

Fourth of July facts and local goings on

On this 238th "birthday of America" it seems fitting to remember just what we are celebrating this July 4. It also seems timely for a few thoughts and comments about the origin of this national holiday. That said, we would be remiss not to also chronicle a few contemporary musings about people and things along the Western Main Line.

We all know that the Fourth of July is also honored as Independence Day. It's an observance of national importance, to be sure. The parades, the bands, the patriotic music and speeches, the flags and, of course, the fireworks tell us so. As if that weren't enough to signify the stature of this most special day, there are the grilled hamburgers and hot dogs, mom's potato salad, ice cold beverages and ice cream and cakes of all flavors iced in red, white and blue to accent the moment. And the holiday is also about fun, just like any birthday party should be.

When this nation's founding fathers met to draft their dramatic declaration that is the reason for our revelry, fun was far from their minds. The firebrand that sparked this 1,337-word statement of separation was about human dignity and rights and freedom. Sure, you say, any fourth grader knows that, right? (Which begs the question of how many of those words that crafted an infant nation do you remember NOW that you are no longer a fourth grader!) Back in the day, if you were like me, you were made to memorize and recite on call those passionate natal words: "When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature, and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation."

And if you remember nothing else about the long litany of charges against the English Crown that were itemized by Thomas Jefferson, and the act of separation signed to by 55 other members of the Thirteen United States of America, hopefully you recall: "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." In essence, this is what July 4th is about. So take time today, amidst the frivolity and the fireworks, to give thanks for the vision and the courage of those man who gathered in Philadelphia 238 years ago.

RAY
HOFFMAN



MAIN LINE BANTER

Shortcuts around town

A T&E Care School Supply Drive is underway. Collections will be received from July 14-July 28. Drop-off locations are posted on the organization's web site: tecare.org. According to Sandi Gorman, the group's founder, at least 200 students will be on the "needs" list. Sorting of the donated items will take place on August 1 at Conestoga High, and volunteers are needed for preparing and distributing the bags of supplies. Residents are also invited to donate \$25 gift cards if they will be on vacation during this time, or have no supplies to give.