Thunderstruck

Friday the 13th of July was an unlucky one for the Anacortes Museum when a rare thunderstorm rolled through town and knocked out the Museum’s security and smoke alarm systems. It also damaged three computers, the copy machine and the phone system, but thankfully missed the handicapped lift.

Staff knew lightning must have struck close by, but were unable to figure out just where. Eric Erickson solved the mystery, showing us where lightning left a gouge in the Douglas Fir outside our office door, 35 or 40 feet up. He spotted it by telltale strips of bark knocked to the ground by the strike.

It took the City’s IT Department, a copy machine repairman and a team of security technicians nearly two weeks to repair all the damage and get all systems back online.

New exhibit spotlights War of 1812

You’ve heard about the rockets’ red glare and the bombs bursting in air, but do you know anything else about the War of 1812 beyond the story of the birth of the National Anthem?

You can learn more at the Anacortes Museum, which is hosting a temporary exhibit on the history of the sea services of the United States during the War of 1812. The exhibit comes from the U.S. Navy’s Office of Commissions, Naval History and Heritage Command, which provided six free-standing graphic panels free.

For more information, visit www.ourflagwasstillthere.org.

W.T. Preston Open Daily Until Labor Day

Life aboard a riverboat comes vividly to life during a visit to the W.T. Preston steam-powered sternwheeler, which is open daily except Wednesdays through Labor Day, and weekends through October. Everything from the galley and crew bunks to boilers and machinery is still inside to tell the story of the National Historic Landmark, which cleared debris from Puget Sound’s navigable waterways from 1939 to 1981. Tickets are $1-$3, free for under 8.

The Preston’s story and those of the schooner Wawona and other historic watercraft are interpreted next door at the Maritime Heritage Center. Currently under construction is an exhibit about the BMW ORACLE Sailing’s USA 17 trimaran, which was built in Anacortes and won the prestigious 33rd America’s Cup yacht race in Spain in 2010. Admission to the Heritage Center is free.

Anacortes Museum Foundation

Through memberships, the Anacortes Museum Foundation supports and assists the educational and preservation goals of the Anacortes Museum.

Become a Member — Support Local History!

Benefits of Annual Membership & Annual Membership Categories

- FREE admission to the W.T. Preston and Maritime Heritage Center
- 10% discount at the Museum store
- Invitation to exhibit openings and special events
- Quarterly Museum newsletter
- Discount on select special events
- Student & Senior (65+)$65.00
- Family $95.00
- Business/Organization $150.00
- Sponsor $500.00
- Life $250.00
- Donation $1-$250

☐ New Member ☐ Renewal

(Contributions tax deductible to fullest extent of law)

Name: __________________________
Address: ________________________
City/State/Zip: ____________________
Telephone: ______________________
Email: __________________________

Please make checks payable to: Anacortes Museum Foundation.
Send to: 1305 8th, Anacortes, WA 98221. Thank you!

Clockwise, from top: Museum Director Steve Oakley and staffer Dennis Mazza wait by the Anacortes Railway engine for the parade to begin; Patrick Shainim tickles the keys of the Thompson calliope; Mayor Dean Maxwell applauds as Eugene “Bud” Strom and Wallie Funk unveil an Anacortes All-America City flag, a replica of the one they helped raise in 1962.

Anacortes Museum
1305 8th Street
Anacortes, WA 98221
360-293-1915
http://museum.cityofanacortes.org
coa.museum@cityofanacortes.org

Starting in September, the Gallery and Research Library will be open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday-Friday, and the Gallery also will be open 10-4 Saturday and 1-4 p.m. Sunday.

The Anacortes Museum & Maritime Heritage Center exist to preserve and interpret the history of Fidalgo and Guemes Islands, and to nurture in the community an awareness and appreciation of its heritage.

Anacortes Museum had a lot to celebrate on Independence Day when we were able to help bring Thomas G. Thompson’s Anacortes Railway engine and three cars home in time for the Anacortes Women of Today’s July 4th. Almost as exciting as the return of Tommy’s train was the return of his calliope, which performed in the parade.

The return of these beloved — and heavy — items would have been impossible without the time and resources of many individuals and companies, and especially the Anacortes Museum Foundation, which purchased the calliope from Anne Thompson. See the Director’s Notes inside for more information.

The excitement continued at Causland Memorial Park during the Patriotic Program, when Eugene “Bud” Strom and Wallie Funk unveiled a replica of the Anacortes All-America City flag they helped raise there 50 years ago this spring.

Both traveled to Florida in 1961 to make the presentation that cinched Anacortes’ win. Strom was Mayor of Anacortes at that time and Funk was the Anacortes American’s co-publisher. The prestigious award is still sponsored by the American Civic League, and Anacortes is still an All-America City.

The photo below is from the Wallie Funk Collection; other images are by Museum staff.

Anacortes Museum
SUMMER 2012
Anacortes Museum News
Becomes The History Books

W.T. Preston open daily until Labor Day

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Director’s Notes

Anne Thompson surprised and delighted Museum staff a few weeks ago when she popped into City Hall with big news: She had decided to gift her late husband’s Anacortes Railway to the City of Anacortes. The gift included the engine and three passenger cars.

The 18-inch gauge train, built and operated by Tommy Thompson, ran a summer route in Anacortes from 1986 to 1998. Since his death in 1999 it had been stored in at the Georgetown Power Plant Museum in Seattle.

The Anacortes Museum and Museum Foundation happily took charge of the ambitious project, with a goal of bringing home the train in time for the 4th of July parade.

During several visits to Seattle and many phone calls, Anne Thompson and I worked out the details of exchange of ownership of the train and the sale of Tommy’s calliope to the Museum Foundation.

Working with Anne has been delightful. She is a truly amazing person with lots of spunk.

AMF President Tom Thompson (no relation to Tommy) quickly lined up a roster of volunteers to tackle the heavy lifting and hauling. The project would have been impossible without them. The engine alone is 4.5 tons!

Headen and Bradford Thompson, sons of Tommy and Anne, provided labor and valuable expertise. Lakeside Industries of Anacortes provided three trucks, driven by volunteers Billy Campbell, Chris Kelly and Errol Lupien. Tonka Ground Work of Anacortes provided a truck driven by owner Lloyd Watson, and NCM Contracting Group of Snoqualmie/Seattle provided a truck driven by Scott Thompson. Those who observed and cheered included Anne Thompson, Headen’s wife Angela Merculef, who baked cookies and brought pizza for the crew, and AMF Secretary Barbara Larson.

We accessed the train after 5 p.m. on Sunday, July 1. We rigged 70 feet of temporary tracks, dunnage into place, then winched, pushed and hauled the four cars back out into the light and onto trailers. We finally rolled into Anacortes at 12:23 a.m. July 2.

Lakeside and Tonka trucks and drivers volunteered again on Independence Day, when they triumphantly hauled the train in the parade. The engine and cars shone beautifully thanks to spit and polish provided by Frank Orr. Patrick Shainin played the calliope.

The crowd reaction to the train was wonderful. Their loud cheers, smiling faces and thumbs up said it all. Anne Thompson had a huge smile on her face as she watched anonymously from the sidelines.

Since then, the train has been stored in a Port of Anacortes shelter. Thanks to Dakota Creek Industries for constructing a skid to assist in moving the train.

Museum staff, City officials and AMF members have been putting their heads together to come up with a plan to construct a fitting facility to permanently showcase the train.

Donations have already started to come in, and we are gratefully accepting ideas and contributions for this worthwhile project.

Steve Oakley, Museum Director

Visit the Anacortes Museum Online

The Anacortes Museum just launched our redesigned website, which you can visit at http://museum.cityofanacortes.org. The biggest change is that you can now search an online database of over 18,000 Anacortes Museum records. This new online system will allow students, historians and everyone else to browse and search the photographs and artifacts in the Anacortes Museum’s collections from their home, office or iPhone. A web search for “Anacortes Museum” also will bring you there.

We are excited to introduce this new tool for education and research to our community. It is the culmination of years of work by museum staff, who have been inputting museum donations, including the Wallie Funk Collection, so that they are now more accessible to all.

We were also supported by our Advisory Board and the Anacortes Museum Foundation; Jose Cervantes and the city’s IT crew provided technical support throughout this process.

Now it is much easier to find out about Anacortes history, to order photographs from the Anacortes Museum, and for the community to assist museum staff by adding to descriptions that tell the story of Anacortes.

It’s also easy to share what you find with friends by emailing them a link using the “Email page” button.

Anacortes Museum Foundation members are encouraged to take an early look at the website, in advance of our promotional campaign. Please let us know what you think. Try out the feedback, email and order functions on our search site, and send general comments to coa.museum@cityofanacortes.org.

Bret Lunsford, Education Curator

Getting By With a Little Help From Our Friends

A short time ago we had a notice in the Anacortes American asking for volunteers to help us here at the museum. Wonderful people came in and signed up to help us… we have 30 years of work to catch up on and all the employees at the museum, with exception of the Director, are part-time positions.

A giant thank you to Charles Smith for entering data in the museum software (PastPerfect) until the lightning took out three of our computers. Now he is photographing each item in our Artifact Room. Next the information on the items will be entered into the database and the items properly stored in boxes.

Another volunteer is Julie Edwards who is scanning photographs from the Wallie Funk Collection, saving us hours of work. Renée Shain has scanned photographs of homes from the 1965 Urban Renewal project. She was ready to begin adding the information to the database when the computer problem arose, so instead she scanned over a hundred postcards of Anacortes and the area.

Linda Yerby has tackled the ambitious goal of photographing and repacking items from our Textile Room and entering the data into Past-Perfect (PPS).

Come visit us on a Monday morning and you will meet our volunteer docent, Naomi Holister, a long-time resident of Anacortes. Watching the Gallery and welcoming the visitors allows staff time to get other work done. And of course, our long-time volunteer Emile Owens has been reading, photographing, and entering into a database old 1800–current Anacortes newspapers. Our former Museum Educator Terry Slotmaker still comes in weekly to help us out and do research work. Still waiting for their applications to be processed are three other volunteers.

It is because of people like these who aid us here in the museum that we are able to organize the history of Anacortes. Thank you to everyone!!

Judy Hakins, Curator of Collections

Island Plants & People: A Twisted Path

Open Through Labor Day Weekend

If you haven’t been in lately, be sure to stop at the Anacortes Museum to see Island Plants & People: A Twisted Path. This fascinating exhibit on the sometimes-rocky relationship between the island’s humans and plants includes photos and information about hundreds of native and introduced plant species.

The exhibit is closing a little earlier than originally planned to make room for Young Man in a Hurry: The Life of Isaac Stevens and the 150th Anniversary of the Civil War, a temporary exhibit provided by the Washington State Secretary of State’s Office.

Judy Hakins, Curator of Collections