

Presented May 9, 2023 at the Avenue of Flags Kickoff

**Open Program with:** (slide #1: We are the Centerville Noon Optimist Club):

**Tom:** (invites audience participation).

**Due to new innovations in Time Travel, we now have the opportunity of meeting with some of our most famous leaders in our past history. So please welcome President, George Washington.**

**(George enters):**

**Tom:** Mr. President, Welcome to our Centerville Noon Optimist Club, and thanks for joining with us; do you mind if I call you George?

**GW:** Tom, since I became President; I am requesting that all should show respect of my office and call me Mr. President.

**Tom:** Mr. President: Thank you for your service to our country; especially your military leadership which carried us thru the Revolutionary War. Is there one military victory of which you are most proud?

**GW:** We certainly had our ups and downs, but the victory I am most proud of, was during the harsh winter of 1776. This was one of the low points in the war and our troops were discouraged. It was not the custom at that time to fight on holidays. On Dec 25<sup>th</sup>, during a freezing rain at night, I led my 1,800 troops who were in many flat boats, across the ice-filled Delaware River. We thoroughly defeated the enemy encampment on the other side of the river. You may have seen a picture as we crossed the river; I was standing in the lead boat with our new American flag which Betsy Ross designed for us. (Slide #2: Give a hearty cheer for George Washington)

**Tom:** Mr. President, yes, many of us have seen that picture and salute you for your bravery. I thought Ben Franklin was coming with you today?

**(Ben enters):**

**Tom:** Ben, thank you for joining us, but what made you late?

**Ben:** Well, you know I am an inventor. I always felt there was a connection between lightning and electricity. So, I attached a pointed metal tip which could attract electricity to the top of my kite; then, I attached a key to the string of my kite; and flew the kite in an electrical storm. I demonstrated that lightening is an electrical charge. I was fortunate that I did not get burned or killed.

**Tom:** Wow, Ben that sounded scary and dangerous; I am glad you made it here today; let's give Ben appreciation for making this trip after that harrowing experience. (slide #3: Let's give a cheer for Ben).

**Tom:** I thought Betsy Ross would be joining with us, but I guess she also may be delayed.

**(Betsy enters).**

**Betsy:** Sorry Tom; I must have put the wrong directions into my Time Travel capsule; but now that I think about it, I did get the directions from you; I understand that you have a history with directions; like when you went to see a horse race with your Optimist group in Kentucky; you could still be driving around that Circle if they didn't find you!

**Tom:** OK Betsy, let's get back to you. I understand that at the start of our Revolutionary War, that George Washington requested you to make a special flag which would unite our young and divided country.

**Betsy:** Yes, George did ask me; I made some changes to his original design and the flag I made for our young country had 13 stripes; (7 red & 6 white); and a field of blue with 13 white stars in a circle representing the 13 states. We felt the flag could become the symbol of patriotism and love of country.

**Tom:** Betsy, the only change to the flag you designed, is that now there are 50 stars representing our 50 states; what has not changed is that our American Flag remains our most patriotic symbol: (slide #4: American Flag). Betsy, we all thank you for your role.(slide #5: Cheers & applause for Betsy Ross!)

**Ben:** Many of us have spent a lot of time, effort, and sacrifice to create this country! I feel our country should have special "Flag Holidays" to show we are proud of what this country stands for! Each holiday would have its own identity; and, flags would be on special display in every community! How about the rest of you?

**GW:** I agree and I have an idea for the 1<sup>st</sup> holiday: It should be a day set aside to remember and honor those who sacrificed their lives to preserve the freedoms we cherish today. It could be named: **Memorial Day**.

**Betsy:** I have an idea for the 2<sup>nd</sup> holiday: I agree with Ben! The flag is the one symbol which unites all of us; it is a symbol of the freedoms we cherish: this holiday could be named: **Flag Day**.

**Ben:** I am a big believer in parades, parties, and fireworks: the 3<sup>rd</sup> holiday could honor our Independence from Great Britain: it could be named: **Independence Day**.

**Betsy:** I work hard and so do many Americans: Let's have our 4<sup>th</sup> holiday recognize the efforts of our hard-working population. Our citizens could take the day off and party all day! It could be named: **Labor Day**.

**GW:** I have an idea for our 5<sup>th</sup> holiday. We all agree, that the freedoms we have today, and the vision we have for tomorrow, are secure, because of the patriotic service of ALL who have served in our military forces, and, those who currently serve our country: let's call it: **Veterans Day**.

**Tom:** My dear friends: I am proud to say that our Club has already taken the leadership in displaying American Flags in our community (**slide #6: O'Leary's Pub**); And, what a co-incidence! -- We honor those very 5 holidays!! (**slide #7: list of 5 holidays**).

For Veterans Day last year, our Ave of Flags Fundraiser Program displayed 3,500 flags in our community!

**Betsy:** How is your group able to distribute so many flags at one time? You must have your own army to do that!

**Tom:** Betsy, that's a good question. All of our Optimist activities succeed because of the power of many, energetic volunteers in our Club; Many helpers, working together, achieve large goals!

**GW:** You must have many horses pulling your wagons of flags !

**Tom:** Mr. President: We have come a long way since your time-period: This year we will have over 90 Teams delivering flags for their respective routes (**slide # 8: map of all flag routes**). Each team will use their own, special, flag-carrying vehicle. we love SUVs, Vans, & Trucks (**slide #9: Collins and Larrimer**); some Teams have unconventional "flag-carrying vehicles: (**slide #10 Lawson w. his boat**); some Teams have their own dance routines prior to delivering flags (**slide #11: John Speers**); we even celebrate birthdays with a bouquet of flags: (**slide #12: Birthday for Paula Harrison**).

Each team uses GPS to deliver flags on their route; and each Team has a metal detector to help find the location of our flag sites: (**slide #13: Gary Anderson & with metal detector & Paul Boeckman**).

Our community loves our flags and each of our Teams are proud to deliver the flags (**slide #14: 2 helpers**). As we continue to grow, remember (**slide #15: Uncle Sam**).

Thanks to all of our AOF Helpers; and thanks to George, Ben, and Betsy for sharing with us today.