

The Bridge



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Special points of interest:

- Commodore History
- First Annual Mini-Golf Tournament
- Daffodil Festival Parades
- New Members Highlighted
- Bon Voyage Andy Pasternack
- Seafair Historical Photos

Inside this issue:

Golf Tournament	2
Daffodil Festival	2
New Member	2
Comer Comment	3
Pasternack Sendoff	3
Historical Photos	3
Additional Photos	4

Seafair and Commodore Historical Review

The foundation for Seafair was laid during the Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition staged between June 1, 1909 and October 16, 1909. The excitement of that Exposition carried on and the following year this article appeared in the Seattle Post intelligencer:

"So far the suggestion of a water carnival to be held sometime in August of each year has met more favor than any other suggestion and there seems to be no reason for doubting the ability of promoters to work out a series of water events which would furnish...one of the most attractive and popular midsummer celebrations in the country".

Suggestions were to have a festival that would include the thousands of "Indians" that annually came to the area to pick hops who would add to a "Potlatch" of national renown. Potlatch, in Chinook terms means "feast of extreme extravagance on part of the host". The Potlatch idea caught fire and was staged in mid-July 1911. Seattle would have an event that would challenge the Portland Rose Festival and gain national attention. Each year from 1911 to 1914 there was a Golden Potlatch. It was discontinued after that year for lack of a continuing professional organization after non-salaried civic promoters got tired.

The first Golden Potlatch in 1911 had a small United States Navy Fleet; the British sent a sloop of war. There was even a hydroplane exhibition run by the "Triad" owned by Glenn Curtiss of airplane fame. A barge was burned in Elliott Bay, an auto climbed up Queen Anne Hill and the grand finale, a night Masked Mardi Gras parade.

In 1912 Jean Romano's wingless hydroplane, which looked like a giant spider, thrilled spectators with a 30 M.P.H. exhibition run off Harbor Island. In 1913 the Golden Potlatch staged three hydroplane races off Madrona Park: a 15 mile race for 16-footers, a 20 mile contest for 26 footers and a 30 mile free for all. The 1914 Golden Potlatch festival fever dwindled after the International Workers of the World (IWW), which was known as a communist organization, mauled five sailors from the fleet. Needless to say this didn't sit well with the Navy which proceeded to ransack the IWW offices. The 1914 Potlatch had a tough act to follow and after that year ceased operation until 1934 when the Golden Potlatch was revived. The depression period of 1936 and 1937 again dampened the festival. It limped along until the beginning of W.W.II when it became impractical and unpatriotic.

However, during the war there was a need for war savings bond rallies, recruitment drives and victory promotions: Victory Square was born. One block on University Street, between 4th and 5th Avenues, a

marathon run of noon time shows was staged. Victory Square began on May 1, 1942 and continued daily until Labor Day every year until the end of the war. After W.W. II, people who had moved to the area and returning servicemen wanted to promote the greatness of the Northwest.

A group called the Washingtonians, Inc. was formed to advance tourism and business for the region. The Washingtonians group and the Seattle Chamber of Commerce pressed the idea. In 1947 mayor William F. Devin called a meeting of business, labor and civic leaders to promote a great fair or festival. Ideas and enthusiasm were building, but did not focus. In 1948 the Washington Federation of Garden Clubs staged a campaign to have Seattle officially named the "City of Flowers". In January 1948 the City Council passed the resolution which has never been rescinded. The official flower of Seattle is the "Dahlia". A City of Flowers festival was staged the first week in May 1949. The festival included a parade that drew over 80,000 hardy folks on a rainy day. The celebration was deemed a success and thoughts of a larger celebration were increasing.

Promoters for the City of Seattle have always come from a variety of backgrounds with a variety of reasons to be involved with community events. That trait is still present in today's festival, but pride in ones community and promotion of business have always been two of the main motivating factors. Other cities were staging festivals, but where was Seattle's? Meetings were taking place and in 1949 it was announced that Seattle would hold a Water Show in the summer of 1950. There was no money, no name and no director. Business leaders formed an organization named Seattle Salts to promote the event. The initial budget was anticipated to be \$25,000 to \$50,000. Supporting memberships to businesses and individuals were sold. Special Seattle Salts pins were made and sold for \$1.00. Ideas for the events came in for water parades, maritime races of all types, fly-ins by seaplanes and even an underwater canasta tournament in the Ballard locks was proposed. The Harnsworth Trophy Unlimited Hydroplane Race was negotiated.

Still another organization, Greater Seattle, Inc. was formed and strongly supported by the Seattle Chamber of Commerce, a committee on Centennial Planning. The first paid director, Walter Van Camp, was snatched away from the St. Paul Winter Carnival. The two organizations soliciting funds, the Seattle Salts for the Water Festival and Greater Seattle, Inc. for the Centennial Celebrating merged on April 10, 1950 into Greater Seattle, Inc. with the festival 20 weeks away. The festival be-

came Seafair, a name suggested by an eleven year old son of one of the founders.

Memberships in the new organization were sold at \$10.00 to raise funds. Seattleites that joined received a special copper bronze medal and became known as Greater Seattle Salts to promote the maritime flavor of the festival. The water show, Aqua Follies, was to take place at an outdoor water theatre to be built on the shores of Green Lake. It opened the first week in August 1950 after around the clock design, permits and construction in less than 90 days. Try that with wetlands restrictions and the permit process today.

The first Seafair had been a success, but without a grand finale. Hello Stan Sayres, Slo-mo-shun IV and the Gold Cup Unlimited Hydroplane race; shades of the 1911 Golden Potlatch hydroplane exhibitions years. The Lake Washington event has since added air shows and other water exhibitions. It is still Seafair's grand finale.

Community festivals always post a challenge for fund raising. In 1955 funds were desperately needed for many of the events, one of which was the giant fireworks display. John Jewett, the first Commandant, organized the Commodores for that and other events by enlisting companies to provide executives as members. One of the original Idea men of the time, Ralph Grossman, is still a Commodore.

Throughout their 50+ years Commodores have raised funds for Seafair, for the Variety Club benefiting the Children's Orthopedic Hospital, the original Milk Carton Derby and Seafair Float visitations. Commodores have acted as hosts and greeters not only for Seafair, but for the Mayor's Office, Convention Bureau and Port of Seattle. Commodores escort the Seafair Queen (now called Miss Seafair) and the Seafair Float in all parades and gatherings. They greet and entertain out of town dignitaries, host social events for guests and stage one of the finest formal evenings each year, the Seafair Commodores Grand Ball. They have traveled to other city's festivals to promote Seafair in cities throughout the Northwest, Mexico, Hawaii, Japan, Norway and other countries. These trips are funded entirely out of their own pockets.

The Commodores have added Honorary Commodores from the entertainment field, mayors, astronauts and outstanding citizens who contribute to the quality of the Puget Sound area.

The Commodores in their white dinner jackets present a picture of civic pride, community spirit and hospitality.





Commodores enjoy the sunshine and putt-putt course at Interbay Golf Center

First Annual Mini-Golf Tournament Fun but Ineffective as Fundraiser

Seattle, WA - The 2008 Commodores Fundraiser Mini Golf Tournament was great fun for those who showed, but the first event procured few dollars.



Congratulations go to Asa Martin (12 & under) and to Ken North (adult) for finishing Number 1 in their categories. Judy Dybwad came in a very close second (48) behind Ken, whose "par for the course" literally did the job!

Thanks to Dee Lee for helping at the registration table and to Ken North for all of the incredible photos he snapped and posted on-line.

Most of all, thanks to Art, Dee, Diane & Chris, James (+2), Janet (+2), Jerry & Louise, Judy, Ken & Sadhia (+2), Paul (+2), Tom Reid, and Commandant



Here's a message from Chief of Staff, Joe Gong: "Greetings Commodores! I wish to thank everyone for their support and attendance at the 1st Annual Mini-Golf Tournament on Saturday at Interbay Golf Center.

Thanks go to Art, Jerry, Sadhia, Ken, Joe & Laurent for their raffle item donations that helped us reach \$148.00 in ticket sales.

Laurent & Family for joining us for a great day of sun, good times and great conversation! You all made this a successful and memorable "first annual" event!"



"The Daffodil Festival Parades of Tacoma and Puyallup marked the start of the summer festivals..."

Daffodil Festival Parades Well Attended

Pierce County, WA — The Daffodil Festival Parades of Tacoma and Puyallup marked the start of the summer festivals in the area, which will fill the calendar from now to early October, culminating with the Issaquah Salmon Days Parade. The Commodores and Miss Seafair, Emily Suen could not have asked for better weather as the thermostat rose to above eighty. Seafair was well represented at the festival, with a

great showing of Commodore members who walked in two of the four parades of the day.



Commandant Laurent Martin led the procession of Commodores as they accompanied Miss Seafair and Gordy Gilmer's new racing hull.

Gordy and his son have been working hard to create the boat for the past nine years. Unfortunately, the boat was in an accident immediately following the events of the day causing damage to the top of a sponson.



Miss Seafair, Emily Suen atop the hull of Gordy Gilmer's new racing hull at Daffodil Festival

Commodores Attract New Member



Bridge was published Bruce Bent-

The Commodores would like to welcome the newest member to their ranks. Since the last

Technical College's Driving Program. In addition, Paul was selected to the Safety Management Council for the Washington Trucking Association. A twenty year resident of the Seattle area, Paul is the proud father of a twelve year old daughter and a 10 year old son.

When not serving his community as a Commodore, Paul likes to spend his free time as an Advisory Board Member for Bates

Technical College's Driving Program. In addition, Paul was selected to the Safety Management Council for the Washington Trucking Association. A twenty year resident of the Seattle area, Paul is the proud father of a twelve year old daughter and a 10 year old son.

Please take the time to welcome our new member when you see Paul at an event in the near future.



Commandant's Corner

We are at a turning point in our 53 year history. Recruiting has come a long way within the past few years and for the first time in a long time, we are more active members (28) than retired ones (26)! This is excellent news and I would like to take that opportunity to welcome our latest four new members: **Sadhia North, Judy Dybwad, JennyLee Gonyer-Donohue** and **Paul Davis**. Our demographic is also evolving as we are attracting members from various age groups and backgrounds. This is perfectly in line with the diversity of the community we serve and represent throughout the year. As such, the Executive Committee has been paying special attention to plan events that are accessible and appropriate to all our members, while not losing focus on our primary mission: fundraising for the Seafair Scholarship Program for Women.

While our membership is growing and evolving, participation and contribution has yet to take off accordingly. The year started on an optimistic note at the Daffodil festival, where 15 white jackets (and red sweatshirts) escorted Miss Seafair on Gordy Gillmer's brand new hydro. Unfortunately, this record attendance did not repeat itself at our 1st annual mini-golf tournament and despite it was a great event and people who attended had a ton of fun, the resulting fundraising was disappointing to say the least. Participation to the



Wenatchee Apple Blossom festival last weekend was even more disap-

pointing. In fact, I was able to join Dick Gilbert for part of the weekend, including the grand parade and he was our only representative to attend the entire festival. Kudos to Dick for stepping up to the plate! Something that struck me when attending the festival in Wenatchee was the number of festival-goers and other volunteers asking the same question: "Where are the Commodores?". This is the question Dick and I had to answer over and over, without really being able to figure out a rational answer. Our two-member unit was so small that it did not warrant an official entry in the parade lineup and we were generously invited by the Daffodilians to walk with their group. I personally thank their president Ron Simchen for his invitation and to avoid us the embarrassment of

(Continued on page 4)



Laurent Martin
Commandant
2007-08

A Memorable Gathering For Andy Pasternack

Seattle, WA — The Commodores gathered with Andy at his residence on First Hill in Seattle on Wednesday April 16th to show

him our thanks and appreciation for his service during his time as a Seattle Commodore. Andy is relocating to live with his children and grand children on Long Island, New York. The Seattle Commodores Board of Directors awarded Andy the title of "Honorary Commodore."



Andy, you are one of us and always will be!

Please see the members roster for Andy's current address and



telephone number.

(Article submitted by John Andor.)



"Executive Committee has been paying special attention to plan events that are accessible and appropriate to all our members, while not losing focus on our primary mission: fundraising for the Seafair Scholarship Program for Women."

Historical Photos of Seafair

To continue in the theme of Seafair and Commodore history, the following are photos from the Seafair archives:

From left: 1) Lawrence Welk, 2) Bob Hope and 3) Bing Crosby



We wish you the very best
Andy Pasternack!

Seattle Seafair Commodores

Officers

Laurent Martin, Commandant
Ken North, Vice-Commandant
John Andor, Operations Officer
Ray Brand, Warrant Officer
JB Webster, Personnel Officer
Chris Hooper, Special Services Officer
Joe Gong, Chief of Staff
Dee Lee, Deputy Chief of Staff
Kim Pierce, Deputy Chief of Staff
James Tisdell, Public Information Officer
Tom Warnke, Past Commandant

Editor 2007-08

Ken North, Vice Commandant



Upcoming Events from Seattle Seafair Commodores

Commodores Officer Meeting

Wed, May 14, 2008, 6:30pm
Uptown China Restaurant

Spokane Lilac Festival

Fri, May 16, 2008
Spokane, WA

Ballard Syttende Mai Parade

Sat, May 17, 2008, 4pm

We're on the web!

www.seafaircommodores.com

More Seafair Photos



Commandant's Corner

(Continued from page 3)

watching the parade from the sidewalk. Really, Commodores where are we? What support do we provide to the other festivals when in turn we expect them to support us when Seafair comes? A golfer who passed by our little gathering at Interbay during our mini-golf event said to me: "Wow, the Commodores! I did not even know they were still together - they used to be my favorite group". There is no reason or excuse for simply disappearing from people's radars. I realize we live in a different time and things are way different than the "old days" some long-time members enjoy reminding everybody all the time and tell stories about the "great things" the Commodores used to do. That said, we have the members and the quality people we need to become the prestigious and popular group we used to be. It is just up to us. We all have busy lives but being a

Commodore is commitment and provides the opportunity to meet wonderful people, attend fun-packed functions and have a great feeling of accomplishment when it comes to supporting the community we live in. It is really up to each and every member to bring their piece of contribution to decide what we want to be and where we want to go as a group.

To that extent, **I am expecting record participation** to the upcoming functions and parades scheduled on our calendar. This month, we will be participating to the Ballard Syttende Mai parade on **Saturday May 17th at 3pm** (please note the new start time) for which we will be escorting Miss Seafair riding the vintage Miss Bardahl hydroplane. We will be gathering at the Wingmaster Sports Bar at 5811 24th Ave NW from 1:30pm. See you all there. Together, let us rebuild the buzz that used to be around the Seattle Seafair Commodores. 

-Laurent.