

# The USO Insider

## A Note from the President

6 December 2006

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Since the last USO newsletter we have:

- Celebrated our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with the successful Red, White and Blue Gala, and
- Deployed the Mobile Canteen on its first direct support mission as the Coast Guard Cutter Polar Sea departed for Operation Deep Freeze, pictures on page 5, and
- Collaborated with community partners by sending the Mobile Canteen on its first community support event to collect donations as part of Operation Santa, and
- Continued to upgrade the capabilities of both the SeaTac and McChord Centers, and
- Completed a new internet café prototype at the NAS Whidbey Liberty Center.

These accomplishments would not have been possible without the large and small miracles carried out every day by our dedicated corps of volunteers. It takes a special person to brave lousy weather, get up in the middle of the night or stay on duty as their deployment shifts get extended.....for the considerable reward of a smile or "thank you" from a young person in uniform. When I helped out on Pier 36 or pass randomly through the Centers, I have been able to get only a glimpse of the satisfaction our volunteers must feel.

Whatever is in your DNA, this nation could use more of it. Hands-on volunteerism such as you epitomize is a value that is not being reflected by younger generations as much as I would hope -- it seems to be a quality that ripens with age. If cloning really works, I'd like to see dominant genes with the compassion, commitment and sense of service displayed by USO volunteers used by our bio-tech engineers as a model for others to emulate.

Again, my thanks for serving those who serve.

Tom



## Everett Senior Center's "USO Veterans' Day Dance" a Rousing Success

By Tracy Early, SeaTac USO Volunteer

Along with a fleet of volunteer sailors from area bases, dancers from local Swing clubs and a veritable army of hungry and In The Mood veterans and their families, a new tradition arrived this Veterans Day with the inaugural event of the Everett Senior Activity Center's Veterans' Day Dance. In agreement with USO Puget Sound, the Everett Senior Center - a sizeable yet accessible and comfortable complex - put on an old-fashioned, patriotic, 1940's-themed dance, complete with 18-piece swing band, singers in 1940s garb and swing dancers showcasing their talents. The fun got underway at 1 PM and wasn't expected to end until the evening.

Tables were adorned with flags and the USO banner was presented with pride ext to the dais. While the expectation was that 200 people would attend, upwards of 600 showed up. Seniors and their families, children, grandchildren, and with more than a few attendees in uniform, everyone seemed to thoroughly enjoy themselves. Heeding the Veterans Administration's new "Veterans Pride" initiative, which asks that veterans wear their medals on holidays such as Veterans Day, Memorial Day and the Fourth of July in order to show both their pride in service and solidarity with today's fighting force, medals and ribbons from wars ranging from WWII to Desert Storm were indeed proudly displayed on jackets and hats, by both men and women. Seeing them served as a useful reminder as to just what the holiday is truly for.

The day's entertainment was all WWII-era swing. Kicking off the festivities were the "Androol Sisters", leading sing-a-longs to era classics such as "A Nightingale Sang In Berkeley Square" and "The White Cliffs of Dover". The Moonlight Swing Orchestra presented 40's hits such as "In The Mood" and "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy", among others, for which the dance floor was filled to overflowing. And throughout the afternoon six dancers from the Emerald City Swing Troupe arrived and performed, putting on a show of familiar moves while often inviting the guests to get up and dance right along with them.

Along with the mood-setting entertainment, a hot dog lunch and a generally festive mood - as well as the USO tradition of coffee and donuts being observed once again! - one large meeting room was set aside for collectors and others to showcase their mostly WWII-era military paraphernalia. Uniforms, rations, newspaper clippings, medals of all kinds were displayed, with their owners available for discussion, happy to answer any questions posed to them. For those interested in the history of the era, this was of particular interest and was a genuinely thoughtful addition to the event.

For more information regarding events at the Everett Senior Center, as well as information about plans for 2007's Veterans Day dance, please contact Karen McGhghy, director, at 425-257-8780. Or e-mail her at [kmcghghy@ci.everett.wa.us](mailto:kmcghghy@ci.everett.wa.us).

Web Information about the Center can be found here: <http://www.everettwa.org/default.aspx?ID=56>

For more information about Emerald City Swing dancers and classes, visit <http://www.emeraldcityswing.com/>.

*"They stand on the wall for our freedom, we must honor them."*

## SeaTac & McChord Birthdays

### November

|                 |             |
|-----------------|-------------|
| Renate Higerson | November 01 |
| Meleen Lavachek | November 03 |
| Cindy Norris    | November 03 |
| Tom Anderson    | November 07 |
| Anne Johnson    | November 11 |
| Nola Strecker   | November 18 |
| Alan Hale       | November 19 |
| Karen Herrick   | November 22 |
| Anthony Sowards | November 24 |
| Debra Newman    | November 25 |
| Ann Schneider   | November 27 |
| Arlene Bales    | November 29 |

### December

|                  |             |
|------------------|-------------|
| Dean Quigley     | December 04 |
| Elizabeth Tubbs  | December 06 |
| James Landerdahl | December 07 |
| Alan Shores      | December 11 |
| Sarge Carter     | December 13 |
| Leland Cleland   | December 17 |
| Connie Huningser | December 27 |
| Debbie Ward      | December 28 |
| Dennis Hamilton  | December 31 |



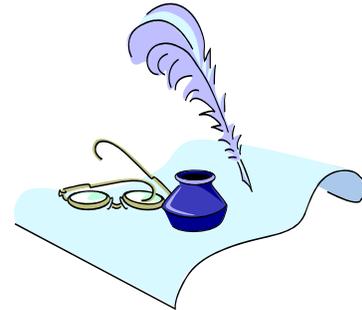
***Please welcome the following new volunteers:***

#### Sea-Tac

Pete Adler  
Tracy Early  
Phyllis & Scott Engstrom  
Jerry Miller  
Mary Roberts

#### McChord

Larry Finnegan  
Wayne Jackson



## COMMENTS FROM OUR CLIENTS

After 21 years of service and not having visited a USO in some time, I must say BRAVO ZULU!! The level of hospitality is outstanding. I still get the same warm welcome and accommodations that made me feel at home over 21 years ago. Your service to this country is unmeasurable. God Bless You and our troops.

ET Straber, USN (Ret.)

One of the better USOs I have stayed. Thank you so much for being there for service members and their families. Our family have enjoyed our stay.

The Dater Family, USMC

This was my first USO back in 1988 (deployed to Japan) and my last USO (returning from last deployment.) You guys are the best.

Kevin Armstrong, AZ(AW) USN

The USO Center makes it so much easier going to and from home and back to the Army. I will give it everything I have in me to protect the good people here at the USO Center. God Bless,

Jesse Salsman, US Army

## REGIONAL OFFICE REPORT

### ***USO Mini-Grants***

Some of you may not be aware that our USO provides mini-grants to service member and family support groups. We have a Request for USO Funds that an organization can fill out to request support for events, supplies, programs and/or emergency funds. The Programs Committee, composed of board members, community representatives and staff, review these requests. Just this past month we were able to assist in funding Bangor's Marine Corps Security Force's Shupe Library and Lounge renovation, as well as the USS Shoup Family Support Group's annual kid's Christmas Party. So far this year, we have been able to distribute over \$13,000 in funds to requesting organizations and individuals, serving over 13,500 members of the military and their families. It is great to know that the USO's reach goes beyond the SeaTac and McChord Centers. We hope to expand the amount of grants given next year, and help even more.

### ***Gala Update***

October 28th, 2006 was a big day for the USO Puget Sound Area - our annual Gala Dinner & Auction. This year's theme was Red, White & Blue and it was a red, white & blue success for the USO! With the help of nearly 40 SeaTac volunteers and community members we were able to pull off a seamless event enjoyed by active and retired military as well as members of the community. TriWest Healthcare Alliance, one of our major contributors and supporters, was the recipient of the USO's 'Rear Admiral Herb M. Bridge' Award. TriWest's CEO David McIntyre was the honorary Gala chair and accepted the award on behalf of his company. Congressman Norm Dicks was also honored at the event. The USO Show Troupe, The Liberty Belles (shown below), provided entertainment for the evening prior to and following the auction.

The tireless efforts of our Gala Committee, our new President & Executive Director, Tom Hinman, our Office Manager Kelly Carey, and all of our volunteers helped us raise nearly \$167,000 for the USO Puget Sound Area. Thank you to all of the volunteers who made this event a success! Special thanks to CJ Williams for helping behind the scenes prior to event as well as at the event.



The Liberty Belles, the USO's Show Troupe, stopped by the SeaTac USO Center following their Gala Performance for a short show, tour, and taste of our internationally famed tuna fish sandwiches.

On October 27<sup>th</sup>, the Liberty Belles, in conjunction with USO PSA, made a trip to the Seattle VA Hospital, to do a short show and tour. They brought a smile to the patient's faces in the transitional care unit.

### ***Volunteer Assistance Request - We could use your help!!***

Would you like to be a driver for the Mobile Canteen and/or help with Mobile Deployments? Please contact our McChord Center Manager Tracye at 253-589-8772, or [tracye@usopsa.org](mailto:tracye@usopsa.org).

Are you good with computers and/or filing? The Regional Offices could use your help! (By the Way, the Regional Offices is the fancy name for the admin offices for USO Puget Sound Area.) Please give Kelly a call at 206-246-1908 ext 1 or email her at [kelly@usopsa.org](mailto:kelly@usopsa.org).

## McChord & Mobile Canteen Updates

### McChord USO Helps Celebrate Thanksgiving

#### *Placemats from University Primary*

Tracye coordinated with University Place Primary and UP Latchkey for the students to make placemats for the Single Airmen Thanksgiving Dinner held at the McChord Cyber Cafe. The placemats were decorated by the students and used by the Single Airmen.

#### *Thanksgiving at Madigan*

McChord USO volunteers cooked and delivered Thanksgiving Dinners on November 23rd for personnel at Madigan Hospital.

### Putting the Word Out

#### *KLAY Radio*

McChord Center Manager, Tracye Kakely, did her first radio interview with Al Knight of KLAY Radio about what the USO has done and what we plan to accomplish in the future. We hope this will become a regular feature to inform the community about the USO Mission and volunteer opportunities.



The Mobile Canteen was the pick-up vehicle for food and toiletry donations as part of Operation Santa, a partnership of organizations surrounding McChord AFB. It was great to have the Marines help out.



Mom and the kids send off their Coast Guardsman after some cookies at Pier 36 in Seattle. USO volunteers Terry & Tim were the Mobile Canteen crew for its first operational deployment on November 18, 2006.

## Special Programs Information – Internet Cafe, Whidbey Island



USO Puget Sound Area was a key partner in creating an Internet Café as part of the NAS Whidbey Island Liberty Center. By reconfiguring part of the mess hall area near the barracks, space was made for Internet access computers, 3 large-screen interactive gaming stations with chairs, a sound-proof recording booth, a pool table and additional mobile computer carts. Through a generous donation to the USO by **Ford Smith**, a Whidbey Island resident and enthusiastic supporter of our service men and women in uniform, 300-500 people a day are now using the enhanced Liberty Center and MWR facility. A Grand Opening ceremony will take place in the near future.

## SeaTac Center Updates

### *SeaTac Remodel Moves Forward*

The SeaTac USO Center opened its new TV Room on November 8<sup>th</sup>, just in time to host the Veterans' Day recognition ceremony. It was also just in time to make space for a new sofa and loveseat donated by Levitz Furniture by moving lounge furniture to the TV Room. Our contractor has relocated doors and repainted several areas in the Center but has a ways to go. Next steps are to select hardwood flooring so we can finish the new Luggage Room with shelving and install electrical outlets in the Pantry so we can relocate the refrigerators and return space to the Port of Seattle. We are thankful to Harrah's for helping fund the renovation of the SeaTac USO Center through a Unity Grant.



From left: George Cargill, John Lee, Tom Hinman, Sgt Roy Murry, Ericka Murray and Jim Broe

### *USO Hosts Recognition for Wounded Soldier*

The USO facilitated a cash award to a National Guardsman wounded in Iraq as part of a Veterans' Day promotion by Levitz Furniture. On November 9<sup>th</sup>, Sergeant Roy Murry and his wife Ericka were presented a \$10,000 gift certificate in front of his commanders and Army comrades. Also present were American Legion official Jim Broe, who handled the selection of this deserving soldier; John Lee, WA Director of Veterans Affairs; and new USO Chairman George Cargill. A Humvee gunner, Sgt Murry nearly lost an arm to an IED blast but used his good hand to operate his 50 caliber machine gun to cover the safe retreat of friendly forces. He has had many surgeries to reconstruct his arm and connecting nerves. We are proud to have helped recognize his service and sacrifice.

***THANKS FOR ALL YOU DO!!***

### SEATAC VOLUNTEER REMINDERS

- **When accepting donations for wristbands, please put the funds in the donation box, paper clipped with a note that says 'Wristbands'.**
- **If you have a problem with the center computer's internet connection, please restart the computer. After it has restarted, wait 5 minutes to see if the connection returns. If that doesn't work, please contact Kelly.**

