



Vergennes City Voice

From The Mayor

Summer is drawing to an end and fall will be on us before you know it.

I would like to bring a person of importance to everyone's attention in this edition of the City Voice. A Vergennes Firefighter celebrates 50 years of service. Peter Michael Collette has served and continues to serve the citizens of Vergennes and surrounding communities with great dedication. Please take the time to express thanks when you see Mike around the city.

We will celebrate the 30th Vergennes Day

this year. We hope that Mike and others will join us on the park and enjoy some cake. It isn't a celebration without cake, is it?

In the past I have written about the economy, volunteering and inspiration. With the latest turn in the national government and stock markets I feel you should hear something more positive. As you know by now, the Council didn't have to raise taxes; that was a combination of things. The school tax went down and the city tax stayed at the same rate. The City Manager, City

Clerk and the Council worked closely to address the different department's needs. This next year will be a challenge to maintain this past year's tax rate, however, I am confident we will be able to if Mother Nature rules in our favor and other factors prove positive.

We still have some events that we would enjoy seeing you at or come join in the fun as a scene for the Haunted Forest. E-mail me at city-mayor@myfairpoint.net if you would like more information.

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Vergennes Day 30th Celebration

by City Manager, Mel Hawley

Often times people ask – “How did Vergennes Day get started?” Since this year marks the 30th anniversary of the event, it deserves a little research and an answer to that question.

According to the 1981 Annual City Report, the Vergennes Recreation Committee was among the list of appointed officials. Many of the names will be familiar to you. The committee included Christine Collette, Susan Fitzpatrick, Karen Husk (now Karen Quigley), Nancy Morrie, Christopher Pettibon, John Sortino, and Daniel Zimmer. I called Chris Pettibon the other day. He won’t take full credit for creating the name of the celebration, but he recalls the committee discussing the idea of a community event to be held toward the end of summer on the City Green. Here is an excerpt from the annual report from the Recreation Committee written by its chair, Chris Pettibon.

The Recreation Committee is probably most proud of our Vergennes Day Celebration and the “Great Little City Race”. If you were out of the city on August 29th (1981) you missed watching a hundred twenty-five runners of all ages compete in the five kilometer foot-race that ended at the park. You also missed horse and buggy rides, an American Legion chicken barbecue, a pet parade, blue grass music, and antique fire department pumpers. The (Vergennes Area) Chamber sponsored a sidewalk sale and flea market. The Stevens House porches were adorned with the paintings of Custer Ingham, a local nineteenth century painter and photographer. You also missed the Steven House omnibus on loan from the Shelburne Museum girthed at home on Green Street next to the hotel. If you were in the city and joined the celebration, you had a good time.

I wonder if the group ever thought they had created an event that would be celebrated year-after-year with a growing numbers of activities and entertainment for residents and visitors alike.

Vergennes Area Events

Vergennes Day 30th Celebration	27 August 2011
Ladies Rally	01 October 2011
Contact the Opera House at 802.877.6737 or Eileen@vergennesoperahouse.org	
Dead Creek Wildlife Day	01 October 2011
10th year bird banding, exhibits, kid’s crafts. Visit www.vtfishandwildlife.com for more information.	
Haunted Forest on Otter Creek	22 October 2011
Fun, guided evening walking tours to view ghoulish scenes along the creek. For ages 12 and up.	
Pumpkins in the Park	29 October 2011
All ages are invited to bring a carved and/or decorated pumpkin for judging and the annual pumpkin lighting.	

Did you ever wonder where kids prefer to hang out on a cool autumn evening? During the month of October, one group of teenagers can be found in Buster Grant's Sugarbush, located on the north slope of Snake Mountain in the town of Addison. Contradicting stereotypes, these kids are not looking for mischief. Instead, they are dedicated citizen scientists intending to capture, band and release an elusive pint-sized nocturnal bird of prey- the Northern Saw-whet Owl.

These teenagers are high school students from Vergennes, Middlebury and Mount Abraham enrolled in the Addison Central Supervisory Union's Diversified Occupations Program (D.O). The D.O Program caters to the needs of students with learning disabili-

ties relying heavily on hands-on authentic instruction. The owl banding project is just one such learning opportunity that connects activity and academics in order to increase student performance, participation and motivation.

Is it working? From an educational standpoint, the students are certainly motivated. They arrive at the banding station at sunset and tend their nets until midnight. When an owl is captured, the students collect the required data: age, sex, weight and wing measurements. The birds are then fitted with a numeric band prior to release.

The band serves as an identification bracelet that is used to identify the bird. If one of the banded owls is later encountered, dead or alive, the students will be informed by the Federal Bird Banding Labora-

tory, where all of the information of each encounter is stored. This process provides valuable information regarding the migration patterns of these small raptors.

As you may have realized, the owl banding project's goals are two-fold: scientific as well as educational. The students understand the importance of these owls as education ambassadors and in an effort to engage others, they have opened their nets to the public. So, if it's mid-October and you find yourself in need of some mischief, come out and join the students of the Diversified Occupations Program for the annual event affectionately known as "Owl Night." Look in the Addison Independent Calendar of Events for October for the details. Hope to see you there!

Children and Safety

by George Merkel, Chief of Police

It is that time of year again for parents and children to prepare for another year of school. It seems as though it was just yesterday that the advent of summer was here, and we were looking forward to spending days of sunshine and vacation with our kids, free from the busy schedules when school is in session.

As much as we prepare for the new school year with the purchase of new clothes, books and school supplies, we also should keep in mind that we should also take the time to speak with our kids about their overall safety, whether they drive to school, take the bus or walk to school. Each and every day presents another challenge for our kids when they deal with peer pressures and just being “kids”. Kids quite often bristle at the notion of Mom and Dad lecturing them about driving safely, wearing their seat belts, paying attention to traffic and driving slowly. Texting or talking on a cell phone while driving are still relatively new skills that present a huge safety challenge for all of us, and even though there is a law prohibiting texting while driving, there really isn’t that much difference between texting and calling someone on a cell phone. Both activities break our concentration from driving, greatly increasing the potential for accidents and injuries. Many of us consider walking to school or riding a bike to school relatively safe activities, providing that kids pay attention to traffic when they cross the road or ride alongside of the roadway. How many parents, however, make their kids wear helmets when they ride their bikes?

Another aspect of keeping our kids safe is how we monitor their access to the internet. In today’s day and age, most every kid from elementary school age through college age is well versed on using the internet. Social networks such as Facebook provide sources of contact for our children, and their personal information is subject to any and all people that are accepted as “friends”. Our kids put their most personal information on the internet, along with their photos, possibly unwittingly providing access to someone with less than honorable intentions. We should keep a close eye on their internet activities, and take the time to explain the dangers of inappropriate access to certain web sites, or providing their personal information on their social networks.

Our children are our community’s future, and their safety is all of our responsibilities. Have a great school year!

City Council Scheduled Meetings

Meetings are held at the Vergennes Fire Station in the public meeting room at 7:00 p.m.

All are encouraged and welcome to attend.

23 August 2011

13 September 2011

27 September 2011

11 October 2011

25 October 2011

15 November 2011

20 December 2011