

## Memorial Memories

Sometimes there are moments that are sure to remain in your memory for a lifetime. Such a moment was mine on Memorial Day. The stirring notes of taps floating across the park with the sound of kids at play echoing behind me, watching a proud group of Pearl Harbor survivors standing at attention with their hands at salute being honored in front of a crowd of veterans, service members, families, and respectful citizens, while the flag was being lowered against a crisp, clear, blue sky. What a moment! It still brings tears to my eyes and reminds me of what an amazing country we live in.

It was wonderful to see how many people came out to enjoy the day, watch the parade, and to take a minute to honor our veterans, past and present. Events like this aren't possible without lots of planning and many helping hands. The Chamber thanks Joyce Claus, who retired this year, for her help in building a great event. The parade has become a great Coupeville tradition and is something that the Central Whidbey Chamber works on throughout the year. It's a joint effort with the help of our fantastic group of volunteers.

I'd like to take a moment to thank all those who helped create a fun parade and community picnic this year. The event is made possible by the generosity of our local sponsors, including the Coupeville Festival Association, Whidbey Island Bank, Prairie Center Red Apple Market, the Town of Coupeville, and the Coupeville Historic Waterfront Association.

The Pearl Harbor Survivors is a special group of men who stand for what this parade is all about. It's great to see them come out every year to share their lives with all of us. We'd like to thank the Whidbey Cruzers, Whidbey Model A's, Paul Loudon, and Hal Johnson for providing transportation to these great veterans.

The volunteers from Whidbey Island NAS helped us in every way, by directing traffic, marching in the parade, moving tables and chairs, and they all wore a big smile and could not have made us more proud. Thanks go out to members of VAQ 129, VAQ 133, VAQ 139, VAQ 137, the NAS Whidbey Medical Center, the NAS Whidbey Color Guard, and the Navy Flyover piloted by Lt. James Udall.

Special thanks go to Town Marshal Dave Penrod, the Island County Sheriff's Department, and to Larry Smith and the team at Coupeville Town Maintenance for all their help in planning the logistics of the parade, and providing the necessary equipment.

The presentation at the town picnic was a great one this year, with Barry Rix singing the National Anthem, and Jeff Hume playing taps. Our speakers included Coupeville Town Mayor Nancy Conard, Captain G. David, Commanding Officer NAS Whidbey Island, and Lt. Andrew Brown. We thank them all for their willingness to participate and for providing a special tribute to our veterans.

And we can't forget the food - what would a picnic be without hot dogs? We want to thank Ken Hofkamp of Prairie Center Red Apple Market for providing all the free food, and the Central Whidbey Lions for cooking and serving it all at the Town Picnic!

Last but not least, I'd like to name the volunteers who gave of their time and energy on the day of the parade. Thanks for all your cheerful help! Cathie Harrison, Sarah Richards, Carol Molitor, Lisa Bernhardt, Pauline Ornburn, Paula Spina, Patty Page, David Eccles, Mary Leonard, Gary Gabelein with his Antique Fire Truck, and all the VIC Volunteers; Carolyn Rutherford, Cathie Harrison, and Maxine Katz for answering all the calls about the parade! Thanks to Fresh Flowers Express for their donation of beautiful flowers, and to Mike Frost and his team of Ham Radio operators.

Whenever one attempts to thank people, it's always a concern that some will be missed and I'm sure this is no exception, so I apologize in advance to those I've not mentioned by name. There is one person however, who is impossible to forget and that is our always smiling, ever energetic Executive Director, Lynda Eccles. Lynda was handed a tough assignment that came with many challenges and she cheerfully solved every one. Thank you Lynda, for an awesome job.

Thanks to all those who lined the streets, waved their flags, and supported this great event. See you all next year!

Sue Cunningham  
President – Central Whidbey Chamber of Commerce  
Coupeville