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## Letters June 28, 2000



### For Elks lodge members, Americanism continues 365 days a year

The celebrations of Memorial Day, Flag Day and Independence Day each year permit ample opportunity for Americans to reflect on those who sacrificed their lives in this nation's service, the meaning of our national symbol and the liberty our nation enjoys. The members of the Middletown Elks Lodge take full advantage of those opportunities, as shown in their formal observance of those days each year.

The members of the lodge, though, carry the idea of Americanism with them 365 days a year. The Pledge of Allegiance, for example, is recited by the Elks before each lodge meeting, and it is done so with pride, conviction and respect. The U.S. flag flies continuously in front of the lodge and serves as a focal point for remembering the members of our nation's armed forces, past and present. The anthem "God Bless America," as sung at the lodge's recent Flag Day service, was a rendition that would have made Kate Smith proud!

Abraham Lincoln wrote that being an American was not dependent on one's national origin or blood ties to the founding fathers, but rather on one's belief in, what he termed, the National Idea. The idea of which he wrote is liberty, and it was an idea of liberty unique in human history, not conferred by man or government, but by God. A small community of citizens who call themselves Elks exemplify the true spirit of American liberty in which people come together freely for a common purpose and for selfless motives, and they take joy in it.

On this coming Independence Day on July fourth, the Elks will celebrate American liberty as members of an American institution – one in which American pride runs deep.

Paul Dutton  
Public Relations Chairman

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