

# Remembering sacrifice

## Memorial Day rites to return

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

Bands, B-25 bombers, batons bet on it. Ballroom Boy Scouts, baby buggies ... better believe it.

After all, this is the annual Farmington Memorial Day we're talking about here.

Wally Christensen will be there, too. Then again, he's always there.

The Farmington resident hasn't missed a Memorial Day parade in 33 years as a member of the American Legion. Since 1963, you could say the event has hinged on the big guy with the handlebar mustache.

"I've kind of inherited it," said Christensen.

As usual, the chairman of the Memorial Day event has been working on this year's parade since the day after last year's.

The parade will start down Grand River Avenue at 10 a.m. Monday, May 31. A B-25 bomber piloted by Air Force Colonel Glenn Lamont will fly over the route, which starts in front of Lake Way and proceeds west to Oakland.

The Farmington High School

**■ 'In the community of Farmington, you can name the oldtimers on the back of your hand who make sure there's a Memorial Day parade.'**

Wally Christensen  
chairman  
Farmington Memorial Day activities

Bands, the Golden Wings and the Redford High School JROTC Drill Team are scheduled to appear.

This year, the U.S. Marine Corps is the honoree. Marine Capt. Emily Elder will give the Memorial Day address. Sergeant Cathrine Kraft, a Livonia Clarenceville graduate, will be recognized as "Outstanding Marine Reservist" and Corp. Slacey Ford will receive "Active Marine of the Year" honors.

The parade is sponsored by VFW Post No. 2269 and American Legion posts No. 346 and No. 190.

Afterward, there will be a special ceremony 5:30 p.m. at North Farmington Cemetery.

These are the facts. Christensen has an ample supply of sentiments.

"That's the day we all have to get off our dead duffs and support and show our children the great heritage of our nation," said Christensen, 69, who is a Korean War veteran.

Memorial Day parades are special to Christensen. He remembers as a child growing up in Farmington seeing the parade down Grand River and then riding on his bike to another one on Eight Mile Road.

On Memorial Day, people honor those who've died in wars. Festivities of the parade celebrate a sense of community and freedom, which people died in battle to preserve.

For that reason, Memorial Day parades are not trivial pomp and pageantry. Each year, the task gets more challenging. Things have changed since the days of

two Memorial Day parades. Christensen remembers only seven years when three to four low-flying jets would shake the elm trees. Defense cutbacks makes such flyovers impossible now.

Also, there's a natural peace-time apathy to contend with.

"In the community of Farmington, you can name the oldtimers on the back of your hand who make sure there's a Memorial Day parade," Christensen said. "It gets touchy a little bit nowadays. The age bracket in the military organizations has a gap in it that needs to be filled."

Christensen and his wife, Loraine, work on the parade along with other volunteers. Both Farmington and Farmington Hills city governments donate such things as podiums and P.A. systems. Also, two anonymous donors chip in.

Christensen said the parade is brought in for \$1,000.

"Let's put it this way. There's only a small group of people in any community who seem to care and put forth an effort to maintain a day such as this. There's no commercialism in a Memorial Day parade."



Called to colors: Parade organizer Wally Christensen salutes the colors during a recent Memorial Day parade in Farmington.

## Hills sets hearing on proposed tax hike

Because Farmington Hills plans to raise property taxes by 1988 mill, there will be a truth-in-taxation hearing on June 7.

The city council voted 5-0, with council members Ben Marks and Joanne Smith absent, to increase the city's budget, as recommended by City Manager Bill Costick, by 5.14 percent. The city's state-

equalized valuation increased, but because of the city's plan to roll back the 1982 base tax rate, the city will have to increase taxes by 1988 mill "just to keep up with minor improvements and adjustments."

The proposed increase translates into about 20 cents in new taxes for each \$1,000 in assessed

property value. The budget calls for two new police positions and one new EMS position for the fire

department. There was no increase in the budget last year and no additions to the work force.

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