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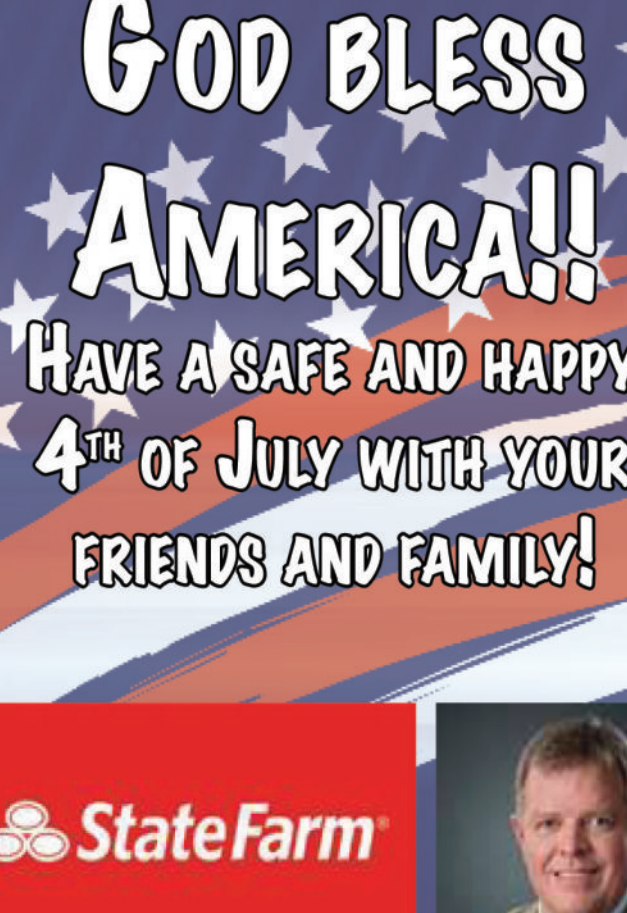
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**GOD BLESS
AMERICA!!**

**HAVE A SAFE AND HAPPY
4TH OF JULY WITH YOUR
FRIENDS AND FAMILY!**

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Wishing you and your family a safe and happy

4TH JULY

INDEPENDENCE DAY

LYNCHES RIVER
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Celebrating the 250th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence

By Nick Suhr

When the Second Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, Benjamin Franklin wrote this message to his wife, Abigail: This moment "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 solemnized with Pomp and Parade, with Shews, Games, Sports, Guns, Bells, Bonfires and Illuminations from one End of this Continent to the other from this Time forward forever more." In keeping with these two-and-a-half-century-old traditions, together with the Lancaster 250th American Revolution Anniversary Committee is creating and supporting a series of presentations in Lancaster County.

As the Revolution and the Constitution adopted thereafter have always been a favorite topic of mine, I ask you to draw inspiration from the thoughts of four

great leaders of our nation.

50th Anniversary – 1826. On June 24, as Thomas Jefferson lay terminally ill at his home, Monticello, in Virginia, he wrote a letter to the Mayor of Washington, D.C., declining an invitation to attend the celebration, and included these reflections on the Declaration:

May it be to the world what I believe it will be, (to some parts sooner, to others later, but finally to all.) the Signal of arousing men to burst the chains, under which Monkish ignorance and superstition had persuaded them to bind themselves, and to assume the blessings & security of self-government. The form which we have substituted restores the free right to the unbounded exercise of reason and freedom of opinion; all eyes are opened, or opening to the rights of man. The general spread of the light of science has already laid open to every view the palpable truth that the mass of mankind has not been born with saddles on their backs, nor a favored few booted and spurred, ready to ride them legitimately; by

the grace of god, these are grounds of hope for others. For ourselves let the annual return of this day, for ever refresh our recollections of these rights and an undiminished devotion to them.

Jefferson and John Adams had long before resolved their differences, and both died quietly on July 4, 1826.

100th Anniversary – 1876.
President Ulysses S. Grant issued the
following proclamation on June 26:

It seems fitting that on the occurrence of the hundredth anniversary of our existence as a nation, a grateful acknowledgment should be made to Almighty God for the protection and the bounties which He has vouchsafed to our beloved country.

I therefore invite the good people of the United States, on the approaching 4th day of July, in addition to the usual observances with which they are accustomed to greet the return of the day further, in such manner and at such

-more-

time as in their respective localities and religious associations may be most

convenient, to mark its recurrence by some public religious and devout thanksgiving to Almighty God for the blessings which have been bestowed upon us as a nation during the century of our existence, and humbly to invoke a continuance of His favor and of His protection.

150th Anniversary – 1926. President Calvin Coolidge delivered a moving speech about the Declaration at Independence all in Philadelphia on July 4:

About the Declaration, there is a finality that is exceedingly restful. It is often asserted that the world has made a great deal of progress since 1776, that we have had new thoughts and new experiences which have given us a great advance over the people of that day, and that we may therefore very well discard their conclusions for something more modern. But that reasoning can not be applied to this great charter. If all men are created equal, that is final. If they are endowed with unalienable

rights, that is final. If governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, that is final. No advance, no progress can be made beyond these propositions. If anyone wishes to deny their truth or their soundness, the only direction in which he can proceed historically is not forward, but backward toward the time when there was no equality, no rights of the individual, no rule of the people. Those who wish to proceed in that direction cannot lay claim to progress. They are reactionary. Their ideas are not more modern, but more ancient, than those of the Revolutionary fathers.

Inauguration Day – 1961. In his first and only inaugural address, John Fitzgerald Kennedy spoke to the American people about a new generation of leadership and new visions for our nation:

And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you--ask what you can do for your country.
My fellow citizens of the world: ask not

what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man. Finally, whether you are citizens of America or citizens of the world, ask of us here the same high standards of strength and sacrifice which we ask of you. With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God's work must truly be our own.

work must truly be our own.
As we celebrate 250 years of freedom and
liberty, let us remember the words of Irving
Berlin's beautiful anthem:
God bless America, land that I love
Stand beside her and guide her,
Through the night with a light from above.
From the mountains to the prairies
To the oceans white with foam,
God bless America, my home sweet home.
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Nick Suhr is a retired attorney and Secretary and Staff Writer for Living @ Sun City Carolina Lakes magazine