



THE ★ BLUE RIDGE ★ JOURNAL

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ON THE 4TH: WHAT DOES RED, WHITE AND BLUE MEAN TO YOU?

LEAH O'NEILL, DE ★
STAFF WRITER

At CONA, we celebrate our nation's most patriotic holiday with some of the most patriotic people in America.

To **Matt Gilreath**, Indiana delegation, patriotism means "having a strong sense of pride in your country."
Mabel D'Souza, Delaware delegation, says patriotism can be "associated with respect and love. It is the willingness to sacrifice for the greater good of your country."

This Fourth of July,
Alecia Blight, North

Carolina delegation, defines freedom as "being able to be unique and be yourself without having anyone judge you and to be bold," while **Felix Li** from Massachusetts distinguishes freedoms as "the ability to do what you want and to have access to the rights you deserve. Freedom is to be able to express your opinion."

CONA delegates stand proud and tall as we celebrate Fourth of July with a mutual respect for each of our unique standpoints on patriotism and freedom.
★



PATRIOTISM ★ CAMERON KUBERA, MA, MODELS HIS VERSION OF RED, WHITE AND BLUE

PHOTO BY LEAH O'NEILL

Fourth Facts

SASKIA GHOSH, OK ★
STAFF WRITER

The Fourth of July brings to mind barbecues with family, fireworks, and red, white, and blue paraphernalia. While most Americans know this special day represents the signing of the Declaration of Independence, they may be unaware of lesser known facts that embody the day of July 4th.

Three U.S. Presidents died on July 4th: Two presidents, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, died within hours of each other on July 4, 1826,

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PLANNING COMMITTEE BRINGS BACK EVENING DEVOTIONAL

MOLLY BRENNAN, WI ★ STAFF WRITER

Evening devotionals are making a comeback. The evening gatherings after the close of committee meetings focus on motivation and bringing delegates to a place of unity after a day of debate. Evening devotionals have evolved throughout conference history; Nancy Dennis, member of the Conference Planning Committee and former CONA delegate, recalls when delegates sat on the floor of Eureka Hall for the devotional. In the past, they have also been led by the presiding officers and individual delegations. At one time, the devotionals were discontinued due to concerns over consistency and location size. However, the 2016 Conference Planning Committee voted to reinstate devotionals to provide delegates a sense of closure after long and sometimes stressful days in committee, as well as to lend direction to subsequent delegation roundtable discussions.

The first evening devotional occurred on Sunday, July 3 in Heaton Hall. Led by Bob McGaughey, former president and CEO of the Montgomery YMCA, the devotional centered on purpose and vocation. Although McGaughey recognized that the delegates belong to the wealthiest, most educated and most traveled generation yet, he also examined the global inequalities that remain despite social and technological advances. McGaughey used the story of



MEDITATION ★ DANIEL HAYWORTH LEADS OFF THE FIRST DEVOTIONAL FOR CONA 2016
PHOTO BY NNEMKA AGBAFE

a young Czechoslovakian man who protected Jewish children from the Nazis to encourage delegates to create a positive impact on the world around them, even in the face of adversity and animosity.

McGaughey hopes that these devotionals will bring a calm and centered conclusion to the delegates' days on the mountain. He encourages people to arrive at the amphitheater with an open mind and a reflective attitude if they want the devotionals to be impactful. McGaughey will host these devotionals nightly, with the exception of Tuesday due to the Conference dance that evening.★

MORE FOURTH OF JULY FACTS HARDLY ANYONE KNOWS

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and James Monroe passed away on July 4, 1831.

July Second? While the Continental Congress technically adopted the Declaration of Independence on July 4th, the approval for independence from Congress actually occurred on July 2nd. In addition, it is thought by many historians that the signing of the Declaration of Independence occurred on July 2nd.

A Child Created the American Flag: 17-year-old Robert G. Heft created the design of the current 50-star version of the American flag for a high school project. After receiving a B- on his design, he discussed a deal

with his teacher: if the flag design was accepted by the U.S. Congress, an adjustment of his grade would be considered.

Jefferson Wrote the Declaration of Independence on a Laptop: While modern day laptops were not created until hundreds of years after the drafting of the Constitution, Jefferson did in fact write the Declaration of Independence on a lap desk called a "laptop."

Now, you know the facts. Remember though the reason Americans celebrate the Fourth of July: to acknowledge the creation of our wonderful country. Happy 4th, delegates!★

INDULGING IN THE HYPE OVER THE BROADWAY MUSICAL HAMILTON

MICHELLE CHUNG, MA
★ MANAGING EDITOR

While sitting in an airport on vacation seven years ago, the brilliantly talented Broadway actor and composer Lin-Manuel Miranda picked up a biography on the first U.S. Secretary of Treasury: Alexander Hamilton. Seven years, 16 Tony nominations, 11 Tony awards and one Grammy Award later, Miranda has created a theatrical sensation that retells history in a way that both revitalizes our view on Broadway musicals and history.

As a result of being so creatively composed, eloquently performed and refreshingly new, Hamilton has reached a broad and passionate audience (especially at CONA). Four delegations even made reference to the musical in their shirt — Virginia (Thomas Jefferson's sweet, kissable home), Washington (the name of the resilient and fatherly figure to Hamilton), New York (the place where you too can be a new man) and Florida (not throwing away their shot to jump in on a trend).

Delegates from many other states have shown their love and appreciation for the musical as well, however. Vilas



HAMILTON HYPE ★ FLORIDA DELEGATES WERE AMONG MANY TO SHOW THEIR LOVE FOR THE MUSICAL

PHOTO BY NNEMKA AGBAFE

Annarapu, DE, commented, "Honestly, I love the fact that Hamilton has this unique ability to make a character that seems so displaced from you seem so relatable. Why on earth would I care about some guy on the ten dollar bill, right? But telling Alexander Hamilton's story and the story of the Revolution shows that the important qualities of human resilience, empathy and passion never really go away regardless of what time period you're from."

Similarly, Kate Canavan from CT remarked, "I think what's really unique is that it portrays people who are usually written out of history like African Americans, Latinos and other minorities. Partially, everyone loves it just because of how unique it is in the musical sense, but also because of the really diverse cast and how everyone can see themselves in all of the characters."

Hamilton has made an impact on the way history is taught to younger generations, and delegates should not waste their shot to hear Miranda's masterpiece. We can't wait to see how else this musical sensation will continue to blow us all away.★

PRESIDING OFFICER OF THE DAY: KATE HANNICK

1. She is currently a freshman at Seattle University and studies economics, public affairs and Spanish.
2. She took Chinese all throughout high school and visited in 2012. She'll be visiting again her junior year.
3. She was a part of the Missouri delegation for all four years and eventually became Youth Governor her senior year.
4. She is a horrid singer. Her family doesn't let her sing Happy Birthday at family celebrations.
5. She was in the Missouri delegation when the pool party was named "The Missouri Pool Party."



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