



July is Independence month celebrated on the 4th, and we as Americans can be proud that we won our independence thanks to those brave men and women whom stood against all odds to gain freedom.

I read an article in the Legion Magazine recently entitled: ***Is America still the land of the free?*** by Alan W. Dowd, and thought I would give you some of the highlights of the article regarding freedom.

“The natural progress of things is for Liberty to yield, and government to gain ground.” Thomas Jefferson made that observation in 1788, when America’s experiment in individual liberty and limited government was anew. America has changed in many ways since Jefferson warned about the fragility of freedom and relentlessness of government – some for the better some for the worse. We call our nation “the land of the free.” This is where the Pilgrims fled to find religious and political freedom, where our founders drafted charters of government declaring our right to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” and securing “the blessings of liberty in ourselves and our prosperity.” Where the “Don’t Tread on Me” flag once waved – and still does in some places. According to a number of measurements of freedom, however, the United States is not exactly the land of the free. The decline is largely a function of government expansion.

Reagan wasn’t saying there’s no need for government. Government is essential to protect life and property, to carry our justice, to maintain law and order, to deter and defeat enemies abroad – all so individuals might engage is what Jefferson called the “pursuit of happiness.” “Reagan understood that “government and private enterprise complement each other” and “must continue to coexist and cooperate.” But he knew that too much government makes the pursuit of happiness – the ability of free people to make full use of their God-given talents – much more difficult. Just as freedom without a foundation of law and order devolves into anarchy, laws and orders fashioned without regard for the Constitution’s foundational promise to ‘secure the blessing of liberty’ have the effect of undermining it.

Here's some fascinating facts you probably didn't know about the famous holiday.

Only two people actually signed the Declaration of Independence on July 4: John Hancock and Charles Thomson, secretary of Congress. Most of the others signed on August 2.

Not everyone was on board with celebrating on July 4, the day Congress approved the Declaration. John Adams wanted to celebrate on July 2, the day Congress voted for independence.

Three US presidents have died on July 4 – John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and James Monroe. In a bizarre twist of fate, Adams and Jefferson both died on July 4, 1826, the fiftieth anniversary of the country they helped found.

July 4 wasn't deemed a federal holiday until 1870, nearly 100 years after the nation was founded.

Other countries – including Denmark, England, Norway, Portugal and Sweden – celebrate the Fourth of July because many of their citizens moved to the US or simply to attract American tourists.

Hopefully you all enjoy your 4th of July celebrations and the remainder of summer activities. Linda and I wish all of you good fortune, and happiness in the coming months, and hope to see you all at the lodge.