



Local Students Recognized in Patriot's Pen & Voice of Democracy Competition

At the December 8, 2015 meeting we recognized area students who participated in the Annual VFW Essay contest. The Post's student essay competition is coordinated by Fred Apgar.

The theme for this year's Youth Essay contest was "Why Is America My Favorite Country?". The winning essay for 5th grade was submitted by Chloe Lee of Mukilteo Elementary. Runners Up were Mohuwa Wahid, Ellie Choi, and Sabrina Windland, also from Mukilteo Elementary. Benjamin Hoang, of Terrace Park Elementary was also a runner-up. Chloe was presented with a \$100 scholarship from the Post, and each Runner Up received a \$25 scholarship.



Commander Blossey Congratulates Student Winners



Voice of Democracy Winner
Olivia Olsen

For the second consecutive year, Olivia Olsen garnered 1st place honors and a \$100 scholarship in the Voice of Democracy contest. This essay contest is open to high school students in grades 9-12. While the Youth Essay and Patriot's Pen competition requires a written essay, the Voice of Democracy competition requires the submission of an audio essay. This year's topic was, "My Vision for America". Olivia is a 10th grade student at Edmonds-Woodway High School. Accompanying the Mukilteo Elementary School students were their teachers, Ms. Aina Green and Ms. Sue Idso. Supporting the students from Terrace Park School was their teacher, Ms. Lori Kutrich.

Prior to the presentation of awards and the reading of the winning entries, Olivia Olson led the Post members and guests in the Pledge of Allegiance. The winning entries have been forwarded to Washington State VFW for consideration at the district and state levels.

Farewell to our Comrade Al Starkenburg



A funeral service was held for Al on Saturday, December 12 at Holy Rosary Church in Edmonds. An "Honor Guard" of Post 8870 members was front and center to bid our comrade farewell.

At the December Post meeting, Mike Reagan presented a portrait of Al to his wife and family.

Al lived his entire life in Washington, in Ellensburg, Shoreline and Carnation. Al was a Marine, having served in Korea in 1954-55. Following discharge he returned home, and attended Everett Community College where he played football. He worked in sales in the food and beverage industry until his retirement. Al is survived by his wife, four children, nine grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

Santa Claus Arrived Early for Veterans Relief Fund

The Nine Yards Brewing community in Kenmore, Wa contributed \$217.25 from their military trivia night to support the work we do.

Nine Yards hosts a weekly game/trivia night at which they collect money from participants to play. 50% of those proceeds go to a charity of their choosing.

They wanted us to know that while usually, 50% stays with the winners, all winners this month gave their half back to increase the amount of their donation for veterans. In addition, a gift basket was donated and raffled off to bring in more cash.

POST #8870 REMEMBERS VETERANS AT CHRISTMAS



Post member Don Stapleton presents gift cards to Ron Bergstrom, Director of Retsil Veterans Home.

In an effort to bring some Christmas spirit to local veterans residing in nursing homes and to active duty personnel in need, VFW Post #8870 recently delivered \$3500 in gift cards to these deserving comrades. The Washington Veterans Home in Retsil and the Washington Soldier's Home and Colony in Orting each received \$1000 in gift cards for distribution to veterans and spouses.

Our Post also gave \$500 in gift cards to the Chaplains' officers at Everett Naval Station, Joint Base Lewis McChord, and District 13 United States Coast Guard. At the Chaplains' discretion, these gift cards will be distributed to those active duty personnel who are struggling to make ends meet. In an effort to support all branches of our military services, a \$500 donation was also made to the Semper Fi Fund.

Funding for this most worthwhile project comes from the Post's distribution of poppies during the Memorial Day and Veteran's Day weekends.

Annual VFW/Legion Christmas Party Held!



On Saturday, December 12, the annual VFW/Legion joint Christmas party was held at the Legion Hall. Members and guests attending totaled over 75. Those attending enjoyed a wonderful array of food and drink, including the traditional holiday ham, turkey and trimmings.

A large number of donated items was raffled off, raising over \$ 300 for our Veterans Relief Fund.

Welcome New Members



Alden Gilliland

Alden is originally from Galveston, TX. He joined the Army in 1986 and served for 7 years. He served in Korea 1988-90 in the 3rd MI Brigade maintaining Mohawk OV-1 observation aircraft. Awards include the Army Service Medal and Good Conduct Medal (2). Alden is a Senior Mechanical Designer with Esterline. He and wife Rose live in Mukilteo and have a daughter. Alden enjoys kayaking.

Welcome New Members, cont'd



Gary Walderman

Gary is originally from Centereach, NY. He joined the Air Force in 1979 and retired in 2000. Gary served in Turkey with HQ SOCEUR as part of Desert Shield/Storm in 1991. He was an Intelligence Officer. Awards include the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Joint Commendation Medal, Air Force Commendation and Achievement Medals. Gary is a Job Coach in the Everett School District. He and wife Clare live in Edmonds and have 2 children.



Clare Walderman

Clare served as an Army nurse 1984-91. She served in Saudi Arabia and Iraq 1990-91 as part of Desert Shield/Storm. In 1992 she joined the Air Force and retired in 2000. Awards include the Meritorious Service Medal (2) and Army Commendation Medal (2). She continues as a nurse in Everett. Originally from Villa Grove, IL, she and husband Gary live in Edmonds. They have 2 children.



Joan Wyant

Joan is originally from Cochranville, PA. She joined the Navy in 2005 and served for 10 years. She is a WESTPAC veteran serving aboard the USS Bunker Hill CG52 and USS Ingraham FFG61 during 2005-2008. She was a Surface Warfare Officer. Joan also served Kabul, Afghanistan 2009-10. Awards include the Navy Commendation Medal, Joint Service Commendation Medal, Navy Achievement Medal (2) and Army Achievement Medal (2). Joan resides in Edmonds.

Edmonds Veterans Plaza Update

Over \$ 270,000 Pledged!

With some verbal commitments we have now surpassed \$270,000 in contributions, more than halfway toward our \$450,000 goal. We would like to reach this goal by March 31, 2016, which would allow us to dedicate the new plaza on Veterans Day 2016!! It is expected that we will take this drive to the general public late in January. Wilcox Construction of Edmonds has offered to build the plaza at their cost, which would be a significant donation in itself. The city is expected to include Wilcox on the bid request list.

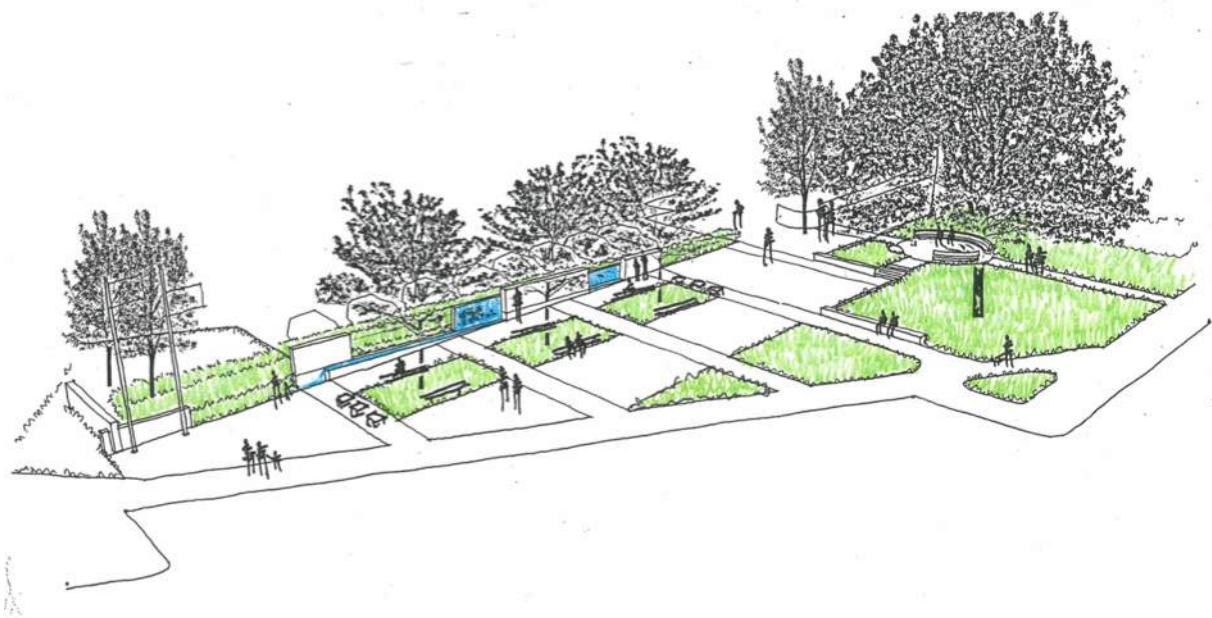


Naming Opportunities

Commander Blossey will be putting together a promotional piece to describe **naming opportunities**, to honor individual veterans, which include:

1. A pedestal at \$10,000 for all four sides
2. One side of a pedestal is \$2,500
3. Individual Pavers are \$500 each.
4. 6 park benches at \$2000 each.

It should be emphasized that these naming opportunities are for recognizing *veterans*, not for recognizing donors. There will be a donor wall to recognize donors who contribute at least \$1,000.



Participation of Post Membership Key to Funding Plaza



Committee Chair Ron Clyborne has questioned the level of participation by the Post membership in funding the Plaza to date. Less than 5% of our membership has contributed as of the December meeting of the committee. Clyborne wants us to know that we have post members on the committee that have put in hundreds of hours on this long overdue project that is “Honoring all veterans...past, present and future” and it is hoped that all of our membership will step up.

Certainly, all of us are not in a position to make a large donation, but every dollar contributed helps and equally important, helps demonstrate how important this project is to our veterans’ posterity. Your contribution, however small helps. \$10, \$20, \$50, \$100 donations do add up and if every VFW member who has not contributed to date donated just \$20 that would raise a very meaningful \$4000+. American Legion Post 66 as an organization has donated \$6000, VFW Post 8870 has donated \$1000 this year with an additional \$1000 pledged for next year ...a very few individual VFW members that have contributed or pledged a total of \$12,500 to date, including a single pledge of \$ 10,000.

The committee asks that we please forward this newsletter to friends and family and other veterans who are not VFW Post 8870 members so that they too may consider a donation.