



# VFW Post 8870

Edmonds, WA  
www.vfw8870.org  
Jim Traner, Editor

VFW Post 8870

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## Smokey Point Fund Raiser

John Casapiedra has secured the north bound rest stop at Smokey Point for the weekend of August 28 to Aug 31. This should be a great weekend with a lot of traffic leaving town for the last full week of the summer. Please mark your calendars and reserve this date as we need to man the booth 24/7 for two day's.

## Change in Method of Purchasing Lunches

The Senior Center has requested that our Post buy a block of lunch tickets rather than having each individual member pay at the door. In a nutshell, that means the post will have to anticipate the number of lunches the Post will be served, pre-buy the lunches, and any shortfalls or excesses will be incurred by us, not the Senior Center. In the meantime, we will have to develop a method to be reimbursed by the individual members. The Senior Center has been great to us, providing the room and lunches to us as a service. However, in tight times such as these, they can't afford to get a lunch count from us and then come up with X number fewer people showing up. We've already lost some members by having an allotment provided to us which didn't allow all the members to sit together, so we will probably have to guess high and have the Post subsidize any lunches not eaten. This is something the board will address and it will be brought up at the next Post meeting.

## Speaker Schedule

Speakers for the next several months are:

January—Elder Law & Estate Planning

February—Elaine Bott—Medicare Advantage and Part D  
Fred Apgar is doing a great job in arranging speakers for our monthly meetings. If you have anyone who you think would make an interesting speaker for our meetings, pass the word along to Fred.

## Need A Lift?

If you need a lift to the meeting, just give Liz Mather, the quartermaster, a call or drop her an email. We can't promise we can get everyone, but we sure will give it a good try. A lot of guys are getting grounded, so to speak, but that isn't a good reason to miss a meeting. On the other hand, if you are interested in providing transportation to a fellow member, let Liz know and she can match riders with drivers.

## Highway 529 Name Change

The Post has sent a letter of support to Nathan Olson who is attempting to have Hwy. 529 (Everett to Marysville) changed to The Veterans Memorial Highway. Nathan's older brother is currently serving in Iraq in the Marine Corp. We wish Nathan good luck in dealing with the State Department of Transportation.

## District Meeting

There will be a VFW District Meeting at the Alderwood Boys and Girls Club on January 3 at noon. The address is 19719 24th Ave. W, #10, Lynnwood, WA 98036. To put you in the neighborhood, it is just south and west of the Spaghetti Factory on 196th. Anyone interesting in attending may do so.

## December's Speaker



Sgt. 1st Class Tim Tasse was our speaker at the December meeting. A veteran of 21 years in the Army, Sgt. Tasse was assigned to the 4-2 Stryker Brigade Combat Team and served 15 months in Iraq where he was an infantry platoon Sgt. It was interesting listening to the Sgt's experiences in Iraq. From the little exposure of his experience, this is a guy I would have liked to had heading up my platoon. Cautious, thorough, and utilizing all the assets at his disposal, he brought back all of his guys. I know a few guys who could have taken a few lessons from Sgt. Tasse.

Fred Apgar is doing a fine job in organizing our speakers. If any of you have any suggestions, make sure you bring them to Fred's attention.



### Socks for Veterans Homes



Fred Apgar presents the Post's gifts to Lynn Semke who is the therapeutic recreation director of the Washington Soldier's Home and Colony in Orting and to Tami Reuter who is the activity manager and volunteer coordinator of the Retsil Veterans Home. Fred and his wife made the trip to both homes to deliver the socks. Fred headed up the project to give the veterans in Retsil and Orting socks for Christmas. The idea for socks came from Fred's wife making a phone call to the Orting and talking to the administrator about what the residents needed. After Fred bought the entire supply of two Wal-Mart stores (1,500 pairs of crew socks), a wrapping party was held at my office. If you missed it, you missed out on a good time. We had a large number of folks, including spouses, bundling the socks into a three pair package, attaching a ribbon, and placing a sticker on the bundle indicating the socks were from our Post. Throw in a pizza and some beer, and a good time was had by all. Fred and his wife delivered the socks to both homes. All in all, it was very successful particularly when you consider that this idea was developed and executed in record time. A tip of the hat to Fred and his wife for a job well done.

### A Few Pictures of the "Sock Workparty"



### Middle School Patriot's Pen Essay Winners



This is a picture of Fred (again) and the three award winners for the Patriot's Pen Essay contest. The theme for this year was "Why America's Veterans Should be Honored." Students from four middle schools participated in the contest and the three winners are students at Billings Middle School. The students are (left to right) 1st runner up Cole Teller, 2nd runner up Mia Andre, and winner Lexi Hagans. Each student who had participated in the contest received a certificate of appreciation and the three winners received cash prizes of \$100, \$50, and \$25. Lara attended our December meeting with her parents and read her essay to our Post. It has been reproduced for those of you who couldn't attend the meeting.



**Patriot's Pen Essay**

**Why American Veterans Should Be Honored**

By

**Lexi Hagans**

"In war, there are lives risked and lives taken. Men and women giving their best to defend what they love. They defend their country, their honor, and their people." This poem by Jared Jenkins makes me think of all of the American veterans that have given their lives in wars throughout history.

The men and women that give their lives to keep the United States of America a free county should be greatly honored. They leave their families to make sure you and I are safe and can live our daily lives in peace. They leave their loved ones to protect people they don't even know. To me they deserve to be honored and thanked for the rest of their lives.

The veterans of the U.S.A. should be honored every day of their lives because of the sacrifices they have made for their country.

We should honor veterans from all wars, because they have protected us in the best and worst of times. The U.S. has fought in many wars throughout its history. Veterans are not just those that have been in combat, but also those that work in intelligence, supplies, and even basic training for new recruits. Everyone that has served in the armed forces during war or peace time should be honored and given our gratitude.

I have many veterans in my family; my father, two grandfathers, several uncles, great uncles, and cousins. My father is a Vietnam era veteran. He was in the Air Force Reserves, and his unit was called to active duty during the Pueblo Crisis. My paternal grandfather, a WWII veteran, was in the U.S. Army.

My maternal grandfather is also a WWII veteran. He and his family lived on Bainbridge Island when Pearl Harbor was attacked. The Japanese on Bainbridge Island were the first group of Japanese in the nation sent to internment camps. My grandfather was part of this group, and he was sent to the Manzanar Internment Camp in California. He was 22 years old and was attending the University of Washington when he was interned. He was in camp just a short time when he joined the U.S. Army to fight for our country. He was in Military Intelligence.

Now that we know that we should honor veterans, we should ask the question, how? The smallest things can show veterans that we appreciate their service to our country. We can thank them, shake their hand, or just say hello; but how do we show that we honor them? Many people think that if they say "it's an honor to meet you" that's enough to really show the person their gratitude and that they really do honor them.

It takes bravery, courage and strength to go into a war. I'm not talking about just physical strength, but emotional strength, and strength of character. Imagine how difficult it would be to see your friend, fellow soldier or even a person that you don't even know get shot down and killed.

To show honor to a veteran, I would not just tell them that I respect and honor what they have done for our country, but show them by listening to what they have to say, and listening to their stories; you can perform simple things like getting them something or just answering a question that they have asked you. To me, to show that you honor them, you need to make sure they know they are being honored.

Hopefully, this essay will explain to anyone that reads it that all American veterans should be respected, and honored. I now leave you with the inspiring words of Steve Buyer, "Because all of us believe and understand in the fabric of the common bond of why we call ourselves American is to care for the men and women who wear the uniform; and when they take off the uniform, we care for them when they are veterans."

**Post Supports Food Bank**

Phil Sacks brought up a great idea at the last meeting. If everyone would bring canned food or nonperishable food to the each meeting, he will see it is taken to the Edmonds Food Bank. So just a reminder, throw a bag in your car now and you'll have it for the next meeting.

**Winter Social**

We thought it might be fun to have a midwinter together (potluck) with the American Legion, VVA, and the college vets. I attended an American Legion meeting where this was discussed (Les finally got me there) and it was thought that a Sunday afternoon get together in February would be fun. We'll keep you informed as to the exact date and time.



# VFW Post 8870 Edmonds, WA

Page 4

Volume 3, Issue 1

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## Officer of the Year Award

Commander Duane Pounds presented Officer Joshua McClure of the Edmonds Police Department a plaque for being the VFW Post 8870 officer of the year. Officer McClure has also been select as the Officer of the Year by the Washington State VFW and will be honored at the mid-winter conference in Spokane in January. As a side note, the Post agreed to an additional \$75 for a hospitality room at the conference in light of having the officer attending the meeting.

## The Last Word

In retrospect, 2008 was a heck of year. However, in light of everything, America is still the shining light to the rest of the world. We were able to have a peaceful election with a transition of power to the opposing party. Try that in 50% of the nations in the world and it's called a revolt. We still have servicemen and women spread throughout the world spending their holidays a long way from home. Everyone reading this newsletter has done the same and know it's a tough time of the year for them. As corny as it may sound, the reason we are still having free elections is because of those young men and women who stand in harm's way and to their fathers and mothers and to the generations that preceded them that wore a uniform. I suggest our New Year's resolution should be making sure those soldiers are supported 100% while in uniform and after they finished their service should they find themselves unable to care for themselves due to injuries incurred while on duty. One way to do this is be a card carrying member of those military organizations that carry clout in Washington DC such as the VFW or the American Legion. The politicians listen to organizations with large numbers of voters and they do listen to veteran's groups. So even if you can't make the meetings due to work or other reasons, your membership does count in more ways than it appears on the surface.



## VFW Post 8870 Minutes from December 12, 2008 Meeting

Prior to the opening of the meeting Chaplain Ed Gray said a prayer for the POW/MIA's while a vacant chair was draped in their honor.

Fred Apgar introduced Lexi Hagans from Billings Middle School, the winner of the Patriot's Pen essay contest, and her teacher and her parents, who accompanied her to the meeting. Lexi read her first place winning essay entitled "Why America's Veterans Should Be Honored," which was chosen from about 50 entries.

Officer Josh McClure was introduced to the post by Jerry Gannon, Assistant Chief of Police, Edmonds Police Department, who told of Josh's outstanding performance which merited his being chosen as "Officer of the Year." Commander Duane Pounds presented Josh with a plaque from the post. Josh will also be attending the VFW mid-year conference in Spokane where he will be honored by the VFW Department of Washington.

Fred Apgar introduced Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Tim Tasse who is with the Stryker Team Combat Unit in Fort Lewis, WA, who spoke of his experiences in Iraq.

The meeting opened with a prayer delivered by Chaplain Ed Gray, a salute to the flag, the Pledge of Allegiance and the singing of "America" led by Buck Weaver. There were 23 members in attendance. The roll call of officers found the Judge Advocate, Officer of the Day and 1<sup>st</sup> Year Trustee absent.

Fred Apgar introduced new members Arnie Wheeler, a Navy veteran and transferee from Post 1040, Jim Wassal, a career Air Force officer, Tom Hallums, an Army veteran who served as a medic in Korea, and Peter Sessum, an Army veteran currently serving in the National Guard. Senior Vice Commander Jim Traner presented each new member with a Cross of Malta lapel pin, and the post warmly welcomed the members to the post.

The minutes of the November meeting were approved as corrected. The Quartermaster's report for the month of November was accepted as read. Chaplain Ed Gray will send get well cards to Rene Blumenfeld and Ken Chaplain.

Poppy Chairman Phil Sacks reported that the total received over the Veterans Day Poppy drive was \$6,214.79 and thanked Poppy Chairman Assistant Bob Crawford and all who volunteered their time to man the collection points, in particular Peter Sessum's 8 year old daughter.

Surgeon Al Boyett gave the Hospital and Community Service Reports. Phil Sacks suggested that members may want to bring in non-perishable foods to meetings to be donated to the food bank. It was agreed that this procedure will be followed beginning with the January meeting.

Voice of Democracy Chairman Rock Roth reported that the reception received at the schools upon presentation of certificates was outstanding. An invitation was received to present the "Teacher of the Year Award" Certificate to winner Terry Traner on Friday, December 19<sup>th</sup>.

Fred Apgar reported that white cotton crew socks were purchased for \$1275.50, assembled by a group of volunteer members and spouses in packets of 3 pairs each, tied with ribbons and tags with the post name, to be placed in Christmas stockings for the 412 men and 63 women at Orting and Retsil Nursing Homes.

Service Officer Roosevelt Ward gave his report to the post, and noted an increase for rent assistance requests due to layoffs. He also stressed the importance of making sure that DD-214's are made available to families in order to obtain all the benefits available to veterans.

A motion was made that the post cover the cost of the Commander's gas, room and meals for the Mid-winter conference, and in addition, that because the post will be hosting the Police Officer of the Year at this year's conference, that \$75.00 be authorized for food in the hospitality room. The motion was seconded and carried.

VFW District One meeting will be held Saturday, January 3, 2009 at noon at the Alderwood Boys and Girls Club, 19719 24<sup>th</sup> Ave W, Lynnwood.

Senior Vice Commander Jim Traner reported that there was interest among members and wives for another social gathering. He suggested that the post have a mid-winter get together to be held at the American Legion sometime between January and March, and that invitations be extended to the VVA and Edmonds Community College veterans.

John Casapiedra's promptness in making the post's application for manning the free coffee kiosk at Smokey Point Rest Area resulted in the post getting the weekend of Friday, August 28<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, August 31<sup>st</sup> on Northbound I-5 – the weekend before Labor Day.

Historian Leroy Middleton told of an incident in World War II where German aircraft bombed a port city in Italy that caused the sinking of 8 ships. Injuries resulted in an illness that was difficult to diagnose until it was revealed that an American vessel in port was carrying mustard gas.

Arnie Wheeler won the drawing and donated the full amount - \$32.50 to the post general fund.

The meeting closed with a prayer delivered by Chaplain Ed Gray and a flag salute.