

Family

Does the Declaration define ideals?

It's the beginning of the Fourth of July weekend. This means cook-outs and fireworks, and maybe even a day off from work. And in the midst of our good times we also remember and celebrate the day in 1776 the Continental Congress, meeting in Philadelphia, ratified a document declaring that the thirteen British colonies lying between Canada and Florida were now independent from British rule. They were from that date forward to be considered the United States of America. Sunday is the 234th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

Many look to the Declaration of Independence not only as a political document, but also a statement of this country's philosophical ideals and its Christian identity. But is it really either of these?

It is certainly a political document. The purpose of the Declaration was to let Great Britain and the rest of the world know that these thirteen colonies were now free of British rule and were an independent nation, to be known as the United States of America. It laid before the world the new nation's justification for declaring itself free from the British crown.

The document itself was really a foreign policy statement that intended to secure a place for this new nation in the international community of nations. In fact, it was discussed more abroad than here at home. Thomas Jefferson, the primary author of the Declaration, wrote in a letter that the object of the Declaration of Independence was "an appeal to the tribunal of the world" to justify their resorting to arms to secure their freedom from Britain.

Much has been made of the Declaration's assertion "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." This was not a new idea, but was a fundamental principle in 18th century Enlightenment thinking.



Carol Rahn

• From the Pulpit

In the same 1825 letter Jefferson states that the document was "Not to find out new principles or new arguments, never before thought of ... but to place before mankind the common sense of the subject ... and to justify the independent stand we are compelled to take." While the signers of the Declaration certainly upheld these ideals, they were not unheard of and unique to the new nation.

There are also claims of the Declaration of Independence being a Christian document. God is mentioned four times, Jesus not at all. The first reference to God is in the first sentence. "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..." The term "Nature's God" was used by 18th Deists (believers in God, but not necessarily in the divinity of Jesus) to describe the God who created and continued to manage the created, natural world. Thomas Jefferson was such a man. He re-wrote the Bible to include the teachings of Jesus, but not his miracles. Jefferson's Bible tells of the crucifixion, but not the resurrection.

The next reference to God, "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 ..." was added by Benjamin Franklin, who wanted to affirm that the asserted rights had their origin

in God. Franklin, like Jefferson, considered himself to be a Deist rather than a Christian.

The final two references to God appear in the last paragraph, which begins, "We, therefore, the representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world..." These words were added on the floor of the Congress after Jefferson presented his original document to them. This does acknowledge a God who will ultimately judge humankind for its actions, but does not explicitly place Christ in that scenario. The Supreme Judge is not identified as a uniquely Christian God.

The last reference concludes the document. "... (With a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor." This affirmed Congress' belief that God will watch over the new nation and protect it during the time of uncertainty, and in all probability, of war.

The Declaration of Independence certainly affirms a God who is Creator, Judge and Protector, but it never mentions Jesus Christ, nor does it quote from Scripture. One could not say that it is uniquely Christian, but it certainly shows a faith in a present and active Deity. If nothing else, it can be said with certainty that those who wrote and ratified the Declaration of Independence, did affirm a God who is the Author and Creator of human rights, who presides providentially over the world, and who will one day judge humankind.

We, as a nation, are blessed that these brave men took the stand they did, risking their lives to proclaim publicly what they believed and who laid a foundation for a country that still today affirms freedom and liberty as God-given rights for all people. May it always be so.

Carol Rahn is pastor of Colby's First Presbyterian Church.



Wight and Lillian Sims

Couple to celebrate 65 years at open house

Wight and Lillian Sims of Oakley and have lived their entire married life in the area.

They are the parents of Lana Etling of Firth, Linda Sims of Des Moines, William Sims of Lawrence, Joyce Young of Austin, Texas, and Brett Sims of Houston. They have eight grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Second Lt. Sims and Lillian Rhea were married June 3, 1945, in Colby. The couple raised their children on their

Senior Progress Center

The Senior Progress Center will be closed on Monday to celebrate Independence Day. There will be no meals or transportation.

Activities for the week: **Monday:** closed. **Tuesday:** 10 a.m., exercise; 11 a.m. to noon, Health Department; board meeting after lunch. **Wednesday:** 11 a.m., root beer floats. **Thursday:** 10 a.m., exercise; 10:30 a.m., pinochle

game. **Friday:** 10 a.m., exercise; 10:30 a.m., shuffle board.

Menus for the week: **Tuesday:** Salisbury steak, mashed potatoes/gravy, mixed vegetables, bread, peaches. **Wednesday:** macaroni and cheese with smokies, winter mix vegetables, strawberry mold salad, bread, choice complement. **Thursday:** oven-fried chicken, mashed potatoes/gravy, corn,

bread, fruit cup. **Friday:** tuna salad, stewed tomatoes, cantaloupe, bun, blueberry dessert squares.

The Thomas County Nutrition Center invites anyone 60 and older and guests to lunch Monday through Friday at the senior center. Home delivery is available, as is pick-up service. A contribution of \$2.75 per meal is suggested for

seniors, \$5 for others. For anyone under 60, home delivery is \$5.75.

Make reservations at (784) 460-2901 by noon the day before.

Jersey doesn't stink, says site

TRENTON, N.J. (AP) – Tired of boorish comments and jokes about New Jersey, residents and business people have created a website to express their Garden State pride.

The site – JerseyDoesntStink.com – is designed to rally those who are tired of the putdowns about pollution, wisecracks about wise guys, and cheap shots about corruption. With companion Fa-

cebook and Twitter pages, state residents can sound off online in defense of their home state.

Corrections

The Colby Free Press wants to maintain an accurate record of our town. Please report any error or lack of clarity in a news story to us at 462-3963.

Vap's Family Fireworks

The Stand With The Flag Painted on it

1655 E. 4th Street
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Friendly Knowledgeable

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Markets

Quotes as of close of previous business day
Hi-Plains Co-op

Wheat (bushel)	\$3.60
Corn (bushel)	\$3.06
Milo (hundredweight)	\$5.00
Soybeans (bushel)	\$8.47

Please Recycle

MOVIES

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July 2nd - July 8th

THE TWILIGHT SAGA:
ECLIPSE

Genre(s): Drama/Romance/
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PG-13 2 Hours, 4 Minutes
Friday & Saturday 7:00 & 9:30
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Genre(s): Adventure/Comedy
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G 1 Hour, 43 Minutes
Friday & Saturday 7:00 & 9:00
Sunday -Thursday 7:00

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Night and Day
Grown Ups
The Karate Kid

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LET'S GO TO THE MOVIES!

Thank You

As we come to the end of our fiscal grant year, Wings Upon the Prairie, Inc. would like to take this time to share a little bit about our organization. We are a non-profit organization that provides a safe environment for adults struggling with a severe and persistent mental illness (SPMI). We offer peer to peer counseling, anger and stress management, life skills, free transportation, opportunities to attend local, state and national conferences on SPMI and many other activities. Many of our members have taken a leadership role in the mental health cause by participating in Leadership Classes, serving on the Governor's Board for Mental Health and serving on the Consumer Advisory Council (CAC). If you have any questions for us or would like to visit us, please feel free to call 785-460-7477.

At this time we would also like to thank our community supporters, without them we would not have the success that we enjoy.

A Special thanks to:

Emily Strange & CCC Nursing Program	Personal Touch - Karen O'Neal
Colby Bowl & Fun Center	Horlacher Jewelers
Sunflower Bank - Susan Orr	Taxes & More
High Plains Mental Health	

Vote

Brenda McCants

for State Representative

Time for a new voice!

- It's time to be heard; it's time to preserve our rural communities.
- It's time to take a stand on issues that impact our economy.
- You can count on me to listen to you!

Vote Tuesday, Aug. 3

Paid for by Citizens to Elect Brenda McCants for Representative,
Sue Evans, Treasurer.

WE WILL BE CLOSED MONDAY, JULY 5

Please review deadlines and paper delivery changes below.

Happy Birthday, America!

The Friday Paper on July 2 will be delivered as normal. There will be no Colby Free Press on Monday, July 5 and our office will be closed to celebrate this joyous holiday.

Deadline for the Wednesday paper on July 7 is Tuesday July 6 by 3 pm. For the Country Advocate on July 6, deadline is Friday, July 2 by Noon.

YOU SHOULD RECEIVE A FREE PRESS ON WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY & FRIDAY!!

155 W. 5th • 785-462-3963