

Stanwood Area ECHOES

Newsletter of the Stanwood Area Historical Society

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Issue No. 76; Fall/Winter 2022



Above is early Camano Island logger & high rigger Swante Kyllonen using springboards to climb and limb the tree before he tops it. In the earliest days Kyllonen said he didn't use safety equipment as he climbed 125 feet.

Kyllonen (on left) and two others are using the springboards at the base of a large Douglas Fir working on the undercut.

Swante Kyllonen : High Rigger from Island County

Born in Clinton Washington in 1893, Swante Kyllonen was the oldest of five boys and eight girls whose father, Herman, took homestead land on Whidbey Island. Herman was from Finland who immigrated in 1888. In the 1910 Census the family was listed as living at Scatchet Head and Herman is listed as a “timber cutter”. Swante said he started helping his father in the woods felling trees at the young age of 7 when he wasn’t walking 5 miles to the nearest school one to three months of the year.

Swante and his brothers came to Mabana about 1911 across Saratoga Passage from Whidbey Island to work at a logging camp that was started by Nils “Pegleg” Anderson. In 1914 at the age of 21 he was chosen as “high rigger”. He worked in woods there for about 3 years.

In an interview Swante said back when “first growth” Douglas fir trees were 10 feet thick, he climbed to their tops, cut off branches as he ascended, “topped” the tree and “put on the rigging” for a high line.” Then they would “skyline the logs to the water”. He also noted Camano Head had a “lot of fir” which went to Everett mills. Mabana had more cedars and they went to shingle mills in Edmonds. At some point Anderson began to use a steam donkey.



Old time springboard notches can still be seen in old stumps on the south end of Camano Island. In the earliest days Kyllonen said he didn't use safety equipment it was said as he climbed 125 feet and "pulled up a haulback block, hung it and threaded the line.



83-year-old climber

Swante Kyllonen, 83-year-old ex-logger, still climbs trees, but now he puts TV antennas in them. Kyllonen of Olympia was the “king of the high climbers” in the 1964 Seattle World's Fair. (Story on page 7).

In 1916 “Pegleg” Anderson became County commissioner and built a road to Mabana which Kyllonen also worked on. He said the road to Elger Bay was built with cross timbers using horses. Anderson also built a hotel and the dock at Mabana for which Kyllonen sawed the pilings. Swante apparently moved around a bit because in 1917 he was listed as living in Hope, Alaska as a gold miner where he registered for the draft.

Anderson then moved the camp to Utsalady around 1919 and Swante married Birdie Wilson in July. She was living near Mabana and was teaching the school there started by Anderson on the south end. He worked with her “dad” cutting pilings for the dock. He and Birdie moved to Hoquiam near Olympia in 1924.

In 1940 Swante retired and started doing breathtaking and suspenseful springboard climbing demonstrations in shows near Shelton and Morton Washington. He demonstrated at the Seattle Worlds Fair in 1964 putting aerials for TVs at the age of 80. He died in Olympia in 1978 and Birdie died two years later.

Sources:

“Swaying atop Cut Tree All In Job for Man, 70” *Seattle Post Intelligencer* Feb 6, 1963

“King of High Climbers” *Tri-City Herald* Pasco Washington 11 November 1976”

“Tree topping Innovator...” *Whidbey News Times* Aug 3, 1972.

Oral History Interview of Swante Kyllonen with Ole Eide, 1970s.

Photos on this page courtesy of the South Whidbey Historical Society. southwhidbeyhistory.org/2022/02/the-kyllonens/

For more stories : see our FNCC Third Floor Exhibits for more on logging history



November 1875

A shipwreck with local consequences



Above is a photograph of the Steamship *SS Pacific*, (which collided with the *S/V Orpheus* was 1,100-ton, 200-foot, wooden-hulled, full-rigged sailing vessel, built in 1856. Date unknown, from the "Lewis & Dryden's Marine History of the Pacific Northwest", c. 1895.

In 1875 a shipping collision changed the course of history for Camano Island and its lumber mill at Utsalady. The mill was among several in the Puget Sound attracting workers and brought many settlers to the area after the Fraser River gold rush. At that time it was operated by Thomas Cranney a storekeeper from Coupeville who began it with Lawrence Grennan in 1858.

On November 4, 1875 the American passenger steamship, the sidewheeler *SS Pacific*, foundered after a collision south of Cape Flattery with a loss of 275 persons. Struck by the *S/V Orpheus*, she went down in a few minutes. Only two survived.

This horrific accident was big news but none of the accounts of this maritime disaster killing 275 people mention its effect on Camano Island history.

"Evergreen Empire"

Utsalady Waterfront Camano Island

50 Feet of splendid beach. The lot has a gentle slope towards the beach. Tall stately trees. Hard surface road, electric light, stores, mail route. A pleasant place to establish your summer salt water home. Price for one lot \$750. \$10 down, \$7 per month. Sales representative there every Sunday. Week days at

2938 Colby Ave. Everett, Wash.

PUGET MILL COMPANY

Advertisement, Stanwood News, July 14, 1938

Among the passengers on the *S.S. Pacific* was Colin Chisholm, listed on the 1871 Washington Territorial Census as a bookkeeper living with Thomas Cranney and his family who owned the Grennan & Cranney sawmill at Utsalady. As manager of the mill, Mr. Chisholm was going south to settle bills for the sawmill, the stores, and the shipyard. The night before he left, he visited with Mr. J. P. Larson, an early millwright at the mill and local pastor. "Mr. Larson, who was an early church founder, admonished Chisholm that his trip might be his last and that he should consider everything carefully, also his religious matters, but he (Chisholm) thought that he could take care of that..."

On Nov. 2, 1875 Colin Chisholm decided to Thomas Cranney the holdings of Grennan's widow, Elizabeth Stacy. Grennan had died in 1869 in California and Cranney had been operating it with Colin Chisholm. The

[FROM DAILY OF SATURDAY.]

THEORY OF THE DISASTER.—The following seems to be the most plausible theory of the disaster to the Pacific and is in accordance with the statements of the survivors and of Capt. Sawyer of the ship *Orpheus*. As near as we can understand the statements, the condition of the vessels just previous to the collision appears to be this: The *Orpheus* was on the starboard tack and was off the starboard bow of the *Pacific*, and would, if she had kept on her course, have probably crossed the steamer's bows without any collision. As they neared each other, the *Pacific* put her helm a port to clear the ship, and at the same time the *Orpheus*, instead of keeping on, went about, bringing her square under the *Pacific's* bows. The *Pacific's* helm was put to starboard, but too late to avoid the collision and each vessel received the shock on the starboard bow, the *Orpheus* just forward of the fore-rigging. The result to the *Pacific* we all know. According to the statement of Captain Sawyer, the bulwarks of his ship were stove in for her entire length, and the lanyards of her lee rigging all carried away, rendering it impossible for him to go about without taking the sticks out of her, which statement is corroborated by the pilot and the revenue officers who made a survey of the wreck of the *Orpheus*.

Puget Sound Dispatch, Volume 4, Number 48,
18 November 1875

(Continued from page 3)

Grennan holdings were but all was lost when Cranney had to declare bankruptcy and moved back to Coupeville. The lost grain as well as funds to settle debts of the mill were a total loss and the mill closed its doors in 1875. In the end it was determined that the collision was caused by the *Orpheus* crossing the *Pacific's* bow. But the jurors also censured the officers and crews of the *Pacific* for being negligent in keeping the steamship in good repair in spite of recent efforts. Captain Sawyer was convicted of manslaughter and leaving the scene but he was not punished. The news accounts are extensive with contradictory views that caused much controversy. The *Orpheus* was found on Vancouver Island a few days later.

The mill was re-activated when it was purchased for \$32,000 in March 1876 by Cyrus Walker of the Puget Mill Company operating mills at Port Ludlow and Port Gamble. With the new ownership, the mill operated until 1891. Finally when the railroad arrived and transportation began to change the future of Utsalady was sealed.

For more of the story see below

Joergenson, Gustav "History of the Twin Cities" Installment IX, June 10, 1948 Twin City News, Stanwood WA

Conroy, Dennis "Pioneers of Utsalady" Columbia Magazine of Northwest History v. 14, no. 1. Spring 2000

Conroy, Dennis "The Utsalady Sawmill: a 1857 business that grew a port." Tall Timber Short Lines, Issue No. 65, Spring 2001

Snowden Clinton A History of Washington : The Rise and Progress of an American State. New York: Century History Company.v. 6, 1909

McClary, Daryl C. "The SS Pacific founders off Cape Flattery with a loss of 275 lives on November 4, 1875.

<https://historylink.org/File/8914>

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360-629-6110 ~ <http://www.sahs-fncc.org>

Editorial Committee: Members of the Board

SAHS is a private, non profit organization (501c3).. We welcome your support and membership. Newsletter writing, research, proofreading, layout are all done by volunteers. Please help support this publication and other projects and programs *with your membership dues*, newsletter subscription or business sponsorship.

info@sahs-fncc.org

Calendar of Programs and Events 2022

December 11th, 2022

Sunday, 4 – 6 pm

Loren Brokaw & Lesley Desmul –

"From Island to Tidal Marsh" – updates on the progress of the Leque Island Estuary Restoration Project.

Followed by the

SAHS Member Christmas Party—6 pm—8 pm

Hearty chili and cornbread will be served along with Scandinavian treats. There will be Christmas carols and raffle baskets. Invite friends!

January **Board meeting**

Wednesday 11 a.m. January 10th

Eldridge Center

Concert : the **South End String Band** Returns

Saturday Feb 4th, 2023

7 p.m.

Stanwood Camano Arts
Advisory Commission

OPEN HOUSE:

Come see what the SCAAC
Community is all about!

Floyd Norgaard Cultural
Center

27130 102nd Ave NW



Dec 15th from 5:30 - 7:30pm (free)

Part holiday party and part artist salon, this casual event invites everyone to celebrate all that SCAAC has done this year. We'll be featuring the collaborative art project with the Stanwood Area Historical Society, doing kid art projects. revealing more of the MAC and so much more.

This event is open to the public - come one, come all!

[More details and RSVP on our website.]

www.scaacwa.org

facebook.com/scaacwa

Visit Eldridge Center Exhibits ~ Also open for community, business, family history research and display space – open for research assistance on Wednesdays and Saturdays 1-4 pm or by appointment.

Stanwood Area Historical Society 2022 Elected Officers & Trustees

President ~	Karen Prasse	2021-2022
Vice President ~	Kathy Uroff	2021-2022
Treasurer ~	Steve Youngren	2022-2023
Secretary ~	Joan Andrews	2022-2023
Past President		2021-2022

Trustees

2022-24	Janet Utgard
2022-24	John Leque
2021-23	Clifford Larson
2021-23	open
2020-22	John Smistad
2020-22	Rose King

Honorary Lifetime Trustees
Pat Bronson & Margaret Utgard
~~~~~

Next SAHS Board Meetings ~  
2nd Wednesday of the month  
Eldridge Center 11 a.m.  
Open to the public!  
New members and volunteers welcome.

## Contact Us!

You can learn more about activities and events planned for the future in our social media links:

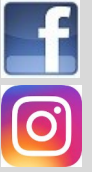
<https://thefloydnorgaard.org>

<https://www.sahs-fncc.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/StanwoodAreaHistoricalSociety/>

<https://www.instagram.com/sahsfncc/>

<https://www.stanwoodveteransmemorial.com/>



## Help Wanted

### Guest Services Staff

The "Floyd" (as it is affectionately known) is a great place for weddings, concerts, arts and music, business events, luncheons, parties, ceremonies and more. It is operated by the Historical Society.

We are looking for individuals to be part of a team to be on site during the rentals to greet and assist with building accommodations.

Pay is negotiable based on experience and availability. Hours include both weekend, weekday and occasional evening shifts as needed. Training will be provided for someone interested in occasional work.

### Custodian Position

Our custodian manages cleaning three of four buildings of the Stanwood Area Historical Society prioritizing FNCC Hall, Eldridge Center, Tolin House. Schedule will be irregular averaging 4-6 hours per week usually coinciding with FNCC rental events. Lifting 30 lbs with prior experience with commercial facility is preferred. Pay negotiable based on experience and availability.

Paypal link is on our website sidebar  
[www.sahs-fncc.org](http://www.sahs-fncc.org)



Donate to

Stanwood Area Historical Society

We collect and preserve the wondrous treasures of history that define our community.

\$10.00  
USD

\$20.00  
USD

\$50.00  
USD

Other Amount

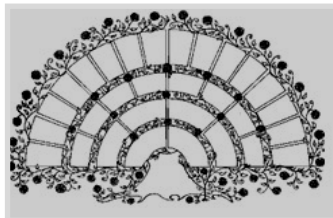
Donate with PayPal

Donate with a Debit or Credit Card

## Camwood Genealogy Workshop

meets on the first Mondays of the month in the Eldridge Center.

Contact [info@sahs-fncc.org](mailto:info@sahs-fncc.org) for updates.

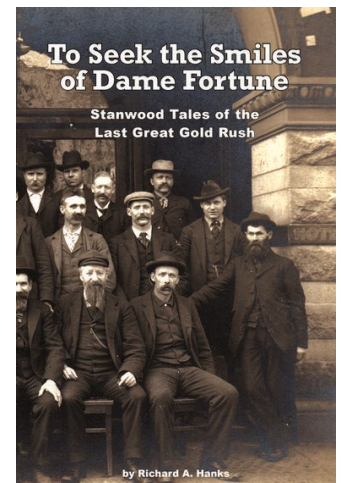


New Book!

## To Seek the Smiles of Dame Fortune

Historian, Author, Archivist Richard Hanks has released his new book of the Stanwood men who went to Alaska during the 1898 Klondike Gold Rush and came back and built Stanwood.

Now available from Coyote Hill Press or the Stanwood Area Historical Society \$20.00



## To our Members & Supporters ~

It was a busy year of COVID catchup here at the Stanwood Area Historical Society and the Floyd. Our fundraiser in May was all-consuming and successfully brought us enough money to cover a major portion of our expenses this year.

In August of 2022 we applied for the Working Washington Grants Round 5 (WWR5). And I am so happy to report that we received \$23,000. This grant program brings \$70 million in pandemic relief funding to Washington small businesses and nonprofits, including \$45 million for the arts, heritage, and science sectors. This is for general expenses that were lost during COVID when we couldn't rent or even stay open for events and museum visits.

In museum news, on the right is a photograph of one of the tours given by SAHS members to 100 (4 classes) of 2nd graders from the Stanwood Elementary School. They walked over and are shown here visiting the displays in the former Oddfellows Hall kitchen (in the 3rd floor of the Floyd) showing historic kitchen and related artifacts

In August we participated in the Stanwood Camano Historic Sites Tour coordinated by a large committee that included members Pat Bronson, Robin and Richard Hanks and Chuck Durland of the Camano Schoolhouse Foundation. The online version is still viewable online as [www.historicsitestour.org](http://www.historicsitestour.org) Check it out!

We will soon be sending out 2023 Annual Membership letters. Your support is important on many levels. If you have lost track of your last payment, it is ok to call or email [info@sahs-fncc.org](mailto:info@sahs-fncc.org). We send newsletters to most for whom we have current addresses. Please let us know if you don't receive one!

We will be seeking new business sponsorships for the 2023 season of programs and publications. If you are a business and you wish to consider a new sponsorship or renew your business sponsorship please consider us this season.



Photo courtesy Joan Andrews

For 2023, officers have moved around a bit and we welcome Joan Andrews as the new 2023-24 President of SAHS. New trustees include Karen Pelletier and Andreea Bergman. John Smistad is completing one of the terms left vacant for 2023.

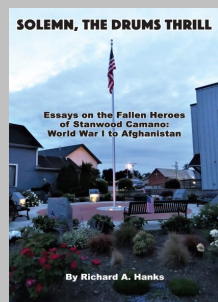
Don't forget our **Eldridge Center Exhibits** which are open on Wednesdays and Saturdays 1-4 pm or by appointment. We also can provide some assistance with genealogy and local history research.

And finally—please consider volunteering—we have many ways to spend a little time including giving our guided visits, helping with the events, working on exhibits and helping with collections. More specialized ways include historic preservation projects, notetakers, typists.

We are Grateful for all of your help! ,  
Karen Prasse, SAHS President 2022

## Veterans Day Ceremony 2022

After a long respite the SAHS Veterans Memorial Committee has revived the tradition of providing important gatherings in honor of our Veterans. The moving ceremony was arranged by the American Legion and its Commander, Chuck Seaburg, Bill Keller, Jim Joyce, Richard Hanks, Mary Pilkington, Pat Bronson, Rose King, and Ed Pearson, "our fearless musician". The program included exhibits, posting of the Flag and comments by Jim Joyce. Richard Hanks read from his book "*Solemn, The Drums Thrill*", the sad and ironical story of the young Edwin Palmer Lund who had just begun work at Boeing where the bombers of the raid that killed were made. Lund survived the crash landing of the bomber somehow but



was among those taken prisoner where he died when the prison was bombed and they were trapped inside.

Details of the many stories of those who gave their lives for our county in this unique collection of essay on the fallen heroes of Stanwood and Camano Island.

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





After two years of minimal holiday celebrating, the Stanwood Area Historical Society and Josephine Caring Community sponsored the traditional “Old Fashioned Christmas” on Saturday, December 3rd



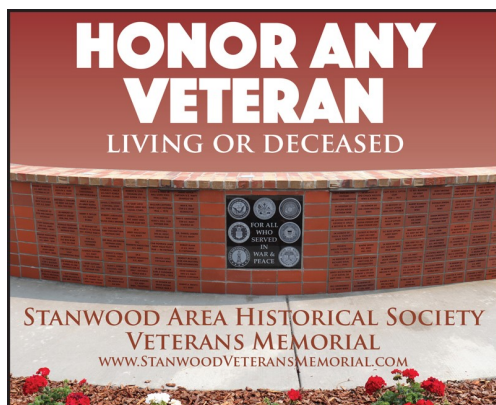
A special Thank You to **Billy Jennings** for photographs with Santa and listed below are the many other members who gave their time.

- Stanwood Starbucks Coffee
- Ed Pearson for music
- Josephine Caring Community for cookies
- Carrie James, Carol Covert, Kathy Uroff, Penny Buse, Sandi Stoken, Diane Anderson and Stephanie Anderson, Janet Utgard, Jeannie Christopherson with crafts
- Donors: John & Jana Smistad, Karen & David Pelletier, Kathy Uroff, Rose King, Elaine & Mark Commins, Cliff and Janet Larson
- IGA Grocery, Camano Island
- Stanwood Rite Aid

Organizers: Rose King, Bill Keller, Richard and Robin Hanks and many of our Board members for such a wonderful holiday tradition.

### Donations In Memory Of October 1—November 30th

- Lenore Moa** —Janet Mayer, Gail Olsen, Kathy Beauchamp, Pat Lund, Dennis & Shirley Anderson, Richard & M'Lisse Williams
- Roger Krogstad** —Cliff & Janet Larson, Margaret Utgard, Kathy Uroff, Jane Sundberg Swartz
- Susan Krogstad Holmes**—Gary & Marlene Reinecke, Kathy Uroff, Margaret Utgard, Janet A. Mayer, Jane Swartz
- June Landry**—Steven & Cindy Sundberg, Allan Anderson



## THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY FOR SUPPORTING AND SUSTAINING SAHS

Sept 22, 2022 ~ Nov. 30, 2022

- Patricia Fay
- Rose King
- Janet & Cliff Larson
- Barbara Wilderman
- Pat & Hi Bronson
- even & Cindy Sundberg
- John & Jana Smistad
- Mike & Michele Evans

### Thank you to our Sponsors for 2022



## Get Involved, Stay In Touch, Join the Stanwood Area Historical Society

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 and volunteer today!

Memberships are due annually. This is a significant means of support for the Society and includes a subscription to the quarterly newsletter. Volunteer members help govern our society by providing assistance with programming, publications and planning for the future.

*SAHS is a tax-exempt non-profit organization and depends for its financial support on gifts, bequests from individuals and groups, fund raising activities and membership dues. Your contributions are tax deductible to you and will be used in support of history education, exhibits and programs.*

NAME (Please print) \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

Email (Program/Activities notifications) \_\_\_\_\_

Individual Membership: \$20.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Student Membership: \$5.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Family Membership: \$30.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

General Supporting Donation: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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