

It Takes a Village

Merry Christmas

Pearl Harbor Remembrance & Happy New Year!

It's that time of year we have all been waiting for! It's time for "Cocoa and Cookies with Santa" sponsored by the Chamber. Our Center will be decorated in style for Santa's arrival by Lori & Danny Drake. The Noteables will be there bring Christmas cheer...and don't forget the cookies and presents from Santa. The Hayden Lake Youth Handbell Christmas Concert is a must see. The concert has a large youth group ranging from 4 years to 20 years old who play a Bell instrument. Included are a talented Harp and Piano player. These individuals will melt your heart and lift your soul this season.

Robin Vierra will host a "Paint & Sip," class using acrylic paint. She will supply the paint supplies to create beautiful seasonal scenery.

Thank you to those who have donated, participated and helped clean up after an event. We could not be successful without you.

Please check our website to view this month's scheduled events at:

bayview.community.center@gmail.com then click on the calendar.

Upcoming Events this month

- Dec 2nd - Bayview Chamber Board Mtg. @ 6pm.
- Dec 6th - Cocoa and Cookies with Santa sponsored by the Chamber, featuring the Noteables @ 1pm.
- Dec 7th - Pearl Harbor Remembrance.
- Dec 8th - Community Ctr. Board Mtg. @ 10:30am.
- Dec 9th - BAB Mtg. @ 9am.
- Dec 9th - Bayview Chamber Mtg. @ 7pm.
- Dec 13th - Hayden Lake Youth Handbell Christmas Concert @ 3pm.
- Dec 15th - The Timberlake Fire Commissioners meeting will be held @ 3pm at the Athol Fire Station.
- Dec 18th - BW&S monthly meeting will take place at 3:30pm. You can attend in person at their Office or attend online. Check their website for the link.
- Dec 19th - Paint & Sip w/ Robin Vierra @ 3pm.
- Dec 25th - Merry Christmas.
- Dec 31st - New Year's Eve.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact me at:

prtonhofer@gmail.com or call (208) 683-8040

Thank you, Pam Tonhofer, Center Manager



Bayview, Idaho

Bayview Bylines

The best little newspaper in Bayview



**December '25 EVENTS
AROUND TOWN**

(held at the Community Center unless noted)

Editor: Norma Jean 208-819-6282

email: njyesca6@gmail.com

Articles provided herein are by local citizens and reflect differing views. Articles are to inform and not necessarily the views of the Editor or the Bayview Chamber of Commerce.

For more information:
www.bayviewidaho.org

Many thanks to Mike Maxson for maintaining our website.

Advertising Rates

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Mail checks to:

Bayview Chamber of Commerce
address below & above.

Bylines are published at the beginning of the month. Please submit articles no later than

December 23rd

for the January 2026 issue.

Email: njyesca6@gmail.com

Mail: Bayview Chamber of Commerce, P.O 121, Bayview, ID 83803

Tue	12/2	6pm		Bayview Chamber Board Mtg.
Sat	12/6	1pm		Cocoa and Cookies with Santa featuring the Noteables
		4 pm		Spaghetti Dinner at the Wheel, 6 pm Fireworks Auction at the Wheel
				Community Ctr. Board Mtg.
Tue	12/8	10:30am		BAB Mtg.
Tue	12/9	9am		Bayview Chamber Mtg.
Tue	12/9	7pm		Hayden Lake Youth Handbell Christmas Concert
Sat	12/13	3pm		Timberlake Fire Commish. Mtg. Athol Fire Station.
Mo	12/15	3pm		BW&S Meeting Zoom and at the office. Check their website for the link.
n				
Thu	12/18	3:30pm		Paint & Sip w/ Robin Vierra
Fri	12/19	3pm		

Community Ongoing Events

Tue	12:00pm	Mah Jong**
	3:00pm	Functional Strength Cardio (FIT) **
Wed	6:30pm	Bayview Bible Service*
Thu	12:00pm	Mah Jong**
	3:00pm	Functional Strength Cardio (FIT) **
Fri	9:30am	Tai Chi**
Sun	8:30am	Bayview Bible Service*
	10:30am	Bayview Bible Service*
	7:00pm	AA Meeting (lower)

*Please check with your Church Leader for monthly schedule changes.

** Please check with your group leader for any schedule changes.

Chamber Chatters & Chuckles

Impressive fishing results were reported for the last Lake Pend Oreille Anglers Club (LPOAC) Fishing Derby. The winning fish sizes ranged from 23" to 26". Of course, these sizes created some very happy anglers. There is nothing more rewarding, after being in a boat, in the cold all day, than reeling in one of these beauties. They make for great eating too!

The month of November closed with another amazing Thanksgiving Dinner, at the Community Center, put on once again by *Ralph's Coffee House & Café*. We are never disappointed when *Daveana* is in the kitchen with *Kevin* as her gopher. The two of them are an amazing team and their food is always top quality. A **HUGE THANK YOU** goes out to them and all of their helpers!

December 6, 2025 will be a busy family day. *Cookies and Cocoa with Santa* begins at 1:00 p.m., at the Community Center. Our favorite group, *The Noteables*, will begin the program by leading everyone in singing many of our favorite Christmas Carols. Whenever this group is in attendance, you can be sure we will have lots of laughter, along with all of the fun! What a way to welcome Santa.

After many years of sharing his love of Christmas with hundreds of children, *Chuck Murray* is passing the Santa suit to *Bruce Clark*. We can't thank Chuck enough for the amazing role he always played, in this annual event. Bruce will have some big shoes to fill but we are confident, with his jovial spirit, he will proudly complete the task and be loved by all. After Santa listens to each Christmas wish, the child then selects a present from the many surrounding the beautifully decorated tree. A very serious moment, to be sure.

We want to be sure we also give a huge thank you to *Lori and Danny Drake* for their time and effort regarding the decorations for this traditional event. They never disappoint when it comes to filling a room with the spirit of the season!

There is a saying "*Life is uncertain so eat dessert first!*" With that being said, after attending Cookies & Cocoa with Santa, head to the Captains Wheel at 4:00 p.m., for a Spaghetti Dinner. There will be more free cocoa and candy canes for the kids, along with activities on the deck. All proceeds from this meal, along with those from the auction, which follows at 6:00 p.m., will go to the Fireworks Fund.

The downtown Tree Lighting will happen about 5:30 p.m. with firepits and a bonfire to help keep everyone warm, down Pier Rd and at the Wheel. Of course there is more cocoa available at Taverna. Once the town is alight with the spirit of Christmas, the auction will begin.

*Who hides in a Christmas bakery?
A mince spy!*



The District is accepting applications to fill one seat on the Board of Directors.

Bayview Water & Sewer District is committed to the continued delivery of safe, reliable, and high-quality drinking water and environmentally responsible sewer service to our customers.

If you are a passionate and involved member of the Bayview Community the Board would like you to consider becoming involved in the decision-making process for the future of one of the most vital components, and the backbone of our beautiful community. We are looking for someone who comes with a new perspective, opinions, and insight. We would love to welcome you to our team.

If you would like to be appointed to a director seat position you are encouraged to contact the District with a letter of interest.

- District Office: 16401 E. Emerson Dr., Bayview, ID 83803 (inside or through the mail slot)
- Email: BWSD637@gmail.com
- Traditional Mail: P.O. Box 637, Bayview, ID 83803

You must be 18 years of age & a member of the District and within District boundary. (*Please see the website for a map of the District Boundaries*).

Thank you and we look forward to meeting you!



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It may have been around 2012 when our beloved Santa bid farewell, gliding into the sunset in his well-worn sleigh and whisking the Santa suit away with him. For a moment, the whole town wondered—what would become of our cherished Cookies & Cocoa with Santa event?



But then, as if by holiday magic, a local resident stepped forward, his eyes sparkling and his nose giving a merry twitch. With laughter and warmth, he became the perfect Santa, welcoming every child with open arms and a hearty "Ho Ho Ho!" Since that day, Chuck Murray has donned the Santa suit, jingling his bells and filling the air with joy. His infectious smile and cheerful spirit have delighted children and adults

alike year after year. By his side, Judy has played the role of a wonderful elf, helping with gifts and guiding little ones toward their festive visit with Santa. Judy wished he could do that ALL of the time but that would not be Chuck!

We all reach a time when rest and relaxation call, inviting us to savor moments with loved ones and pass on joyful traditions. And so, the honor of making children laugh and smile will journey onward, but the laughter Chuck has gifted our community will echo for years to come.



The Bayview Chamber offers its heartfelt thanks for the happiness, laughter, and countless smiles Chuck has brought to Bayview's families and children. Truly, Chuck, you are a gift to our town—one wrapped in kindness, tied with delight, and topped with a bow of genuine joy. And as a final sparkling note, Chuck has also generously provided the American flag for our Community Center, another thread in the tapestry of his giving spirit!



Restaurant Hours
Sun—Thu 11am-8pm
Fri & Sat
11am - 9pm
 208-683-6504

CHAMBER NEWS

December 9th Chamber meeting 7 pm
 Budget Election
 Business of the Year



“Mouse-in-a-Will we have a Fireworks Show next year?”



208-683-1011
NEW HOURS
 Mon—Sun
 7am - 7pm
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Timberlake Fire Protection District's 13th Annual Candy Cane run
 December 6th. Driving Santa around Bayview collecting Toys and Food



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READER BOARD for RENT

The Reader board at the entrance to Bayview is available for rent

\$20/ week facing SW (viewed coming into town)
 \$20/ week facing NE (viewed leaving town)

Application and instructions are available on the Chamber website:

www.bayviewidaho.org



Bayview Chamber of Commerce Board Members:

President:
Vice President: Jackie Beaudry 509-998-4146
Secretary:
Treasurer: Sue Damon 208-683-8608
Pro-Tempore: Larry Pegg 208-249-0538
 For Chamber issues, use this email address:

admin@bayviewidaho.org

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to reach out to our community
and to build believers.

Sr. Pastor Christopher Antone

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Woof woof! Huckleberry Ace Reporter here, with my best pal Jenny at my side. **EAGLES:** Let me tell you, our mom has been obsessed with taking pictures of eagles in Bayview since way before we were even part of her pack. She says the eagles only show up after the kokanee fish do their spawning thing and start lying all over the shore, looking and smelling—well, honestly, really delicious to any self-respecting canine. We've sniffed them plenty, but mom never lets us have a taste. She's picky about what goes in our bowls!

Some years, there are loads of kokanee, and other years—not so much. It all depends on what happened four years ago, because kokanee live for four years, then spawn, then die, and their kids start the whole cycle over again. There was a time when Bayview almost lost all its kokanee, but some clever humans worked super hard to bring them back. My buddy Kevin Elmore apparently knows everything about fish in Lake Pend Oreille, so go bark at him if you're curious.

When you're trotting along the shore of Lake Pend Oreille in Farragut State Park, do what I do—stick your nose up in the air and check out the treetops. You'll probably spot some majestic eagles up there, soaring way too high for me to chase! Those birds are always just out of reach, no matter how much I jump. By the start of January, most of the eagles fly off to places with even more fish. I'd follow them, but mom says I have to stay and guard the house!

Bayview Notaries

There are times we all need a Notary

Bayview now has 3 notaries

Keen Word Processing. Dorothy 208-683-2405

Nanci Walton Cisneros 406-314-1015

***Nanci's service is free for residents of Bayview**

Maureen Carl 509-993-4723

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*Tuesday and Thursday 3 - 4

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You can work at your own pace and join at any time. Hate to say it but it's true...if you don't use it, you lose it. And hey it's fun!

Bring a mat, water, and weights if you choose to use them. There is no charge.

For more info please call, text, or email at:

Jorja Auten
208 661 7459 or
Jorja@autenco.com
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President	-	Martha Bowman	-	916-591-3720
Vice -president	-	Vickie Selia	-	425-422-9314
Secretary	-	Susan Esteph	-	208-691-5177
Treasurer	-	Linda Grage	-	206-714-3462

**Meeting 12/9at
9:30 am sharp!**

BAB's Women's Club

Bayview - Athol - Belmont

A local women's charitable organization



American Legion Auxiliary Unit 149

In Athol
Hwy 54 between the RR tracks

Regular Meeting Dec 6th 9 am
Auxiliary Dinner Dec 27th 6:00pm



Janette Sleep, President 720-560-0961
Jan Powell, Membership Chairman 208-667-2737

Legion Phone: 208-683-2614

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Business Directory

Local Businesses

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Bayview Post Office	208-683-2733
Bayview Water & Sewer	208-683-3948
Bitter End	208-683-2534
Great Northern Nautical	208-682-0770
Cadnum Construction	208-755-2864
Captain's Wheel	208-683-6504
Christine Brochier	208-964-2136
C & L	208-683-2730
Cole's Automotive & Towing	208-651-4780
Companions Animal Center	208-772-4019
Country Boys Cafe	208-683-2363
Country Clinical Massage	208-755-6301
Dave Vig	208-217-4934
Doc Holly Vet	208-772-3221
Farragut State Park	208-683-2425
Farragut Shooting Range	208-683-1499
Grease Monkey	208-966-6100
Iron Pizza	208-561-5211
Jazzy Janitorial	208-262-6506
Keen Word, Notary	208-683-2405
Kootenai Electric	208-765-1200
Lakeland RV Park	208-683-4108
Lakes Hiway District	208-772-7527
Lazy Bear Rentals	208-683-7018
Log Spirit B & B	208-683-4722
MacDonald's Resort	208-683-2211
Mercantile	208-683-1011
Panhandle Waste	208-683-1777
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Customer Testimonial: How Rooter Guys Saved Our Sanity (and Our Septic Tank)

Flush with Relief: A Comedy of Clogged Errors

Our Wild Ride with Plumbing Services

Few things in life get your heart racing like a sewer line more stubborn than a toddler at bedtime. One fateful day, our line to the septic tank decided to rebel, giving us a crash course in "Homeowner Horror Stories." We thought, "Let's give the local plumber a shot—what could possibly go wrong?" Famous last words! After a game of charades trying to explain the problem (spoiler: nobody won), the plumber did their thing... just not the thing we needed. Fast-forward to Saturday night, and the only thing flowing was our tears as the sewer backed up. Again.

Epic Fail and Saturday Night Frights

Nothing says "party" like water where it shouldn't be. As we faced another weekend ruined by rogue plumbing, we remembered the legends—the Rooter Guys.



They're our trusty, caped crusaders of clog, ready to swoop in 24/7, rain or shine, sewer or septic. Desperate, we called our heroes, channeling our inner Bat-Signal (it was probably just us yelling into the phone).

The Rooter Guys: Superheroes in Overalls

In record time, a Rooter Guy appeared at our door, armed with tools, know-how, and the patience to actually listen. (Take note, previous plumber!) Within minutes, the villainous blockage was vanquished, peace was restored, and our bathroom was once again safe for occupancy. I swear I heard heroic theme music playing as they packed up their gear.

Moral of the Story

What have we learned? Never trust a backup on a Saturday, and always call the people who've pulled your family out of the drain before. Rooter Guys are now part of our emergency contacts—right up there with pizza delivery. When the going gets tough (or totally gross), we know exactly who to call. Thanks to them, our only backups now are in our cloud storage!

Side note: the other plumber did refund us our money

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Dear Friends of Our Community,

The Bayview Community Center is the heart of our community. It is a safe, clean, and welcoming place for many events. People come here for worship, to vote, take classes, have fitness activities, eat at Lunch On Us, hold meetings, attend memorials, celebrate weddings, have parties and play pickle ball. We have indoor space including a main hall with a full kitchen, and a downstairs multi-purpose room. Outdoors, the property features a large lawn, gazebo, and memorial garden — all with very reasonable rental rates.

Our accomplishments were plentiful this past year, with lots of hard work from our board & staff, and donations from people like you.

- The entrance, foyer, hallway, upstairs main hall, and exterior were painted with new colors.
- The interior and exterior upper men's room, and foyer area received extensive repairs.
- The exterior lights were replaced with new ones.
- The north deck was rebuilt.
- The failing furnace was replaced.
- Security cameras were added to garden/building areas.
- The second Memorial Wall was completed.
- Volunteers worked hard to rescue our Memorial Garden.



That may sound like an extravagant list, but it is mostly an overdue general maintenance list. Our costs for 2025 were exceptionally high. We extend special thanks to our community groups who provide their critical financial funds through rental and lease income. Those donations are vital to the operation of the Center, but unfortunately, don't cover our total annual expenses.

We come to you now to ask for your help through monetary donations. We do not receive any money from tax dollars. We are totally supported by individual donations, fundraisers, and our rentals. We ask you to find a way to contribute whatever amount you can donate to the Bayview Community Center.

Since the Bayview Community Center is a 501(C)(3) nonprofit corporation, your **donation is tax deductible**. All those who contribute will receive a letter of thanks to use for your tax records. Please respond to our sincere plea and send a check issued to the Bayview Community Center and addressed to PO Box 493, Bayview 83803.

On behalf of the board and management team,

Bob Prince
Bob Prince, Chairman
board members
Pat Johnson, Vice Chair
Joy Shantz, Secretary
Jackie Lloyd, Treasurer
Tom Barrett, Member-At-Large

volunteer managers
Pam Tonhofer, Center Manager
Laurie Mauser, Garden Manager
Lori Drake, Decoration Coordinator

Donations are also accepted on Venmo.

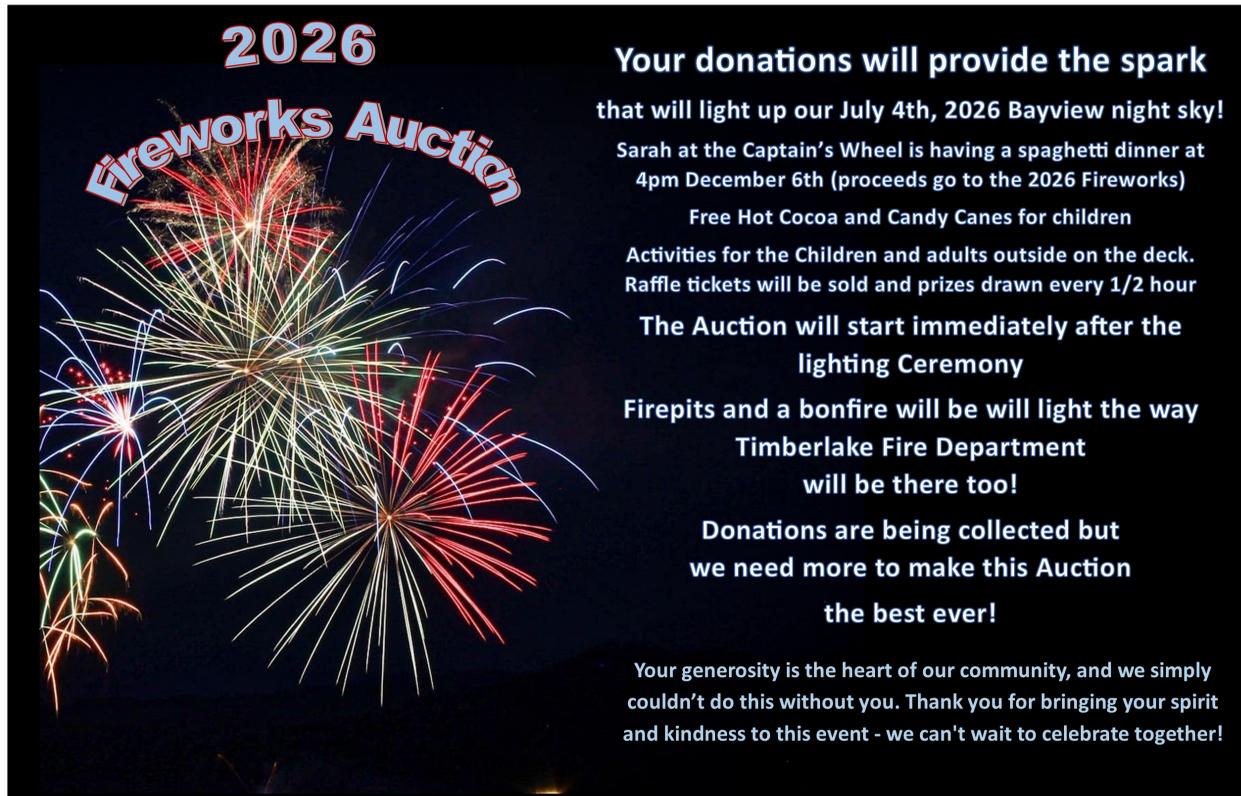


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2026
Fireworks Auction

Your donations will provide the spark that will light up our July 4th, 2026 Bayview night sky!

Sarah at the Captain's Wheel is having a spaghetti dinner at 4pm December 6th (proceeds go to the 2026 Fireworks)

Free Hot Cocoa and Candy Canes for children

Activities for the Children and adults outside on the deck. Raffle tickets will be sold and prizes drawn every 1/2 hour

The Auction will start immediately after the lighting Ceremony

Firepits and a bonfire will be will light the way Timberlake Fire Department will be there too!

Donations are being collected but we need more to make this Auction the best ever!

Your generosity is the heart of our community, and we simply couldn't do this without you. Thank you for bringing your spirit and kindness to this event - we can't wait to celebrate together!

Bayview's Fireworks Auction December 6th

In addition to Kevin Elmore and the MacDonald family, Bayview is fortunate to have several dedicated individuals who work tirelessly each year to make the Fireworks celebration a true tribute to our nation. Sarah Cramer, Marie Streater, Chad Cadnum, and Kevin Huff have shown remarkable commitment to this beloved American tradition. Although the auction is being held slightly later this year, these patriotic volunteers are going above and beyond to help us reach our fundraising goals and honor our country's 250th anniversary, ensuring the festivities will be unforgettable for our community.

This year, Liz Wright, Christa Marie, and Cami Duclos have joined the cause, proudly contributing baskets, baked goods, and sharing the spirit by promoting the auction throughout Athol and Bayview. Their efforts, along with those of our entire team, exemplify the values and unity that make America special. Please show your support for the auction and take a moment to thank all those who selflessly dedicate their time and energy to celebrating our nation and making this event a resounding success.



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OPEN DAILY NOON TO 9PM

Monday Daily Deal Drops	Tuesday Taps on Tuesday \$2 drafts with food order	Wednesday Flight Night BoGo drinks with Pizza Flight	Thursday Thirsty Thursday BoGo drinks with food order
Friday Live Music 6pm - 8pm	Saturday Live Music 6pm - 8pm	Sunday Sunday Funday weekly specials watch for more	Note Bring this ad into the restaurant for one free beer cheese bread





A full-time Marina with moorage, cabins, gas & diesel, fishing supplies, mechanics, parts, snack food & beverages and **Fishing Licenses**.

Call their friendly staff at:

683-2211
Cabins
683-0661

CITIZEN LAKE RESPONSE GROUP

This group was formed due to the 2008 Thanksgiving Day deadly boat fire. If you know of a **LIFE-THREATENING EMERGENCY** on the lake, **first call 911, then** call someone on the list. While boating, monitor **CH16** and be prepared to pass on info by radio/cell phone.

MacDonald's Hudson Bay Resort (208-683-2211)

will serve as the headquarters to coordinate rescue efforts.

DO **NOT** call for mechanical problems or lack of gas.

This group is for **LIFE-THREATENING** emergencies only.

Bayview residents with **boats in the water** can volunteer to be available to respond to Lake Emergencies. Call Chris Hansen 208-659-8091 to add your name.

Current "Good-Samaritans" are:

Chris Hansen	659-8091	Jim Woods	683-2294
Tim Meyer	683-1986		
Cam Bond	682-0770		



Happy Holidays!

Thank You Bayview

For Another Wonderful Year!

Curious about your Equity?

Call for a free no-obligation value on your property!



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Christine Brochier

ABR, RSPS

208-964-2136

cbrochier@johnlscott.com

Call, Text or Email



John L. Scott
1884 W. Bejerove Ln #104
Coeur d' Alene, ID 83814





Santa makes a special appearance for
Cookies and Cocoa with

SANTA

AND the renowned NOTEABLES

December 6th 1:00 p.m. at the

Bayview Community Center

Sponsored by the

Bayview Chamber of Commerce

We have been doing this for years, nothing fancy,
just good old fashioned fun and presents!



gauc.com backdropsfactory

HELP BAYVIEW REACH OUR GOAL

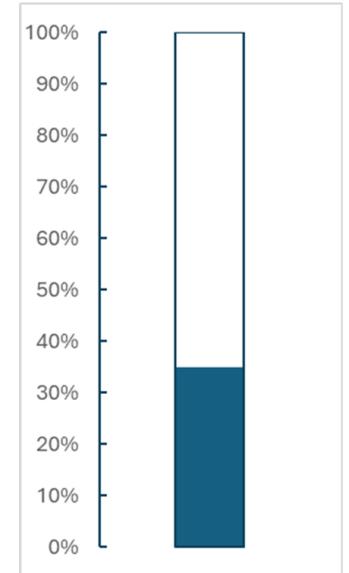
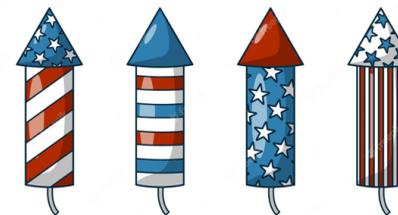
OUR Fireworks Fund is currently at
\$13,971.53 or 35% of our
goal for 2026.

Our goal is \$40,000. The big question
now is are we going to have a Fireworks
show in 2026? No donation is too small!

With everyone's help we can have the
Bayview Fireworks the best in the
Inland Northwest while celebrating our
Nation's 250th birthday

Donation cans are located in businesses
throughout Bayview, or a check can be
sent to the Chamber PO Box 121,
Bayview, ID 83803.

Our QR code is still active.



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Hayden Lake Youth Handbell Concert

DEC 13, 2025

3:30 p.m

Bayview Community Center

20298 E. Perimeter Rd, Bayview, Idaho 83803



Free Community Event



LOU

L U N C H O N U S



WEDNESDAYS @ NOON

We are bringing back the popular lunch program in 2026.
January 14th – April 29th

Half of these dates are already booked for volunteers to prepare a meal (and be reimbursed for the cost of groceries).

We have a sign-up sheet in the Community Center kitchen for interested cooks to select a date and let us know your meal plan. You may have a team of helpers, or we can help you find helpers. Kitchen rules apply.

If we don't have anyone signed up by the prior Wednesday, the next lunch will be canceled.

Help us fill up the sign-up sheet!
open dates: January 28, February 4 & 25, March 4 & 25, April 1 & 15
Everyone is Welcome at LOU!

Send an email to joyshantz@gmail.com if you have any questions.

HOW WOULD WE RATE OURSELVES?

When we are very young, time seems to drag on forever. Sitting in a classroom, waiting for the school bell to ring, waiting through an entire week for the next weekend to arrive, or waiting for an anticipated special event. How can time move so slowly? However, the slowness of time passing didn't really last for too many years, when we look back and compare it to our lifetime.

Without realizing it, all of a sudden our lives went from having babies in diapers, to having children who are well into their adult years. Somehow we never think of ourselves as aging, or how fast it happens, until someone questions us about the ages of our offspring. Then a heavy dose of reality hits - how did our youngsters get so *old*, while we stayed the same, or so we thought?

We know we have birthdays each year but somehow our actual age never really penetrates our brain, especially when we don't feel any different from one day to the next. Oh, we dreaded those times when we approached a new decade and for some, certain years were more traumatic than others, like reaching thirty, never to be twenty-nine again. Of course there are some die-hards who have numerous anniversaries of being twenty-nine or thirty-nine or some other number they never want to part with.

As a youngster, whenever someone asked me the age of my Grandma, my answer was always the same - "eighty" - regardless of my age at the time. Talk about making time fly for someone. The poor woman was only in her early fifties when I was born. Of course our grandparents of yesteryear were much older in appearance, and how they acted, than any of today's grandparents. However, most of them still seemed to live a long, fruitful life.

Each generation still has the same complaints about how time flies. Of course, it doesn't help when holiday decorations seem to go up earlier each year. We see Christmas decorations beginning to appear just after Labor Day weekend and Valentine advertisements the day after New Year's. Time flies fast enough with the arrival of the actual dates. It certainly doesn't need the extra months (in some cases) of commercialism.

It doesn't matter how time passes, for whatever age we might be, this tells us we need to appreciate each of our days to the fullest. We never know when we might depart this earth, so we need to appreciate the time we are given and use it wisely.

When we are young, it feels as though we will live forever. We have all of the time in the world to do whatever we want, so our thoughts and future plans can be lackadaisical at best. It is only as we age, that we become more aware of how truly short life really is. Anytime someone even thinks their end is near, the first things that come to mind are all of their unfinished plans, projects or hoped for ideas. Even family information, to be passed down to younger members, becomes in danger of being lost forever. We need to embrace our time on this earth!

Look Up – Keep a Happy Heart



As another year comes to a close, we think back on the friends and family who have passed and the ones we are still blessed to have. One of the most difficult things in life is watching those we love suffer from declining health, whether mental or physical, and knowing the only thing we can do for them is share our love.

As we witness more of our loved ones suffering from declining mental abilities, we have to re-educate ourselves in the art of making conversation. Even simple questions, like "how are you feeling today" can become complicated for someone who seems okay but has actually lost their ability to reason and think about any type of a response. Instead of questions, we have to learn to make statements like "you look terrific today".

For many of the individuals who have had to move into a care facility, their first question is usually "When can I go home?" or "I want to go home." Many times this is accompanied with numerous tears. This is the heart-wrenching part of being their non-medical care-giver, family member or friend. Now our responses need to be as creative as possible. How can we find a way to slide into a different topic of conversation? Truthfully, nothing will truly appease them, when it comes to this subject, so hopefully we can change to a happy conversation they are familiar with. They might not remember this moment, day, or week, but there seems to be great clarity when it comes to recalling events from years past.

It can be a real struggle for us to listen to the same story or question over and over but we can be truly thankful knowing (or hope we know) that our own thinking is still intact. If we are so sure of our own thinking ability, then how creative can we become when it comes to ways of conversing with someone without asking questions, which will only confuse and agitate them?

If we seldom visit or talk to someone, who is mentally challenged, they sound completely lucid and we might wonder what their problem might be. However, if we listen long enough, we discover there truly is a problem and the saddest part is the "patient" is totally unaware. They can sound so convincing with whatever they are telling you. Their details are "true facts" and it is up to us to only believe (at that moment) and not correct them. At this point in their lives, it is not the accuracy that is important, it is the happiness in their hearts.

During this time of year, cards become very important to those who might be considered a "shut-in". Many of us have gotten away from sending cards via the postal service and have become more modern with the electronic world and social media. However, we need to make a special effort to bring some "old-fashioned" joy into the lives of those near and dear to us who now only live in the world of yesteryear. Let's make this a year of giving the happiest of hearts to not just everyone, but especially to those who truly need them!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year