

Dear Readers,

On the fourth of this month, Americans across the country will celebrate their independence, often without a clue as to what it means historically. Two hundred and twenty-six years later, it is hard to envision what independence meant to our ancestors, but the photos on pages 22-23 may give us some insight.

What is more relevant and personal is the realization that our sons and daughters are at war in a foreign country in an effort to restore independence to many who have never experienced it.

The positive effect 9-11 and the war has had on us is to remind us how fortunate we are to have elected officials and rights and freedoms guaranteed to us by our Constitution. At times, we may have to fight for those rights, and justice is far from perfect, but there is the promise of tomorrow.

And yet, the times have caught us teetering on the edge between personal independence and dependence. The decisions we made in the past influence the choices we get to make today. Seniors who didn't put enough away for retirement are afraid they'll live too long; recent graduates, searching for jobs, find their choice of careers no longer in demand; young couples who put off having children until they could afford them are weighing the decision to let their biological clocks continue to run.

Eager to transfer responsibility for their lack of independence, many place blame on their parents, poverty, abuse, or lack of an education, without acknowledging those who have become independent despite those factors in their lives.

Why is it that some are able to achieve relative independence at an early age, while others never find themselves free from the bonds of another, be it person, place or thing?

Could it be that we allow others to set the standard for our lives? Even those with money are often just as dependent as the next person, or maybe even more so. The more they have the more they seem to want. (See the comments by Mizner on page 27.) No, money is not the qualifier when it comes to independence, because no amount of money frees a person from his or her wants, if there are too many.

This Fourth of July, let's try to adjust our wants to the ability we have to provide, enabling us to maintain independence throughout our days. Get in touch with the difference between wants and needs. The less wants, the greater the independence, and the more likely our needs will be met. Thank God for the many blessings that we in this great state of Florida, this amazing United States of America, have in our homes and through our families.

Mary Lou Merritt

Mary Lou Merritt
Publisher



Mary Lou



Like her character in the movie, *Driving Miss Daisy*, Ruby Pearl Diamond lived alone, becoming best friends with the black man who was her chauffeur.

37

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Lost forever

5

Ships and planes have been lost forever in the Sargasso Sea – what phenomenon can explain their disappearance? We explore several different possibilities.



Slurp 'em, steam 'em 10

Oysters are one of the finest dinners you can enjoy anywhere – just ask those who love them! For a mouth-watering recipe, try our Oysters Rockefeller.



Think big and build! 24

The buildings of Palm Beach and Boca Raton reflect the Spanish influence of Addison Mizner's designs from the 1920s.



More stories & activities

Land of the friendly people	8
A natural lightning rod	14
Thoroughbreds – at home in Ocala	18
Who's who in Ocala	21
Fourth of July in photos	22
Palm Beach Doozies	28
Flamingo Facts	31
Boca's pompous Geist	29
Water, water everywhere	32
Exploring the Peacock	36
Tallahassee's lawlessness	39
Ten generations of one family	40
Find Florida Facts	42
Affairs of honor	43
Black builder makes a place	45
Tallahassee remembers	46
Hey, Kids	49

