

Vergennes City Voice

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From The Mayor

Hello everyone, hopefully we have seen the last of cold weather. As for the rain, we can't control it but we know how to play in the rain from years before.

While attending the Addison County Firefighters Annual Fire School, one of the instructors gave a speech at the assembly that triggered my article for this City's Voice.

On our tombstones there are two dates, one for when we were born and the other for when we died; but in the middle there is a dash. The dash has much greater meaning than either of those two dates. Some people have shorter dashes and others have longer ones. These dashes are what we do in life. Some people become doctors; other may become lawyers, firefighters, politicians, business owners, volunteers. That list goes on and on. No matter what profession one chooses, you have an impact on the people in your life. Take that opportunity and make the most of it. Help others when they are down or need direction. Maybe suggest a solution when they lack an answer to their problem. One may feel they do not have time to be a "Volunteer". If you have children, you are already involved. One day that child will grow up and turn to you and ask, "How did you learn that?", and as you reply you might say, a wise person taught me. Go out and get involved in life and your community. With the economy being what it is, we need to help each other succeed. Buy local, learn the rich history of our City. Get involved with the different events. Know what your child is doing and what they are involved in. Everyone knows the saying "many hands make light work". Join one of our areas valuable organizations (American Legion, Lions, Fraternal Order of Eagles, Rotary, Knights of Columbus, or Vergennes Masonic Association).

I hope to see each and every one of you throughout this summer.

Recreation Committee

by Joe Klopfenstein

The city council has appointed a recreation committee to take a look at our city's parks and playgrounds and make some recommendations for improving recreation options in Vergennes. The committee is made up of city residents and business leaders and I have the privilege to be a part of it. There is a lot of excitement and energy from the community and the rec committee hopes to funnel it into some positive action. We've taken a tour of both the developed and undeveloped recreational assets within the city to help make short-term and long-term recommendations to the council. We've opened the doors of the skate park for our city's youth and we're currently looking at options for resurfacing the basketball and tennis courts located at the elementary school. Other options we are discussing are walking paths, a dog park, a toddler playground and a municipal boathouse in the basin. Do you have a wish list for city recreation? Look for surveys about the dog park and other options at the Vergennes Animal Hospital and Comfort Hill Kennel. Or, feel free to contact a city council member or e-mail your ideas to citymayor@myfairpoint.net. Speaking of recreation, check out the new 18-hole disc golf course that begins at the elementary school. Currently the course is open to the public after school hours and weekends. After the school year is over, the course will be open anytime. A course map and more information is available on the Vergennes elementary school web site at <http://www.anwsu.org/vues/>. Type "disc golf" into the search bar.

George Merkel, Chief of Police

Hi folks! Memorial Day and the days of summer are almost upon us! As we are about to honor those who have gone before us protecting our country, unfortunately there are those who wish to victimize you by taking advantage of your trust and good nature. The advent of the internet certainly has changed the way you do your daily business, from keeping up on the local and national news, researching information, shopping, or even doing your financial business. Access to your personal information could allow someone to tap into your savings or checking account, enable identity theft, or cause you hardships that could plague you for months or even years. Never provide personal information over the internet unless you have adequate protection on your computer. Internet scam artists are very crafty and convincing, providing you with elaborate documents and official looking correspondence. You could easily assume the documentation that you received is legitimate, and inadvertently provide valuable and damaging information. If you don't recognize the source of the e-mail, do not give any information to the person requesting it. Ask for a phone number and an address. Also ask for a fax number to help determine validity. Verify who you are communicating with. The same applies for people who represent themselves as legitimate officials by phone. If something seems wrong and you are suspicious, there is probably something to your suspicions. If you are wary of an e-mail or phone call you received, do not respond. Gather as much information about the contact as possible and call the police immediately. Remember, you are your best protection against internet or phone scams.

Have a great Memorial Day and be safe!

Did You Know?



Thoughts on Memorial Day

By Cookie Steponaitis

Going to and from vacations on airplanes are sometimes tedious and sometimes intriguing adventures. On one such recent trip, the passenger next to me was a man of ninety plus years who was traveling to attend his great-grandson's christening. Clad in a flight jacket and a hat showing military service, he seated himself and asked with a smile where I was traveling to. As the conversation flowed, the emblem on his hat struck me momentarily silent as it was the marking of the famed Tuskegee Airmen. Seeing me staring at his hat, he chuckled and asked if I knew what it meant. A bit tongue tied, I assured him I did and asked if he would be willing to share with me some of his stories from his time in World War II.

Over the course of the plane ride I learned as much from the inflection in his voice, the glint in his eyes and the firmness of his grasp as I did in the facts, figures and events he calmly and proudly took me through. Again and again the pride in America and his own service came through. Again and again I was struck by the determination and tenacious approach he took to protecting pilots, many of whom did not want him in uniform or even flying as their escort. When I asked him if he was excited about seeing his great grandchild, he took out of his pocket a small box and handed it to me. The gift he showed me was for his name sake, a child born sixty-five years after the World War II conflict into a time of turmoil and strife, but one that was stronger because of the efforts of this man and his generation. Nestled in the box was an identical set of wings to the ones he wore on his hat and his jacket. Shiny, polished and obviously new, they gleamed in the box with the promise of being treasured by the newborn they were to be presented to. When I asked simply what his wish was for the child, the airman simply answered, "That one day he will wear them with pride as I have."

The flight was over too quickly and the pilot disappeared into the crowd as he headed down to his next gate and the plane that would take him home to his family. Being left with plenty to think about, what hit home the most was the one request he had made of me as we rode together and I listened diligently and wrote down his stories. "Please do not use my name," he requested. "Which Tuskegee Airman I was is not what is important. What is important is that we served proudly and continue to love this country today."

So as the flags fly this year and we stop to reflect on the sacrifices, messages and impact that American service men and women have and continue to have on our lives, I will remember my plane ride and a chance meeting with a man who fought not only an enemy he could see and target, but the undercurrent of racism that he faced in his quest to defend the country he loves to this day. Perhaps, our greatest legacy from the "Greatest generation" is that they still feel their names are not important and that their service is what sets them as models.

To all Americans, as you enjoy Memorial Day this year, pause and reflect on what is owed to those who keep us safe, generation after generation.

Vergennes Area Events

May 30	Vergennes Memorial Day Parade	August 9-13	Addison County Field Days
July 15-16	French Heritage Day	August 26	Vergennes Day Kick-Off Dance
July 22-24	Junior Fishing Derby	August 27	Vergennes Day

Visit the Calendar for more events and information.

I AM YOUR FLAG by Marine Master Sergeant Percy Webb

- I am your flag.
- I was born June 14, 1777.
- I am more than just cloth shaped into a design.
- I am the refuge of the World's oppressed people.
- I am the silent sentinel of freedom.
- I am the emblem of the greatest sovereign nation on earth.
- I am the inspiration for which American Patriots gave their lives and fortunes.
- I have led your sons into battle from Valley Forge to the dense jungles of Vietnam [deserts of Iraq].
- I walk in silence with each of your honored dead to their final resting place beneath the silent white crosses - row upon row.
- I have flown through peace and war; strife and prosperity; and amidst it all, I have been respected.
- I am your flag.
- My red stripes symbolize the blood spilled in defense of this glorious nation.
- My white stripes signify the yearning tears shed by Americans who lost their sons and daughters.
- My blue field is indicative of God's heaven, under which I fly.
- My stars, clustered together, unify fifty states as one, for God and Country. "Old Glory" is my nickname, and I proudly wave on high. Honor me, respect me, and defend me with your lives and your fortunes.
- Never let my enemies tear me down from my lofty position, lest I never return.
- Keep alight the fires of patriotism; strive earnestly for the spirit of Democracy.
- Worship Eternal God, and keep his commandments; and I shall remain the bulwark of peace and freedom for all mankind.

I AM YOUR FLAG!

Recycling Program

by City Manager Mel Hawley

The Vergennes Recycling Center has been operating for around 25 years. From day one, Waltham residents pitched in with volunteer staffing and financial support so they too could have access. Within a few years, Panton, Ferrisburgh, and Addison closed their respective centers and contracted with the City so their residents as well had the option of a drop-off center for their recycled materials. As many of you know, the program has evolved. In the beginning, materials had to be carefully separated at the center. Later the materials could be deposited in two streams, fibers (paper material) and containers (glass, plastic, aluminum). As sorting facilities became technologically advanced, we are now "single-stream" making it very easy to recycle. Currently all materials are delivered to the Chittenden Solid Waste District materials recovery facility. In the last two years, we surpassed the 500 tons mark. In 2009, there were 511.87 tons of materials collected and in 2010 that amount rose substantially to 568.53 tons. The combined annual cost of the program supported by the five municipalities is \$52,000. Recycling is the right thing to do for the environment by reusing the materials and it saves space in the landfill. **Hours of Operation:** Wednesday 2:00 p.m.—6:00 p.m. and Saturday 8:00 a.m.—Noon