

# STANWOOD AREA ECHOES

Newsletter of the Stanwood Area Historical Society  
P.O. Box 69  
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*Stanwood Area Echoes*

Issue No. 57 : Winter, 2018

## ILLICIT DISTILLERY AT LAKE KETCHUM IN 1920



This moonshine outfit was a going concern at Lake Ketchum until raided by revenue agents in 1920. Earlier a man had been severely scalded when part of the still blew up. Pictured is the "dry squad" and Snohomish County Sheriff James McCullough second

from the right. Prohibition was in place in Washington state from 1916 to 1933. The Volstead Act of 1918 ushered in much illegal trade until it was repealed in the 1930s.

*More About Prohibition on Page 3*

# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members and Friends:

As 2017 fades into memory, we reflect on a very busy fall even as we turn to the challenges of a new year. Hibulb Cultural Center Senior Curator Tessa Campbell closed our History and Hors d'oeuvres speaker series with a discussion of Snohomish culture and our Old Fashioned Christmas drew roughly 1,000 people to the Floyd. It is always an exhausting but magical day, energized by the shining faces of so many happy children. We also again thank Jeffrey Cohan and his very talented colleagues for another great night of Jazzin' with the Classics for Christmas. The ever popular South End String Band, who have been performing for us since 2004, and a return performance of Spiritus Winds bookend February activities. In April we will have our second annual Camano Island Historic Sites Tour scheduled for April 6, 7 and 8, and on April 21st we hold our largest fundraiser, which is our 7th annual Spring Tea. Progress continues, as weather permits, on the Community Veterans Memorial which we plan to have completed by Memorial Day, 2018.

We are doubling our efforts at outreach to the local community through partnerships with the Stanwood Resource Center and Stanwood Library through Story Corps, a national program which records the stories of everyday Americans. Our inaugural taping featured retired State Senator Mary Margaret Haugen on January 31st at the Resource Center and was well attended. We have also joined with the Camano Arts Association and the Stanwood Camano Arts Guild in creation of the Arts Advocacy Commission. The goal of the Commission is to work jointly and make this region a destination spot for the arts and culture in the Northwest. It is hard to rival the number of incredible artists located in Stanwood and Camano Island of all disciplines from painters and sculptors to writers of varied genre. We hope to expand on the success of the yearly Art Studio Tour with greater access to this enclave of talented people.

We also will be reaching out more to residents of the area looking for people to assist us in moving the goals of the Stanwood Area Historical Society forward. Perhaps you used to participate in the Society or perhaps you are new to what we do. We

invite all to find a niche that interests them in Society activities. From assisting to plan an event, or create an exhibit, write an article or greet visitors to our complex, we hope you might take the time to see how you can help. To try, is to achieve.

*Sincerely,*

*Richard Hanks, President*

*Stanwood Area Historical Society*

## Stanwood Area Historical Society Effective January 1, 2018

### OFFICERS TERM (2Yr)

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>President</b> , Richard Hanks          | 2017-2018 |
| <b>Vice President</b> , Dan Lien          | 2018-2019 |
| <b>Recording Secretary</b> , John Smistad | 2017-2018 |
| <b>Corr. Secretary</b> , Margaret Utgard  | 2017-2018 |
| <b>Treasurer</b> , Dave Eldridge          | 2018-2019 |
| <b>Past President</b> , Gail Ryer         |           |

### TRUSTEES TERM (3Yr)

|                      |                  |
|----------------------|------------------|
| Penny Buse           | 2016-2018        |
| Louis Stangeland     | 2016-2018        |
| Janet Mayer          | 2017-2019        |
| Sandy Robinson       | 2017-2019        |
| Margaret Utgard      | 2017-2019        |
| Ramona Snowden       | 2018-2020        |
| Clifford Larson      | 2018-2020        |
| Mary Margaret Haugen | 2018-2020        |
| Alex Gedstad         | Honorary Trustee |
| Pat Bronson          | Honorary Trustee |

Newsletter Editors                      Richard and Robin Hanks



# WET AND WILD DAYS IN STANWOOD & CAMANO

They had very athletic sounding nicknames such as bootlegger, rumrunner and moonshiner. And, during the bawdy days of Prohibition, Camano Island and Stanwood were centers for their activities. The Wild West was again active in the Northwest during the time of outlawed liquor.

Utsalady became a well-used drop off point for Canadian whisky. The many secluded bays and coves of the island offered natural cover for boats bringing the illicit cargo to waiting accomplices whose cars flashed spotlights signaling all clear. Stanwood resident Quinten Davis remembered that "Highway 99 was about the only continuous route over which the rum runners could transport their booze from Canada to the high prices paid in Seattle, other than by water." Led by a scout car, Davis said autos loaded with liquor sped at high speeds through the town, tires screaming around corners, bent on escaping hijackers or federal marshals.

Washington state went dry earlier than the rest of the country enacting a referendum on January 1, 1916 which closed saloons but permitted limited possession of alcohol by individuals. A stricter "bone-dry" law eliminated that loophole a year later. Inspired entrepreneurs found secluded sites for moonshine stills hidden within heavily forested areas. A short-lived, romantic allure of the insurgent outlaw ensued initially, as evidenced by a headline announcing the arrest of Clarence Newsome in 1919: "Stanwood Moonshine Artist Goes to Jail."

Artistry, however, would give way to the hard business of smuggling liquor. It soon became increasingly dangerous with well-armed and violent encounters especially during the transporting of alcohol. Gunfire broke out along the Stanwood waterfront in 1922 when federal agents ambushed the boat "Dragon" at the mouth of the Stillaguamish River carrying 223 cases of Canadian whisky. Pilot Clarence Chambers was wounded in the exchange. James De Palmer of Seattle was shot dead in June 1923 by hijackers as he attempted to unload a cargo of illicit booze at Utsalady on Camano. A shootout with four bootleggers in June 1924 netted two suspects in southeast Camano, including one woman, and left Deputy Sheriff James Gillam critically wounded. The incident coincided with the drowning death of elderly John McDonald who fell from his boat after buying

liquor in Stanwood. Stanwood's Mayor Charles Dockendorf and its City Council initiated a crack-down. Public card rooms were closed and slot machines in local confectionary stores were seized. The Bellingham Herald declared that even with its long history of saloons, Stanwood's problem was never worse than at that time. This is supported by news accounts carried nationally by the Associated Press that smugglers had "put Camano Island in terror."



*Seattle Police Lieutenant Roy Olmstead*

Racketeers such as Seattle police lieutenant Roy Olmsted brought organization and technology to trafficking in illegal liquor. Olmsted and his right hand man, Alfred M. Hubbard, became two of the most colorful figures of the illicit trade around the Puget Sound. Olmsted saw the lucrative potential after participating in several raids on whisky runners. Although fired from the police force in 1920 after being implicated in a seized shipment, Olmsted soon brought order to the prohibited trade utilizing supply chains and modern speedboats, becoming one of the Sound's largest employers. He became known as the "King of the Puget Sound bootleggers."

*(Continued on Page 4)*

# WET AND WILD DAYS IN STANWOOD & CAMANO



*Alfred Hubbard*

*(Continued from Page 3)*

His chief assistant Hubbard was a youthful, eccentric genius and inventor. Bored driving taxis in Seattle, he developed a ship-to-shore radio system, kept in his car's trunk, and began assisting bootlegging crews in their runs. His technical abilities drew the attention of Olmsted. Hubbard's invention of an Energy Transformer put station KFQX on the air—Seattle's first commercial broadcaster and owned by Olmsted. Olmsted allegedly used the airwaves to send coded messages to his henchmen. The invention made a stir nationally. Hubbard's later careers, following a stint in prison, would include working for the Office of Strategic Services, (precursor to the CIA) and helping secure the first uranium for the Manhattan Project. More astonishing, he became a champion for the use of hallucinogenic psychedelics, especially LSD, being dubbed Captain Trips and the Johnny Appleseed of LSD. He is credited with introducing the drug to Aldous Huxley and Timothy Leary among many others. Throughout his life he remained an advocate for LSD use as a therapy to battle addiction and promote psychic expansion.

Hubbard worked closely with one local area bootlegger, Chris Skrondal of Conway. Both men were part of Olmsted's organization and along with Olmsted and 89 others, had been indicted for violations of the Volstead Act on January 19, 1925. Despite being under federal indictment, in November 1925 both men were arrested again after piling up one of the larger smuggling speedboats, named the Estrella, on Rocky Point of Camano Island after it was "riddled by bullets" from a pursuing Coast Guard cutter. Skrondal took the blame after being arrested by Island County sheriffs and was fined \$500.

Chris Skrondal was born in Norway in 1884 but came to the United States as an infant with his family and parents Endre and Ildri who settled in

Skagit County roughly around 1886. Fishing was the family trade which led to the tragic drowning death of Endre in 1889. Ildri would later become known for her own gill netting talents, a tradition carried on by her granddaughter and great-granddaughter in British Columbia. Chris and older brother John took to the waters as well. In 1918, however, John opened a general merchandise store in Conway and held the position of postmaster for many years.

Soon after the Estrella's beaching Alfred Hubbard was touted as working as a federal prohibition agent. He, however, was able to convince Skrondal and others in the ring that he was double-crossing the authorities even as he laid plans for a new trap to ensnare his cohorts. In early May 1927 Hubbard, Skrondal and Laurent Vereecken brought the liquor-laden Zev speedboat down from Vancouver planning to unload at Williams Point on Samish Island for transfer to awaiting autos for distribution. As they arrived at the cove, fellow smuggler Fred Nourse sounded the alarm that agents were waiting in hiding and that Hubbard had betrayed them. Skrondal and Vereecken immediately turned on Hubbard who during the scuffle pulled his pistol, subdued the two and handcuffed them. Fearing the unknown situation on shore he sped off in the Zev to deliver his prisoners to authorities at Anacortes. Newspapers and federal agents credited Hubbard for the successful operation.

Fourteen members of the rum-running ring were convicted in federal court in October 1927; an appeal was denied four months later. Olmsted's original 1925 case went to the U.S. Supreme Court which upheld the conviction. He entered McNeil Island Federal Penitentiary in June 1928. He was released May 12, 1931. While incarcerated he converted to the Christian Science faith and spent the rest of his life visiting and counseling prison inmates and working toward their rehabilitation. Appeals by his wife resulted in a full presidential pardon by Franklin Roosevelt. He died in Seattle in April 1966.

Chris Skrondal also spent time in McNeil prison entering the facility in February 1928. He again became a fisherman according to census records and was living in La Connor with his wife Elizabeth De Burgh Skrondal by 1930. Family history says he continued that work after re-locating to Alaska where some say he drowned while plying the waters. However, an Alaskan death certificate shows him dying in Ketchikan in 1939 due to insan-



ity brought on by syphilis of the central nervous system.

Al Hubbard spent 18 months in prison for his bootlegging activities but received a full pardon from President Truman for his work during and right after World War II. His mysterious life is complete with strange twists. He took Canadian citizenship and became a millionaire through his Vancouver charter-boat business and later was scientific director of Uranium Corporation of Vancouver. After discovering an obscure research paper about LSD in 1951, he became a lifetime advocate for its use. Timothy Leary says Hubbard considered the drug a “boon and a sacrament.” He reportedly worked for Teledyne in the 1960s and was involved in government testing of psychochemical agents on military personnel. He advanced the use of LSD as a scientifically proscribed therapy as part of Hollywood Hospital of New Westminster, Canada. The wide-spread use of LSD however—something Hubbard condemned—fueled by the antics of Leary’s very public endorsement of the drug, led the government to outlaw LSD in 1966. Severe restrictions on research left Hubbard out of the mainstream and strapped financially. He continued his advocacy albeit curtailed and semi-retired to Casa Grande, Arizona where he died August 31, 1982. Writer Todd Brendan Fahey wrote that Hubbard was “as brilliant as the noonday sun, mysterious as the rarest virus, and friendly like a golden retriever.”

Liquor smuggling in the Puget Sound brought together an incongruous group of individuals: Canadian businessmen, industrious fishermen, police professionals and an electronics genius. Easy profits and excitement enthused participants and re-created a frontier mentality in that heady time between the two world wars.

by Richard Hanks

Sources: *San Bernardino Sun*, July 28, 1924; *Bellingham Herald*, Jan. 30, 1919, June 2, 1924, Oct. 5, 1922, May 2, 19 1927, Feb. 25, 1929, April 17, 1934; *Seattle Daily Times*, May 31, 1927, Nov. 19, 20, 21, 1925; *Morning Olympian*, June 24, 1923, Nov. 22, 1925; Daryl C. McClary, *Olmstead, Roy (1886-1966)—King of King County Bootleggers*, [HistoryLink.org](http://HistoryLink.org); *National Fisherman mag.*, *Gillnet Girls: Three Generations have made a Living Salmon Fishing out of Sointula, British Columbia*, Dec. 1, 2005; *Interview with Quentin Davis*, *Stanwood Area Historical Society Archives*; *Alice Essex, The Stanwood Story*, vol. 2; *Census and Vital records from Ancestry.com*. *Todd Brendan Fahey, The Original Captain Trips—Who Was ‘Captain’ Al Hubbard?*, August 27, 2002, <http://www.rense.com/general28/dshwo.htm>;

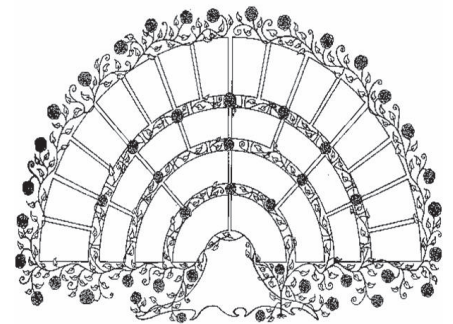


## Stanwood Area History Museum & Research Library, Pearson House & The Floyd

Operated By  
Stanwood Area Historical Society  
360-629-6110

Research Wednesdays  
1:00-4:00 pm  
Open for Tours Anytime  
by Appointment

## Family History Researchers!



Camwood Genealogy Workshop meets the **FIRST Monday** of each month at 1 p.m. on the 2nd floor of the Stanwood Area History Museum unless there is snow.

For more information, call Bill Blandin,  
360-387-3375

# Welcome Center for Camano Island Historic Sites



## Floyd Norgaard Cultural Center 27130 102nd NW, Stanwood, WA

Tours of the Pearson House Museum, The Floyd Norgaard Cultural Center (IOOF Public Hall) & the History Museum & Research Library  
Activities include:

- Drum circle with the Stillaguamish Tribe
- Flute Performance by the Tulalip Tribes
- Artists from Tulalip Tribes
- Quilting by the Camano Island Quilters Guild & The Cama Beach Quilters and the Hero Quilters
- Barnacles by the Cama Beach Foundation
- Crafts & Weaving by Local Artists
- Books by Local Authors

**COFFEE & MUFFINS - \$1 • SOUP & BREAD - \$7.00**

# SAVE THE DATE APRIL 6, 7 & 8, 2018

## THE CAMANO ISLAND HISTORIC SITES TOUR



- |                               |                                  |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Stanwood I.O.O.F. Public Hall | Cama Beach Historical State Park |
| Camano Lutheran Church        | Camano Island Inn                |
| Kristoferson Farm             | Camano City Schoolhouse          |
| Barnum Point                  | Utsalady Historic Vista Point    |
| South Camano Grange           | Utsalady Ladies Aid              |
| Mabana Schoolhouse            | Camano Pioneer Cemetery          |
| Camano Island State Park      | English Boom                     |

[www.CamanoHistoricSites.com](http://www.CamanoHistoricSites.com)

Stanwood Area Historical Society's 7th Annual

# SPRING TEA & VINTAGE FASHION EXHIBIT

*"Waistlines and Hemlines"*



Please save this date:

**SAT. APRIL 21<sup>th</sup> at 12:30**

*Tea starts at 1:30*

Prepaid reservations required call:

360-629-6110 by April 10<sup>th</sup> Tickets: \$20.00

P. O. Box 69, Stanwood, WA 98292

The Floyd Norgaard Hall, 27130 102nd Ave. in Stanwood



## EVENTS @ THE FLOYD

February 18th • 2:00 - 3:30 p.m.

*Spiritus Winds Returns*

February 24-25, 2018

*Port Susan Birding &  
Snow Goose Festival*

March 18th • 4 p.m. - 6 p.m.

*History and Hors d'oeuvres*

April 6, 7 & 8, 2018 • 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Welcome Center for the  
*Camano Island Historic Sites Tour*

April 21, 2018 • 12:30 p.m.

Spring Tea &  
Vintage Fashion Exhibit



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## RENT THE FLOYD



The Floyd Norgaard Cultural Center Public Hall is available for arts, music, theater, cultural events as well as a banquet hall for family events, weddings, reunions, birthdays, & business meetings.

Proceeds from rentals and events benefit the continuing preservation and rehabilitation of the Public Hall and SAHS educational and historical projects and programs.

Call 360-629-6110 or visit [www.sahs-fncc.org](http://www.sahs-fncc.org)

### SAHS Memorials

*In Memory Of:*

|                      |                         |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Jim Lund             | Bill Williams           |
| Jim Lund             | Loren & Pat Kraetz      |
| Olive Olsen Lundmark | Clayton & Joann Olsen   |
| Susan E. Sill        | William & Vicki Fure    |
| Susan E. Sill        | Margaret Utgard         |
| Earl Sundberg        | Margaret Utgard         |
| AnnaLee Lund         | Margaret Utgard         |
| Audrey Knutson       | Margaret Utgard         |
| Peter Stahl          | Elmer & Gladys Norgaard |
| Peter Stahl          | Carl & Nancy Garlow     |

### SAHS Donations

Dennis Fishel  
Phillips & Candace Trautman  
Janet Larson  
Pamela Trojanoski & Robert Hall

# GET INVOLVED...STAY IN TOUCH

The Stanwood Area Historical Society is a special place. It collects and conserves the wondrous treasures of history that define our community. Your participation would not only assist in this crucial protection of our past, but would make you part of our important work. You can make a difference. Join SAHS today!

*Memberships are due annually in January. This is a significant means of support for the Society and now includes a subscription to the newsletter and 10% off all publications, rental of The Floyd and special events for most memberships\*. SAHS is a tax-exempt non-profit organization and depends on gifts, bequests from individuals and groups, fundraising activities and membership dues for its financial support. Your contributions are tax deductible and will be used only for the preservation of the history of our area.*

Individual Membership: **\$20.00**

Student (Under 15) Membership: **\$5.00\***

Family Membership: **\$25.00**

Lifetime Individual Membership (+65 yrs of age): **\$100.00\***

(\*Newsletter Only)

Name [Please print] \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_



P. O. Box 69 ~~~ 27112 102nd Ave. N. W., Stanwood, Washington ~~~ www.sahs-fncc.org Photographer: G. D. Horton, circa 1886, Stanwood Stillaguamish River Waterfront

MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE DUE BY JANUARY 31ST. THANK YOU!

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