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**Glendale Heights Trustee Chester Pojack removes tattered flags from a drop box in Glendale Heights Monday. He spearheaded the program that provides an outlet to properly dispose of worn flags.**

# Where Old Glory gets fitting funeral

*Flag-disposal program  
catches on in Glendale Hts.*

**BY SARA HOOKER**

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When an American flag has flaunted its last star and flapped its last stripe, its owner may wonder the correct way to dispose of our nation's symbol.

Glendale Heights Trustee Chester Pojack admits he was once among the uninitiated.

"I didn't know where else to put them, the proper way to dispose of the flag," he said. "I've always been patriotic, and I've always had flags. I would burn them in a metal pan in my driveway."

But village ordinance actually prohibits such burning, so Pojack thought of a way for people to properly dispose of flags without breaking any local law.

Coordinating with Glendale Heights VFW Post 2377, Pojack created a drop box last year for flags no longer fit for flying. The Glendale Heights postmaster donated a mailbox to collect old flags, and a village worker painted it patriotically. It sits in front of the Sports Hub, 250 Civic Center Plaza.

Since then, the program has received flags not only from the Glendale Heights area, but from all over, including Chicago, Indiana and downstate Illinois. In total, 521 flags have been deposited. Some have notes; others don't.

"You ought to see some of the flags I've gotten. Some of them are moldy and have probably been in the corner of the garage for who knows how long," Pojack said.

Whatever their condition, the flags collected are taken to the local VFW, which takes them to Yorkville in Kendall County, where there's an official flag-burning ceremony a

## Flag: Other towns are calling about how to launch program

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couple times a year, Pojack said.

This year, the village is considering having its own burning ceremony, which would require a waiver from the burning ordinance, and placing the ashes in an urn that could be situated in Veterans' Memorial Park, Pojack said.

Village officials are also pleased with the program's results so far.

"To date, that amount of flags that is far beyond what we had anticipated. We're ever grateful that people are using it

— and they are, continually," said Gina Thorson, the village's public relations coordinator. "I think it's absolutely wonderful for people to take time to show respect for the symbol of our country."

Pojack said he's even gotten calls from people in other towns wanting to start their own branch of the collection program.

Such outreach and the sheer number of flags collected let Pojack know his program's been a success.

"Oh, yeah, I'm continuing on it," he said. "I'll be doing it as long as I'm living."