

NEWS



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Orange County Executive
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06-08-11 THIS WEEK IN ORANGE COUNTY BY EDWARD A. DIANA

On June 14, 1777, the Marine Committee of the Second Continental Congress "resolved that the flag of the United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field representing a new constellation." On the 108th anniversary of that day, a Wisconsin school teacher, BJ Cigrand is credited with the first public day of recognition for our flag's birthday. President Woodrow Wilson first proclaimed Flag Day in 1916, but it wasn't until 1949, 172 years after the Second Continental Congress' flag resolution, that President Harry S. Truman signed an Act of Congress officially designating June 14 as National Flag Day.

The entire week surrounding June 14 is designated "National Flag Week" and the President issues a proclamation urging citizens to fly the American flag throughout the week. The flag should also be displayed outside government buildings and many municipalities line their streets with flying flags and teachers use Flag Day as an opportunity to teach the history of our American flag. It's also a time to honor and remember our veterans and active duty personnel who have committed themselves to defending our flag and our nation.

Old Glory, Stars and Stripes, the Star Spangled Banner ... whatever you call it, the American flag is the symbol of our nation and probably the most widely recognized flag around the world. Children recite the Pledge of Allegiance at the start of each school day. We pay tribute to our flag with each singing of the National Anthem. We hang it proudly outside our homes and businesses. On September 11, 2001, after the worst terrorist attack on U.S. soil in our nation's history, Old Glory was waving from homes, cars, and businesses within mere hours, giving us hope that all would be okay. In fact, pictures of the flag raised at Ground Zero in Manhattan on that horrific day were shared around the globe, letting the world know that the United States of America would continue to stand tall.

President Wilson once said, "The things that the flag stands for were created by the experiences of a great people. Everything that it stands for was written by their lives. The flag is the embodiment, not of sentiment, but of history." The flag is a symbol of our national pride and represents the sacrifices of our people on which America was established. As such, it is to be treated with respect and proper flag etiquette should be followed.

The American flag should never touch the ground and a damaged or tattered flag is considered disrespectful and should be retired appropriately. Thanks to a generous donation from the Middletown Post Office and Allan Spellmon and his team at Goshen Collision Center, including artist Michelle Vanderpyle, a beautiful hand-painted "mailbox" is located outside the Veterans' Service Office (111 Craigville Road, Goshen) for the collection of flags that need to be retired. While you're there, be sure to take in the beautiful display of Stars and Stripes surrounding the Veterans' Cemetery. If you happen to be there on a breezy day it's quite spectacular and especially moving to see more than 100 flags fluttering.

Happy Flag Day! Until next week, wishing you good health and happiness,

Edward A. Diana
County Executive