

KeyOpinion



Waving the flag — independence, part II

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Following are living and real comments of those suffering from enemies of independence on Longboat Key and more:

Friend's story No. 1: "I can remember as a child when the Germans were invading my homeland that I would cry myself to sleep at night. I was very afraid, and I would pray myself to sleep asking God to have the American soldiers come and rescue me and my family." Our friend had real fear, real tears, and the loss of independence was real.

Friend's story No. 2: "Being a survivor of Hitler's regime, I thank God each and every day for our sacred Constitution, and am most grateful every time it's brought to arrest the forcing of policies by a few to the unquestionable will of the majority. I for one welcome the bringing up of the Constitution any time and for any legitimate reason when the will of the majority are at risk, as it certainly has been proven over and over in our present issues. In the past my comments have been anonymous, but the comment about our constitution revived some horrible memories, which had to be expressed, and I am proud to sign."

These friends teaching us the reality of the loss of liberty, bring tears to our eyes each time we think of them — regardless of the number of times we look back at these messages. Liberty is real, as is the loss of liberty. To regain liberty once lost requires more than fighting to keep the liberty.

The attack on the Pentagon, the World Trade Center, and the thwarted attack on the White House killed nearly 3,000 on United States soil. According to the CIA, Al Qaeda or affiliated groups are operating in 68 countries worldwide. Reports indicate the same group has been responsible for bombings at the Olympics, United States embassies, a previous bombing at the Trade Center, the beheadings of many journalists and the murdering of women in Afghanistan.

The recognition of independence must include the fact there are those opposing the liberties we cherish. Cherish — yes! Apathetic? Sometimes. Society shows apathy and sometimes fears to stand up and be counted. The draft of the Declaration of Independence is in the handwriting of an individual — no, a common individual.

As common as any of us. Those individuals signing the document and many others were common ordinary individuals willing, no — "committed to" accomplishing extraordinary deeds. They did it for themselves — they did it for you and me. The enemies of liberty come in many forms. Some are deceptively disguised. When there are warriors fighting abroad, their honor must be fought for in the homeland. Do not let the disguise of enemies of liberty legislate our liberties away from any individual.

"What I fear the most is that I become like or assimilate the character of my enemy. My greatest concern is that when I fight injustice, I might use injustice to win that fight. When one fights deception and diversion with honesty and openness — not falling prey to the use of tools of the enemy — one finds the victory, although difficult to obtain in not only the results but also the means. Empty promises and language distract from what is real, and shall be used against one's best thinking, reasoning and sense of reality. No — more than used against common senses, it will be used to seduce senses of reality."

-Bob Parrish, July 2008

Although we wave the flag of the United States of America — the symbol represents not the Central government, the symbol represents the restrictions on the government, the protection of the liberties, the protections of those "inalienable rights" and the doctrine of a government that monitors itself to protect those liberties as written in the Federalist Paper No. 51:

"To what expedient, then, shall we finally resort, for maintaining in practice the necessary partition of power among the several departments, as laid down in the Constitution? The only answer that can be given is, that as all these exterior provisions are found to be inadequate, the defect must be supplied, by so contriving the interior structure of the government as that its several constituent parts may, by their mutual relations, be the means of keeping each other in their proper places."

-The Federalist Paper No. 51

"If all mankind minus one were of one opinion, and only one person were of a contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing all mankind. We can never be sure that the opinion we are endeavoring to stifle is false opinion. And even if we were sure, stifling it would still be evil." *-John Stuart Mill*

The flag of the United States of America has been waved many times, and has been used in many ways.

Below are the comments of former CMC of USS Cole, James Parlier, as put out over AFN TV and Radio on behalf of the crew, a USS Cole one-year anniversary statement:

Since one year ago Oct. 12, 2000, many events have transpired that not only have effected our military but now our nation, since the tragedy on Sept. 11, 2001, it is as if the Cole bombing was a prelude to current events.

One thing that stands out with a common strength is the U.S. flag and what it stands for and how our military and nation has come together to support each other.

That day we were faced with tremendous odds, a 60 foot hole in the ship, dead and wounded shipmates — but this crew would continue to deny the terrorist the victory they sought that day. We also knew that without a shadow of a doubt that this crew was up to the task of getting USS Cole home. We never changed course from our objectives.

For us, the flag had come to symbolize what we stood for as Americans. Our shipmates were covered by it as they left USS Cole for their journey home, and during the next eight days, that American flag, the battle ensign, served as our source of inspiration. We slept under it each night and awoke to it each new day. It flew as a proud symbol of our determination (determined warriors) to not let what happened to us diminish our spirits and we weren't about to do anything that might portray us as weak or unwilling to stay the course."

We must fight also stop giving away the U.S.A. independence. Think about what countries our money is sent to, we trade with, we lose our jobs to. Think about foreign countries (sovereign funds) buying our industries. Think about the same money controlling the commodities, stocks, and bonds markets.

"Let us remember, then, in the first place, that political institutions (however the proposition may be at times ignored) are the work of men; owe their origin and their whole existence to human will." *-John Stuart Mill "Representative Government," 1861.*

Mary and I live on Longboat with pride — not because of the amenities, nor the status. Nor does having our names on a brass plaque next to many successful names foster pride. The pride is fostered by what all of our friends stand for...

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of Marco Island would be looking at a \$1.8 million loss in tax revenues due to the \$1 billion decrease in total taxable values, according to records. Officials say that the city may have to consider a higher millage rate as well as decreasing services.

Pompano closing city pools

In Pompano Beach, the city had property values falling 6.5 percent from 2006 to 2007. This year, the numbers are expected to decrease even more. City officials are expecting to consider a decline in services, including closing city pools and community centers on some days, to offset the estimated budget shortfall of \$6.3 million.

Longboat to decide

At the 1 p.m. budget workshop and at the 7 p.m. regular commission meeting on Monday, July 7, the Town Commission will set the maximum millage rate. After the maximum millage rate is set, the commission can decide to lower the rate before adopting the budget in September, but it cannot raise it any further. But before the rate is set Monday, commissioners will decide what cuts and budgetary measures must be taken to help balance the budget.

This year marks the first time in six years that the town of Longboat Key may face having to increase the millage rate

due to the reduction in property valuations low property valuations. Every year for the past six years, the town has lowered or maintained millage rates, giving the taxpayers financial relief. The millage rate in 2007-08 was 1.4062, and in 2006-07 the millage rate was 1.4175. The property values for Sarasota County decreased from 2007 values of \$4,732,518,406 to 2008 values of \$4,236,364,578. The property values for Manatee County decreased from 2007 values of \$1,874,290,960 to 2008 values of \$1,718,513,521.

Budget re-arranging

Town Manager Bruce St. Denis and town Finance Director Tom Kelley have determined a few ways to reduce the budget deficit through which they will present to the Town Commission at the July 7 workshop. The number crunching involves reducing the budget deficit by \$600,000 by rolling over the the Commission Contingency Fund (which is currently an expenditure line item). Kelley writes:

"In the past the Commission Contingency account was budgeted by computing the percentage of the operating budget that the Commission thought would be needed in the next fiscal year and appropriate it to the account line. This resulted in new tax revenues being generated to cover this appropriated expenditure... Since the town has a more than adequate fund balance based on the size of the operating budget there

is no reason to continue to budget the Commission Contingency account as was done in the past."

Kelley recommends placing it in an account called Prior Year Surplus, which he writes is on the revenue side, for the same amount of money. As Kelley states in his memo to commissioners, "What this does is allow the Commission to access the Contingency account with a workshop and one meeting without having to raise new revenues to cover it. The unreserved fund balance remains the same until such time as an actual expenditure is made."

Kelley proposes that another reduction in the deficit could be made by loaning the Police and Fire Pension Plans (which are having money withheld by the State) money from the General Fund. Loaning the pension plans money would reduce the budget deficit by \$367,000 according to Kelley. Kelley explains in his memo to commissioners that loans do not register as expenditures because it is a balance sheet transaction, and "where a 'receivable' is debited in the lending fund and a 'payable' is credited in the borrowing fund. There would be no effect on the reserve balance of either fund." Kelley adds, "As long as the loans (pension) are repaid in a reasonable time there will be no affect on the reserve balances."

The pension plans show a loss because the pension investments of the early 2000s started to lose money in the stock market. The town's actuary has deter-

mined the best way to make up for the investment loss would be to take a 30-year repayment to the pension plans. The State of Florida's actuary department has a problem with the town's 30-year repayment plan, and is requiring the town repay the pension loss within seven years instead. To pay back the State within seven years would create an immediate deficit in the town's budget of an additional \$1.4 million. Since the town is contesting the State's decision, the State is withholding the pension monies until the issue is resolved. The town has its own actuaries that stand by the 30-year repayment plan, and has hired attorneys to defend its position, but until the State agrees with the town, the monies from the pension plan will be withheld.

Budget worries cause picketing

The \$1.5 million budget deficit is causing many residents and groups to speak out regarding how they feel the deficit should be reconciled.

Beverly Shapiro, President of Longboat Key's Public Interest Committee (PIC) wrote an email to the Town Commission in the beginning of June stating their position to consider eliminating some of the funding for employee retirement and benefit packages. Shapiro wrote, "PIC believes that the town should no longer fully fund employee health and retirement plans. Written agreements covering packages for certain employees should, of

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