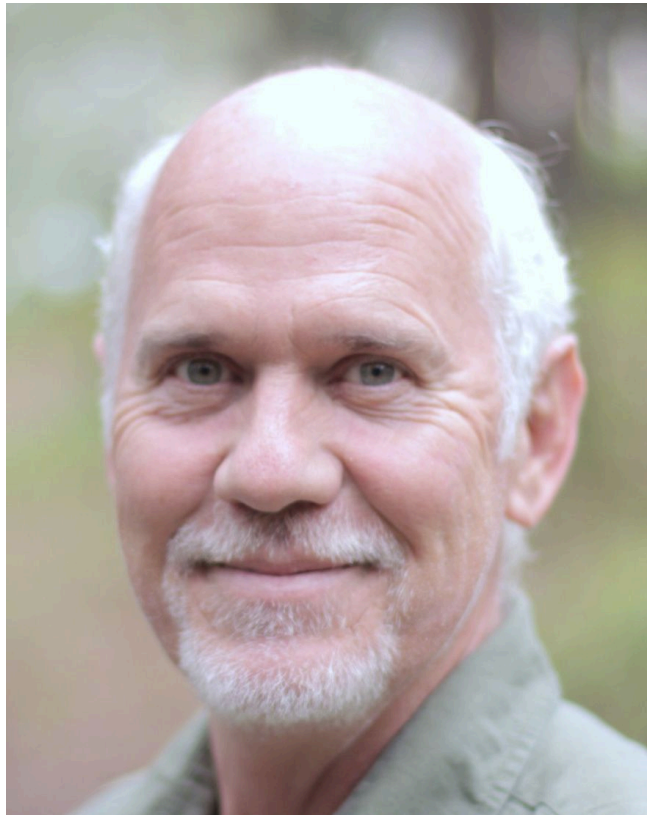


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## Guest Column: Declaration of Interdependence

July 14, 2022



On July 4th we celebrated our country's Declaration of Independence from Great Britain. On this day I was just returning to Crescent City from a two-week, 5,000-mile trip across our country. While I was driving, I contemplated the many ways in which we are interconnected as a country. This has inspired me to suggest that we should also have a Declaration of Interdependence.

The last line of the Declaration of Independence states that, "...we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor." The founders knew that for this effort to form an independent country to succeed all the people needed to band together. The Revolutionary War had just begun, and the United States would not claim victory until September 3, 1783.

There is no doubt that when we work together, there is much that we can accomplish. To do this, we must overcome political or philosophical differences and find common purpose. The reason for organized government is to facilitate progress as a country that we could not accomplish individually. Through our taxes we pool our resources to build what we could never do by ourselves.

The national highway and road system is a good example of this. If you kept the sixty-nine cents per gallon that you pay for state and federal gas taxes, you would not have enough funding to build even a small section of road. However, combining a small amount of tax from everyone, provides sufficient revenue to build the extensive highway system that we all utilize.

Closer to home we use our combined taxes to fund police, fire protection and free public education. We all contribute to these for the benefit of our entire community.

As I was driving from state to state, I did not see the color of the sky or the land change colors from blue to red when I crossed the borders from Washington through Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. What I did see were vast ranches and farms that grow the beef, corn, wheat, soybeans, and potatoes that we all rely on. We depend on the food that is grown in these other states, just as they depend on the fresh fruit, wine, dairy, and nuts that are produced in California.

On a day-to-day basis we count on the many people who we learned to call essential workers during the pandemic. We expect that when we go to the store or gas station that there will be someone there to allow us to purchase the products that we need. We trust that when we need medical assistance that doctors, nurses and other medical professionals will be available to help us.

If we once thought that we are separate from what happens in other parts of the world, we have learned that this is not true. When the corona virus first emerged, it was not deterred by national or state boundaries. We are now seeing that a war halfway around the world can have a profound effect on us here in our remote county.

The war in Ukraine has disrupted oil supplies which has increased our gas prices. The blockade of the ports in Ukraine has cut off the export of wheat and other grains causing massive food shortages. The global economy is more intertwined than ever and what happens in other countries affects us here as production of basic goods are curtailed and supply chains are disrupted.

When I studied ecology at the University of Wisconsin, I learned that all living things are interdependent. Degradation of our natural environment will eventually affect all of us. What we do individually affects what happens to our society as a whole. We are all interconnected and interdependent.

Our country's motto, first proposed for the Great Seal of the United States by John Adams, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson is "E pluribus unum," which means "one from many." We are the United States of America, and it would be best if we could all recognize that we are in this together.

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