



## **MAY GOD CONTINUE TO BLESS AMERICA**

The United States stands on the eve of a grand anniversary. It is the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. It is known as the Semiquenncentennial Celebration, quite a mouthful. Get used to hearing it as we focus on the birth of our nation. Many national and local activities have already begun as we look forward to a year of patriotic celebrations.

I am so grateful that I was fortunate enough to be born into the United States of America. Many of you know that I am a proud member of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Membership means you can prove direct lineage to someone who fought, served or aided the American Revolution. The members of the society are engaged in historic preservation, education and patriotic activities. We honor the legacy of those who sacrificed everything to form this nation.

George Washington was a courageous and charismatic leader who inspired his troops in the most difficult circumstances. He was a private man about his Anglican faith, but, throughout his time in leadership, he encouraged days of prayer and fasting as a means to seek divine assistance in perilous situations. His proclamations at Thanksgiving, Christmas and his Farewell address sought divine guidance from God. He and his officers were known to lead church services during the French and Indian Wars that preceded the American Revolution. He believed deeply in freedom of Religion. And God indeed blessed this nation.

One of the most famous scenes of the Revolutionary War was the crossing of the Delaware River at Trenton. Temperatures for the crossing ranged from 29-33 degrees. The drizzle turned to driving rain which became a howling nor'easter. One soldier recorded that it "blew a perfect hurricane." This weather event of snow and sleet hid their crossing from the paid mercenary soldiers, the Hessians. The mission was successful for, on Christmas morning, the Hessians were taken by surprise by the bedraggled, shoeless, ill-clad, tired and hungry Revolutionary Soldiers.

My 5<sup>th</sup> great grandfather, Nicholas Bieber, was among the soldiers who took part in the Christmas surprise. He went on to fight with General George Washington for 8 years as a Private. What was it about this General Washington that motivated his men to continue under these conditions? Was it his unique ability to lead and inspire or was it that most knew what was at stake if they failed?

Our Founding Fathers e.g. John Adams, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin and Patrick Henry, John Hamilton, John Jay and James Madison to name a few, left behind rich and complex writings as to how they envisioned this new form of government. Their ideas represented diverse viewpoints and many of the same ideas that are still controversial today. Immerse yourself this year in Madison's writings, The Adam's family letters, Ben Franklin's letters written under the pseudonym "Silence Dogood" or the *Federalist Papers*. They provide valuable insights into the challenges of creating documents that will form a new nation based on principles of liberty and the rule of law, unheard of by the European monarchies of that day.

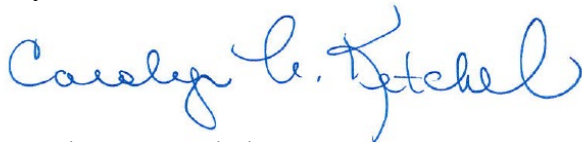
Sometime I hope you make it an intention to visit the Museum of the American Revolution in Philadelphia. It is a collection of compelling stories of the diverse people that have become America. A powerful theatre experience takes the visitor to witness the actual field tent used by George Washington, which has been miraculously preserved for us to view. (There is not a dry eye in the house when the lights slowly come up.)

My prayer for you and this wonderful country is, however we celebrate the birth of the United States this 4<sup>th</sup> of July, that we paused to thank God for our citizenship birthright and for those who made it possible for us to live in the land of the free and the home of the brave, including all those who served and continue to serve. In the words of John Adams, *"You will never know how much it cost the present generation to preserve your freedom! I hope you will make good use of it."*

## HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY

It is an honor and privilege to serve as your commissioner.

My Sincere Thanks,



Carolyn N. Ketchel  
Vice Chairman  
District 2 County Commissioner  
Okaloosa County, Board of County Commissioners  
1250 N Eglin Pkwy., Suite 100  
Shalimar, FL 32579  
850-651-7105  
[cketchel@myokaloosa.com](mailto:cketchel@myokaloosa.com)

