



San Juan Historical Society & Museum

Summer 2018



Take a stroll on our lovely grounds...



...and meet "Chopper" or the iMow our robotic lawnmower, a recent donation.

Summertime and the Museum is Open

Summer 2018 is an exciting time to visit the San Juan Historical Society and Museum! A Landscaping Project is caretaking the grounds, mowing, planting, trimming – perfect for a family picnic, Island Rec's Music on the Lawn and the Kiwanis Pig War Picnic. The Jail Renovation Project is refurbishing the interior of the beloved but infamous first San Juan County Jail Building on the grounds – a new exhibit plan coming for law enforcement, smuggling, you name it!

The Etta Egeland Resource Center has been renovated and is now the workplace for volunteers who are researching all facets of Island history, creating new exhibits, enhancing the archival database; all while discovering and recording the history of the Island. If you visited the Museum of History and Industry, our museum within a museum last year, you will be amazed at the additions to the Welcome Atrium, Limestone and Logging Wings. If you have a group of 4 or more, contact us for a customized behind-the-scenes guided tour.

*Open for self-guided tours
Tuesday – Saturday 11 am - 2 pm
Now through September
(closed July 4th to accommodate the Pig War Picnic
and the week of the County Fair, August 15–18)*

From the President: Creating New Memories and History this Summer

Rome wasn't made in a day, and neither was San Juan Island history. A great thing about history is that it's always being made, one day at a time and one experience at a time. Come see us this summer and be part of San Juan Island's history of today.

We just finished participating in History Lives Here, the observance of National Historic Preservation Month, in which community events are scheduled during all of May. Our two free Open House Days were well attended by islanders and visitors alike. We were welcomed to the San Juan Island Library's speakers series with a presentation called "Genealogy and Local History: Research Soulmates." It educated an enthusiastic crowd about how to research a community's history in order to put a person's life story into context.

Friday Harbor is a great town for museums – and we're pretty partial to our own unique campus of historic buildings. The Museum is again delighting groups of Road Scholar travelers and visitors from far and near. If you are here on island, drop by to see the progress in our Museum of History and Industry (MHI).

Bring your guests or send them here to visit for the first time.

Museum members are always welcome (and needed) to greet visitors as they arrive for self-guided tours. It's a fun and flexible volunteer activity where one signs up for a three-hour shift during the Museum's open times of Tuesday through Saturday, 11:00 am to 2:00 pm. Each docent chooses which days and how often. If you like meeting interested people from all around the world, this one's for you. Here's one more way to enjoy your Museum. Have you seen our website lately (www.sjmuseum.org)? It's looking better than ever, thanks to the expertise of volunteers.

We can't thank members enough for your ongoing support of our activities. But we can thank you directly if you come by to see what's new or drop us a line with your questions or suggestions. Wishing all a summer full of new fond memories – It's your history in the making.

Robin Jacobson
Board President

Landscape plan for the Museum grounds

There is an acre and a half of museum grounds. Although the pathways added in 2012, assisted the traffic flow and visitor comfort greatly, there is still much to be done to create a better experience for the community, the visitors, and for the our volunteers. Volunteer Mo Sloane has created a detailed and well researched landscaping plan that began in April, to create "curb appeal", restoration and preservation of existing trees and shrubs, interpretation of new plantings, reworked signage, etc.

Thanks to a generous donor, the Museum recently acquired "Chopper" (see cover page), a robotic lawnmower, that is assisting in keeping the grounds mowed. Chopper quietly

does his work while the weed-eating, garden planting, and other improvements are being handled by human volunteers.

Although we are soliciting grants for the full Landscaping Project, it needs donations of funds, time, people, and material. ***If you would like to serve in this Task Force, please contact us at 360-378-3949 and we will welcome you with friendly but grubby hands!***

Project currently needs native plants, about 500 pavers, and potting soil. Please contact the Museum to let us know if you can provide any of these items. Thanks!

A brief history of our heritage structures, first in a series.

King Farmhouse

The James F. King family homesteaded the property in 1877. When their original log cabin burned down, the current farmhouse was built to replace it between 1894 and 1898, and the family raised six children there. In 1934, the Kings sold the land and buildings to the Pittman family, who continued the dairy operations started by the Kings. In the years to come, it was the residence of other Island families, and in the 1930's, the farmhouse served as a boarding house for single Island school teachers. In 1966, George Peacock, a retired schoolteacher from Michigan, a transplant to the island for retirement, bought the King Farmhouse and generously donated it to the San Juan Historical Society. The building, now well over 100 years old, has had renovation since the Museum was established, most significantly a new foundation in 2009. Currently, the farmhouse needs a new roof, repair of two chimneys, paint touch-up, heating system and restroom upgrade. Recently, a generous donor stepped in to fund the repair and a return to operation of the original onsite well.



San Juan County Jail

This is the original San Juan County Jail, built next to the first County Courthouse in 1894-1895. Builders were James Farnsworth and Sheriff Newton Jones. It served as the "hoosegow" from then until 1971, when it was condemned by the County Board of Health and the State of Washington, declared it to be the worst jail in the entire state! In 1981, the building was moved to the Museum grounds. Some much needed restoration was done to the building in 2008, with a new roof and it was repainted in 2010.

In keeping with the museum visitor expectations of modern times, a grant was recently received from the San Juan County Historic Preservation Grant Program to upgrade the Jail Exhibit. Instead of empty cells and photocopies of information, the Jail Project Task Force plans to use the cells as themed exhibit areas and the area outside the cells to be a tribute to the law enforcement community past and present of the Island. Part of the grant will cover the new exhibit and fixing the main door, but there is still a need for moss treatment for the roof and a repainting of the iron bars.

Tobacco quilt



This quilt was donated to the Museum in 1975, by a local resident who moved away from the island the next year. The details of the accession are sketchy, but research is ongoing to discover more. The Museum does know that the article is rare, and dates after 1926. All pouches are Bull Durham, and some have slight traces of tobacco still inside.

The Quilt is currently being featured at the San Juan Islands Museum of Art (SJIMA) in an exhibit, entitled "Conversations with Gee's Bend", which runs through September 3. Fifteen years ago an exhibit of quilts made by women of Gee's Bend, Alabama toured the country. People responded in awe to the

quilts, their improvisational designs, bold colors and narrative they told. The rural Alabama community handed down their traditions, quilt by quilt, generation by generation. The materials were often nothing more than worn out clothes. The women of Gee's Bend succeeded in creating masterpieces of art, telling their own personal stories. Quilts made out of necessity, from nothing, became something enduring and beautiful.

Our Museum is honored to loan our mystery folk art to the exhibition, and encourages you to explore the Gee's Bend stories and works at SJIMA this summer.



What's a Typical Day at the Museum Like?

The quickest reply to that is Questions and Answers – folks wander into the Resource Center or onto the grounds with history related questions about the island, with donations of articles, and with stories to share. The staff and volunteers do their best to answer those incoming questions, and we end up generating a lot of our own questions through our research. It is a challenge and a joy to head down those rabbit holes to find answers, and especially when we learn something new! Here are some examples of questions we are currently researching, and would appreciate your input!

- Does anyone have photos of Buller's One Ring Circus that wintered on this island in the 1920's?
- Does anyone have photos or stories about the 1961 Mock Invasion of San Juan Island, dubbed Operation Sea Wall, an amphibious military exercise?
- What ever happened to early island merchant Israel Katz? He disappeared without a trace in 1913.
- Does anyone have a picture of Richard Straub, the only person ever executed in San Juan County?
- Who planted the Black Walnut Trees on the Courthouse lawn and when?
- Does the Historical Museum want my great-great-Uncle Bill's false teeth? (thank you, but no)

This is just the tip of the iceberg and we welcome more! Come by the museum and help us research some of these wonderful stories.

Fun summer activities you won't want to miss

Ahhh, those lazy summer days on the island. It does not get much better. It kind of makes all the rainy and gray days of the winter months worth it if this is the reward.

Returning to the Museum grounds for the 24th year is the Kiwanis July 4th Annual Pig War Picnic. This is a biggie. After the must-see parade down Spring Street this is where you need to be. You haven't been to San Juan Island if you have never been to the Pig War Picnic! Live music, kid's games, Captain Pickett, food and more are sure to make for an enjoyable part of your July 4th festivities.

Island Rec's Music on the Lawn Summer Concert Series also returns for its 18th year beginning June 27 for six shows each Wednesday evening, starting at 6:30 p.m. July 4th will be skipped this year because of the Pig War Picnic, but put it down on your calendars to take in an eclectic collection of musical styles this summer. Bring a picnic meal, pack it in and pack it out and please leave your four legged companions and adult beverages at home.



Kick back and take in the tunes in a truly beautiful setting and you really can't beat the price which is FREE! Such a deal.

Volunteer today! We need you and we promise fun.

Volunteer Positions needed:

- *Welcome Center docent (only 3 hours, inside work, just in the summer)*
- *Gift Shop Coordinator*
- *Newsletter Coordinator*
- *Grounds keeping Team*
- *Archiving/Researching*
- *Data Input*
- *Photo scanning Team*
- *Fundraising & Membership*
- *Grant writing*
- *Maintenance Team*
- *Exhibit Task Force*
- *Oral History Task Force*
- *Textile Research Team*
- *Ephemera Preservation Team*
- *School Outreach Coordinators*
- *Tour Guides*
- *History Buff Club Coordinator*
- *Board Members*

- *Speakers and Presenters*
- *Event Coordinator*
- *Correspondence Secretary*
- *Social Media Guru*
- *Volunteer Coordination Duties*
- *Director's Assistant*

*Sign up for as many as you want
by calling 360-378-3949*

or

*Sending the Museum a message
on our Facebook page*

or

*Emailing the Museum at
museum_admin@sjmuseum.org*

or

*Stopping by the Museum's
Resource Center at 323 Price Street*

We love company!

Highlights from March 14 Show and Tell Event

The Second Annual Show and Tell Event, presented by the San Juan Historical Society and the Friends of the San Juan Island Library, was held on Wednesday, March 14, 2018. The public was invited to view some of the Museum's recent acquisitions and discoveries, and to hear the reports on volunteer project by Ron Hanson, Michael Hansen, and Andy Zall. The photo slideshow and the gag reel were informative and enjoyable – the volunteers who presented have been working for nine months on their individual projects: Boats, Buildings, and Photos. The work continues and more volunteers are always welcome, whether as a team member or the leader of your own project.



Top right, volunteer Michael Hansen shares his findings of the historic Saloon Best. Bottom right, new Board President Robin Jacobson shares opening remarks with the audience.

Volunteer spotlight

Many thanks to board member Romona Jones for her many years of tireless devotion to the Museum. Whatever the occasion or the need, Romona is always there to lend a helping hand with her signature style and grace.

She served as board Recording Secretary for 13 years and only missed one meeting in that time! She has helped in other capacities as well including welcome docent, coffee, tea and baked goodie maker extraordinaire for countless occasions and with the help of her daughters, working her magic for the Old Fashioned Christmas Celebrations. Her chocolate mice are to die for!

A sure sign of spring is when Romona arrives to perform her spring cleaning magic. Using her white glove technique, she clears away the winter grime and gets the buildings in shape and presentable for visitor season.

Thank you Romona for all you have done and continue to do on behalf of the Museum!!



Yes, she does windows too! On a chilly and windy spring day, Romona bundled up and cleaned the windows (inside and out) on several of our buildings, including the King House as shown here. That is real dedication.

New and Renewing Members and Donations

Since last newsletter publication 3.1.2018

Many thanks for your support and generosity!

Jeanie Garrett
John Wade
Pat Ball
Barbara Clary
Emily & John Geyman
Alan & Lynn Weber/Roochvarg
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Chance & Frank Earle
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Anne & Court Bell
Donna & Eugene Alexander
Mary Alice & Jack McKenzie
Jane & David Cable
Mary Jane Anderson

Memorial donations

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John Wade
Bob Guard

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Ed & Barbara Rouleau

Katherine "Kitty" Roberts
John Wade
Jeanie Garrett
Anne & Court Bell
Bob Guard
Mary Alice & Jack McKenzie

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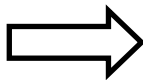
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The Museum is a recipient of grant funding from San Juan County lodging tax funds. Proceeds derived from this grant help to defray a portion of operating expenses. We thank the San Juan County Council and their lodging tax advisory committee for this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

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

Name _____

Address _____

City, State & Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____ Email _____

This is a (check one) ☐ Renewing Membership ☐ New Membership ☐ Other

Yearly membership contribution: \$ _____ (amount of your choosing)

Additional contribution: \$ _____

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