

Seconds of July

July 2, 2012

This is Jill Duffy, with Community Comment

My two youngest sisters are twins, and today – July 2, they celebrate their birthday. During the summer of 1976, our country's bicentennial birthday, my mother drove us cross country to Worcester, MA to visit our great-grandmother and then to Groton, Ct to visit our uncle before he departed on yet another mission on a nuclear submarine.....Five of us traveling cross country in a 1966 volkswagen van with a maximum cruising speed of 52 mph, and considerably slower than that when we encountered a hill. We smiled and waved to the multitudes of passing motorists, begged the truckers to honk their big rig horns and sometimes pantomimed some re-enactment or other in the rear window and...with four girls, we talked. One reoccurring topics was, wouldn't it have been cool if the twins had been born on July 4th... What a grand celebration they could have had as our nation celebrated it's 200th birthday...

~~During our summer trip~~ ^{WE VISITED} to historic sites and watching ^{re-enactments} re-enactments across the country, ^{AND} we learned that the resolution for independence was actually passed by representatives on July 2, with Thomas Jefferson's ~~prepared~~ Declaration of Independence approved on July 4. John Adams wrote to his wife...

"the second day of July, 1776, will be the most memorable epoch in the history of America. I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival. It ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance, by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations, from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward forever more.

Well. The twins almost got to have community celebrations and fireworks...but not quite...

It's been a month since the primary elections, and turnout here in Humboldt was about 40%, but statewide the turnout was a paltry 23%. Given the importance of issues, representation and the amount of money that candidates raise and spend in campaigns in an attempt to mobilize their base, I find it astounding that less than one in four registered voters turned out for their civic duty...

And somehow many people have forgotten that civic duty is more than just showing up at the polls or complaining in newspapers and blogs ~ Civic duty also means having your voice engaged on matters before our public bodies...board of supervisors, city councils, special districts, school districts and all the other public entities. And yet routinely, annual budgets are passed with nary a public member in sight...these 'boring' meetings establish the government's priorities and designate the resources necessary to implement programs and projects.

As I conclude preparing this community comment, I've just learned of the passing of David Elsebush, a well known public meeting attendee, former grand juror and fiscal watchdog. My condolences to his wife Penny and daughter – know that David's points and criticisms were often heard and integrated towards improving our local government.

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