

Fall, 2024

Anderson Island

HISTORICAL SOCIETY



A LITTLE OLD NEWS . A LITTLE NEW NEWS

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President's Letter

by Bob Bedoll

Welcome to our fall, 2024 newsletter.

This will mark the end of my eight years as president of the Historical Society, and it has been a great eight years. The Historical Society continues to make a lasting and significant positive impact on our island community. Our programs and events draw hundreds of people, and this year, our Salmon/Rib bake served almost one thousand meals. The Farm and Archival Building continue to be a wonderful event venue. And, of course, the many historical displays at the farm continue to make Anderson Island's history accessible to everyone.



This year **Todd Billett**, our AIHS treasurer, will be stepping down. Todd has been our treasurer for over 20 years and has done an amazing job! Todd was our treasurer through the construction of the Archival Building. The Historical Society is exceedingly thankful for Todd's dedication, consistency, and dependability over the past 20 years.

Our AIHS board this year was a mix of old-timers and newcomers. **Carol Paschal** completed her fifth year as vice president. **Sally Buchanan** began her first year as Secretary. **Jim Battishill** began his first year as

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Operations Chairman. **Serena Frank** started her first year as Events Chairman. **Lee Ann Whitaker** began her first year as Education chairman. **Jon Fields** started his first year as Publicity chairman. **Rick Anderson** completed his seventh year as Archives chairman and will continue for another four years. **Ed Stephenson** continues his eight-year run as Past President after serving eight years as president!

Once again, I must offer my thanks to all our volunteers – you are who make this organization thrive. Volunteers staff all our events, as well as our weekly farm work parties. If you have not yet volunteered for AIHS, I urge you to give it a try. You will find it satisfying, rewarding, and a great way to make new friends. Each week, we have over twenty volunteers at our Wednesday morning work parties, equally split between men and women. And we try to have lunch for our volunteers every other week. Volunteering for events is also a great way to help out. Volunteers help with Farm Day, Salmon Bake,



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and the Apple Squeeze, as well as the weekly Garden Market. This year, over one hundred volunteers helped us with Salmon Bake. Finally, becoming a farm docent is also a rewarding way to volunteer. Each summer weekend docents guide visitors through the farmhouse, the archival building, and the farm. This year over twenty docents served under the leadership of **Lee Ann Whitaker**.

A special word of thanks also goes to our Gift Shop managers, **Leslie Lamb** and **Virginia Cummings**. They staff the gift shop every weekend throughout the summer and fall, all the way up to Christmas. The gift shop is one of the primary destinations of island visitors and a significant contributor to our annual finances. Visitors stop at the gift shop first and then visit the farmhouse or the Archival Building. Throughout the year, our Operations team, under the direction of Operations Chairman **Jim Battishill**, has been busy maintaining and enhancing the farm. Jim leads the weekly Wednesday morning work parties and oversees the major improvements we make to the farm. Finally, I want to thank all of you, our members, for joining us to make the AIHS a wonderful part of Anderson Island life, both this year and for many years. 🍏



Gardens, Guests and Gardeners thrive at the Summer Garden Market

By Susie Cunningham

The 2024 season of the Anderson Island Garden Market concluded on September 29. It was not only successful at raising funds to benefit the Anderson Island Historical Society, but also at introducing newer residents to longtime neighbors who gathered so early on Saturday mornings to volunteer. Neighbors who were once strangers are now friends! The generosity of the gardeners in the Community Garden who weekly donated produce, plants, and flowers to sell is what fueled the market's success and was greatly appreciated. We sincerely thank all who volunteered and the fellow islanders and visitors who supported the Garden Market through their purchases. The Garden Market's manager team, Susie Cunningham, Jane Evans, and Agnes Rogers, are already planning new additions to the 2025 season. Stay tuned! 🌱



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GARDEN



Volunteering at the Garden Market

By Julie Sallenbach



In renewing my garden contract this past year, I learned that there was a requirement to donate time to the Anderson Island Historical Society. I had no problem with the obligation as I sincerely enjoy volunteering my time, and went about the springtime thinking, “One of these days, I am going to reach out to the folks that manage the Garden Market and volunteer.” But as the weeks passed, I never seemed to have time and continued to put off this responsibility until it was suddenly late summer, and my work was not yet done. In a typical week, it is hard for me to find time to get to my garden, a place I cherish a great deal, let alone volunteer additional hours, yet always have the best of intentions.

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GARDEN

Finally, one Saturday morning, I got out of bed and thought, “Today is the day!” I hadn’t made preparations by contacting the market managers, which didn’t sit well with me since I pride myself on being organized and showing respect to others, yet knew I needed to step up. I put on my boots, grabbed my gloves, and headed to the garden. When I arrived, there were several folks scurrying about preparing everything for the day. I had a particular interest in picking flowers, and the ladies I was introduced to were more than happy to arm me with a pair of snips and a clean bucket of water.

Once I received my instructions, I had the most wonderful experience walking in the garden amongst all the beautiful flowers seeking out the perfect buds to cut. As those of us who spend time in the garden know, once you are there, it is difficult not to delight in the sensory experience. I spent the next 30 minutes or so gathering as many glorious long-stemmed blooms as I could cut surrounded by bumblebees, hummingbirds, and enchanting scents. When I had finished gathering the flowers needed, I was invited to participate in making the lovely arrangements that are sold each week at the market. To my surprise, I enjoyed this experience as much as I had enjoyed seeking out the most beautiful flowers.

I learned many new skills from the ladies already experienced in bouquet-making, met some new friends and had a delightful time. If ever you have a Saturday morning not committed to another activity, I highly recommend you consider volunteering at the Saturday Market. You will leave smiling, and glad you invested the time, time I will look forward to making in the future. ●

Johnson Farm as a Gathering Place for Island-wide events by Jon Field

Islanders: Our mission at AIHS is to Present, Protect and Preserve the historical integrity of Anderson Island and the Johnson Farm. But it is so much more than that. We strive to provide the Community with interesting Programs, Concerts, Learning Experiences and Social Gatherings to bring our island community together.

To that end, we are committed to work hand in hand with the many other groups, organizations, and clubs, all serving for the betterment of our Island Residents. Groups such as *Island Arts*, *The Photo Club*, *The Garden Club*, *Emergency Management*, *the Senior Exercise Group*, *the Radio Club*, *Share and Care* and others. The Johnson Farm provides a much-needed venue and services for those clubs and their activities.

This past year saw numerous events, concerts and activities where AIHS teamed with other organizations to provide the most enjoyable experiences possible. We had island vendors join us at Historical Society



events such as Farm Day, the Salmon/Rib bake, the Apple Squeeze, and our Saturday Garden Markets, all to enhance your AIHS experience.

We will continue in the coming year to offer the Historical Society and the Johnson Farm as a gathering place to unite residents and provide a sense of Community Involvement. We look forward to serving you, our membership, neighbors and friends, to give you an amazingly full Island Experience. ●

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PHOTOS



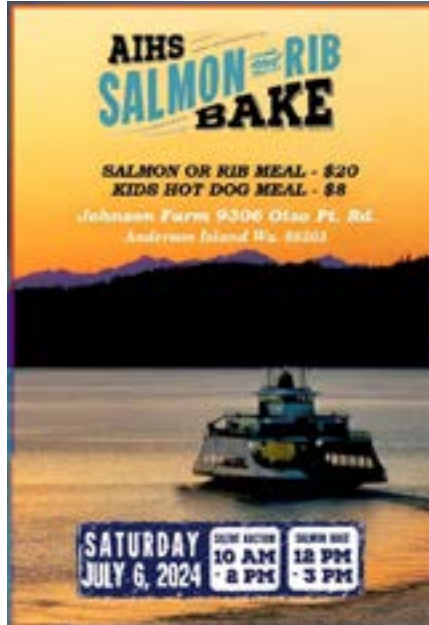
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PHOTOS



Spotlight on a volunteer: Jerry Simonsen

by Sally Buchanan



Jerry Simonsen is a faithful worker who is stepping down as the lead volunteer for two huge jobs, managing the Apple orchard and the Salmon-Rib Bake. As he prepares to pass the baton, we chatted with Jerry about his experience and what makes him tick.

Full disclosure: this interviewer knew Jerry and his wife Linda years ago when Linda and Sally worked together as nurses in Portland. Following a rumor of newcomers from Woodburn OR moving to Anderson Island, Sally tracked them down with a phone call. The rest is history. So, this interview requires a first-person writer.

The Simonsens are “Family-first” islanders. They have two children, ten grandchildren and await two great-grandchildren soon. They are both known also for significant service in their communities, past and

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SPOTTLIGHT

present. Jerry's experience in church work, business, and associated organizations in Oregon prepared him well for his leadership positions here. We are fortunate to have such loyal friends to the Historical Society.

Jerry reminded me that he began volunteering at the farm when I suggested that he would be a great docent. Linda joined him and soon was helping Karen Stephens maintain the farmhouse. During that time, Jerry became close friends with Dick Throm, one of the heroes of our farm community. Dick, who now lives in Tacoma, was instrumental in establishing the orchard in 1993 and managed both the orchard and the Salmon-Rib Bake. Jerry gives Dick credit for mentoring him in each role, a support that Jerry will provide to the next managers.

Jerry emphasized that the entire island has many unsung heroes; volunteering here is the backbone of what holds our community together. For example, with the involvement of an army of workers, the orchard has produced another good apple crop this year. In February, cheerful pruners chatted as they protected the buds that developed into beautiful apples. For the rest of the season, mowing, watering with improved filtering and timing, picking up fallen apples and a joyful harvest yielded a great Apple Squeeze. For Jerry (and most of us in the Historical Society), relationships are the key. Loyal volunteers working together on Wednesdays and sharing meals at the monthly potlucks become friends and support one another in many ways, strengthening the bond that ensures future success for our beloved farm.

The two roles Jerry has held have grown very large with the growth of each event. So, two men will assume these key positions in 2025. Gustavo (Gus) Camacho has already plunged into the maintenance and improvement of the orchard. Bruce Rogers will assume the important role of the Salmon-Rib Bake in 2025. Thank you, Jerry, for your commitment. We look forward to continuing to work with you for a long time. ●

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MUSEUM

Museum Visitors hosted by docents

by Lee Ann Whitaker

Our docents had some wonderful, fun, and rare opportunities this year, including visits from a group of seniors from the Pines Senior Living, Vintage Chevy Club (who brought their beautiful cars), students and teachers from China, and our own adorable Anderson Island Elementary students. A rough estimate puts the figure of visitors this summer and autumn at around 400.



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MUSEUM



Pot Lucks and Presentations:

We started our series of pot lucks and presentations in Sept., with Brad Biggerstaff who explained about the geography of Puget Sound and Anderson Island, showing how nature collects our water under the ground. Interest was expressed in scheduling a beach walk in May so that he can point out the layers of earth and rocks that form our Island. In October, John Dodge discussed the Columbus Day Storm of 1962, which resulted in millions of dollars of damage, over 100 lost lives, and hundreds of injuries. He autographed and sold copies of his amazing book, "Killer Wind". ●

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ISLAND SIGN

ANDERSON ISLAND: WHERE IS THE SIGN?

By Bob Friend



The last time you drove, rode a bike or horse, or just walked to the Johnson Farm, did you wonder on the way in, “Hey, what happened to the sign that was over the road-it’s gone!” Well, after some serious discussions within AIHS, it became apparent that the sag in the very top of the sign was beginning to look bigger and more ominous as each day went by. So, about a year ago, with the help of the Tanner Electric boom, the sign came down for repairs. Still, where did it go?

Well, it did not go far, and is currently down in the Annex diligently being worked on by the volunteers of the AIHS. So: what exactly is being done to the sign and when will it be back up over the entrance to the farm? All good questions, but first some brief sign history courtesy of Rick Anderson:

For over 50 years, the ANDERSON ISLAND sign that hangs over the entrance to Johnson Farm adorned the Anderson Island Ferry Dock and encouraged departing visitors to “COME AGAIN.” The sign was the idea of the Ladies’ Improvement Club, later known as the Anderson Island Community Club. They paid for the sign to be built in 1926 and persuaded the County to erect it on two poles at the top end of the

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ferry dock. When the new dock was built in the 1984-85 time frame, the County notified the islanders that the sign was coming down and was not going to be replaced. The County didn't want the liability for the sign, but did offer to donate it to the Anderson Island Historical Society, and that is how the sign ended up at the Johnson Farm.

Now, after hanging over the entrance leading to the farm for the past 40 years, it is being given some much-needed maintenance and TLC. Some may even wonder, "How much is being repaired and replaced, and do we have to question whether this is similar to the Theseus Paradox?"

Never fear, the sign will look the same, only with a fresh coat of paint and some new boards. The sign repair team of Jon D'arrigo, Wes Tromble, and Robert Friend removed one side of the sign, planed down each board, replaced a few rotted boards inside the structure and then did the same to the other side. The boards were glued and applied with all new screws, and then were ready to be painted. Under the guidance of master old sign painter, Rick Stockstad, we learned how to apply the

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paint stain in a professional manner and are close to being finished. What is left to repair and paint is the smaller sign that hung down from the original sign, stating, "Johnson Farm, established 1916."

Taking down the sign for maintenance has given the opportunity to correct the dates on the sign. The farm was established in 1896, and it was the present farmhouse that was built in 1916.

According to Jim Battishill, Operations Manager, the sign will be back up before the end of year, set for the next 50 years and all will be back to normal as you enter the road up to the farmhouse. ●



Join us in 2025 to work together, preserving our rich history for the future!