



2005 "Days In The Park" Grand Marshal



The Brawands, Grand Marshalls

This year's Grand Marshal is Walt Brawand. Sitting in the comfortable living room of their large, well-kept home overlooking the Columbia River, Walt and his lovely wife, Cleo, graciously agree to share some of their adventures of the past nine decades. Their dear little black cocker spaniel, "Missy," sits quietly on the couch next to Cleo. With pictures of family in evidence throughout the house, one gets the feeling that many wonderful memories have been created here during the past 48 years.

Walt was born in Boring, Or., and moved to Goble when he was three years old. He attended school through the eight grade in Goble. His high school years were spent in Rainier. Cleo, born Cleo Joseph, is a lifelong resident of Rainier. She attended Rainier schools.

From 1935-1936, Walt worked at Longview Fibre Company where he earned 32.5 cents an hour. He tired of shift work, and began hauling

logs to the sawmill in Rainier until it burned down.

When asked how they met, they smile, shrug, and claim they don't remember. However, when Walt began his four-year hitch in the Army Air Force, they began writing each other "every day." Romance blossomed, and, much to Walt's surprise, they were married eleven days after Walt's return from his tour of duty throughout Europe in 1946. He planned to resume use of his "little black book" upon his return, but Cleo had other plans. The fifty-nine-year union is a testament to the fact that Cleo knew what she was doing.

Walt settled into his life's work in the fuel business, operating a heating fuel business and running the Mobil service station located where the Esby station is now.

The Brawands were blessed with four children, Vickie of Rainier, Bill of Kelso, Bob of St. Helens and Amy of Rainier. They have subsequently been presented with five grandsons.

Walt is a member of VFW Post #1909, and has been a member of the Masonic Lodge for about 50 years. He has always been an avid Oregon State fan. He and several of his buddies have traveled to many of the Oregon State games to root for their Beavers. He still watches baseball, basketball, and football on television.

As one would guess, Walt has witnessed many changes during his years in Rainier. His Mobil station was once bordered on the west by the flood plains of Fox Creek, with a few buildings built on stilts. In the earlier 1960s, the dredge spoils were pumped in, providing the property that has since been used for several businesses along Highway 30. Of more recent changes in Rainier, Walt says the City Park and the Senior Center to meet with old friends and to enjoy the lunches served there.

A recent fall in which Walt injured his left leg has been a bit of a setback for this tough, nearly 90-year-old gentleman. But he is improving and plans to resume his normal activities, which include working in the beautiful rose gardens that grace his yard, and meeting with friends, old and new, as he travels throughout his beloved Rainier