

NEWS



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06-29-11 THIS WEEK IN ORANGE COUNTY BY EDWARD A. DIANA

This weekend we begin the celebration of our nation's birth – the Fourth of July! Americans across the country will enjoy time with family, barbecues, parades, and fireworks to mark the momentous occasion when our forefathers declared their independence on July 4, 1776. On that day, 235 years ago, 56 representatives in General Congress declared “that these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States ...”

Less than 1,500 words in length, this incredible document drafted by Thomas Jefferson, laid a strong and enduring foundation for our nation. It is a foundation on which our ideals and our individual liberties continue to stand today, more than two centuries later.

In recognition of Independence Day, I'd like to share with you the opening of this Declaration which we take for granted today, but makes us the nation and the people that we are today.

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.

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.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.--Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States.

As we all know, the Declaration was not the end, but rather the beginning and Orange County played an important role in the ensuing American Revolution. Take a look at the Historian's calendar on the County website at www.orangecountygov.com for some great events over the holiday weekend that commemorate our region's role in the war, including a cannon firing at Fort Montgomery and a special flag raising at Washington's Headquarters in Newburgh.

Happy Independence Day! Until next week, wishing you good health and happiness.

Edward A. Diana
County Executive