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Alan, Brenda Mitchell are Grand Marshals

By Wendy Thomas
For the Port Orford News

It is with great pleasure that the 2008 Port Orford Jubilee announces its choice for this year’s Grand Marshals, congratulations to Alan and Brenda Mitchell!

Alan and Brenda have lived in Port Orford for almost 40 years. Their contributions to this community over the years are numerous. They have been extremely generous with their time, energy, and resources. Time and time again, they have demonstrated their unflagging dedication in helping to build a better community.

Brenda

Let’s start with Brenda’s career as a teacher for the Port Orford School District. As enrollment fluctuated, Brenda taught various grades and transferred from location to location as the need arose. She also taught twenty years at Ophir Elementary. Her service in the field of education spanned thirty years. To give girls an after school activity, Brenda taught 4-H cooking in her home for several years. While teaching, Brenda also served 10 years on the Port Orford Library Board and held several offices in the Back Acres Garden Club.

Brenda decided the coast was the perfect place to own a horse. Before you could say “giddy up!” Alan and Brenda joined up with Jim and Bev Crose to organize and build the riding arena in Buffington Park. Hard work and dedication to community improvements would become a trademark often associated with the Mitchells.

When given some local black wool Brenda soon upgraded

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Jubilee update

Most everyone has been very cooperative in getting in their forms for the brochure, concessions and parade.

A reminder to all interested parties, we have a few tables available at the Craft Collectable and Treasure Event on July 5. It’s only a $10 fee for the day. St. John’s Ladies Auxiliary will be in attendance to offer snacks and beverages throughout the day.

Don’t forget - if you have junk, make art! We are looking forward to your Junk Art entries. Bring your art to the Community Hall between 7am and 8:45am, July 5 and we will place it on exhibit for the day. The viewing public will be your judges. Ballots will be opened and read at 3:45 p.m. The Best of Show will be announced and a prize of $25 will be awarded.

The Driftwood Art Show will be on display at the corner of Hwy. 101 and Oregon (at the former beauty shop), as well as the photos from “A Day in the Life of Port Orford.”

We are working to bring the community a fun and entertaining Fourth of July holiday. We appreciate the community spirit, good will and participation. It should be a delightful celebration.

We could all use a party, don’t you think?
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from a drop spindle to a spinning wheel. As her interest grew she invited friends to join her and Spindrift Spinners was born. That group continues on, demonstrating spinning every year at the Hughes House and at local County Fairs. Her interest in spinning and weaving became another project of community contribution when she then helped start the Humbug Weavers’ and Spinners’ Guild.

Alan

Alan served as secretary of the Port Orford Volunteer Fire Department for 10 years. He also served on the city and county planning commissions, as well as the City’s Lodging Tax and budget committees. In 1973, Alan initiated communications between then-Mayor Leon White and the Robert Gable Family in Kentucky; his hard work resulted in the community to obtaining the funds necessary to complete the construction of the City Council Chambers in 1975.

As charter members of the Humbug Mountain Committee, Alan and Brenda can take credit for what has now become the Port Orford Arts Council.

Alan worked with the city and the port to help obtain a 100 percent grant to both replace a failing water tank on Coast Guard Hill and provide water for the Cannery’s hydraulic shrimp picking machine.

Alan obtained the financing for and then served on the committee that developed Oregon’s first Comprehensive Plan – The Port Orford Plan of 1977. While working on that he also spearheaded the fundraising of the $2,000 needed to get the necessary equipment to bring Public Broadcasting TV and radio into Port Orford.

In 1974 Alan utilized a considerable amount of his time and talent to bring national attention for our port’s sanding-in problem. Before it was over, we had a story on the front page of the Wall Street Journal, and CBS News was in town to report on the first ever town meeting with the Army Corps of Engineers.

Alan’s knowledge and photograph collection of Port Orford makes him a wealth of valuable information and an esteemed town historian. If only we could set him on a reference shelf of the new library!

About the Mitchells

Alan and Brenda owned and operated Humbug Studio, one of the first boutiques in Port Orford. Their success encouraged others to open similar shops in town.

The Mitchells are also owner-builders. For instance they built and operate one of Oregon’s original Bed and Breakfasts – Home by the Sea where they offer a Wi-Fi hot spot for anyone needing Internet access. And Alan has created a unique website showcasing Port Orford, one that has a live webcam looking down our ever changing Battle Rock Beach. The website (www.homebythesea.com) is a great treat for people worldwide and attracts people to Port Orford. As an example, Rockne Berge, the Castaway Motel manager, reports that many of their valley guests always check Alan’s webcam before making plans to come to the Coast.

Another very significant contribution on Alan’s part was his administration of the Robert W. Reinhardt Estate in 1999 in such a way as to maximize the value of the estate for the benefit of Port Orford. Alan and Brenda had rescued their friend, Reinhardt, from a nursing home in Portland where he had become stranded after treatment for cancer, and brought him back to Port Orford to recover in his own home. Throughout this endeavor, Alan was assisted by Jim and Pat Rhoades. And as a result, initial funding of over $80,000.00 was donated for construction of a new library with an identical amount given to the Rotary Scholarship Foundation, and I’m sure I’ve left something out. It is a bit overwhelming to take in all of the Mitchells’ accomplishments over the past 40 years.

Their next adventure

My interview with Alan and Brenda Mitchell was a pleasant, jam-packed two hours at their home. A monument to their carpentry and crafting skills, it is tastefully appointed from one end to the other with Brenda’s own incredibly varied handicrafts and a collection of arts and crafts she has accumulated during her travels. Toward the end of our interview, she graciously excused herself to go to her quilting class, where she uses yet another one of her many talents. Alan offered to take me on a tour of the house, and it soon became apparent that these two people are bigger than life. They don’t just dream of what life can hold for them, they roll up their sleeves and dig in with gusto to realize their dreams.

Alan and Brenda are gearing up for their next adventure, which will take them to Vancouver, Washington. When they drive away from Home by the Sea for the last time, they will be leaving a legacy of incalculable acts of generosity and community spirit.

Port Orford will benefit from that legacy for many years to come.