

# **HERMIT HERALD**

## **ISSUE 121**

**JULY 19, 2021**

### **QUOTE FOR THE DAY**

**“Our job is now just not to forget.” General Austin Miller, speaking at a farewell ceremony in Afghanistan.**

### **THE “UNFORGOTTEN” WHAT AN ENDING!!**

**That’s all you can say after twenty years, General? Our job is, “just not to forget.” How pathetic!!**

**Your scribe is in a minority, but predicts the way we have chosen to leave Afghanistan will live in infamy – a colossal humanitarian failure and spectacular strategic blunder.**

### **A NATION DIVIDED?**

**Dear readers, don’t think this is our collective fault – something that has come to pass just in recent years or decades. No! We owe it all to**

**Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton. The two men had a visceral hatred for each other, almost from the first day they met.**

**Mary Kay Linge, a reporter for the NY Post recently offered an interesting historical perspective. From the get go George Washington, in his first term, was wary about the formation of political parties, “convinced that partisans would shred the young nation’s fragile unity. But he had accidentally planted the seeds of the two-party system by placing Hamilton and Jefferson, the nation’s most ferocious partisans, in his cabinet.”**

**Hamilton is described as, “a boundlessly ambitious Treasury Secretary” and a Federalist, while Jefferson, a Republican and Secretary of State, was as anti Hamilton as Biden vs Trump.**

**Jefferson was a strong supporter of state’s rights, whereas Hamilton was essentially a monarchist, seemingly wanting to put a crown on Washington’s head. They treated each other, “not just as opponents, but as enemies of the constitution.” According to author,**

**Dennis Rasmussen, it was all Washington could do, early in his second term, to keep them on a short leash, advising each, separately, to, in modern terms, “dial it down.”**

**In their not so friendly exchanges of barbs, Hamilton said of Jefferson, “So seditious, so prostitute a character.” Jefferson returned the favor by saying of Hamilton, “A man whose history is a tissue of machinations against the country.”**

**Two hundred and thirty years later (plus or minus) are we any better off? Today, political strategists, among them, Mark Mellman, point out that with 53% aligned with the Democrats and 46% with the Republicans, “The president cannot engineer a broad realignment of the public mood.” Coronavirus success, seemingly significant infrastructure help coming, increasing employment, countered by poor grades on immigration and crime simply won’t move the needle on voter preferences. Even if none of those things were happening, Democrats and Republicans are firmly entrenched in their own parties.**

**But, wait a minute. Those percentages are misleading. They reflect what percentage of all voters are currently aligned with Democrats and Republicans – not how many are the actual die-hard party members. The hard-core numbers tell quite a different story. A Gallup poll 12/17/20 found 31% of voters call themselves Democrats and 25% Republicans. Those are the percentages where the inflexibility, the unchangeability lie. The Independents- that remaining 41%- determine the country's political direction and they can, and have, changed their minds and votes.**

## **FRIENDS TO ENEMIES AND BACK TO FRIENDS**

**In the lead up to this year's fourth of July, Peggy Noonan wrote a great article in the WSJ based on a book by Gordon Woods, "Friends Divided."**

**John Adams and Thomas Jefferson had become great friends in the aftermath of their roles as co-founders of the country. Despite dissimilar backgrounds they became very close during their shared time as emissaries of the new nation in Europe. Then political events**

**destroyed their closeness – not events in America, but in France; the Revolution of 1789 to be exact. Jefferson viewed the revolution as a continuum of 1776, and Adams viewed it as a perversion leading to, “a continent drowning in blood.” According to author, Gordon Woods, “Jefferson seems to have mistaken Robespierre for Paul Revere. When the revolution’s ferocity was revealed in the Terror, Adams threw it in Jefferson’s face, ‘In France, anarchy has done more in one night than all the despotism of their kings had ever done in 20 or 30 years.’”**

**That exchange brought a chill to the relationship, but the final blow came in the bitter presidential race of 1799 which saw Jefferson, who was, at that time, Adam’s vice president, defeat Adams and deny him a second term. Adams was so angry he left Washington by carriage in the early morning hours of Jefferson’s inauguration.**

**A strong mutual friend of both men, fellow nation co-founder, Benjamin Rush, initiated an effort to bring the former friends back together. In 1809, as Jefferson’s second term**

**was coming to an end, Adams asked Rush if he ever had any dreams about Jefferson. Rush said he had, in fact, dreamt of Adams writing a note to Jefferson congratulating him on his retirement, effecting a renewal of their friendship.**

**Woods records that, “Rush wrote to Jefferson to soften him up. ‘You loved Adams. Of all the evils of politics none are as great as the dissolution of friendships.’” (a teaching moment for the divided politics of today)**

**“Rush told Adams to forget what had separated them. ‘Explanations are required of lovers, but are never so between friends.’”**

**Thanks to these efforts, Adams finally sent a friendly letter to Jefferson on New Year’s day 1812 to which Jefferson immediately replied. In the following 14 years they exchanged 158 letters covering every topic under the sun.**

**At one point Adams wrote, “You and I ought not to die before we have explained ourselves to each other.” – a happy restoration of a great friendship. Both Adams and Jefferson died on**

**July fourth 1826, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.**

## **LET'S BREAK UP THE STATES**

**Say what? Columnist Noah Millman makes a compelling case to do just that. It is unlikely that the U.S. can add more states. It's the dream of Democrats to add Puerto Rico and Washington, D.C. and the nightmare for Republicans who envision an additional four Democratic senators. Mellman's discussion has nothing to do with that.**

**Millman points out that since 1960, the United States has added about 150 million people without increasing our state count. What this means is that since 1980, 40 % of America's growth has accrued to three megastates, California, Texas and Florida.**

**Adding NY State to the above three, the four largest states have eight senators and about one third of the country's population, more than the smallest 34 states put together. Those smallest states have a super majority of 68 senators.**

**Breaking up these largest states into several smaller ones is not without precedence. Kentucky was created out of territory that had belonged to Virginia, as was Tennessee from N. Carolina and Maine from Massachusetts.**

**Millman suggests that such divisioning of the megastates would by no means necessarily give one political party advantage over the other. Let's say California becomes three states- ok- probably Democratic, but Texas also becomes three states- probably Republican. New York becomes two states with Democratic NY City becoming a "city state" while upstate NY, likely Republican. Florida, as two or three states, likely more conservative in the north and more liberal in the south.**

**Certainly there would be sentimental objections to breaking up these states, but they are, within themselves, such complex entities that they have vastly different needs and priorities and, for sure, with their burgeoning populations, need more senatorial representation. Interesting thoughts!**

**END PAPER**



**Stay away from these fireworks – on July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend 400 people nationwide were shot and 150 killed. (Note- handguns are notoriously inaccurate)**

**Chicago: think about this one: did they just wait for the magic number to announce, or is it mere coincidence? At July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2,021 people had been shot in the city, year to date.**

**Olympics in Japan: Due to Covid 19 virtually no spectators will be allowed at Olympic events. Japan has invested over \$3 Billion in spectator facilities and will lose over \$800 million in lost ticket sales. These numbers, of course, do not reflect lost hotel bookings and restaurant revenues. Japan is still having major problems with Covid 19, with 80% of the Japanese public against holding the Olympics. Perhaps the organizers and the 20% who support holding the games should be back billed for this financial and health fiasco. There is no P&L statement here- just a Loss statement. Someone call Ernst and Ernst.**

**Your faithful scribe,  
PB**

