

J.W.J.

July 4 doesn't mean might is right

By J.W. JOHNSON

Few dates in history have cast so long a shadow as July 4, 1776...even though the actual signing of the Declaration of Independence took place July 3.

It was more than two centuries ago that our founding fathers and mothers gathered in Philadelphia to pledge their lives, fortunes and sacred honor to the fulfillment of a dream—a dream unrivaled in human history.

When those people gathered in Philadelphia, the planet was governed to a greater or lesser degree by the tyranny of man over man. Kings ruled with iron fists and hobnailed boots. Opportunity was the special province of the rich. Those born poor stayed that way, and none dared question the righteousness of the old order.

Those who gathered to the south of here had a different vision. A land of equal opportunity. A land where the governors worked for the governed, rather than the other way around. A land where the people would rule.

Today, that dream is in large part a reality. We live in the greatest, most free and most prosperous society on earth, or in the history of humankind.

It was once the custom for Americans to spend much of the holiday listening to a patriotic oratory. Today, not many of us do that, although it would bode well for our future if a child were to hear at least once Daniel Webster's eloquy about this nation from the play *The Devil and Daniel Webster*.

At the same time, and through the free flow of information and ideas, this nation must forever remain vigilant against the tyranny of 'might is right' and that the symbols of patriotism stand as means unto themselves.

As such, the First Amendment stands on its own merit as the single most important freedom we have. All other freedoms stem from the right of free expression.

And contrary to the beliefs of those who want to, for example, have a constitutional amendment to prohibit burning of the U.S. flag, the flag should not be the subject of worship as an idol, but rather should be approached as a symbol which represents our heritage. Respect for the flag cannot be legislated, but can only come about by citizens' understanding and appreciating that heritage.

"If the day comes when (citizens) refrain from desecrating it

only because of the law or some dimly remembered custom, it will have truly become an empty symbol," former President Richard Nixon has said.

Amen, ex-Mr. President! For me, the choice between the flag and the First Amendment is a clear one. The flag is a symbol of First Amendment principles. It would be a serious mistake to erode one of those principles in order to protect the symbol.

To have a flag burning amendment would be sort of like the tail wagging the dog.

Likewise, there has been no great rash of flag burnings, and the issue certainly isn't of the magnitude to warrant throwing the baby out with the bath water.

In any event, our forbears were smart enough to make it difficult for us to mess with our basic charter. Any proposed amendment must first be approved by two-thirds of both the House of Representatives and the Senate. Then it must be ratified by 38 state legislatures.

More to the point, such an amendment was defeated in the House of Representatives last year 254-117, or seven per cent short of the 66 per cent needed.

And it's not likely that, even if such an amendment were to pass the House and Senate, it would then pass citizen muster, particularly when citizens would come to realize that it would open the door to a further erosion of the individual liberties found in the Bill of Rights.

In short: leave the Bill of Rights alone. Thankfully the House has agreed.

At the same time, what about this symbol, this flag of ours? There is cause to be concerned about not only its worship as an idol, but also about its idle worship, particularly in the hands and minds of those who have no idea why its being waved?

Freedom symbolized by the flag is not present in the hot dogs we will eat July 4, nor can it be found in our browning in the summer sun, nor in our watching sports on television, nor in our gazing skyward to see man-made glories which go bump in the night.

Freedom is not a commodity for installment plan purchase, nor can it be found at summer auction or yard sales, and it can't even be inherited as a birthright.

Freedom is not present in any manner simply because we wish it to be so.

Freedom is not material. It is an

idea which requires nurturing and affirmation through the free flow of information and ideas. It needs an informed, involved citizenry to grow and remain vibrant. Freedom thrives with us as people through expressions of sentiment and desire, and in us as a nation through the ideal that all humans are created with liberty and justice for all.

Those words remain just words in the mouths of those who are idol (or idle) flag wavers—just as the flags which were waved during the recent Flag Day, and which will be waved on the upcoming July 4 holiday—will remain just pieces of cloth in the hands of those who wave them without knowing why.

And I wonder where all the flags were prior to Flag Day, or will be after July 4? Conversely, do the constant flag wavers leave reason to believe that we have learned little from the past when our flag waving "in the dawn's early light" was the only reason needed to go to war and snuff out lives?

Waving the flag is said to be symbolic of patriotism. It seems to me that patriotism (call it loyalty) should not mean blind submission to the flag or any other symbols. Independent thought, nurtured by the free press flow of information and ideas, is the cornerstone of this country. Loyalty is not a down-with-somebody placard written in haste to join the crowds on television, a knee-jerk reaction to often complicated issues.

It also seems to me that loyalty (call it patriotism) means a dedication and extension to others of the constitutional provisions of liberty and justice. Patriotism should mean more than the convenience of a bumper sticker flag.

And finally, it seems that patriotism-loyalty (call it citizenship) means taking the time to fully appreciate the responsibility of one's actions, and not taking for granted that the force historically implied in flying the flag is all there is, or all there should be.

Fly the flag, yes. But we ought to understand why.



BUSINESS ASSOCIATION FORMS - Members of the steering committee of the newly-formed Back Mountain Business and Professional Association gathered recently to plan a membership drive. From left, Monty Evans, chairman; Elva Valentine; Bart Slocum, treasurer; Nancy Eckert, Joseph Mooney. (Post photo/Ron Bartizek)

New business and professional association seeks members

With nearly 20 members already signed up, a new association for businesses and professionals is planning its first event, and working on a membership drive.

The newly-formed Back Mountain Business and Professional Association has been meeting to outline its purposes and direction. The steering committee for the organization has drawn up the following list of goals:

- Provide a directory and map of all member businesses and services located in the Back Mountain, to be distributed throughout the region.
- Provide a strong voice on issues that affect businesses in the Back Mountain.
- Sponsor mixers for members to provide a setting for them to get

to know others in the community. Encourage members to do business with one another.

- Coordinate special events and sales.
- Work to see that students and parents at College Misericordia and Penn State Wilke-Barre are aware of the range of products and services that are available to them.

The steering committee is assembling a mailing list of potential members who will be sent an application form. A one-year membership costs \$75. All business and professional people in the Back Mountain are invited to join.

A business card exchange and membership mixer is being planned for August 10 at the Pine Brook Inn. Members in good stand-

ing may attend at no charge, to learn more about the group, and to join in planning for the future.

Members of the steering committee are Fran Ochman, Tom Ochman Jewelry; Elva Valentine, Valentine's Jewelry; John Lloyd, Energy Converters; Joseph Mooney, Pine Brook Inn; Thomas and Melissa Quinn, Ye Olde Clock Shoppe; Ann Parkhurst, Bay Window Shoppe; Nancy Eckert, Le-with and Freeman Real Estate; Jim Richardson, L.L. Richardson Dodge; Ron Bartizek, The Dallas Post; and Cathy Mugford and JoAnn Campbell, Country Traditions.

Monty Evans is chairman of the organization; Bart Slocum is treasurer.

Back Mountain Business and Professional Association P.O. Box 25, Dallas, PA 18612

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Business name _____
 Address _____
 Phone _____ Contact Person _____
 Title _____
 Description of business _____

Please return this application with your check for \$75 to BMBPA

Bing Wolfe makes contact around the nation

Amateur Radio Operators "HAMS" operated from remote portable locations this past weekend. Hams from all over the United States and several other countries participated in field day. Locally, Amateur Radio Station WA3YYC Bing Wolfe from Dallas,

operated in the contest from a field near his home. Even though Hams are licensed by the FCC to use a maximum of 1500 Watts output power, WA3YYC operated in the lower power 5 Watt battery power QRP class.

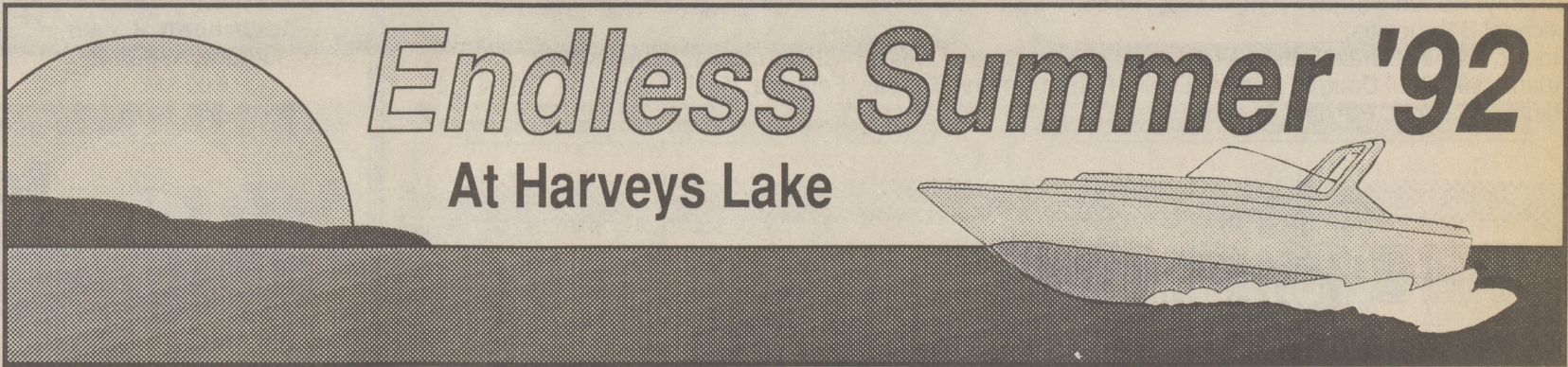
Wolfe contacted stations from

several states including North Dakota, Idaho, California and Arizona.

If you are interested in becoming an Amateur Radio Operator contact: WA3YYC, Bing Wolfe, RR 4, Box 308B, Dallas, PA 18612.

Endless Summer '92

At Harveys Lake



Newspaper office will be closed Friday, July 3

The office of The Dallas Post will be closed all day Friday, July 3 in honor of the Independence Day holiday. Routine news items, and calendar listings should be received by 3:00 p.m. Thursday. Late news items may be left in the mail slot at the front of the building, or dropped off Monday morning. The office will re-open Monday, July 6 at 8:30 a.m.

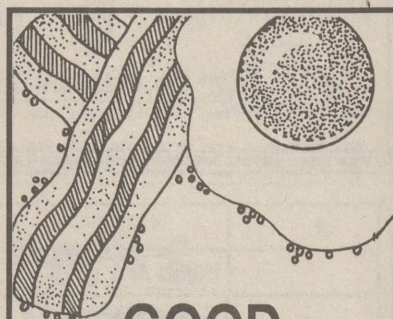
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SPECIAL EVENTS

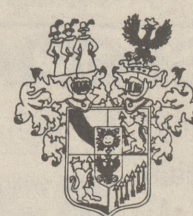
Roberts Bros. 3-ring circus

Fri., July 3
 Shows at 5:30 and 7:30 p.m.

at Hanson's Amusement Park Campground

Ricky Van Shelton plus Marty Stuart

Thurs., July 9
 Bud Light Amphitheater at Harveys Lake



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