

Deadline: 1 p.m. Tuesday. Submit opinions by email or mail to Penobscot Bay Press, P.O. Box 36, Stonington, ME 04681.

## PACKET OPINION

### Our Independence Day legacy of courage

The 2020 Independence Day will be like no other on this, its 244th anniversary. We all know too well the changed circumstances we are experiencing now that have made the enduring celebrations and activities we have enjoyed on this date impossible this year. For inspiration and example in this troubling time, let us look back to that original declaration in 1776.

The declaration was a supreme act of courage. A representative collection of people came together to state a long list of grievances that made it "necessary...to dissolve the political bonds" that connected the American colonies with Great Britain. Citing the "Laws of Nature and of Nature's God," the signers of the declaration wrote about what they believed to be truths and rights. They wrote, "We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." These were not just words—they were backed by the following pledge that ended the declaration just above all their signatures: "...for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance of the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our scared Honor."

This act of courage is part of our country's legacy. Let's embrace this legacy with our hearts and minds as we understand, cope and adapt to our current circumstances. From the basis of the heart, the positive love energy that unites us all, we can summon the courage to cope with the virus, face and vanquish our embedded prejudices and discrimination, come together to support our local causes, and help our local businesses recover and survive.

We have a unique opportunity to create a "new normal." To do this we must first let go of our negativity, our discord, our conflicts and our prejudices to embrace our courage to live in the tolerance, peace, harmony, love and happiness we all strive for.

E.M. Forster put it succinctly: "We must be willing to let go of the life we have planned so as to have the life that is waiting for us."

The life that is waiting for us is ours to create.

RNWB

## AWANADJO ALMANACK

### June 26–July 3, 2020 First Quarter Buck Moon

BY ROB MCCALL

**Natural events**—When I walk down the path through the woods to our camp and drooping fir branches knock off my hat, it's a sure sign we need rain. The branches of many kinds of trees bend downward when they lack moisture. This is the principle behind the so-called Old Woodsman's Weather Stick which is nothing but a peeled twig from a fir tree turned upside down and tacked to the side of the barn. If it points up, the weather is dry. If it points down, it is wet.

**Field and forest report**—It is a Maine custom to have blueberry pie on the Fourth of July, after a dinner of fresh salmon and garden peas. Well, maybe not this year. Due to a cool Spring and a dry summer so far, you would be hard put to find enough ripe blueberries for even one pie. But strawberries? Oh yeah! They are at your Farmer's Market. In the fields the familiar Black-eyed Susan *Rudbeckia hirta* and the tall intoxicatingly fragrant *Valeriana* officialis are coming into bloom delighting the senses.

**Saltwater report**—Clammers are hard at work on the flats these days, hustling to make the harvest before red tide closes the season.

**Rank opinion**—Celebrating Independence Day is good, but it is possible to be too extreme about independence, as many of us can testify after a long isolation in quarantine. The ultimate independence would be for each of us to do whatever we want, whenever we want, without regard to the effect on others, and without consequences. But the result of this in a nation of adults is what sociologists call "anomie," the collapse of society into atomistic particles that no longer bond, and what psychologists call "sociopathic

behavior," no over-arching values other than those of each individual. Michael Berliner of the Ayn Rand Institute wrote: "To the founding Fathers there was no authority higher than the individual mind, not King George, not God, not society." We might reasonably wonder if he is reading the same Declaration of Independence we are. The word "individual" appears nowhere in that document. We find only one statement about the independent rights of the individual: "We hold these truths to be self evident, that all Men are created equal..." But even this statement goes on to declare our dependence on God for those rights: "...that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights..." In times like these, we must proclaim again that the rights of life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness presented in our Declaration of Independence come not from any nation or government or corporation, not from any church or court or Congress, not from any army, not from the individual, nor from any earthly power, though all of them must protect these rights. These rights are given to all people equally by their Creator. They are God-given, not man-given, and no man can take these rights away without answering to the judgment of their Giver.

**Seedpods to carry around**—From Justice Lewis Brandeis 1856-1941: Experience should teach us to be most on our guard to protect liberty when the government's purposes are beneficent. Men born to freedom are naturally alert to repel invasion of their liberty by evil-minded rulers. The greatest dangers to liberty lurk in insidious encroachment by men of zeal, well-meaning, but without understanding.

From Thomas Jefferson April 13, 1743-July 4, 1826: When the government fears the people there is liberty. When the people fear the government there is tyranny.

## LETTERS

### Actions indicate racism

I suppose here on the Blue Hill Peninsula, it would seem to some folks that participation locally in the Black Lives Matter movement is sort of silly.

After all, there are so few black people here and everyone here is civil and Mainers tend to leave people alone and what are all these white people getting so excited about anyway? There isn't really any racism here.

Not so. Signs memorializing eight of the recent victims of murder at the hands of police, including George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery were hung on a stretch of road on Caterpillar Hill in Sedgwick. These were quickly defaced by someone using red spray paint which looked chillingly like blood spatter. Subsequently the signs were removed by someone. The same types of signs were hung down Tenney Hill in Blue Hill. Many have been removed.

The same images were hung on Deer Isle. Within a few hours all were taken down and what was displayed instead was a carefully fashioned noose slung over a telephone wire.

Why are the signs being defaced and taken down? What is it we don't want to see?

For anyone who imagined we don't have racism in our communities, these very disturbing actions indicate otherwise.

Annie Poole  
Brooksville

### Support for proposed ordinances

Shaw Institute submits this letter in support of the Blue Hill Healthy Ecosystem Ordinance to ban the sale of synthetic pesticides that is up for vote in the town of Blue Hill on July 14.

Glyphosate, the active ingredient in Roundup Weed Killer, is one of the most widely used herbicides in this country. Its

widespread use has caused herbicide resistance in many nuisance weeds, leading to applications of the chemical in larger doses, or the use of harsher herbicides. Although glyphosate was thought safe for many years, recent findings recognize this chemical as probably carcinogenic. Bayer and Monsanto have paid millions of dollars in cancer lawsuits against their company and will likely pay billions more. Unfortunately, health risks from pesticides are not limited to those who use the chemical. Pesticides in the air, soil, surface and groundwater can affect non-target plants, insects, and unsuspecting people enjoying the outdoors. While not as directly toxic to bees as some agricultural chemicals, glyphosate kills beneficial bacteria in the guts, which makes bees more vulnerable to sickness and infection.

Here in Maine we are vulnerable to climate change, plastic pollution, and other hazardous chemicals in our environment. Every action we take to protect human health and the surrounding ecosystem is a step in the right direction.

Shaw Institute also supports the Unencapsulated Polystyrene Ordinance for Blue Hill. Polystyrene can travel vast distances in the ocean (it was recently found in the Antarctic). Because it takes so long to break down, polystyrene can remain as toxic pollution for hundreds of years. The Unencapsulated Polystyrene Ordinance will help keep Styrofoam out of Blue Hill Bay and away from the marine life that might otherwise be exposed to this harmful material.

By voting in favor of these local ordinances, we join global efforts to protect environmental and human health from the increasing exposure to toxic chemicals and plastic pollution. It is an exciting opportunity to create the future world in which we hope to live.

Heather Richard  
Shaw Institute, Blue Hill

## POLICY

### Election opinions

With the July 14 state primary election approaching, we welcome your opinions on candidates and two bond issues on the ballot.

The July 1 issue is the last for new opinions. The July 8 issue is reserved for rebuttal of previously published material. The deadline for opinions each week is Tuesday at 1 p.m. Word limits are 350 for letters and 800 for Another View columns. Email them with name, town and phone number to opinions@pbp.me.

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—The Staff

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