



Heroes



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Recognizing Local Hero: Sgt. Victor "Vic" Koontz



Sgt. Victor "Vic" Koontz is a 20-year veteran of the Mt. Vernon Police Department. He is currently in charge of the narcotics division and is also a Team Leader for the High Risk Team. He is the Treasurer of the Jefferson County Fraternal Order of Police and heavily involved with the planning and organization of the annual "Night with Santa Cop" event for needy children.

In January of 2017 the number of detectives available was unusually low for various reasons and he was called out to assist a murder investigation. He assisted Capt. Bullard and Det. Haney, the only other two available, into the late morning hours of the next day. After getting a few hours of rest, Sgt. Koontz came back in to continue the murder investigation and discovered the patrol division needed assistance with a serious child abuse case. He uncovered video footage of a one-year old child being physically abused, located the child, took him into protective custody, and gathered enough evidence to arrest the abuser. All this while the murder investigation continued.

Sgt. Koontz, along with Det. Haney, received the department's merit award for their work in the murder investigation, leading to 12 arrests. In his acceptance speech to the city council he was quick to point out it was a team effort. This was just one of many examples of his selfless service and the citizens of Mt. Vernon are lucky to have him.



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Six Things You Didn't Know About St. Patrick's Day

Did you know? Green beer is not Irish—that's a decidedly American tradition. In fact, there are several fun facts about St. Paddy's Day that probably won't be popping up on your Facebook newsfeed this month, but provide an insightful look at the beloved holiday nonetheless.

Here are six of them.

- 1 The shamrock is not the symbol of Ireland. That honor goes to the harp. A popular icon of the holiday, the shamrock was used by St. Patrick. He used the three-leafed plant as a metaphor for the Holy Trinity when he was first introducing Christianity to Ireland.
- 2 There really was a St. Patrick, but his real name was Maewyn Succat, or in Latin, Magonus Succetus. He took on the name Patrick when he became a priest.
- 3 Green wasn't really St. Patrick's color; he was more of a blue guy. As St. Patrick's Day shifted from a religious holiday to a celebration of Ireland's history, the color green was introduced. On March 17, during the Irish Rebellion of 1798 (an uprising against British rule in Ireland), Irish soldiers wore green uniforms as a political statement.
- 4 It may be an Irish holiday, but Americans are just as onboard for the celebration. The average amount American St. Patrick's Day revelers will spend this holiday is \$36.52 per person, totaling a combined \$4.6 billion, according to a report by the National Retail Federation.
- 5 FYI: If you're a corned beef and cabbage fan (which is oddly not a traditional Irish staple) you might be relieved to know it has nothing to do with corn, the grain. Instead, it's a nod to the large grains of salt that were historically used to cure meats, which were also known as "corns."
- 6 You can't attend a Saint Patrick's Day event without hearing a cry of "Erin go Bragh." What's the phrase mean? It's a corruption of the Irish Éirinn go Brách, which means roughly "Ireland Forever."

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FILE THIS:

Simple Mistakes to Avoid This Tax Season

Just as inevitable as taxes are the mistakes that many taxpayers make when they're preparing their returns.

Tax Day (April 17) is right around the corner. If you do your own taxes, be mindful of the most common errors the government finds each year and double-check your return. Sometimes the slightest mistake can cost you time, money and way too many hours on hold with the IRS.

Here's what to watch for:

Bad math. Math mistakes are one of the leading reasons the IRS adjusts returns. This sounds basic, but if you're not using tax software that does the math for you, be sure to use a calculator and double-check all figures on your return.

Commonly overlooked credits and deductions. Most taxpayers file their taxes using the standard deduction, but you may be eligible for a variety of itemized deductions that could possibly save you more. Also, you may be eligible for "above-the-line" deductions and tax credits, none of which require you to itemize. Note: The newly passed tax reform generally does not impact these credits or deductions until you file your 2018 tax return in 2019.

Incorrect filing status. Check only one filing status on the tax return and check the appropriate exemption boxes. If more than one status fits, use the one most beneficial to you. Claiming the wrong status could negate your ability to claim the child tax credit, the earned-income credit and dependent exemptions.

Direct deposit routing errors. If you are asking the IRS to deposit your refund directly into your account, you must be sure to provide the right information. If your account number or routing number is off, your money will float forever between financial institutions.

Failure to include payment. If you do owe money, enclose a check or money order with your tax return and write your tax form number and tax year on the payment.

Failure to take tax credits and deductions. Each year the IRS collects millions of dollars in overpaid taxes thanks to taxpayers who don't claim all the deductions and credits available to them, whether they itemize or not. Two significant credits not to miss: The Earned Income Tax Credit for lower-income workers and the American Opportunity Credit for students in higher education.

Send the Right Message with the Right Moves

It's not what you say but how you say it—or so they say.

The truth is, they're right. The words you speak are just a small percentage of what you communicate. Studies show that your words account for only 7% of the message you convey. The remaining 93% is nonverbal: 55% is based on what people see and the other 38% is communicated through your tone of voice.

In other words, if your body language doesn't match your words, you're sending mixed messages and you may leave a wake of confusion. Be mindful of your nonverbals with these need-to-know tips:

Eye contact is the most obvious way you communicate. When you are looking at the other person, you show interest. When you fail to make eye contact, you leave others feeling insignificant. Maintain eye contact about 60% of the time in order to look interested but not aggressive.

Facial expression matters. A smile sends a positive message and adds warmth and an aura of confidence. Mouth movements like pursing your lips or twisting them to one side can indicate that you're thinking about what you are hearing or that you are holding something back.

Keep your head on straight. Well, at least keep it straight, especially in a business setting. This will make you appear self-assured and authoritative, and people will take you seriously. If you're in a social setting and want to come across as friendly and open, tilt your head to one side.

Open yourself up. Arms crossed or folded over your chest say you're uninterested in what others are saying or that you don't agree with them.

Lean the right way. The angle of your body indicates what you're thinking. Leaning in says, "Tell me more." Leaning away signals you've heard enough. A nod of your head affirms that you're listening.

You may not always be aware of what you are saying with your body, but like it or not, others will get the message. Make sure it's the one you want to send.

FIVE WAYS TO SHOW PEOPLE YOU'RE REALLY LISTENING

- 1 Line up your toes, belly button and eyes with the person talking.
- 2 Don't interrupt or finish someone's sentences.
- 3 Validate. Acknowledge the point, even if you don't agree.
- 4 Encourage by nodding or saying, "mmhmm."
- 5 Tilt your head—it's a nonverbal way of lending an ear.

WORDS TO LIVE BY

“People should talk less and draw more. Personally, I would like to renounce speech altogether and, like organic nature, communicate everything I have to say visually.”

—GOETHE, GERMAN POET AND NOVELIST

Four Trends for Print Marketing in 2018

The most effective marketing is simple, personal and reliable—an important point to remember as brands and businesses scream for attention in this year's crowded digital space. If you haven't already, now's the time to plan your marketing strategy for the year, including your print marketing plans.

Print marketing can be compelling, memorable and engaging; just the fact that you can touch it gives it a significant advantage over digital. In all the clutter of the information age, sending tangible messages they can hold on to helps create connections with consumers and builds credibility with your audience.

Wondering what's trending in print marketing for 2018? Here are four things to note.

1 SIMPLICITY. The world is filled with digital chaos and overwhelming noise—that's why minimalism resonates with audiences of all ages. Look for simple, striking images. Keep text short and to the point. Maximize white space. Opt for a layout that's clean and uncluttered. Often, less is more.

2 PERSONALIZATION. Print is already a personal medium, but with personalized pieces, you can go a step further and reach your audience on an individual level. For example, use online data about your customer's preferences to create a customized marketing piece. Are you running a promotion on a product they've been researching? Send them a quick postcard to let them know.

3 COLOR. Pantone has released their color trend predictions for 2018: They foresee continued print marketing trends in iridescent color palettes and a move away from pastels towards bright and bold colors. According to Pantone color experts, "Intense colors seem to be a natural application of our intense lifestyles and thought processes these days."

4 TEXTURE. Studies have shown that touch memory has the strongest impact on the human brain. When we hold something, it sticks. By tapping into that, print media creates lasting brand awareness. Make your fliers, business cards and postcards feel as great as they look with details like embossing, debossing, raised ink or intricate folds to add a unique texture.



PROOF POSITIVE

Maintaining your customer (and prospect) databases is crucial when it comes to creating both your direct mail and email marketing messages. By being able to segment and pinpoint the exact audience you believe would be interested in your offer, you're able to reduce costs and increase ROI at the same time.



SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

The only states that do not observe Daylight Saving Time are Arizona and Hawaii. Arizona found that any savings in lighting costs were more than offset by the extra cost of air conditioning for that extra daylight hour. Hawaii follows the lead of many tropical areas that do not benefit from DST as the amount of daylight doesn't vary much near the equator.