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DELIVERY!**

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## What we remember through our honored veterans

By Brooke Cochran and Mary Weimer

Many of us can recall sitting in a classroom, listening to our teacher talk about the different wars this world has seen. Between the Revolutionary War, the first and second World Wars, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and today's own war against terrorism, one aspect remains the same. We can always count on the soldiers who protect and defend the country we call home. What is astounding about having a Memorial Day issue (of the FAN) is that we are surrounded daily by veterans who have experienced both unheard-of atrocities as well as remarkable victory. Sadly, we seldom take the opportunity to ask these men and women their stories. Today's article cannot possibly cover all those who deserve a chance to share their experiences; nonetheless, one story is better than a blank page.

Hubert "Lee" Childers served in the United States Navy for two years, nine months, and 26 days. The reasoning for his specific calculations might be because he served and fought during the second world war. Not only was Lee able to obtain a rare photograph of the Japanese surrender on the USS Missouri, given to him by a fellow naval comrade; but he documented and mapped out his tours from 1943 until his honorable discharge in March of 1946.

Lee's story begins as many other soldiers' (stories) began. He was a young man, eager to join the military, ready for action, ready for the experience of a lifetime. From his induction into the U.S. Navy to the time of his first assignment headed towards a war zone, Lee received excellent training and education to be a military pharmacist and x-ray technician. By the end of his service, he was ranked as a Pharmacist Mate Second Class. On September 11, 1944, Lee was given an offer by a duty lieutenant to join any available ship in any body of water. Lee chose the Pacific Ocean since the war was waning. He chose to serve on the USS Neshoba, since it accommodated his wishes for an on-deck hospital.

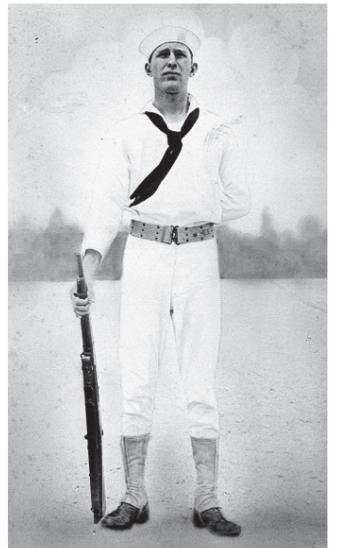
During his time on the USS Neshoba, Lee experienced the western portion of the United States, the Hawaiian Islands, the islands of Japan, and a small portion of China (which he later mapped out). November 13, 1944 was the

first time the crew was able to board their ship. They were in Richmond, Virginia and made their way to California. They proceeded to Mare Island, off Vallega, California, where they loaded the last of the ship's necessities. They were now ready for sea duty.

Despite the need for training on the ship, a sudden change in the Pacific fleet created the USS Neshoba's entrance into active duty — sooner than expected. On January 7, 1945, the USS Neshoba made her way to the Philippine Islands by way of Pearl Harbor. Once the ship passed the 180<sup>th</sup> meridian, the "old salts" (older shipmates) subjected Lee and the other new shipmates to initiation ceremonies for passing into the "Domain of the Golden Dragon." For newly-bearded Lee (his first), the rite of passage was to shave off half his beard and mustache and half of his head. Not only was he shaved, but hosed down by the fire hose! Despite a war, these comrades knew how to keep the spirit light.

On April 1, 1945, the USS Neshoba commenced lowering the assault boats to participate in the first six waves against the southern beaches of Hagushi. The waves of United States Marines and Naval personnel continued to hit the beaches for three days, retiring for the night out at sea. Of course, where there is war there is also devastation and death. But luck was with the shipmates, as no casualties were suffered, and the hospital on board was fully stocked and ready to aid those who had been hurt on shore. On April 5, the fleet left Okinawa for Pearl Harbor via Guam with 90 Japanese prisoners. Over all, Lee described the prisoners as being "well behaved."

This story is only one of the many that Lee experienced in his two-plus years in the Navy. During his service, Lee made five separate tours back and forth between parts of California and the islands of Japan. Lee's narrative is one of many, but how much longer will these stories be carried on? With the aging World War II veterans, it is imperative that we continue, or begin, to ask our parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts to share their stories with us. We have history living among us. Why not take the opportunity to let it speak for itself?•



## Summer concerts at Maranatha

(Submitted by Maranatha Bible and Missionary Conference)

Maranatha Bible and Missionary Conference, 4759

Lake Harbor Road in Muskegon, presents summer concerts every Saturday evening at 7 p.m. No admission is charged, however, a free will offering is accepted.

Concert features:

- |           |                                 |
|-----------|---------------------------------|
| June 26   | Nicol Sponberg                  |
| July 3    | The Kings Brass                 |
| July 10   | Jon and Ben Burchfield          |
| July 17   | Theater for the Thirsty         |
| July 24   | Robert & Pam Adams & Paul Satre |
| July 31   | Huntley Brown                   |
| August 7  | The Rick Webb Family            |
| August 14 | Keith Longbotham                |
| August 21 | D.C. Washington & Scott Griffin |
| August 28 | Dave Boyer                      |

A special Friday, September 3 (Labor Day Weekend) concert features Richard Allen Farmer.

For more information, visit [www.vacationwithpurpose.org](http://www.vacationwithpurpose.org) or call 798-2151 or 798-2152. •



## Raffle tickets on sale for March of Dimes Race to Save Babies

By Mary Weimer

Get your raffle tickets to win a four cycle race car in support of the March of Dimes Race to Save Babies.

The car will be in the Old Fashioned Days parade, the Coast Guard Festival parade; and at the Berlin Raceway on August 21, where the winner will be chosen.

The blue and white race car features a photo of little Ashlynn Elizabeth Hamm, who passed away.

You can follow the car on Facebook, as well.

The raffle tickets will be sold following the Old Fashioed Days parade at Fruitport Middle School. •

## Grand Rapids Children's Museum aides child development

(Submitted by the Grand Rapids Children's Museum)

The Grand Rapids Children's Museum creates minds through play by providing open-ended, creative, interactive play experiences which have been shown to help the cognitive, social, emotional and physical development of children. Children ages 0-10 learn while having fun each time they visit.

The museum is open to the public Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Thursdays, 9:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. (Family night is 5 to 8 p.m.); and Sundays, noon to 5 p.m. During the summer, the museum is also open on Mondays from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Regular admission is \$6.50 per person. Family night admission is \$1.50, with PALS members and children under one year of age admitted free of charge.

For more information, visit the website: [www.grcm.org](http://www.grcm.org). •



## Local bald eagle sighting

Story and photo by Harry Wojahn

I have been searching for the Fruitport bald eagle since I got my camera two years ago. My search finally paid off on the morning of May 1, 2010. Following the morning rain storm, I went to check on the nest and found the eagle perched on a branch.

I love the bald eagle for its beauty and grace. Even in high school, I selected the bald eagle for my report on birds.

I also saw a cormorant on a post in Spring Lake on April 19, 2010. •



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