



## Chalk the Walk

Mount Vernon's First Street will come alive with art on May 2 and 3 during the annual Chalk the Walk event. According to the event's Facebook page, organizers anticipate more than 160 individual 8-by-10 art pieces, along with a large collaborative community mural. This year's featured community piece will showcase John Bramblitt's "Lady Liberty."

The event will run from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. each day and will include live music, food vendors, and family-friendly activities.

**Due to street closures on Saturday, access to the bank will be available via the 3rd Avenue South alley entrance located behind the First Street Brick building.**



*This year's community piece is John Bramblitt's "Lady Liberty".*

## The Importance of a Will

For many people, writing a will is something that gets pushed to the bottom of the to-do list. It can feel uncomfortable, unnecessary, or even premature. Yet experts consistently stress that having a will—and keeping it updated—is one of the most important steps adults can take to protect their loved ones and their wishes.

A will is a legal document that outlines how your assets will be distributed after your death. Without one, your estate is considered "intestate," meaning state law determines who receives your property—often in ways that may not reflect your intentions. This can lead to delays, confusion, and even family disputes during an already difficult time.

One of the most critical functions of a will is the ability to name an executor, the person responsible for carrying out your wishes. Without this designation, the court appoints someone to manage your estate. A will also allow parents to designate a guardian for minor children, ensuring their care is entrusted to someone they choose rather than leaving that decision to the courts.

Beyond distributing assets, a will can simplify the legal process for your family. It helps streamline probate, reduces the likelihood of disagreements, and can even minimize certain taxes for larger estates. In short, it provides clarity at a time when emotions are high and decisions can feel overwhelming.

Despite its importance, many Americans still don't have a will. Recent data shows that more than half of U.S. adults have no estate planning documents at all, even though most acknowledge how important they are. A common misconception is that wills are only necessary for the wealthy. In reality, anyone with children, property, or personal belongings can benefit from having a plan in place.

Just as important as creating a will is reviewing it regularly. Life changes—and your will should reflect those changes. Major events such as marriage, divorce, the birth of a child, or significant financial shifts are all reasons to revisit your plan. Experts recommend reviewing your will every few years to ensure it remains accurate and relevant. An outdated will can be almost as problematic as having none at all, potentially leading to unintended outcomes.



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### Upcoming Events

**May 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup>,** Chalk the Walk

**May 25<sup>th</sup>,** Memorial Day, Bank closed.

Memorial Day Services

Mount Vernon: Services held at the Mount Vernon cemetery at 9:30 a.m.

Lisbon: Parade begins at 10:00 a.m. with services to follow at the Lisbon cemetery.

**June 19<sup>th</sup>,** Juneteenth, Bank closed.

**July 4<sup>th</sup>,** Independence Day, Bank closed.

**July 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>** Mount Vernon's Heritage Days. Bank closing at 10:30 Saturday.

For more information on community events, go to [visitmvl.com](http://visitmvl.com).

Ultimately, having a will is not about preparing for the end—it's about providing peace of mind today. It ensures your wishes are honored, your loved ones are protected, and your legacy is handled the way you intend. Taking the time now to create or review your will is one of the simplest—and most meaningful—ways to care for those you leave behind.

## Living Will

A living will and a regular will are both important estate planning documents, but they serve very different purposes and take effect at different times.

A **living will**—also known as an advance directive—outlines your wishes for medical care if you become unable to communicate those decisions yourself. This might include whether you want life-sustaining treatments such as mechanical ventilation, feeding tubes, or resuscitation if you are terminally ill or permanently unconscious. A living will only goes into effect while you are still alive but incapacitated. It helps guide doctors and loved ones, reducing uncertainty and emotional stress during difficult situations. Often, it is paired with a healthcare power of attorney, which designates someone to make medical decisions on your behalf.

The key difference with a living will vs a regular will (often referred as a last will and testament) lies in timing and purpose. A living will focuses on your healthcare preferences during your lifetime if you cannot speak for yourself, while a regular will directs the distribution of your estate after death. Having both documents in place ensures that your wishes are respected in medical situations and that your loved ones are provided for according to your intentions.

In addition, a living will works hand in hand with a healthcare power of attorney to provide a more complete plan for medical decision-making. While a living will outlines your specific wishes, it cannot anticipate every possible situation. A healthcare power of attorney fills that gap by naming a trusted individual to interpret your preferences and make decisions if circumstances arise that are not clearly addressed. This person can communicate directly with medical providers, review treatment options, and ensure your values are honored. Together, these documents provide clarity, flexibility, and peace of mind for both you and your family.

## Tax Refund

Receiving a tax refund can be a great opportunity to strengthen your financial future, especially when you choose smart banking and investment options. Rather than spending it all at once, consider putting your refund to work in ways that support both short- and long-term goals.

One of the simplest options is depositing your refund into a savings account or money market account. These accounts allow your money to grow while remaining easily accessible for emergencies. If you're looking for a low-risk investment with a fixed return, certificates of deposit (CDs) are another solid choice. CDs lock in your funds for a set period, often with better interest rates than savings accounts.

For those focused on long-term growth, consider contributing your refund to an Individual Retirement Account (IRA). Traditional IRAs may offer tax advantages now, while Roth IRAs provide tax-free withdrawals in retirement. Both can help build a strong financial foundation over time.

Before deciding, consider your financial priorities—such as building an emergency fund, paying down debt, or saving for future goals. Using your tax refund wisely can turn a one-time payment into lasting financial progress.

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