

# THE ISLAND BRIDGE

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**WHEOA!**  
**WE DID IT AGAIN!**



# Team Effort Grills up Memorial Day BBQ

By PETE WEITZNER, Producer, "Golden Age of Newport Harbor"



*Thanks to grillmaster Pasqual Ayala and friends for volunteering!*

On an Island well known for its annual community events, the Memorial Day BBQ at Balboa Island Park stands out – not just because it's a true community effort, as every event on this Island exemplifies the adage: It takes an Island. The Memorial Day BBQ stands out because of the day's significance.

"It means so much to our Balboa Island community that we honor on Memorial Day all those who gave the ultimate sacrifice for the USA," Master of Ceremonies and All-Around BBQ-MVP **Dennis Bress** said.

This year's BBQ fell on May 29, amid what seemed our endless May Gray. But the steel skies didn't dampen turnout or the spirit of fun and reverence.

"Best BBQ we've had, sure felt that way," Memorial Day BBQ Founder and WW II Veteran **Bill Stewart** said.

"It was very successful, over 200 people, raffle always a hit too. And best part, raises money for our Veterans Project," Museum Executive Director Tiffany Pepys Hoey said.

The event is a dual effort – the Balboa island Museum Newport Beach is primary funder and provides many volunteers, runs the raffle, etc. All the BBQ essentials, from setup to breakdown, are courtesy of the Balboa island Improvement Association. And a big assist underwriting the event came from the **Stanley W. Ekstrom Foundation** (\$2,000) and the **Foster Family Foundation** (\$1,000).

"Many hands make light work," BBQ Volunteer **Pam Kallestad** said. Pam's husband **Larry** is a BIIA Board Member.

There were families, up to three and four generations everywhere you looked. It's certainly become a family affair for emcee and museum board member Bress, whose wife **Summer Bailey**, sang the "Star-Spangled Banner." "Such a treat for a live rendition of this special song," the proud emcee and husband said. "And much credit to Dennis' son **Nigel**, Bill Stewart said, ran around buying all the food. Dennis even provided the Spam."

As always Stewart, also the director of the Museum's Veterans Project, set up a wall of photos of Island Veterans in front of the Carroll Beek Center, which greeted visitors as they arrived. Many in the crowd were dressed in patriotic red, white, and blue. Beyond the hot dogs and hamburgers, they came to honor those who have died in our nation's wars.

For the traditional playing of Taps, which honors the men and women who have lost their lives in service to our country, a call went out to CDM High School Music Teacher **Val Jamora**, AKA Mr. J. Jamora referred Bress to "the perfect guy, **Phillip Long**, who plays trumpet in Corona del Mar High School's Jazz Band, Bress said. Philip did a great job playing Taps, another special, respectful part of the event. Thank you, Philip."

Phillip witnessed his own poignant moment, when his uncle, **Sergeant Robert Harrison**, USMC, a Vietnam War veteran, was among four veterans to be pinned at the event. Museum President **Paula Castanon** performed the pinning, a solemn ceremony that publicly acknowledges military service and sacrifice made by our veterans.

And then there was this moment, shared by Bress, and played out many times throughout the afternoon:

"I was going into the Beek Center to get more chili for the chow line, saw a woman holding her dad's arm walking up to the ticket line. It struck me – the love and respect this daughter had for her dad who wore his Air Force hat, to help him walk to our little community Balboa Island Memorial Day BBQ. The look she gave her dad...the look her dad gave her just priceless, stopped me in my tracks – this is what it's all about, making memories for our brave military members and their families, to share in a day, were we honor the fallen, but continue to live for what they fought for –honor, country, and community. That was a great memory I have of this year's Balboa Island Memorial Day BBQ."

The BBQ was free to veterans and their spouses, and all donations support the Museum's Veteran's Project. Stewart's Balboa Island Veterans Project has identified some 300+ veterans on the island, in its efforts to document and recognize all of them. About 180 Island veterans have shared their history at [balboaislandmuseum.org/veterans](http://balboaislandmuseum.org/veterans)



*Centenarian Veteran Jim Stilwell with Veteran Bill Stewart, Director of the Museum's Veterans Project.*



*Phillip Long of the CdM High School Jazz Band played a beautiful rendition of Taps.*



Balboa Island Museum is located at 210 Marine Ave., Balboa Island

Open daily • Free general admission • Become a member

For more information, visit <https://balboaislandmuseum.org>





The BIIA held it's Annual Pancake Breakfast and Parade Award Ceremony in Balboa Park June 24th. Over 200 attended and enjoyed music, entertainment, fantastic food, and getting together with their neighbors.



*Our annual neighborhood social, the Pancake Breakfast brings Islanders together*



*Sandcastle Master Chris Crosson Sr. with granddaughter Riley McManus, daughter Stephanie Crosson, grandson Oliver McManus, and wife Laura.*



*Pancake Check-in Team: (front) Heather Arnold, Laurie Sloan, Kathy Tierney (back) Leslie Myers, Annette Giermann, Penny Rodheim*



*Birthday boy Scott Mehlburger surprised by Stefanie Baker*



*Kathy Tierney, Heather Arnold, Vicky Hare, Gail Vasterling*



*Pancake Host Scott Mehlberger, Jack Callahan, Cynthia Shafer*



*Flapjack specialist Larry Friday*



*Ferry Operations Manager Nate Capra with wife Shannon, and daughter Felicity*

**THANK YOU FOR COMING ISLANDERS!**



*Cornell Lliescu danced and the Bootleggers performed*

