

**STATEMENT BY JOHN CHOULOCHAS**  
**5550 Salish Road, Blaine (Birch Bay Village), WA 98230**

**RE: JULY 4<sup>TH</sup> PARADE CEREMONY**  
**July 9, 2007**

**Mr. Mayor and Members of the City Council**

This is a 2-part statement concerning the July 4<sup>th</sup> Parade activities.

First, at the conclusion of the wonderful parade, I stood in the intersection of "H" Street and Peace Portal Drive and marveled at the literally thousands of people filling Peace Portal Drive all the way from "F" Street to Cherry Street. And then looking east on "H" Street to observe many hundreds more visiting the various attractions and displays. For me it was an emotional high. The Chamber of Commerce and the City Fathers have reason to be proud of the event and be encouraged by the many people from the region and Canada who took part in the celebration of our Independence Day and the evening's spectacular fireworks.

***"Just what is a real "Old Fashioned Fourth of July" Celebration?"***

Secondly, I think the City Governing body could set an example of what the meaning of this commemoration of our Nation's Dedication to Independence is really about. How can we say it is an "Old Fashioned 4<sup>th</sup> of July complete with fireworks" if we do not pay homage to our country's National Anthem and the efforts made by a young nation to free itself from an unjust foreign ruler. I stood proudly at attention with hand and hat placed over my heart during the Star Spangled Banner that was sung by a local vocalist. I also stood respectfully silent while the Canadian National Anthem was played. But I noted that many in the crowd either could not hear or were distracted by the vendors and the passing crowd, who seemed unmindful of the solemnity of the situation.

To be sure, the audience was not as fully readied as could be, in preparation to remind them of these two national songs. In most instances people are told before the music, that they are being asked to join together to honor our Nation and those who sacrificed to free our country from foreign rule. Sadly, I noted that many in the crowd failed to hear either of the anthems. Frankly, they may have even considered the setting to be more of an entertainment venue than a ceremonial one....or a mixture of both. Nothing wrong there.

But, as one of the Blaine Chamber of Commerce Directors who brought back the idea of a celebration to replace the "retired" Sky-Water event, and I might add, gave the celebration its' name "The Old Fashioned 4<sup>th</sup> of July," I would ask you consider working with the Chamber of Commerce to encourage two additions to this wonderful community activity. I would urge you that, with growing numbers of visitors making the Blaine 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade a destination, these will become imperatives. You might give this some thought. First....

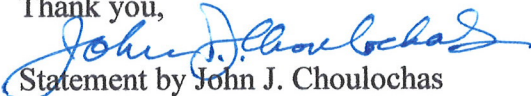
A) Replacement of the present sound system to permit a larger number of people to hear both the entertainment and listen to speakers commemorating the actual reason for the holiday. It would also enable the crowd in the general area of the "H" Street intersection to hear the name, location and composition of the groups participating in the Parade. I was a participant on a float and I could barely hear Jim Jorgenson almost in front of him. There are those in town who know what equipment might be needed and even those who might loan it to the City.

(B) And secondly, I will also discuss this suggestion with the Chamber Board at their next meeting. The Parade should in effect, start at the "H" Street intersection. The Color Guard and lead units could still line-up at the "F" Street corner of Peace Portal and march up to the "H" street Reviewing Stand, stop for the ceremony and the National Anthems of both nations. Additional speakers could be temporarily installed for the occasion.

This would also allow an opportunity for the Mayor or Council Members to provide the parade participants and the crowd in the area to experience the significance of the events that the 4<sup>th</sup> of July is all about. Who knows, they could even wear clothing of the "turn of the Century.

The 4<sup>th</sup> of July, especially in these troubled times, ought to be more than just a day of entertainment, food, drink and fireworks. And, I think a small step would be to briefly reflect and honor the flag and anthem of our Nation in a respectful way. Our City of Blaine governing members and the Chamber of Commerce Board ought to provide leadership in that effort. Especially if we really mean that it should be an "Old Fashioned 4<sup>th</sup> of July".....right here in Blaine, Washington.

Thank you,



Statement by John J. Choulochas

Former Blaine Resident and Member of the  
Blaine Community Chamber of Commerce