

# O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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## OUR VIEW

# The great experiment continues

With the Fourth of July holiday looming, it is easy to forget just how close the whole American independence effort came to failure.

We often sort of take it for granted that, as Americans, pretty much everything we've accomplished in our storied history as a nation was foreordained.

That is a nice thought, but not exactly accurate.

For example, it took the 13 colonies seven years to finally emerge victorious from Great Britain and secure the chance to execute the great experiment we call democracy. On the way to that victory there occurred many missteps and defeats.

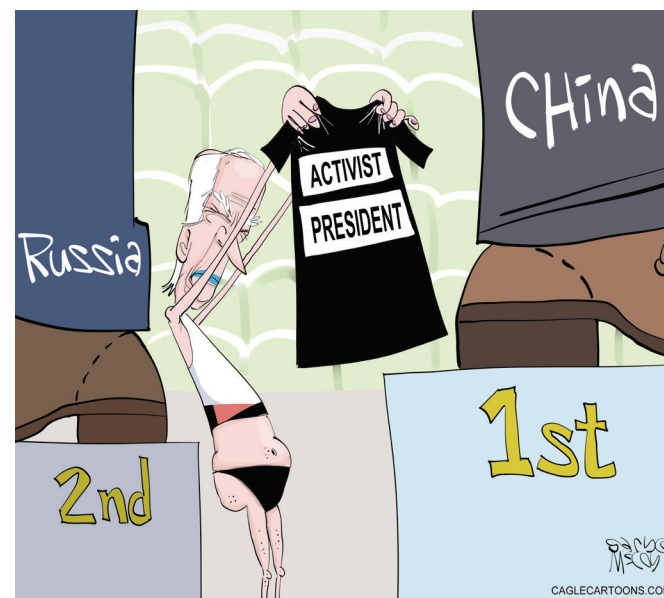
Sunday's holiday — the official observance of the actions of the Second Continental Congress on July 4, 1776 — marks in many ways a brief period of respite for the nation. There remains little doubt the nation as it stands in 2021 is saddled with an array of difficult and contentious issues. Yet, the Fourth of July bestows upon all of us a moment to reflect on the fact that the great test of democracy, fashioned by the Founding Fathers, endures.

We still conduct free elections; America still transfers political power in a peaceful manner. We have challenges — many of them very serious with long-term implications — yet our experiment sustains, and often reinvents itself, constantly.

With the specter of COVID-19 restrictions seemingly in the rearview mirror, this weekend's holiday should be about many things — family and fun just to name just two — but it also should be a moment, a time, to remember that despite all of the nation's perceived flaws, we are a democracy still going strong more than 200 years after a group of brave men decided to risk it all for liberty.

Have a safe and enjoyable Fourth of July.

BillDay FloridaPolitics.com



## YOUR VIEWS

### A lesson about presidents

I saw a collage of American flags on my Facebook page and that made me think of my dad. We had a flagpole near the front patio. In the summer, nearly every day that I was home, we would line up and take down the flag, fold it up into a triangle and take it inside, reversing the operation in the morning.

My dad was a colonel in the Army. He was stationed at the Pentagon as an aide to Gen. Douglas MacArthur during World War II, and was a big player in supplying the Pacific Front with military equipment. He flew with the airplane that held the first deployment of night-vision goggles that were to be used in a successful night attack in a significant island battle with the Japanese. This was top secret for years.

He often contacted the Pentagon leaders during the Vietnam War with suggestions for battle plans, and we had many a fight over that war and Nixon.

Dad was a big conservative Republican. That is why I was shocked one evening as we watched the news. President Richard Nixon had been implicated in Watergate, and when the truth came out it was hard for Dad — he was a big supporter of the president. But Dad had fought fascism, and an emperor king of Japan as well. He knew what freedom was and Nixon had

defiled America by his actions. And that night, when Nixon began to speak on the TV, Dad stood at attention, flung his hand up in the air and into a Hitler salute and shouted "Heil Nixon" in disgust.

I learned a powerful lesson about presidents then. And the importance of truth. I honor the flag, I honor the office of the president, but I cannot honor this president as he has defiled our nation with his actions and his lies. I truly and objectively feel that no list of accomplishments can equal the dishonor he has brought to the White House.

If my dad were still alive, I know he would agree with me.

June Colony  
Lostine

### The worries of a fire chief

What worries a fire chief? In this case, this week worries your fire chief.

I remember professional fireworks shows — the beauty of the rockets' red glare, the celebration of America, apple pie and baseball. I remember traveling to other cities to see their Fourth of July fireworks: San Diego, Washington, D.C., and Newport Beach. They were beautiful, inspiring and awesome.

As a new father and a firefighter, I was the guy on the block that helped

the families enjoy the day safely. We always ended the evening sitting on a roof, watching professional fireworks all around town.

Now, as a fire chief for the past decade, I see the impact is more than the simple joy on a child's face. It is also the thousands of injuries, the burns and loss of fingers. It is stress or trauma for some veterans, for members of the community with sensory challenges, and for pets. It is accidents that lead to the loss of a field, property or even a home.

We watched last weekend as greater than 450 acres burned and closed Interstate 84, along with endangering three family homes. We are passing through a week of record-setting heat, during an epic drought. I pray every morning for the people of this community and their safety.

I will increase the staffing this weekend to cover the community because I know there will be a few that won't heed my warning. We do not have any professional shows this year. My wish is we would all stay inside in a cool environment and watch the fireworks on our television this year. It is just too hot and too dry.

I hope you have a healthy, safe week, and I will be here worrying about the worst and praying for the best.

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### EDITORIALS

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### LETTERS

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