

The Dallas Post

EDITORIALS

Personal freedom isn't all we celebrate

Monday is Independence Day, the date Americans celebrate adoption of the Declaration of Independence in 1776. That document and the Constitution still stand as milestones in human history, and the bedrock upon which rests the world's longest-running democratic society.

Frequently missing from July 4th observances is any recognition that the Founding Fathers created a new nation, not an ad hoc collection of individuals. An emphasis on purely personal freedom lacks understanding of how important cooperation is to the advancement of our common goals. Too often, powerful, narrow interests fearing loss of their own privileges have stifled ideas that would ultimately benefit the vast majority of citizens. Health care is a current example. Who among us but the most ardent Calvinist conservatives would deny that adequate basic health care at an affordable price shouldn't be available to all Americans? But there is massive opposition from individuals and groups who feel their ability to profit from present inequities will be lost under reform, and care little for any principle of public good.

So, celebrate your freedom this Independence Day, but remember that it flows not only from individual action but from the consensus of those delegates to the Second Continental Congress who together reasoned that 13 independent colonies could not sustain a war or a peace, but needed the resources and will of all parties to attain victory. So it is today; America's strength flows not only from selfishness but from selflessness as well.

Publisher's notebook

Ron Bartizek



I never met O.J. Simpson, and followed his career only sporadically. I try not to grant celebrities special access to my thoughts or emotions, having learned that they're made of the same stuff as the rest of us, only with some special talent and the connections that put them in the limelight. Mention the name of a movie star and I'll usually return a blank stare. Why, then, has the murder of Nicole Simpson and O.J.'s arrest so touched me and millions of other Americans?

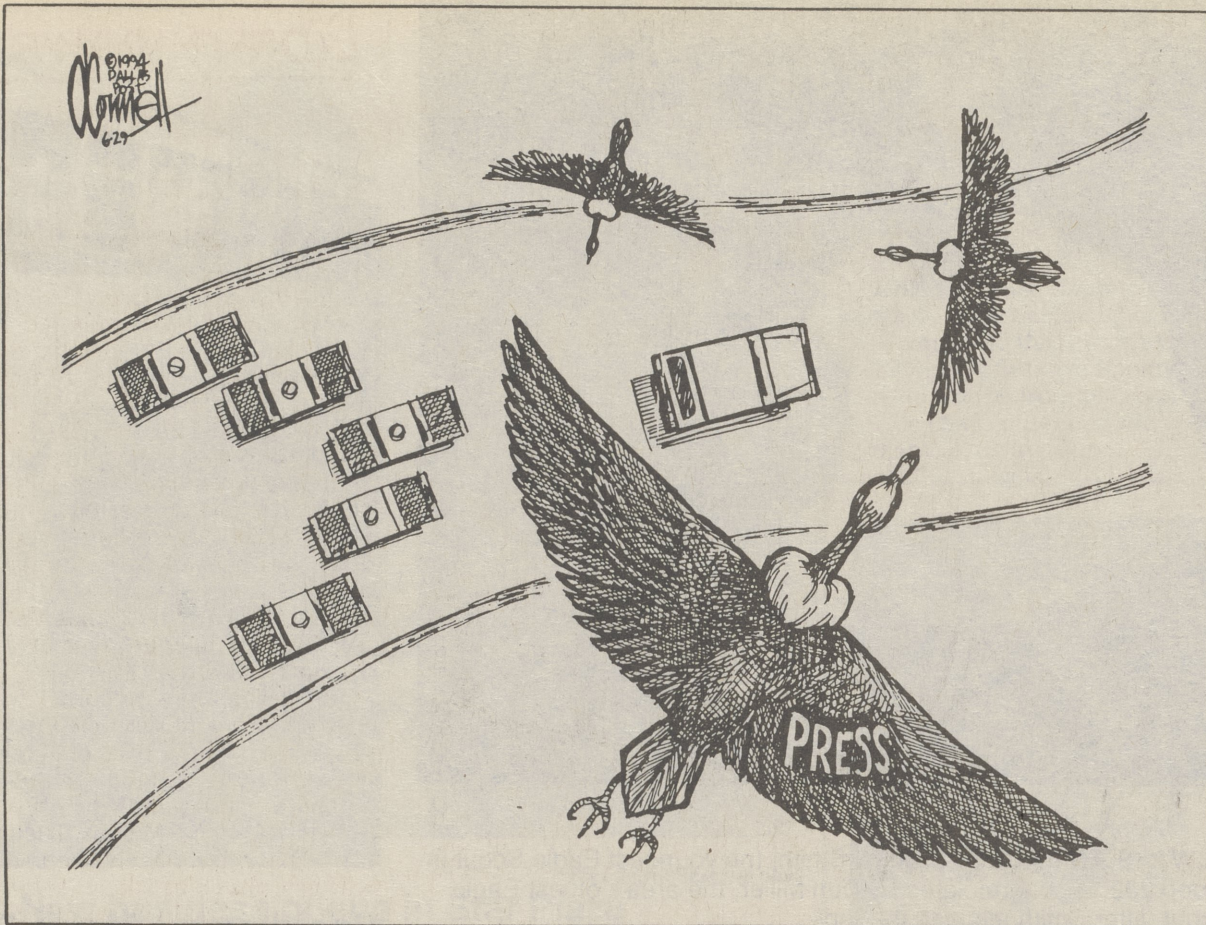
Television is part of the reason. I watched the entire "chase" on live TV, as a phalanx of police cars trailed the white Bronco motoring leisurely along California's freeways, on its way to a dramatic climax of one sort or another. I stayed with the coverage for 15 or 20 minutes after the car pulled into the driveway of Simpson's Brentwood mansion and negotiations to get him out of the car alive began. There's no denying it was great TV, and the type of event at which the medium is unmatched. I was equal to any \$5 million network anchor, and often ahead of them as they stretched to say anything as compelling as the live video, and failed. Switching from CNN to ABC, NBC, ESPN and back again, I had information before Peter Jennings or Tom Brokaw, and could easily tune out the soporific pronouncements of pop psychologists (and Barbara Wawa) marshaled for the occasion.

But there must be more. Is it that O.J. and I are contemporaries, born the same year, his college time corresponding to mine, bits and pieces of his career flashing on the screen as my own life progressed? Maybe that's a little of it.

Then there's the contrast — of an ever-gracious O.J. scoring touchdowns, sprinting to rental cars and talking into the microphone, sandwiched between his cohorts in the broadcast booth — with the now-ubiquitous O.J. of the drawn features, desperate words and record of spouse abuse. We saw the commercial O.J., the promotional O.J., the packaged O.J., who transformed a difficult childhood into smooth success, with homes on each coast, frequent travel and the adulation of millions. Also, of course, there was Nicole, the stunningly attractive, loving wife, and the two beautiful children.

The latest media rage is finding the "real O.J. Simpson." Is he the gregarious friend or the brutal, possessive husband? The answer is both, neither and a lot more. As with most anyone, the side acquaintances see is only one part of a complex personality, and the one we want to display. Each of us is full of good and bad qualities in different measure. That's the point, I think — that we recognize some of ourselves in O.J. and Nicole Simpson, and it scares us to think that we have some of the traits that can lead to tragedy, which is sometimes separated from joy by a narrower margin than we're comfortable with.

The story of O.J. Simpson's rise and fall has been characterized in Shakespearean terms. I believe that's accurate, and if you throw in the high drama of live television coverage, it becomes a spectacle unmatched in recent memory. What remains to be seen is how far the descent will be, and whether or not any good can come of it all. On that, the jury is still out.



As I was saying



Jack Hilsher

Things you never knew 'til you saw them here...a batch of goodies which individually would never fill a column, but collectively...enjoy:

• **MINOLTA** - If you think this company's founder was named Hirosha Minolta you'd be dead wrong. The founder's name was actually Kazuo Tashima and "Minolta" is an amalgam composed of: (M)achinery and (I)struments (O)ptical(L) by (T)ashima. Inscrutable they were, but clever too.

• **FOURTH ESTATE** - You'll never guess where this springs from. During the French Revolution the press was called the Fourth Estate because it was considered as powerful as the other three: the nobility, the commoners and the Church. Today, sadly, it is only a part of the powerful "media."

J.W.J.



John 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. Regardless of the true date, we will once again celebrate the occasion some 24 days from now.

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 about three hours 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 patriotic oratory. Today, not many of us do that, although it would bode well for our future if a child were to

The names you know; here's how they got them

• **JAMES FRANKLIN** - Yep, Ben's older brother, a real loser. In Boston in 1722 James was jailed for sarcasm in his New England Courant about how slowly the government acted in chasing private ships. The following year the government shut him down entirely. James should only see what is published today.

• **HOOKER** - Not basketball, but those ladies of the evening said to be operating on Wilkes-Barre's South Franklin Street. ("South Franklin" Good heavens!) The term has been traced to General Joseph ("Fighting Joe") Hooker in the Civil War. As a morale booster the General was said to have allowed prosties to mingle with his troops in camp. They became known as "Hooker's Girls" and when a Washington district was allowed to have brothels it was called "Hooker's Division" and the inhabitants were of course called "hookers." (Aren't you beginning to feel the least bit educated?)

• **NATIVE AMERICAN NAMES** - They aren't called Indians anymore, and rightly so. But they had a flair for names unequalled by any race anywhere in the world. From the tribes of Pawnees, Arapahos, Sioux, Crows, Blackfeet and Cheyennes, savor these ac-

tual Native American Names: Jumping Calf, Long Otter, Blood-On-His Moccasin, Rising Hawk, Far-Away-Storm, Gray Owl, Stone Maker and Lame Fox.

• **FAITH POPCORN** - This is my special favorite. Faith heads up her own firm in NYC called "Brain Reserve." They call themselves spotters of leading trends, and for a fee, probably quite plump, they will tell you what is going to be "in" and before it is "in." The idea being if you made and sold something and you knew what fads would be widely popular, you could act accordingly, cash in and be way ahead of your competition.

Ms. Popcorn made an impressive impact at marketing seminars. No makeup, shag haircut, casual outfit tied with rope belt, she always puts males in her audience into a deep trance. Her name, however, remained a mystery until my patient research paid off. Many years ago her Italian grandfather named "Corne" was called "Poppa" by everyone in his village. When immigrant Corne arrived in this country, he was asked his name at Ellis Island. His reply made sense to him: "Poppa Corne," and Faith's new name was born!

Before you burn it, know what Old Glory stands for

hear at least once Daniel Webster's soliloquy 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 we refrain from desecrating it only because it's against the law to do so, will mean that it has become the emptiest of symbols.

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.

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.

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.

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 it's 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 equal 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 or cloth in the hands of those who wave them without knowing why.

Only yesterday

60 Years Ago - July 6, 1934 BORO DEFAULTS ON BOND PAYMENTS

For the first time in its history and closely following the announcement of a gift of \$4,500 from the State to meet teachers' salaries, Dallas Borough School District defaulted in meeting \$2,400 worth of its bonds and interest presented for payment, June 30 at First National Bank of Dallas.

Rural Building and Loan Association is offering stock in the second series of the association starting at a meeting to be held at Dallas National Bank. This association was started to aid homeowners and the development of Dallas, Shavertown, Trucksville and other nearby territories.

You could get - Veal rump, 19¢ lb.; round steak, 29¢ lb.; watermelons, 45¢ ea.; bananas, doz. 19¢; Brillo, 2 pkgs. 13¢.

50 Years Ago - June 30, 1944 AREASAW MILL HELPS IN PAPER SHORTAGE

With the greater part of their goal of \$50,000 in War Bonds already achieved, Dallas Woman's Club will keep its booth open in the Post Office one more week, the drive ending July 8.

Two carloads of pulpwood a week are being shipped from the local freight station by Ruggles Lumber Co. to the Armstrong Forest Product Co. at Lock Haven to help relieve the acute paper shortage.

Alfred Bronson of Sweet Valley, puzzled by the slaughter of 30 of his full-grown Rhode Island Reds, discovered the cause Monday night when he caught the marauder, a large horned owl, in the act of beating one of his finest birds to death.

40 Years Ago - July 2, 1954 ROBBERS HIT GAS STATION, TAKE OFF

Two armed robbers in a 1949 cream-colored Mercury robbed Andy Denimon's service station, Main Highway, Trucksville, Wednesday morning, getting \$35. At gun point they forced the night attendant into the back of the car, heading for Luzerne. Foiled of robbing the Atlantic Station in Luzerne by seeing a car drive up for service, they made a quick getaway but not before the night attendant had taken their number.

Establishment of a State Mental Hospital in the Back Mountain Region for the rehabilitation of 1,500 to 2,500 patients moved a step nearer realization with the announcement that between 3,500-4,000 acres of the best farm lands in Jackson Township are now under option. The options have been obtained over a two month period for the General State Authority by John M. Hewitt, Lehman Twp.

30 Years Ago - July 2, 1964 BIDS LET FOR NEW POST OFFICE AT LAKE

Forbes-Morrison Corp., Rochester, NY, is low bidder for the construction of the new post office at Harveys Lake, according to a telegram received from Congressman Dan Flood. The site is located on Rte. 415 between Queen of Peace Road and West Point Avenue.

Mrs. Pillar to Post (Mrs. T.M.B. Hicks), will attend the Annual International Conference of Weekly Newspaper Editors at Southern Illinois University July 12-17. The invitation comes as a salute to an editorial written at the time of the assassination of Pres. John F. Kennedy which rated a prominent position in Grassroots Editor Magazine.

Two major events of the summer season in the Back Mountain are scheduled for this weekend and next. Lehman Horse Show adds an evening to its regular program starting tonight. Back Mountain Memorial Library dates are July 9, 10 and 11 to be held in the Risley Barnyard.

20 Years Ago - July 3, 1974 VANDALS HIT LITTLE LEAGUE FIELD

Last Tuesday in the early evening, someone broke into the concession stand at the Little League field adjacent to Dallas Township Elementary School. Vandals forced open a steel door, then tore out cinder blocks out of the wall to get into the main concession stand. Once inside they ripped shelves off the wall, scattered candy all over the floor, opened the refrigerator, ripped the pay phone off the wall and turned on the soda dispensers and let the soda run all over the candy.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Gosart Sr., Shavertown, celebrated their 58th wedding anniversary on June 26. The couple has two sons, 4 grandchildren and one great grandchild.

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Joan, why haven't you written?

Let the Back Mountain know what you think by writing a letter to the editor. Always include your name, address and a daytime phone number; we don't publish anonymous letters. Send letters to: The Dallas Post, P.O. Box 366, Dallas, PA 18612