

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## Independence Day Trivia

Declaration of Independence 4 July, 1776: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Everyone who reads our newspaper should reread this entire document and consider its worth to what our nation represents. Understand that from our nation's birth that our young military from that era right on through today and all that have served did so for these ideals; most of which were unheard of in earlier nations.

What was the major objection to being ruled by Britain? Taxation without representation whereas early colonists had no say in English Parliament. How long did it take for colonies to organize against the British? One year of unfruitful efforts to settle their differences with the British, the colonies sent delegates to our Second Continental Congress in May, 1776. In June recognizing the hopelessness of erstwhile negotiations, a committee was formed to pen our Declaration of Independence.

Who was this committee? Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Philip Livingston, and Roger Sherman. Who sewed our first American flag? Although unsubstantiated, it is accepted that Betsy Ross sewed our first flag in May or June 1776, being commissioned by the Congressional Committee. When was our first flag accepted? June 14, 1777 by our Continental Congress with the following creed: "Resolved: that the flag of the United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a field of blue, representing a new constellation."

Our first Independence Day celebration was when? July 8, 1776 in Philadelphia.

What is our Liberty Bell? A large bell with its historic crack, first sounded from the tower of Independence calling all citizens to gather for the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence by Colonel John Nixon.

When was the first public Fourth of July event celebrated at our White House? Not until 1804. What is the origin of the word, "Patriotism"? The early Latin word "patria" meaning homeland or fatherland. Our many Veterans, past and present are Patriots. What breed of animal hated our first Fourth of July celebrations? Horses! They were tormented by boys and girls throwing firecrackers at them, gleefully and without reserve celebrating freedom. No doubt, in this respect, horses came to appreciate the invention of the automobile.

When and where was the first Independence Day west of the Mississippi? This was in 1805 at Independence Creek by Lewis and Clark.

What was Thomas Jefferson's last written letter? He was sick, dying and his last penned efforts for our wonderful America, he declined an invitation to attend the 50th anniversary of America's birth. He sent it to Roger C. Weightman.

How many signers of our nation's Declaration were there? There were 56 total with only 50 signing for the official event on August 7, 1776. Who was the last person to sign? Thomas McKean in January, 1777. Jefferson and John Adams died on 4 July, 1826.

*Semper Paratus*

**The Veterans' Corner**  
Scott Drummond  
USCG Veteran



## Cold Equations

We're going to talk about immigration today, but we're going to step back from the drama without rushing automatically into those well trodden camps on the left and right sides of virtual reality, ready to attack, and searching for just the right meme to signal our virtue to our respective tribes.

We are so distracted while we argue and insult each other that you could drive a truck between our two camps and no one would notice, even if that truck was loaded with the liberty and prosperity of the nation, which, as it turns out, has indeed been the case for decades. While we have argued and protested and posted, 75% of the nation's wealth has accumulated in the hands of 10% of our people, but that's a discussion for another time.

Talking candidly about immigration is difficult at best. The facts are hard to sift, and often discomfiting. Each of our opposing camps is in possession of a few facts that they seem to regard as the whole truth. Few have been willing to cross the divide to share information. Let's see if we can start to bridge that gap. To begin with, the numbers are incontrovertible: Without immigration, the US population would be shrinking, and according to most economists, without a growing population, we would suffer economically. If you're a "bottom line" kind of person, you can start right there. We need younger, working taxpayers to finance the social security of millions entering retirement, and there is no easy or painless solution to our demographic cliff.

The United States is a nation of immigrants and a melting pot of all races and cultures. We have proven throughout our history that no matter a person's race or nationality, when opportunity exists, all are capable of achieving excellence, no matter what their origins. This truth is at the core of our national identity. Unfortunately some of the fire has gone out of the furnace and the melting pot has less of the strong alloy and more of the sticky mess. Many have lost or forgotten our unifying principles, and we are divided against ourselves by our own seriously flawed political culture. How can we expect newcomers to assimilate into our culture when we are not sure ourselves just what that should be? When our economy was strongest and our vision clearest, we did not need physical walls to protect us. But we have changed, and the world has changed.

Repeatedly throughout our history we have struggled with the consequences of immigration. But in the generation after WWII we hit our stride, and, empowered in large part by the children and grandchildren of immigrants, the United States experienced a rise in standard of living unprecedented in human history. Accompanying that ascent was a steady increase in life expectancy and interestingly, in IQ scores, fueling even greater prosperity. But beginning in the 1970s, IQ scores began to and continue to drop. Last year life expectancy declined for the first time in 25 years. Our students from grade school through high school do not compete well with the students of other industrialized nations.

There are competing theories about why this is happening, but we can all agree that something has changed. Many factors affect intelligence. Multiple studies have shown that malnutrition in early childhood leads to lower IQ scores and antisocial behavior later in life. There are environmental factors as well.

Now here's where the discussion gets uncomfortable, but we're going to suspend judgement until our thoughts are complete: Some anthropologists and demographers believe that immigration has been a contributing factor in the decline. At this point the discussion often goes off the rails when those who suffer from racism attempt to conflate immigration with lowering IQ and increasing crime to conclude that race or nationality is at fault. Of course they are wrong. Declining IQ scores and increasing crime rates are seen in every race and nationality where people suffer from malnourishment and a degraded environment, and over the last 30 years we have witnessed a significant increase in migration away from just such hardship. Also, many of our immigrants are among the most successful in school and business and score in the highest percentiles on intelligence and achievement tests.

The real challenge at the borders of developed nations is not immigration, but mass migration driven by hardship. The history of the world has many chapters on mass migration, and one people has displaced another many times over.

Today, there are approximately 1.4 billion people living on the African continent. That number is projected to grow to 4.2 billion by 2050. Africa has been plagued since the colonial era by war and famine. Millions of people have fled and are still fleeing repressive regimes, civil war, violence and hunger. A short distance from the African continent lies Europe, with its relatively small population and low birth rate. It is blessed with stable economies and governments, and is the nearest and most obvious destination for desperate people on the move. Observe closely what is happening there.

Add to the mix the mass migrations precipitated by the destruction of at least 8 nations in the greater middle east over the last 20 years, most recently in Syria, for reasons we still argue. And we've barely begun to factor in climate refugees and those fleeing natural disaster, now that we have populated every corner of the globe. Meanwhile in Latin America, thousands flee failed states, brutality and drug cartels on their way north to the currently most sought after asylum on the planet. The situation puts us in an awkward position, to say the least. We celebrate our immigrant heritage, but we are haunted by a history of volatility and violence that accompanied the process.

There are no easy answers. We need immigrants, and we like to see ourselves as the compassionate human beings depicted on the Statue of Liberty. But we are ill prepared for mass migration, and frankly, we are ill prepared to accommodate large numbers of people who have values that are the antithesis of our own. If you disagree, consider the history of Austria-Hungary or the failed state of Yugoslavia or even the Soviet Union - all nations where people of significant cultural, religious and social differences were forced to live together.

Consider also the volatility any time or place where the needs of a population exceeded the ability of its economy or resource base to provide for it. We have millions of people already here, many born here, who are living in poverty, malnourished, in polluted environments and unable to participate in the prosperity of their fellow citizens. It is reasonable to question the wisdom of adding too many more to those numbers when they are growing in spite of all our political solutions. Consider Puerto Rico if you believe we have done such a good job taking care of our own.

There are no perfect solutions, and any remedy will have to be based on compassion, but limited by the cold equations of simple math. Sadly, until the world improves, the math will indeed be chilling.

## The Middle Path

By: Don Perry

## No Maintenance? No problem

"If it were easy, everybody would be doing it." How many times have you heard that?

Thousands of dollars are spent annually to have designs drawn and created for what's called No Maintenance or Maintenance Free Lawns and Gardens. People, people, people.. I'll give it to you straight and it won't cost you one red cent. Do nothing. Yes, you read that correctly. Absolutely nothing.

Just ask George Washington. (A seance may be necessary.) He is said to have had No Maintenance Teeth. Being a general and fathering a country takes a huge amount of time, and sacrifices must be made. He was reduced to eating soft cherry pie and avoiding termites, but he heeded his patriotic duties. Teeth be Hoover dammed. Would George or I lie to you?

Try this at home. Let your nails go Maintenance Free. You may have a shot at deposing that Chinese guy who holds the record for having the world's longest fingernails. Eight inches of gnarling, discolored keratin extending from your fingertips. Your mama would be so proud.

Dr. Phil has taught us all that there are two sides to every coin. Doing no maintenance on your lawn will be oh so easy, but it may take a machete to get or from the front door to the curb. What does that matter when the challenge of avoiding tall weeds, poison ivy and lurking rodents, can provide such fun? If you can't locate your kids or pets in the overgrowth, just give a shout and follow their whines and whimpers. Hey, that could be fun too! An unattended lawn reverts to a chaotic mess. An unattended garden or forest reverts to a jungle. You can bet that when Elvis was eating those peanut butter and 'nanner sandwiches in the Jungle Room at Graceland, somebody was tending it. Now let's talk about Maintenance Free. IT DOES NOT EXIST! We all know that maintenance costs a bloody fortune. (Sorry, too many English Epics on TV.) We haven't broached the subject of Low Maintenance. That could go several ways. It could mean doing a half ash job of mowing, weeding, and fertilizing or it could mean working with Mother Nature by planting the right specimen in the right location and providing proper watering needs to a climate. A balanced blend of natives and introduced flora, that benefit from like conditions is important for peaceful coexistence. An enjoyable, healthy garden requires thoughtful, love, physical work and let's face it, M-O-N-E-Y.

This is only the beginning of my Hamilton Gardens soapbox. Shawn from the Towns County Herald has the hook in her hand and is nudging (pulling) me off stage. More next week. I'd like to start a dialogue with you. I've been told that publishing my email address is not smart. Well so what? Let me hear from you: dalegharmon@gmail.com I love Hamilton Gardens and know it can be an asset to our region. Thanks for reading.

**Dishin' Dirt**  
Dale Harmon



"After all these years, their ideas haven't aged a day!"

## Letters to The Editor

### The Price They Paid

Dear Editor,

Have you ever wondered what happened to the 56 men who signed the Declaration of Independence? What fates befell them for daring to put their names to that document?

Five signers were captured by the British as traitors and tortured before they died.

Twelve had their homes ransacked and burned.

Two lost their sons serving in the Revolutionary Army, another had two sons captured. Nine of the 56 fought and died from wounds or hardships of the Revolutionary War. They signed and pledged their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor. What kind of men were they?

Twenty-four were lawyers and jurists. Eleven were merchants, nine were farmers and large plantation owners. All were men of means and well-educated, but they signed the Declaration of Independence knowing full well that the penalty would be death if they were captured.

Carter Braxton of Virginia, a wealthy planter and trader, saw his ships swept from the seas by the British Navy. He sold his home and properties to pay his debts, and he died in rags.

Thomas McKean was so hounded by the British that he was forced to move his family almost constantly. He served in the Congress without pay, and his family was kept in hiding. His possessions were taken from him, and poverty was his reward.

Vandals or soldiers looted the properties of Ellery, Hall, Clymer, Walton, Gwinnett, Heyward, Rutledge and Middleton.

At the battle of Yorktown, Thomas Nelson Jr. noted that the British Gen. Cornwallis had taken over the Nelson home for his headquarters. He quietly urged Gen. George Washington to open fire. The home was destroyed, and Nelson died bankrupt.

Francis Lewis had his home and properties destroyed. The enemy jailed his wife, and she died within a few months.

John Hart was driven from his wife's bedside as she was dying. Their 13 children fled for their lives. His fields and his gristmill were laid to waste. For more than a year, he lived in forests and caves, returning home to find his wife dead and his children vanished. A few weeks later, he died from exhaustion and a broken heart.

Morris and Livingston suffered similar fates.

Such were the stories and sacrifices of the American Revolution. These were not wild-eyed, rabble-rousing ruffians. They were soft-spoken men of means and education. They had security, but they valued liberty more.

Standing tall, straight and unwavering, each of the 56 signers made the following Declaration: "With a firm reliance on the protection of divine providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor."

These men gave us a free and independent America. The history books never tell us much of what happened in the Revolutionary War. We were British subjects at that time, and we fought against our own government. Now, we too often take these liberties for granted.

So, while you are enjoying the festivities of the Fourth of July holiday, take a few moments and silently thank these patriots for their heroic contributions. It is not too much to ask for the price they paid. Remember: Freedom is never free!

- Author Unknown, Submitted by Anne Mitchell

## Towns County Community Calendar

	Every Monday:	
Bridge Players	All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
	Every Tuesday:	
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
	Every Wednesday	
SMART Recovery	Red Cross Building	7 pm
	Every Thursday:	
Bridge Players	All Saints Lutheran	12:30 pm
Free GED prep.	Old Rec. Center	4 pm
	Every Friday:	
Movers & Shakers	Sundance Grill	8 am
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
	Every Sunday:	
Alcoholics Anon.	Red Cross Building	7 pm
	First Monday of each month:	
Mtn. Amat. Radio	1298 Jack Dayton Cir.	6:30 pm
	First Tuesday of each month:	
Alzheimer's Supp.	McConnell Church	1:30 pm
American Legion	VFW Post 7807	4 pm
Hiaw. City Council	City Hall	6 pm
Young Harris Coun.	YH City Hall	7 pm
	First Wednesday of each month:	
Quilting Bee	McConnell Church	10 am
	First Thursday of each month:	
Stephens Lodge	Lodge Hall	7:30 pm
	Second Monday of each month:	
Chamber Board	1411 Jack Dayton Cir.	8 am
VFW	VFW Post	5 pm
Historical Society	Old Rec. Center	5:30 pm
Planning Comm.	Civic Center	7 pm
School Board	Auditorium	7 pm
Unicoy Masonic	Lodge Hall	7:30 pm
	Second Tuesday of each month:	
Gem & Mineral Club	Senior Center	1:30 pm
Arts & Crafts Guild	Calvary Church	4 pm
Lions Club	Daniel's Restaurant	6 pm
Mtn. Coin Club	N. GA Tech	6 pm
	Second Wednesday of each month:	
Basket Weavers	SC Fire Hall	10 am
	Second Thursday of each month:	
CVB Board	Rec Center	9 am
Awake America Prayer	Civic Center	Noon
Mtn. Comm. Seniors	Senior Center	1 pm
Democratic Party	Civic Center	6 pm
	Third Monday of each month:	
Hospital Auxiliary	Cafeteria	1:30 pm

Publication No: 635540

Advertising, News deadlines: Friday at 5 p.m.

Towns County (1 Year) \$25. Out of County (1 Year) \$30. Entered as second-class matter on November 8, 1928, at the post office at Hiawassee, Georgia under Act of March 3, 1879. With additional mailing points. The Towns County Herald is not responsible for errors in advertising beyond the cost of the actual space involved. All advertisements are accepted subject to the Publisher's approval of the copy and to the space being available, and the Publisher reserves the right to refuse any advertisement. Postmaster: Send change of address to: Towns County Herald, P.O. Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546.

Office located at: 518 N. Main St. Suite 7 "The Mall", Hiawassee  
Phone: (706) 896-4454 Fax: (706) 896-1745 Email: tcherald@windstream.net  
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## Towns County Herald

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