

# PENINSULA DAILY NEWS

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## Salvation Army's George Bawden dies

By Brian Gawley, Peninsula Daily News

PORT ANGELES - Retired Salvation Army Maj. George Bawden died of cancer Thursday in Port Angeles. He was 63.

Bawden served The Salvation Army as its chief officer in Port Angeles for eight years, and retired in 2001 after 40 years of active service in the organization.

He was remembered for his tireless work on social welfare programs, including starting the Biker Toy Run and tutoring current Port Angeles Food Bank manager Mikki Saunders when she was just starting.

"I worked with him through United Way. He kept The Salvation Army's presence out there, made it very visible," said Patty Hannah, former director of United Way of Clallam County.

"He was a promoter, but also knew how to get people excited about a cause, all different kinds of groups. That was one of his strengths

"He was the one who got the [Biker Toy Run] collection going. He was the prime mover behind that," she said.

The 16th annual event to collect toys for distribution during the holidays was held this year on Nov. 3

More than 80 motorcyclists took part in the procession from 7 Cedars Casino in Blyn through Sequim to Port Angeles, carrying new, unwrapped toys on their motorcycles.

They arrived at The Salvation Army, 206 S. Peabody St., in Port Angeles, where they dined on a buffet meal.

During his tenure, Bawden also oversaw the controversial move of The Salvation Army Thrift Shop to the old Kaufman-Miller furniture store location at 123 E. First St., in downtown Port Angeles during early 2000.

It closed permanently in August 2002.

Port Angeles Food Bank manager Mikki Saunders said Bawden worked with The Salvation Army just about as long as he could before resigning because of the cancer.

"He was a such good person. That is so sad," Saunders said.

"He has done a lot. It's really something. He's helped so many people in the community.

"When I took over the food bank 14 years ago, I was green. He and his wife would tell how to make the food bank go," she said.

"They helped and it was so appreciated."

Former Port Angeles Deputy Mayor Orville Campbell said Bawden did a lot of work with social welfare organizations in the community and, of course, was instrumental in creating a strong Salvation Army operation in Port Angeles.

"They chose to retire in Port Angeles and continue to serve the community," he said of Bawden and his wife Jeri.

Rex Springer of the Strait Views Kiwanis Club of Port Angeles, where Bawden was a member, said he didn't seek attention for his work.

"He just took care of people. He wasn't seeking the limelight," Springer said.

"He just saw what needed to be done and just went out and did it."

Jeri Bawden said on Saturday, "My husband and I knew this was home the minute we drove in here."

Bawden was born to K. John and Evangeline Grace (Mitchell) Bawden in Baker, Ore.

He married Jeri Jean James in Hollywood, Calif., on March 23, 1968.

After attending Spokane Business College and The Salvation School For Officer Training in San Francisco, he became a Salvation Army Officer Minister of Religion.

He served in various locations in western states, with his final appointment in Port Angeles.

He enjoyed playing Santa for children and riding motorcycles.

He was a member of The Salvation Army and the Masonic Lodge in Pasadena, Calif.; and of the Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs of Port Angeles.

Survivors include his wife of Port Angeles; son and daughter-in-law George R. and Martyna Erwick Bawden II of Boise, Idaho; brother Major Ron Bawden of Mesa, Ariz.; sisters Major Marilyn Gregory of Orange, Calif., Lt. Col. Linda Griffin of Atlanta, Ga., and Major Jan Williams of Reno, Nev.

Memorial services are set for 2 p.m. Dec. 16 at the Salvation Army, 206 S. Peabody St., Port Angeles.

Drennan-Ford Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.