



Town meetings

Vassalboro

Town meeting, Mon., June 7, 6:30 p.m.
Elementary School
Municipal elections, Tues., June 8,
8 a.m. - 8 p.m., town office

Madison

Town meeting, Mon., June 7, 7 p.m., at
Madison Area Junior High School
Performing Arts Center.
Municipal elections, Tues., June 8,
8 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Skowhegan

Town meeting, Mon., June 7, 7 p.m.
at Municipal Building Opera House

Chelsea

Town meeting, Thurs., June 10,
6:30 p.m. at Chelsea School

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**Voters to decide
on six local
questions**

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Vassalboro

**Selectmen
postpone
due date
on bids**

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Memorial Day - a time to remember

by Milt Huntington

Magnificent monuments, little white crosses and the soulful sounding of taps all serve to symbolize the arrival of another Memorial Day. It's a time to honor loved ones and heroes who died in defense of our country. It's also the unofficial beginning of summer.

The legal holiday is observed annually on the last Monday in May. Originally known as Decoration Day and observed on May 30, it remains a time for decorating graves with flowers and flags and a time for flying the colors at half mast. Some would argue that changing the date of the observance merely to create a three-day weekend was a slap in the face to the very meaning of the occasion. This resulted in periodic introduction of Congressional measures to change the date back to May 30 again. All attempts failed.

Many states in the South refuse to commemorate the day because of lingering hostility toward the Union Army during the Civil War. It's a mystery to some that a war that took more than 600,000 lives could be labeled as "civil." By comparison, 400,000 U.S. troops died in WWII.

WWI, however, was unquestionably the deadliest conflict in history. A total of 21 million were wounded and 16 million killed, with allies alone losing 5.7 million soldiers. "The war to end all wars" failed to live up to its promise, but we remember the sacrifices and commitment made to perpetuate that dream. The War in Iraq, so far, has taken the lives of more than 4,000 U.S. troops, over half of whom were under the age of 25. The Vietnam War cost America over 58,000 lives and 350,000 casualties while the Korean War resulted in the loss of over 54,000 American lives and 92,134 wounded.

On Memorial Day in the nation's capitol, the president or vice president will observe the tradition of placing a wreath on the Tomb of the Unknowns in Arlington National Cemetery. Small flags will be



The Wreath of Honor is placed at the Somerville Cemetery during Memorial Day services on May 31. Photo by Janice Hisler

placed on each and every grave. Ceremonies will also be held at Gettysburg National Military Park in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania and at Antietam National Battlefield in Sharpsburg, Maryland.

Here in Maine, monuments and grave-stones are scattered throughout the state in almost every city and town, recognizing the sons and daughters who died in the defense of their country. Relatives and friends will decorate those graves before and during the weekend of Memorial Day. The Maine Vietnam Veterans Memorial, erected in the shadow of the State House dome, is the most recent of Augusta's mon-

uments. During the warmer months, it's decorated with beautiful flowers and American flags. Just south of the Capitol building stands a memorial to law enforcement officers, while another serves as a memorial to the firefighters of Maine.

On a lighter note, many of us will utilize the weekend for picnics in our favorite parks, barbecues in the back yard and watching parades. Weather permitting, there could be trips to the beach. If the weather refuses to cooperate, there's always the Indianapolis 500 on TV, shown every year during the weekend of Memorial Day.

The cost of war in American lives

Spanish-American War	- 385
Indian Wars	- 1,000
War of 1812	- 2,260
American Revolution	- 4,435
Mexican Wars	- 1,733
Civil War	- 620,000
World War I	- 116,516
WWII	- 416,800
Korean War	- 54,246
Vietnam War	- 58,236
Gulf War	- 2,094
Global War on Terror	- 4,734
War In Iraq	- Over 4,000 to date
America's war dead total:	1,194,198

Call it Memorial Day or Decoration Day, it remains a day for memorializing love ones and heroes. It's also a day that opens the door to the joyous season of summer.

Memorial Day services in Central Maine



Photo by Janice Hisler



Photo by Mark Huard



Photo by Mark Huard



Photo by Lyn Rowden



Photo by Isabelle Markley



Photo by Lyn Rowden

Clockwise from top left, Darlene Landry lays a basket of flowers at the monument in memory of all who have served in the U.S. military; Fairfield American Legion Post #14 members march; the Waterville Junior High School band; Isaiah Houston, of Winslow, front, a member of the CHIPS Platoon, Dirigo Young Marines, stands at attention while Nicholas Masse, of Benton, plays Taps; Memorial Day activities at Veterans Park in South China; Shylo, a seven-month-old Akita, commanded much attention when he appeared dressed for Memorial Day in Fairfield. He and his handler, Wendy Rayeski, reside in Burnham.