

It's festival time in Edmonds

By Chris Keuss, Executive Director, the Port of Edmonds

There are a couple of great events coming up in the next few days, one of them right here at the Port of Edmonds.

This Saturday — the first day of the long Memorial Day weekend — the whole core of downtown Edmonds will resonate with music. It's the weekend for the annual Edmonds Jazz Connection. Starting as early as 9:00 AM Saturday, remarkably talented high school students (and even some middle schoolers) will be playing and singing, keeping three separate venues hopping until after late afternoon. All the daytime performances are free, although the Edmonds Daybreakers Rotary will accept donations for local music scholarships.

Saturday's jazz event will be capped by a 7:30 PM concert at the Edmonds Center for the Arts featuring the best players and singers from the 17 high school groups represented, and a professional concert appearance by Anne Hampton Callaway, one of the jazz world's best — and best known — vocalists.

The following weekend is the liveliest of the year here at the Port. It is the annual Edmonds Waterfront Festival, a three-day celebration of food, music and things nautical.

The event, has been in existence since 1989 when a small swap meet and salmon barbecue at the Port attracted more people than anyone dreamed. The following year, 1990, the Port expanded it to a full-fledged festival and named it the Edmonds Waterfront Festival. After only two years it had grown too successful to handle for the Port's modest-sized staff and we turned it over to the Edmonds Rotary Club, in whose hands it has remained ever since.

The emphasis is and always has been on fun. There is, quite literally, something for everyone. The maritime focus is the main attraction for many, while others come for the many food

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booths or the music. Kids always find it an exciting day, with many activities and entertainments designed especially for them.

Again this year, one of the highlights of the Waterfront Festival is the Classic Yacht Rendezvous. The Pacific Northwest Fleet of the Classic Yacht Association will have more than 20 classic wooden yachts moored at the docks, many of which will be available for boarding.

New this year will be a maritime art show coordinated by Kirsten Gallery. A couple of nearby Waterfront Festival events are also worthy of note: the Edmonds Waterfront 5K fun run (or walk) at the City Park, and the annual open house at the Willow Creek Fish Hatchery with free trout fishing for kids 12 and under and a free shuttle to and from the hatchery.

All in all, the next two weekends are highlights of Edmonds' kickoff to summer. Plan to attend one or both events. Get reacquainted with the community and the waterfront that you love.

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