

“Fires of Adversity”

We have a lot for which to be thankful. We live in a part of Sarasota that has been painstakingly built-up by County planners into a corridor with a nice blend of developments. Currently, those of us living in the Fruitville/Exit 210 area, enjoy a wonderful mix of residential neighborhoods, commercial centers, restaurants, and service-related businesses. Plans are in the works to improve some of our local roads to accommodate the new traffic that the evolutionary development has brought. We all hope that the progress and prosperity continues to enhance our lifestyle. However, unless monitored, we might be faced with projects that do not fit the general character of our community. Projects that bring tremendous amounts of traffic that current infrastructure cannot handle, will adversely affect public safety. Projects that have the potential of putting existing businesses out-of-business will reduce our choices as consumers and change the current lifestyle that we enjoy. Projects that operate on a 24-hour basis will bring more traffic, more noise, more light pollution, and more people into our neighborhoods at all hours of the day.

The aforementioned types of projects are those that we must keep an eye on. We can be a part of the developmental process in our community if we sacrifice just a little time.

In 1774, John Adams, a British colonist left his wife, Abigail and their four children on the family farm in Braintree, Massachusetts. He embarked on an important journey to Philadelphia to join the newly-organized Continental Congress—a small group of visionary colonists who believed that freedom from tyranny would only be realized if they sought independence from England. An act viewed as treason, punishable by death. Despite the risks, all of those who signed the Declaration of Independence believed the cause was worth it. They had sacrificed everything, including their families. In fact, during the first fourteen years of marriage, John and Abigail would be apart for nearly half that time because of his commitment to their cause. Abigail knew her husband was on a necessary course. Her commitment to that course is often overshadowed. Thousands of other women like Abigail made the same sacrifice which allowed their loved ones the time to continue the struggle for independence.

History would show that their struggle was not in vain. With unwavering determination, steadfast loyalty, and indomitable will, John Adams and his fellow countrymen won a bloody revolution against a tyrannical superpower. Adams, once described as “reckless, hot-headed, and obnoxious”, was to return to England to meet the king, who just years earlier would have seen Adams and his band of patriots swing from the gallows. John Adams and Abigail met the King of England. They were not subservient subjects of the crown but an American emissary and wife representing the world’s youngest nation. Upon his return to America, John Adams was greeted and hailed as a hero when he sailed into Boston Harbor. His hard work and determination had paid off. John Adams would later become the second president of the new republic.

The Continental Congress and its members exemplified the early American spirit of sacrifice. They were true patriots who sacrificed everything in their struggle for freedom which would bring a better way of life. Adams was quoted as saying, “People and nations are forged in the fires of adversity.” Today, we simply cannot forget the dangerous journey that these early Americans took. If they had not embarked, we would not have the luxuries and benefits that we enjoy these days.

John Adams believed that the struggle between individualism and corporate authority was always present. Today, we see that same struggle. Corporate authority threatens the American way of life. The only way to have a victory over domineering corporate authority is to sacrifice. When we face ourselves in the mirror, we should ask ourselves, “Do we truly appreciate the sacrifices that those early American patriots made?” The time is now. We must involve ourselves in the process. Our community needs us. We can call it our civic sacrifice but with one major difference—we won’t lose of lives for our involvement. But, certainly, if we don’t participate, we could lose our way of life. Together, as a unified body of like-minded neighbors, we can show leadership and set a standard for others to follow. We can be citizens that would make John and Abigail proud.

In their desire to have independence and a better way of life, John and Abigail along with thousands of other colonists risked their lives, families, and fortunes. In our desire to maintain the way of life that they afforded us, we should be willing to risk a little time. It’s the least we can do. It’s our “fire of adversity.”

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