



FRUITPORT Area News

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A day to honor the heroes of America

By Brooke Cochran

This past Memorial Day, we laughed and screamed on the carnival rides at Fruitport Old Fashioned Days; we tried our luck at games to win that big teddy bear for our loved one. And much of Fruitport enjoyed the parade festivities. One event surpassed all of the exciting aspects of Fruitport Old Fashioned Days: The solemn and appreciative emotions of the graveside Memorial Day service. The service is what the day is all about -- honoring our veterans. Often, we, as Americans, unintentionally repress the fact that our ability to celebrate our very freedom was and continues to be bought by the dedication, sacrifice and lives of American soldiers.

Although all Americans in the military deserve praise for their service and commitment to the United States, a tug at the heart strings of a Michigan-grown kid directs your attention to the Polar Bear Expedition of World War I. During the Memorial Day service this past May, the speaker reminded the crowd that soldiers from Michigan and Wisconsin were specifically chosen for the Polar Bear Expedition because of their familiarity with cold weather.

The U.S. Army's 85th Division completed its training at Fort Custer and proceeded to England in 1918. Around 5,000 troops from the 339th infantry were issued Russian weapons and headed toward Archangel, a Russian port 600 miles north of Moscow. After nearly a year of engaging the Russian troops, America withdrew, only to be followed out by British troops a few months later. Nearly 10 years after the Polar Bear Expedition, two commissions were appointed to retrieve the bodies of American soldiers buried in Russian soil. Upon the return of the remains, the soldiers who had died for their country were reburied on American land with honors.

The government has not always financially aided families in obtaining the remains of a loved one killed in the line of duty. During the Civil War, families had to procure enough money to have the body brought home. This is why national cemeteries became common. Now the government pays for the necessary means of moving the remains from one place back home to the family. Apart from the graves themselves, the speaker at the ceremony spoke on the importance and honor of being in the color guard, specifically during the Civil War. The position of color guard was to protect and preserve the American flag, or to capture a Confederate flag. If one was to obtain a Confederate flag, or protect the American flag, he or she would be awarded a Medal of Honor.

During this year's memorial service, three flags were flown and explained: the National Colors, the Prisoner of War/Missing in Action flag, and the VFW Post 3734 flag.

In the National Colors (the American flag), red represents hardiness and valor; white, purity and innocence; and blue, vigilance, perseverance and justice. The stars (each of the states) are a symbol of the heavens and the stripes (the original 13 colonies) are rays of the sun emanating light down on us.

The POW/MIA flag reminds us of those whose fates rested in the hands of the enemy, and of those whose fates rested in the hands of the enemy, and of those of whom we lack any knowledge. In World War I there were 7,323 soldiers who were either taken prisoner or never made it home. In World War II, 78,750 were lost during battle or imprisoned. In the Korean War, there were 8,215 who were held against their will or lost. In the Vietnam War, missing or held captive at war's end were 2,005 soldiers. In the Middle East, 5,400 soldiers have sacrificed their lives for us.

Memorial Day is not about the carnival that comes every year. The day is not about the old cars driven by during the parade. Sure, those are fun, but the day is about remembering the cost of our freedom. Memorial Day comes once a year, but the reality of this world is that we are constantly in need of protectors; and we find them in the Marines, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force and the Coast Guard. Thank you, men and women of the military. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

For more information on this topic, see the following websites:

www.polarbears.si.umich.edu; www.homeofheroes.com/hallofheroes/1st floor/flag/1bfb disp9c.html or www.vfwwebcom.org/mi/post3734.



"Ridin' along in my automobile" is Village President Roger Vanderstelt and friend. (Photo by Perry Burns.)



Members of Calvary Church provided breakfast for the carnival workers as they have in years past.

A scary event

By Dorothy Anna Birkholz

August 9, 2009 is a day I will never forget. I had just celebrated my 91st birthday and have gone through many bad and sad times and experiences, but the storm on August 9th was the most shocking time for me.

There was no warning about a storm, but suddenly I had a huge tree hanging down into my living room with water pouring in like a waterfall. The ceiling tiles were falling down expelling the heavy water behind them.

I have a special chair where I sit in the front part of the living room. I spend most of my time in that chair due to two complete hip replacements and a plate in my left shoulder. I had just gone into the bedroom when I heard a gush of water. When I went back to see what it was, there was a huge tree hanging through the living room ceiling, just above the chair I had been sitting in. I am so thankful I wasn't in that chair at the time.

The enclosed front porch had a big piece of 2X4 hanging through the ceiling and a big hole in the other corner where you could look up and see the sky. All four windows were smashed, and the floor was full of insulation that fell from the attic. My front bedroom window was smashed and the glass all blew into the room and also the pouring rain. What a mess! The picture window was gone and, with the trees lying in front, I could not see out.

There I stood with my phone in my hand and, of course, all the wires were torn from the house, so there was no power or phone service. I just stood and prayed.

Soon, my great nephew, Ron Rutkowski, who lives around the corner (and our back yards butt together) came in and I was so glad to see him. He had a hard time getting over here as there were so many huge trees and wires lying over the streets, yards, driveways and everywhere. He and his wife helped me over the brush and trees to get to their house and I stayed with them until Saturday, August 15.

The power and phones were out for seven days. I am so grateful that no one was injured during the storm. I am also thankful that my house was repairable. The water had run through the floors and into the basement where I lost some things I had stored on the shelves.

I remember when I was a little girl and when anything happened, my mom used to say, "Nothing is so bad, as it could have been worse." I really understand that now. There could have been a fire or a flood, and everything would have been gone.

I thank God for keeping me safe and for being back in my own home. I also appreciate and thank Ron Rutkowski, his workmen, and everyone who helped me through that ordeal. In addition to replacing outside walls, roof, drywall, insulation, ceiling tiles, and carpeting, they also had to build a new front porch. I am so fortunate to have all that help. •



Fruitport police examine the damage to Zach's Eagle Scout project at Beach School.

Eagle Scout project vandalized

By Mary Weimer

Zachary Pulsifer spent a lot of time planning his Eagle Scout project, an outdoor classroom to be built at Beach Elementary School. He designed and planned the project and recruited help for the actual construction, which began on Saturday, July 3.

Unfortunately for Zach, but fortunately for Beach School students, what began as a project has now become a mission because of vandals who destroyed what had already been accomplished. The work will continue, as Zachary is determined to obtain the highest rank of scouting. Only about four percent of all who join scouting earn the rank of Eagle Scout.

Note from Editor:

If anyone knows who may have vandalized this project or someone who may know the culprits please call Silent Observer at 722-7463 or the Fruitport Police Dept. at 865-8477.



Zachary Pulsifer stands with his completed benches prior to the vandalism.

Tentative Newspaper Delivery Schedule

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Election Issue

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