

Subject: Three Hats
June 27, 2023

This past weekend I participated in the Village Square Art Show in Founders Park, created by Cynthia Strain 18 years ago and who just retired last year as the coordinator. The Mountain Top Rotary Club now organizes the art show, and the proceeds of the event go to nonprofit endeavors in the community. The Mountain Top Rotary Club volunteers are commended for all the hard work they put forth in making this a successful event. As an artist/craftsman for over 50 years, let me also thank the artisans who participated in the show. They, too, work hard at perfecting their art and craft. They are truly laborers who love what they do, not for the meager financial return but for the drive and joy to work with their hands, minds, and hearts to create objects of elegant form and beauty.

As an artist, who is 75, I sometimes struggle with the arduous labor of creating pottery, but I still do it because I fantasize that my next great work is just ahead. It may now just be a dream, but I am not ready to give it up. On behalf of my fellow artisans, let me thank all the people who visited the art show and took the time to look at and, in some cases, buy the pieces on display.

Putting on my other hat, the Mayor's hat, I want to invite you to attend the June "Community Coffee with the Mayor," which will be held Friday, June 30th, at the Hudson Library. The coffee will get underway at 11 am and end by noon. The program will review the major items in the recently passed town budget.

Now putting on my other hat, the American citizen's hat, I must say that the Fourth of July is one of my favorite holidays. I always look forward to the food, games, and fireworks that we enjoy in Highlands. The American Legion and members of Wreaths Across America will be placing flags on the graves of our veterans. I appreciate and support this recognition of our veterans, but to me, the holiday celebrating our nation's liberty and freedom goes beyond just celebrating the contributions of our veterans. Liberty and independence is a complex structure that depends on and is supported by many institutions, such as governing bodies, the courts, law enforcement, educational institutions, private businesses, and faith-based and non-profit communities.

Looking back on the events of July 4th, 1776, our founders declared Americans were not subjects of a sovereign king, and we were not willing to do his bidding by being subservient to just one individual. The men who signed the Declaration of Independence had this radical idea that the people of this country, by working together, could govern themselves and make decisions that both protected individual liberty and were also for the common good. Such a plan, the American Experiment as it has been called, requires all of us as citizens to be actively involved in various ways to hold our country and republic in trust for now and for future generations. This holiday is an affirmation and renewal of our individual liberty and our sacred bond with one another. That common bond acknowledges and supports everyone's freedom.