



ANACORTES ROTARY HISTORY

Chapter 7 - Parades



BY DUANE CLARK

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From the first July 4 parade in Anacortes in 1890, one year before Anacortes became an official city, parades have had a distinctive up and down experience. In 2015, Elaine Walker wrote an article noting several interesting chapters in the history of parades in Anacortes. At one turning point (1937), Anacortes Rotary came on the scene as 50-year Rotarian, Paul Luvera, worked with others to re-ignite Anacortes' interest in July parades.

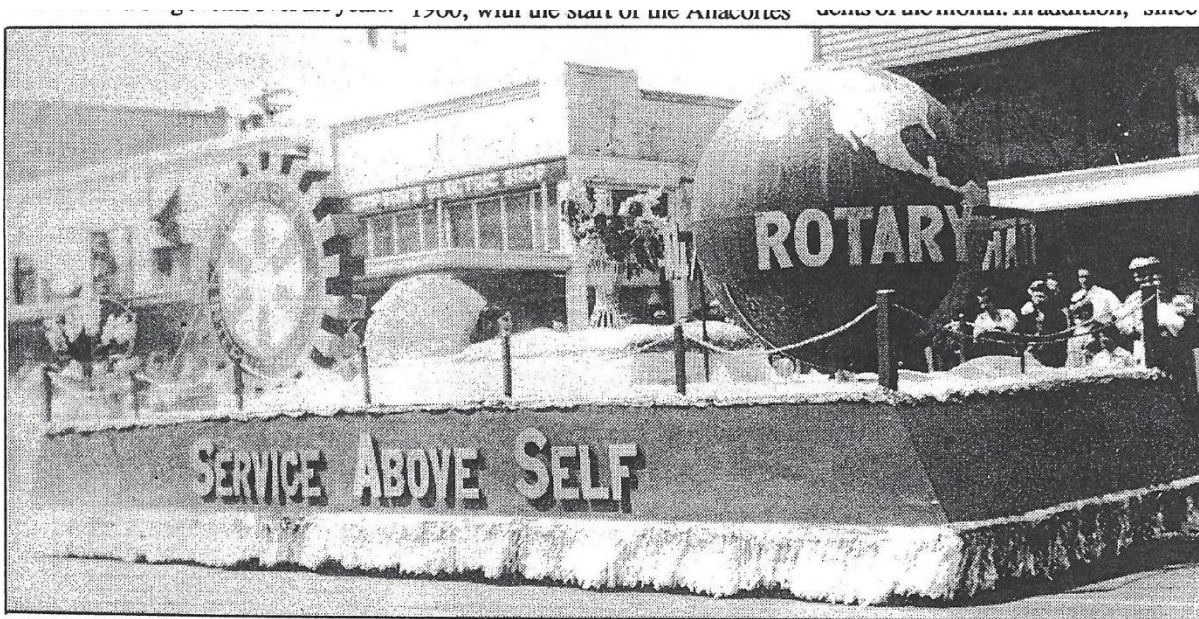
Elaine quotes Wallie Funk from his book, "Pictures of the Past," in which he describes that first July 4 parade in 1890.

"The town marked the Fourth of July with a celebration that drew thousands of visitors from as far away as Tacoma and Victoria. At that time, it was the largest such event held on the Sound and won for the boom-driven city great praise for its historic gala. The 'grand parade,' including four bands and horse-drawn floats, was photographed by D.B. Ewing as it headed south on planked streets and sidewalks which covered P Avenue (now Commercial). It was a memorable day that concluded with a spectacular fireworks display that priced out at \$500 - all of it from local pockets."

Elaine goes on to say, "Independence Day parades and events were held regularly in the city, if not annually, until brought to a halt by the Great Depression. Civic activists and merchants such as Paul Luvera who missed the patriotic events - and the economic and morale boost they provided - came up with Marineers' Pageant, which was held in late July for several years, starting in 1937.

"There were parades, pirate girls, queen coronations, dances, a grand parade and watersports, including world-champion water-skiers, hydroplane races, tribal canoe competitions and battleships at anchor. There were also stunts that made national movie newsreels, such as a mass wedding of seven couples, and the unique and hilarious Cat-Putter-Outter-Derby."

The earliest photo of an Anacortes Rotary parade float is from 1940. This was not just an ordinary float. Because the float won the Marineer's Pageant's first prize, it was invited to participate in Seattle's Potlatch Parade, where it also won first prize ... and \$50.



First prize winner, 1940 Mariner Pageant. Tom Henwood was the chairman. (An old photo of Paul Luvera, one of the committee)
 PHOTO COURTESY OF DICK JOHNSON

The next year the 1941 parade saw a new and unique Rotary float. The parade appears to be moving north on Commercial Avenue, opposite of the direction of today's parades. For reasons unknown, the float has a nursery rhyme motif. In the photo can be seen the famous Leadbetter Clock, behind which is what is now the Brown Lantern, next to the Platt Building.



Along came the 1947 Marineer's Pageant, and along came another Anacortes Rotary parade float. In the background of both photos is the Bank of Commerce (Gere-A-Deli today).



(Anacortes Museum – WF 1509)



(Anacortes Museum – WF 1510)

The 1948 Marineer's Pageant was recorded on film. There is an 18 minute fun-packed video accessible via a simple YouTube internet search. About six minutes is devoted to the parade, including Anacortes Rotary's float, and the remaining time captures a remarkable water sports show which takes place on, and sometimes under, the open water just east of the Amphitheater located on the east side of Cap Sante Park.

The 1948 Anacortes Rotary parade float:



Fast forward to 2016, when the theme for Anacortes Rotary's float was the new Disc Golf Course just opened at Rotary Park, adjacent to Cap Sante Park.



Fast forward one more time to July 4, 2022. The opening salvo for Anacortes Rotary's Centennial involved two meaningful events:

1. On June 11, a “trail to the top” was unveiled to the community. The trail winds its way from the entrance to Rotary Park, across the disc golf course, and all the way to the very highest point in Cap Sante Park, just west of the Cap Sante parking lot. The trail is the opening chapter of Anacortes Rotary’s Centennial Project. More to come.



2. On July 4, 2022, the Anacortes Rotary Club displayed, for the first time, its unique Anacortes Rotary Centennial Parade Float.

The Centennial Events Committee organized the planning, design, construction, and display of the float.



The parade itself was memorable as 40 Rotarians, most of whom were wearing the club's special Centennial t-shirts and hats, hitched a ride or walked alongside the float as it made its way through the throngs of onlookers, young and old. The young were captivated by the cake more than any other component of the float.





(Photo by Steve Berentson)



(Photo by Steve Berentson)

A beautiful float, yes, but how did the parade judges see it? It turns out that the judges were impressed. The maximum number of points possible was 120. The Anacortes Rotary Centennial Float garnered 120 points and the first place prize for floats in the parade.



For those who might be interested in the construction and design stages that took place over several weeks, below is a series of photos capturing a few of those stages.

A – Construction of Deck Panels



B – Construction of Rotary Wheel Frame



C – Construction of First Cake Layer



D – Construction of Second Cake Layer



E – Addition of Side Display Panels



F – Addition of Rotary Wheel Graphics



G – Placement of Rotary Wheel



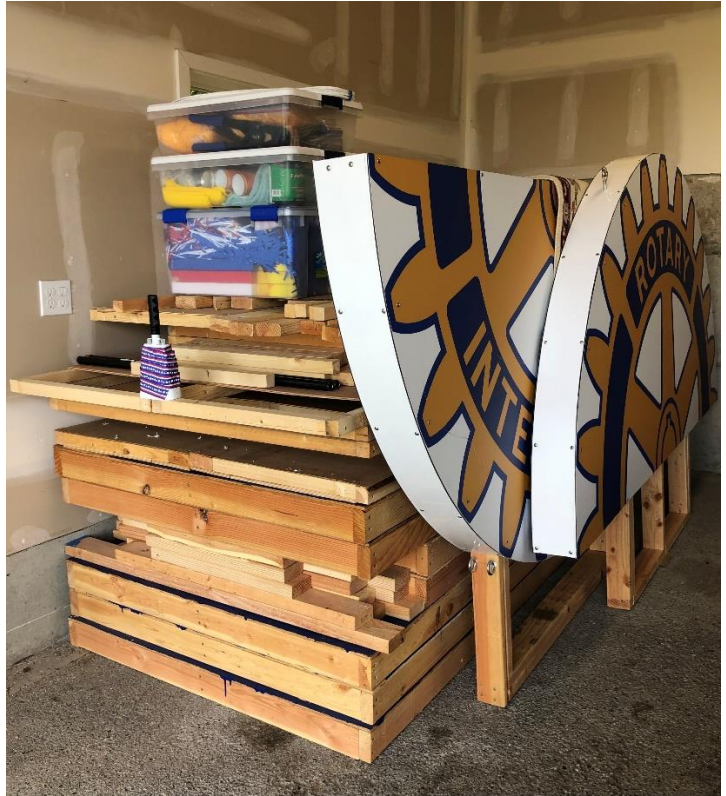
H – Completion of Decoration Process



I – Dismantling Process



J – Storage ... for another day



Thank You to local businesses who provided space, equipment, and advice:

Quantum Construction (work space)
Simply Yards (trailer)
Strandberg Construction (flatbed truck and work space)
Jamie's Signs (assistance with signage)
Port of Anacortes (decorating space)

Construction & Decorating Committees (alphabetically listed):

Loalynda Bird
Duane Clark
Colleen Craig
Peggy Flynn
Stephanie Hamilton
Mark Lascelles
Jim MacDonald
Lindy Reno