

Flags

from front page

Under the direction of President James Madison, Key had been aboard a British war ship with the mission to negotiate the release of an elderly and popular Doctor Blanes who was being held captive for assisting in the arrest of British soldiers. Key was successful in Blane’s release because of the letters written by wounded British soldiers praising their treatment by the doctor. But since Key had overheard the plans for the British bombardment on Baltimore, he himself was detained. Witnessing the attack, he was inspired by the American victory and the sight of the American flag still flying above Fort McHenry. This prompted him to write the poem, which his brother-in-law took to a local musician who applied it to the drinking song.

Newspapers soon published the song and it became popular during the 19th Century. In 1889, Secretary of the Navy Benjamin Tracy ordered that it be played at the raising of the flag. In 1916, President Woodrow Wilson ordered that it be played at military occasions. In 1918, it was played at the opening of the World Series and the polo games in New York City. Now it is heard at the opening of every MSL, NBA, NFL, MLB and NHL game.

At the urging of John Phillip Sousa, *The Sta- Spangled Banner* was signed into law by President Herbert Hoover in 1931 as our national anthem.

The first pop version was sung as a blues rendition by Puerto Rican singer and guitarist Jose Feliciano at the 1968 World Series. This opened the door to countless renditions, some barely recognizable. Bit it is still the old-fashioned way, sung by the people, that touches my heart.

The American flag has been a work in progress. The first flag in 1775 was an alteration of the British flag, with the red

cross of St. George and the white cross of St. Andrew. In 1777, Congress passed a resolution providing for its 13 stars in a circle representing a new constellation--the first official flag of the United States. Like all historical folklore, there is some controversy regarding Betsy Ross’s making of the first flag. But there is reasonable consensus that the three-time widow, mother of five daughters, and professional upholsterer who shared the pew at Christ Church with George Washington, did indeed sew the first flag. In 1891 when Kentucky and Vermont were made states, two more stars were added.

By 1818 under President James Monroe, there were 20 states, and an additional star for each was added. I am not sure who was in charge of flag designing, but on January 24, 1912, under President William H. Taft, the flag was redesigned with rows of stars instead of a circle. In 1959, under President Dwight D. Eisenhower, with the addition of Alaska and Hawaii, there were seven staggered horizontal rows and nine staggered vertical rows.

The American flag flies on the moon, sits atop Mt. Everest and at the North Pole, and hurls about in space. It has inspired fetes of awesome heroism, served as a symbol of patriotism and as an ideal in the civil rights movement, and has been a symbol of protest with the burning of it during the Vietnam War. In whatever form, it is a symbol of the freedoms and liberties we enjoy in America.

So this Fourth of July, when we gather our picnic baskets, fire up our barbecues and gaze at fireworks, let us not forget the significance of our American flag and our national anthem. They are our symbols that deserve our reverence.

Karen Russo can be reached at kkrusso@aol.com .•

Celebrate Wellness in the Garden

By Karen Russo

There are so many worthy causes that come after us for support. And most of us give to and/or work for some, but we can’t help them all. Many are to remedy or give assistance to situations that are real heart-tuggers, but thankfully if we are fortunate, may not affect us directly. The Wellness Community South Bay Cities, however, does not fall into that category. They offer psychosocial support to people with cancer and their families and caregivers. And every one of us has been and will be touched by cancer--whether ourselves, loved ones, friends or neighbors. And though TWC is not here to offer a cure, or even research, it is here to offer emotional support to people so they will not feel alone during their struggle. While volunteering at the front office or attending events at the Center, I overheard so many “participants,” as they are called, both men and women, say they could not have made it through without The Wellness Community.

Among the services provided are: Individual counseling, support groups, yoga and exercise classes, nutritional lunches, networking, writing for wellness, relaxation and visualization, and professional lectures by doctors and oncologists specializing in a specific field. All these services are free.

So funding is dependent upon corporate sponsors, individual donations and fundraisers. One of the most delightful of fundraisers is the annual Celebrate Wellness, a Garden Party at the South Bay Botanic Garden, on the Palos Verdes Peninsula, July 10, from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

It will be a gala afternoon on an early summer day, with wine tasting offered by 27 premium wineries, food served at stations by 28 of the area’s favorite restaurants, music, and a tantalizing array of auction items. Just come and stroll around, and partake of it all at your leisure, and know that whatever money is raised will go to make the world a more compassionate place.

In 2007, the Institute of Medicine (IOM), part of the National Academies in Washington DC, put out a report entitled “Cancer Care for the Whole Patient: Meeting Psychosocial Health Needs.” The IOM reported, “Americans place a high premium on new technologies to solve our health care needs. However technology is not enough. Quality psychosocial care is critical in order for patients to have optimal clinical outcomes... Community-based organizations are a necessary part of the health care delivery system.” To this end, the report cited Gilda’s Clubs and The Wellness Community for making valued contributions.

We are fortunate in the South Bay to have a Wellness Community right here in an inviting location on the Redondo Beach

Pier. More than that, at the National Conference in November, held in Washington D.C., TWC South Bay Cities, now in its 22nd year, was rated number one among the 24 U.S.-based centers.

To support this worthy cause, put on your summer frock and hat (men can be casual) and see what Rock’N Fish, the Bottle Inn, Kincaids, or Trump Golf Club, to name only a few, are serving for you. And I bet you won’t leave without something in your hand, be it two round trip tickets to anywhere in the U.S. aboard Southwest Airlines or Air Tran Airways; a Holland American Caribbean cruise; a week on the big island of Hawaii with a snorkeling trip; two weeks in a private home in the village of Uluwatu, high on the cliffs overlooking the Indian Ocean in Bali; or a Mexican fiesta in Portuguese Bend for 50 of your best friends, catered by the original Red Onion with a Margarita bar. Or maybe something easier on your pocketbook. Every cent helps.

For tickets (\$125) to Celebrate Wellness, for more information, or to volunteer, call 310-376-3550. And for another fun way to support TWC, mark your calendar for October 6,7, and 8. It will be Girls Night Out at the Comedy and Magic Club in Hermosa Beach.

Karen Russo can be reached at kkrusso@aol.com.

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SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

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7:00-8:15pm Hatha Basics - All Level Leta

Tuesday

5:30-6:45pm Yin Yoga - All Level Yin

7:00-8:15pm Vinyasa Flow - Level 1 Leticia

Wednesday

6:00-7:15pm Vinyasa Flow - All Level Betty

5:30-6:45pm Hatha Basics - Level 1-II Andy

7:00-8:15pm Hatha Basics - All Level Teri

Thursday

5:30-6:45pm Barret - All Level Theresa

7:00-8:15pm Beginner: Hatha Robyn

Friday

6:00-7:15pm Vinyasa Flow - All Level Betty

6:45-7:30pm Vinyasa Flow - All Level Alex

Saturday

9:30-10:45am Hatha Basics - All Level Andy

11:00-12:15pm Tai Chi - All Level Ann

Sunday

6:00-7:15pm Hatha Basics - All Level Cathy

8:30-9:45pm Yoga Flow - All Level Theresa

5:30-6:45pm Hatha Basics - All Level Andy

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