We are grateful to have him overseeing the construction on a day-to-day basis with tireless hours on-site and negotiating bids on our behalf for the best options.

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Bill O’Meara was mentioned in a previous newsletter when he helped install the light on the flagpole and other lighting needs. Over the past two months he has donated his time to the gymnasium project, traveling between Seattle and Chinook. In his profession as a commercial electrician, he has worked on the Opera House and Garfield High School in Seattle, which provided him with stage experience first hand. Bill has such an interest in our project that he has researched what is needed for our stage lighting and sound, and even stage curtains, in an attempt to update and upgrade the gymnasium stage to accommodate the performing arts and artists.

He is also working with Joanne Leech (who is another alum and FOCS board member) on the design of the new kitchen in the gymnasium and has taken the time to research bids for equipment and appliances necessary to make it a well-functioning kitchen.

Corky Wilson is a Port of Chinook Commissioner and is donating his time for the sole purpose of saving money on the project. Now retired, his background and experience make him an excellent choice for the role of construction manager. He owned and managed a construction-related business for years, and served on the Port of Willapa Board of Commissioners.

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Our own illustrious Board President, Eileen Wirkkala, was voted one of the “Greatest Community Volunteers” for the 2010 Discovery Coast publication, which is a primary marketing and advertising tool for the Peninsula. What a great honor!

Angus Bowmer came to Chinook the year the banks failed - 1928. He had gone to a Normal school to get a “degree” in education. When he graduated he took a teaching position in Rosburg, Washington.

During his second year of teaching in that small community he traveled by boat to Astoria because he heard there was a run on the banks. He was advised to leave his money in the bank. There was no reason for panic he was told. Alas, the following day he learned that the bank in Astoria had failed and all his money was gone along with his dream of completing his education at the University of Washington.

He was directed to Chinook where a beautiful cement school had just been built, and after an interview, he learned they would pay him $1800 a year plus the luxury of teaching in a new, modern school building. His wife, Lois, was also hired for a lesser salary. They lived on her salary while saving his to regain their loss.

His love was always drama. The boys from Chinook who were attending high school in Ilwaco couldn't participate in sports because there was no bus to bring them home after school. So, Angus decided to form a basketball team to give these boys something to do after school. They were called the Yellow Jackets and he coached the team. In order to raise money to buy uniforms for the team he decided to have a play, but where would they present the play? Angus sent all the high school boys to the beach to collect driftwood and out of this driftwood he constructed a stage inside the east end of the gym. Besides the students, he used members of the faculty and the community to produce the play. He got everyone so enthused about being in plays and drama that the school board built the original stage on to the gym in 1930 or 1931. By this time the Great Depression had occurred and Angus had moved on to complete his education at UW.

The rest of the story is...after his graduation Angus moved to Ashland to teach at Southern Oregon College and he is the person who initiated the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Our goal is to have an OSF troupe perform in the newly restored gymnasium on the “Angus Bowmer Stage.”

CONGRATULATIONS!

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Volunteers Needed

If you have a particular talent and/or some time to spare, please call Corky Wilson at 360-777-8050, or one of the board members, to volunteer your time and effort to promote this community effort.
Memorials

Monetary donations since the last newsletter have been received in memory of:

- Sigurd Hansen
- Jerry Osborne (Mrs. Buddy)
- Joe Church
- Eileen (Williams) Nyberg
- Helen (Williams) Tetz
- Emma Louise (Saither) Krager
- Adella (Olsen) Orvick
- Katherine (Johnson) Montgomery

We are grateful to families who memorialize their loved ones in donations to Friends of Chinook School. As mentioned in the last newsletter, the FOCS board has plans to place a memorial plaque in the school building when the restoration has been completed. This plaque will serve to remind all of us of departed family and friends and the generosity of those who contributed in their memory.

Time to Join or Renew!

If you have never joined or haven’t yet renewed your membership for 2010, we are counting on you and your support.

If you have any authentic memorabilia you are willing to part with we will gladly accept items and pictures to eventually showcase the history of the Chinook School. Contact any board member today.

Cartoon by Carol Johnson
More than three hundred hungry people attended our 5th annual Oktoberfest fundraiser. For the first time it was held in the historic school, transformed into a bountiful fall harvest setting with pumpkins, cornstalks, a harvest moon, and leaves entwined with lights. The Beach Buddies Band provided entertainment and the roving German singers mingled with the dinners guests. German food catered by Joanne Leech received rave reviews and the young wait staff from Chinook did a great job busing tables. The school’s four large classrooms were set up for dining, refreshments and a silent auction. Many generous area residents and business people contributed to the auction and dinner.

Friends of Chinook School is so appreciative of the growing response and support of our project. The event brought in just over $17,000 plus $2,275 in membership renewals and contributions.