

St. Paul Mission Historical Society (SPMHS)

P.O. Box 158
St. Paul, Oregon 97137
Newsletter – Spring 2026

We hope you enjoy this Spring 2026 edition of the St. Paul Mission Historical Society (SPMHS) newsletter. We welcome your suggestions for future articles. Please feel free to contact any of the Board members with your comments and suggestions.

The focus of this newsletter is on the Joe and Rosella McKay Service Award ([see the last three pages](#)).

Mission of the Society:

Preservation of the history of early Oregon and the French Prairie region of the Willamette Valley. Preservation includes establishment of a historical trust for artifacts, written and spoken history of the St. Paul and French Prairie area, and publication of historical records of early Oregon.

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Board of Directors 2025-2026:

Claudine Smith Lake, President

Connie Lenzen, CG, FNGS, Secretary

Donald Koch, Comptroller

Gretchen Brown

Gerry Lenzen, Vice-President

Benda Howard, Treasurer

K'Lyn Brentano

Tim Bergquist, PhD

America 250-Oregon:

The Society is working with the Oregon state commission on an official event to take place May 23 and 24, 2026 (Saturday and Sunday of the Memorial Day weekend). We are hosting an open house at the Matthew O. C. Murphy House in St. Paul from 11 am to 3 pm each day. Information about Oregon's involvement in the United States 250th Anniversary (Semiquincentennial) celebration can be found at:

<https://www.ohs.org/about-us/america-250-oregon/index.cfm>



House Renovations:



Murphy House:

The porch (see picture to the left) is in the process of being renovated thanks to a \$10,000 donation from Bill Murphy in December 2025.

Brentano House:

Major renovations are in process on the inside of the house. The Marion Cultural Development Corporation approved a grant for \$3,000 in January 2026 for restoration of the Brentano House.

Donations are desperately needed to continue the renovations on both houses. In addition, funds are needed to add a restroom on the grounds. A separate account has been established for each house. The Society has a 501(C3) classification to accept endowments and donations. The IRS number is 93-0671244. Donations should be sent to the address on the first page of this newsletter.

Fred Meyers Community Rewards Program:

Apply for a Fred Meyer's Shopper's Card for free and link it to St. Paul Mission Historical Society. Fred Meyer donates annually to participating organizations based on your percentage of spending as it relates to the total spending associated with all participating Fred Meyer Community Rewards organizations.

[Use this link: Fred Meyer Community Rewards Program to get started.](#)

Sign in or create an account, then search for the St. Paul Mission Historical Society in the list of organizations.

Website: www.spmhs.com.

The website has been updated extensively with lots of new information including stories and articles. The Collections tab provides access to many pictures about the French Prairie area. Under the Stories tab, new items have recently been published by Tim Bergquist and Connie Lenzen.

The St. Paul Mission Historical Society is developing a public database of historically significant manuscripts and photos from the SPMHS collections and the Harriet D. Munnick collection.



William Cannon Event:

On November 14, 2025, four members of the SPMHS Board attended a wreath-laying ceremony for William Cannon, the only Revolutionary War veteran buried in Oregon, at the old St. Paul cemetery. In addition, the SPMHS received a certificate from the Oregon chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR). Pictured (from left, Brenda Howard, K'Lyn Brentano, Gretchen Brown, and Connie Lenzen). This was part of the Oregon250 celebration.



Joe and Rosella McKay Service Award 2025 Recipient:



Maureen Rose (Drescher) Ernst (April 4, 1949 – April 28, 2018)

Maureen was born Woodburn, Oregon, the daughter of Hubert (Hub) Drescher and Marguerite Marie Merten, and died in Mt. Angel, Oregon after a short fight with cancer.

Picture is from when she was presented with the Mount Angel Chamber of Commerce's 2010 First Citizen award (she is taller woman on the right).

Maureen was a SPMHS founding board member. She was the SPMHS secretary from 1976 until she died in 2018. As a board member, she performed the regular secretary duties. Then she did more - grant writing, event organization, and promotion of St. Paul and the St. Paul Mission Historical Society. If an event was considered, Maureen was the person who recognized its potential and made it successful. For one SPMHS event, she arranged a military flyover. Several years ago, she organized a goal-setting session for the SPMHS board and then reminded people about the goals when things started to go off topic. She was continually looking for ways to improve the organization.

Her St. Paul roots date back to early statehood. Besides Drescher and Merten, her St. Paul ancestral lines include Connor, Gooding, Moffenbeier, and Hughes.

She retired from Mt. Angel Telephone and owned her own marketing and consulting business. She was active in the Mt. Angel community, serving as a board member for the Mt. Angel Chamber of Commerce, co-founder of the Mt. Angel Hazelnut Festival, and member of the Mt. Angel Lions Club.

Maureen left a legacy that included these two phrases that she lived by.

“Give back to your community. And do it because you want to.”

“Know your ancestors and appreciate what they did for you.”

Maureen was survived by her children: Angela Capps, Ben Ernst (Ann) and Madeline Tanner (Rob); and grandchildren: Margo Metcalf-Capps, McKaylie and Brynn Capps; Zachary and Riley Ernst; and Kellen and Allison Tanner. Siblings, Sue Price (Jim), Peggy Sellers (John), Mary Paret (Jack) and Dan Drescher (Jodi). She was preceded in death by her parents. Her sister Sue has since died.

Joe and Rosella McKay Service Award:

In 2023, the St. Paul Mission Historical Society established the Joe and Rosella McKay Award for Service to the Society as a way to honor individuals who have performed outstanding service to the Society. The award is limited to one living person per year, except in the case where a pair of members has worked together. The number of deceased individuals shall be made at the Board's discretion.

The awardee[s] will have their name inscribed on a plaque in the Murphy House and will receive an Award certificate at the October annual meeting and brunch. Their biography will be printed in the Spring Newsletter. If they are not currently a dues paying or Life member of the Society, they will receive an Honorary Membership.

Any dues paying or Life member of the Society may make a nomination, and the awardee will be selected from the nominations by a majority vote of the Board of Directors. Nominees must have a well-documented history of Service, Leadership, or Accomplishment to the Society over a long time period.

Procedure: Any Society member may nominate an individual for the award in writing. A nomination must be submitted to the Society President, and should include:

- individual's name and contact information,
- list of services, activities, positions and accomplishments,
- narrative describing the nature of their work in terms of its importance to the Society, and a
- short biography.

All areas of service should be examined and may include, but not be limited to:

- service as a board member,
- chair of a major committee or project,
- research and writing,
- significant fund raising, or,
- other responsibilities.

The Board will review the nominee information and may also consider nominations carried forward from a previous year. The Board will select the individual who in their judgment is the most deserving. The Board may decline to select an awardee if the available nominations are found to be inadequate, or if no nominations are received.

Information submitted for nominees who were not selected for the award will be retained by the secretary for possible use in future years by the Board. Prior to publication of the award, an official biography will be prepared from the data submitted in the nomination. It will be presented to the awardee for verification.

Schedule for nomination process:

- Spring. Newsletter announcement about nominations, including criteria.
- June 1st: Nominations presented to Board.
- July Board meeting; Review the nominations.
- August Board meeting: Board acts to select a nominee. Plaque and certificate prepared.
- October: Award presentation at the Annual Meeting.
- Spring: Publication of official biography in the newsletter.

St. Paul Mission Historical Society (SPMHS)
Joe and Rosella McKay Service Award Nomination Form
Deadline June 1

1. Personal Information:

Nominee's Name(s) _____ Living ___ Deceased ___

Nominee's Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (work) _____ (home) _____

Email Address _____

Date and Place of Birth _____

Date and Place of Death (if deceased) _____

Please indicate the category in which the nominee is eligible:

_____ General Membership _____ Research and Writing _____ Fund-raising

_____ Board Member _____ Committee _____ Other

2. **Contributions/Accomplishments:** Tell us how the nominee has contributed to the SPMHS and to the success of the Society.

3. **List of Services, Activities, Positions, and Accomplishments.**

4. **Short biography (to include years and dates).**

Joe and Rosella McKay Service Award Nomination Form
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5. **Other Pertinent Information and Comments:** List items that were not specifically covered somewhere. Notable quotations, biographical information, nominee's interests and any other information that will give further insight about the nominee.

Nominated by _____

Relationship to Nominee _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (work) _____ (home) _____

Email Address _____

Signature _____

Date Nomination Submitted _____

Please return the completed form to:

SPMHS

P.O. Box 158

St. Paul, Oregon 97137

***Note:** If you are not a member of the SPMHS, you may submit your membership dues with your nomination for the award.

___ Individual: \$20

___ Senior: \$15

___ Family: \$35

___ Supporting: \$75

___ Corporate: \$200

___ Benefactor or Individual Life: \$500

Persons nominated should be aware of the fact that any information listed may be made accessible to the public or media if that person is selected to receive the award.

Nomination Forms must be submitted by June 1. Awardees will be notified by August 31. The award will be presented at the October Annual Meeting.