

Community Comment
July 3, 2015
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~~Our National Birthday~~

The Fourth of July is a Party. North Coast communities celebrate it with gusto. It will be a day of fun and food and music and end with a fireworks display that will fill the night sky with noise and color. This is the day we celebrate the Declaration of Independence, July Fourth, 1776.

This was the beginning of our country. Our country and our constitution would be established some years later. We had a war to fight and win. This was a war we shouldn't have won but we did. And then these colonies had to come together and establish a government. Thomas Jefferson wrote a brilliant Declaration of Independence that we all should read and re-read every now and then. It gave the foundation of why we should be a country of and to ourselves. The drafting of a Constitution was a far different task. This was a work in principles and compromise. Good will and common cause was needed to reach an agreement among a very diverse group of people representing very different social and economic interests. Establishing our Independence, winning a war against the greatest superpower on Earth at the time, and creating a government that put the people in charge of their destiny occurred despite the odds against us. We should reflect on this day and realize how uncommon our history is and how well, despite it's flaws, our government works.

This last week demonstrated some of the best in this government that was born of the people, by the people, and for the people. We, the people have to tend to this government. The week started in tragedy with the killing of nine people in a church during a bible study session. The killer was a white man and all the victims were black. It seems apparent that the shooting was racially motivated. There was no other obvious motive or reason. Out of this senseless and shocking event, an opportunity was created for a President to comment; and comment he did. The eulogy President Obama gave was perhaps the best speech of his term in office. Like him or not, if you listen to the words, it is a reminder of the spirit and greatness of our collective and diverse people. It is also a call to remember who we are, how we got here, and the work that still needs to be done. We are, after all, seeking a more perfect union.

We are finally on the brink of putting the Confederate Flag and the Battle Flag where they belong; in a history museum. They do not represent anything of the present. They are symbols of traitors attempting to separate the country, a hard fought civil war at a terrible cost, and a generous reconciliation.

We also saw one branch of our government at work on an important issue . While the ruling on same sex marriage is seen by some as a victory for gays and lesbians; it is really a victory for all of us. It is a statement about our individual civil rights. This simply

affirms that the state allowed contract of marriage is open for two people and all the benefits that apply.

After all, we declared that all men, and women, are created equal. And we celebrate this on the Fourth of July. Have a great Fourth.

This has been Sam Pennisi for community comment.