

Our City

I walked through a soulful and lonely period this morning as I thought forward to the weekend and Memorial Day. Something about putting one foot in front of the other and the cadence of my walking sticks on the pavement puts me in a reflective mood. I think he would have been 86 on the 31st of May. But, he has been gone now for almost eight years. My memories of him are as fond as they have always been and the lessons imparted have stayed with me. Yet, this morning in the darkness I found myself missing him and grasping at the memories. I suppose that is what Memorial Day weekend is still about for many of us. I would like to think too that as folks load up and head out, they do so with the intent of reflection and reconnection wherever they find themselves. I would hope as well that, at least in thought, they pay their respects to those who have passed and especially those who have passed paying the ultimate price for this country.

This past Monday I stood awaiting the Poppy Ceremony sponsored by the American Legion at the Neeley Cemetery. I found reflection there as well as I observed the markers and read the memorial citations. My thanks to the Legion for their efforts in maintaining a tradition and imparting the significance to others of those who have served, fought and died for this country. Thanks also to the Hillcrest Second Grade teachers for exposing the young students to those same traditions of service, sacrifice and remembrance. Well done, Legion and teachers!

As Memorial Day passes and school is out, “summer” is upon us. I find my summer calendar as full as the school year’s any more. With student project visits, FFA competitions, professional development and Oh yeah, City business, it seems the pace never quite slows down anymore. That is certainly my choice as I am not much for idle time. I do look forward to some long weekend trips with Sally and a ten-day backpacking trip into the Frank Church Wilderness with Al. And if I am lucky, a few early mornings and late evenings on Spring Creek with PMDs, Tricos and rising trout.

Summer becomes a different time for our City crews as well. The Street department is in full gear as repair and maintenance projects are getting lined up. The Water and Waste Water Departments continue to hunt trouble spots in our sewers with the new camera trailer and fix them with the vacuum truck. The City is also trying to take a proactive role in water conservation practices and will be working with other major water users throughout the summer to implement techniques that will reduce our water use. Summer becomes very busy for our Grounds, Golf and Police Departments. As the City Council approved the Lunch in the Park program again for this year, I ask that as your children enjoy this opportunity you also join in our efforts to keep our parks and green places clean and free of trash, debris and vandalism.

I understand the dynamics of many families change as summer arrives. It is no coincidence that as summer starts, vandalism goes up significantly. So as parents and guardians I am asking you to please be mindful of your children. The City’s curfew will be enforced and as such children out and about when they should not be will be detained until you come and

collect them. It is one of the few recourses we have available to encourage everyone to be responsible and in most cases it does seem to be effective. I hate starting summer off on such a bummer note, but I want to be up front about the consequences. Appropriate supervision and responsibility goes a long way in saving us all time, money and grief. I thank you in advance for your help and cooperation in this matter.

As I get into my summer schedule, it will require that I be gone for extended periods of time. Like last year, I will be asking Councilmembers to write a few of these columns. I appreciate reading their different perspectives; I hope you do too. I hope that summer finds you able to do the things that you find most enjoyable.

As I concluded my walk this morning I was smiling warmly as so many memories of loved ones now gone filled me. I often think I am too sentimental about dates and traditions like Memorial Day; but then the memories of all those now gone fill me. I feel blessed to have really known so many truly wonderful people. Each of them, without question, is a part of who I am; and that fills my soul with pride as it washes away the loneliness.

Until next week...