

Commentary

StepSaver THE OBSERVER

Our Views

•Letters...pages 6, 7

•Columnist...page 6

StepSaver THE OBSERVER

MIKE CHAIKEN, editions editor

Established December 9, 2004

Published weekly by The Step Saver, Inc.

213 Spring St., Southington, CT 06489

editorial: 860-621-6751

advertising: 860-628-9645

circulation: 860-628-9438

fax 860-621-1841

e-mail mchaiken@BristolObserver.com

All editorials are intended to reflect the position of the publisher and not that of any individual editorial writer. Signed columns, on the other hand, reflect the position of the author and not necessarily those of the publisher.

www.BristolObserver.com

www.StepSaver.com

Declaration of Independence [Adopted in Congress 4 July 1776]

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any form of government becomes destructive to these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. — Such has been the patient sufferance of these colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former systems of government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states...

In every stage of these oppressions we have petitioned for redress in the most humble terms: our repeated petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have we been wanting in attention to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace friends.

We, therefore, the representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the name, and by the authority of the good people of these colonies, solemnly publish and declare, that these united colonies are, and of right ought to be free and independent states; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the state of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as free and independent states, they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent states may of right do. And for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor.

Dreams of being Michael Jackson

The Fourth of July is already upon us, yet the rain seems not to want to let the sun through.

All we can do is hope that the rain lets up soon. And, then, when it does, we can hope that the heat doesn't beat us down.

Early last week, we lost two celebrities —Farrah Fawcett and Michael Jackson.

When I was in high school, I can remember one of my good friends reading an article about Farrah, entitled "Why Farrah's Hair Spells Sex." That was serious stuff for any high school boy, but especially those of the more intellectual bent who were trying to understand the opposite sex anyway they could.

Farrah was a phenomenon, but her career was overshadowed greatly when it was announced that Michael Jackson died shortly after her.

Yes, Michael turned stranger and stranger and weirder and weirder, but when he was a kid, he had our attention.

That takes me back to the late '60s when it seemed that the Jacksons came out with a new song every week.

The best part, though, was this: Michael made us think we could all sing. Here was this kid singing and dancing on the Ed Sullivan show and everyone loved him. We wanted people to love us too.

So when Scotty Dumont and Johnny Greenleaf slept over, we used to have marathon singing competitions.

Of course, we did not limit ourselves to the Jackson 5 tunes.

Our repertoire was quite extensive.

It went as far back as Frank Sinatra's "Strangers in the Night" and Jerry Vale's "The Girl from Ipanema."

It was as current as the current Casey Kasem's "Top Forty" and included The Carpenters' "Close to



David Fortier Around the House

You," Bobby Goldsboro's "Honey," Glen Campbell's "Wichita Lineman" and "By the Time I Get to Phoenix," and Bobby Sherman's "Julie, Do Ya Love Me." Of course, the Beatles were a force.

But being rough and tumble kids, we could identify closely with the Jackson 5 because they had Michael. And, when our classmates Davey Watson and Billy Gagne picked up their instruments, we gave them room. We might have played football, basketball, and baseball religiously and dreamed about being professional athletes, but these two already had made it in our eyes.

On those crazy nights when it was just us kids upstairs on in the five-room duplex on Lillian Road, we never got bored because we were dreamers—not because we thought life was going to be easy, but because we knew life was difficult.

Music could make things better.

In the late '60s, even though we were kids, we knew on our own level what was happening. The assassinations of Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr. saw the streets close down and the blinds come down.

We knew all about Abraham, Martin, and John from our lessons at school, but also from our music. It was serious stuff.

Sometimes, when I think back

about how serious we were and how bad we sang, the thing that strikes me most is how we embraced the lyrics.

We were in sixth grade singing love songs that had to do with people leaving on jet planes and planning never to come back; we were singing songs from a girl's point of view ... "Close to You" was a favorite ... listen to the lyrics ... and we sang "Strangers in the Night." I think my brother Jim was only in fourth grade and he had the song memorized.

What were we thinking?

Somewhere in our subconscious, perhaps, there was the idea that we might sing like Michael.

This past Sunday afternoon, the 20-year-old and I sat in front of the TV switching through all of the 200 or so channels that come with our service when we stumbled on one of the many tributes to Michael Jackson.

It was obvious I didn't know much about his career.

The 20-year-old knew more about his career than I did. I thought, perhaps, somehow that because I was on the scene when he started that I had by osmosis absorbed all the Michael Jackson information that was necessary. I was way off.

"Dad," the 20-year-old said to me after I admitted how little I knew about the Michael Jackson oeuvre, "that's why he is the King of Pop."

All I could do was shake my head.

I'll bet on the Fourth while the grills are hot, the firecrackers pop on lawns and driveways, and the fireworks blaze above our heads, Michael Jackson's music will be blaring from stereos somewhere near by.

David Fortier, a Bristol resident, is a freelance writer.

Letters

Relay for Life dinner committee says thanks

To the editor:

The survivor's dinner committee for the Bristol Relay for Life would like to thank the local vendors who provided the food for our survivor's dinner on June 5. Since its inception in Bristol, the number of survivors who attend our dinner

either by themselves or with a caregiver has continued to grow. With the economy being as it is, it is wonderful that local restaurants continue to help us out by their donations or reducing the cost to us enabling us to keep this tradition. A big thank you to LJ's Pizza, Sabino's

Restaurant, The Chunky Tomato, LaFamiliga Deli, and Harvest Bakery for your kindness and support for this event!

Dina Mazzone and Linda Lubrico
Bristol

Getting letters to the editor in the Bristol Observer

We invite readers to contribute letters to the editor. Please include a name and address for inclusion with the letter. Also, submit a telephone number where we can reach you so we can verify your letter.

We will not publish any letters signed with pseudonyms or submitted anonymously. We also will

not withhold the names of the author of a letter.

The editor and this newspaper reserve the right to edit letters for clarity and length, and to withhold letters from publication that do not meet legal standards.

Our mailing address is 213 Spring St., Southington, CT 06489.

Letters also may be e-mailed to mchaiken@BristolObserver.com, or faxed to (860)621-1841.

Deadline is Friday at 10 a.m. for the following week's paper. Submission of a letter prior to the deadline is no guarantee of its publication in the following week's issue.