and First, including the waterfront. Volunteers Mike Hansen and Diana Mancel began by assembling and reviewing all archival material and photos, creating the structure of the research and outlining the possibilities for the end result of the project.

### ***History of Music on the Island***

Volunteer Tom Starr has begun researching the Jazz Festival first, collecting old programs, photos, posters, etc., in preparation for an exhibit and a Museum event in 2018.

### ***Museum Photograph Collection***

The original collection of historic photos numbered about 1,200; of these, many were not fully identified and a number of duplicates were discovered. We discovered the Museum actually has several thousand more photos that originally thought. Volunteers Regina Kammer and Andy Zall are involved in scanning the found photos, researching the unknowns, and updating the existing photo collection to make it more usable. There will be a three week intensive Task Force in January, (stay tuned for dates) to make a major ramp up on work that is needed.

### ***Boats***

Narrowing down to a manageable frame of the 1880's to 1920's, and concentrating on freight ships and ferries, the Boat Project is being handled by Volunteer Ron Hanson. Accumulating information from his personal research and the archives of the Museum, Ron is discovering some wonderful stories about the ships that sailed to Friday Harbor and Roche Harbor.

### ***Resource Library & Files***

Lynn Weber-Roochvarg is the volunteer who has reviewed most of the Museum's books, binders and pamphlets, organizing them and assessing their historic value. There has emerged a basic system of categories for files and books, a usable resource library for research and references, all thanks to the work of Lynn.

### ***Computers / Work Spaces***

Volunteer Alan Roochvarg stepped in immediately when five computers were donated to the Museum. Hooking up the computers, ensuring their proper operation, and working with the volunteers to set up workspaces, Alan's contribution of time and effort has been priceless.

### ***Website and Social Media***

Board members and volunteers Robin Jacobson and Leslie Baker, have updated the Museum's website and maintained our Facebook presence. Revamping the website by updating content and posting regularly on Facebook is getting the word of the Museum work out faster than ever.

### ***Behind the Scenes***

Attorney Carla Higginson has provided all legal work and consultation to the Museum for many years, on a pro bono basis. Thank you for all you have done and continue to do, on our behalf.

Rich Norris keeps the Museum grounds mowed, blown and trimmed year-round.

Trustee Romona Jones has lovingly cared for the Museum through landscaping, cleaning, greeting visitors and participating in every event for the last decade and a half.

***Our volunteers provide such a wealth of knowledge, expertise and passion to the Museum. To our many volunteers, thank you for all that you do on behalf of the Museum. Your contributions are priceless and very much appreciated.***



*More projects await. Take your pick!*

## *Found in the Collection*

The term “found in collection” is an umbrella reference to something a museum has in their collection, but has no paperwork regarding any provenance. The copper artifact pictured below falls under that category here at the Museum – any ideas?

The following list highlights some of the items uncovered in the 2017 Archival Project. Some lack specific details and need further research in order to obtain more complete information. Before we put any articles into preservation and archive status, we need full descriptions, provenance, photos, etc.

Want to help solve a few mysteries? We would gladly welcome your assistance with this fun process!

*12 women's hats in various states of disrepair*

*Hudson Bay Company banner*

*Pig War medallion*

*Scrapbooks*

*Journals*

*Box of hair*

*Razor strop*

*Jockey underwear box c. 1910*

*1912 violin*

*Steamboat master license*

*90 year old cookbooks*

*Ship's compass*

*1908 Grange Hall dance ticket*

*WWII ration book*

*1 pair wooden shoes*

*Postcards (hundreds)*

*1961 JFK Inaugural Program*

*Pyrometer*

*1980's era shiny gold women's jumpsuit size 10*

*11 Confederate currency notes*

*1939 cow testing records*

*Sewing patterns 1880's to 1980's*

*31 marbles*

*21 copies of c.1930 NRA "Pathfinder"*

*Music & song books*

*Report cards from 1910*

*2 pair of roller skates with keys*

*150 year old school textbooks*



*Clockwise from above: a kit for embroidering silks and textiles using plastic and paint, a vintage postcard, classic roller skates (with the all important original key attached) and the mystery copper thing-a-ma-jig.*

## ***New and Renewing Members and Donations***

*Since last newsletter publication 9.30.2017*

**2017—2018**

### **Business Members**

*Kings Market  
San Juan Interiors  
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Friday Harbor Suites  
M&W Auto Sales & Rentals  
God's Pocket Photography  
Barnyard Farm Supply/  
Horshu Ranch  
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## ***Memorial donations***

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Irene Vandersluys

**Etta Egeland**  
Jeanie Garrett  
Vonnie Nichols

**Charley Brown**  
John Wade

## ***MHI Contributors***

Brent & Kelly Snow  
Alice Berenz  
James & Linda Bergquist

Donna Karls & Eric Miner  
Janis & Don Crosby  
Sondra deBeauclair

## ***Wish list***

- *Volunteers for: greeting visitors, research, data input, grounds maintenance and exhibit design.*
- *Gasoline or rechargeable electric blower for clearing sidewalks of grass clippings and leaves.*
- *24" or larger flat screen computer monitor.*
- *LED lightbulbs—60W equivalent.*
- *Historic images to borrow, relevant to San Juan Island and Friday Harbor. Especially images from the 1950's to 1990's. We'll scan and return to you.*
- *Tools and lime barrels from the Roche Harbor limestone era for use in MHI Limestone exhibit.*
- *Brochures and memorabilia from the Tarte Family Roche Harbor "Boatel" era.*
- *A gently used iPad (2017), iPad Pro 9.7", iPad Air 2, or iPad Air for a Square credit card reader.*
- *Did we mention VOLUNTEERS? See first item.*

**San Juan Historical  
Society & Museum**

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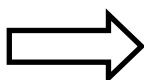
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*The Museum is a recipient of grant funding from San Juan County lodging tax funds. Proceeds derived from this grant help to defray a portion of operating expenses. We thank the San Juan County Council and their lodging tax advisory committee for this grant award. We thank the islands lodging owners and their guests for the continued financial support of the Museum.*

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*Please detach this form at dotted line and return with your donation today. Thank you!*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Memorial contribution: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ in memory of \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to donate \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to the developing SJI Museum of History and Industry (MHI)

**Please make checks payable to San Juan Historical Society, PO Box 441, Friday Harbor, WA 98250**

**The San Juan Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, tax i.d.# 23-7022221.**