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INSIGHTS

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56 Brave Men



On July 4, 1776, a group of patriots pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor by signing the Declaration of Independence. Have you ever wondered what happened to the 56 men who signed this historic document?

Twenty-four were lawyers and jurists. Eleven were merchants, nine were farmers and large plantation owners – men of means, well educated. But they signed the Declaration of Independence knowing full well that the penalty would be death if they were captured.

Five were captured by the British as traitors and tortured before they died. Twelve had their homes ransacked and burned. Nine fought and died from wounds or hardships of the Revolutionary War. Some were forced into hiding, their possessions taken away and poverty was their reward.

Such were the stories and sacrifices of the American Revolution. These were not wild-eyed, rabble-rousing ruffians. They were soft-spoken men of means and education. They had security, but they valued liberty more. Standing tall, straight, and unwavering, they pledged: "For the support of this declaration, with firm reliance on the protection of divine providence, we mutually pledge to each other, our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor."

They gave us a free and independent America. Some of us take these liberties so much for granted. We shouldn't. Take a few minutes this year while enjoying your 4th of July holiday and silently thank these patriots. It's not much to ask for the price they paid. Freedom is never free! ■

Big Macs go Environmental!

After more than two years of testing, McDonald's Corporation has approved a compostable packaging from EarthShell Corporation for its "Big Mac" sandwiches.

The container is a composite of materials, primarily limestone and potato starch. It also includes a small percentage of post-consumer recycled paper for toughness. The packaging material was designed using life-cycle analysis as a tool. It is compostable and free of toxic materials.

EarthShell is targeting the food service industry for future applications of the material, competing with paper and polystyrene for use as hinged containers, cups, trays, plates, and bowls. ■

Source: Tappi Journal

Fun in July!

The Boring Institute has designated July as "Anti-Boredom Month." No problem! It's also Recreation & Parks Month, which means you can get out there and celebrate the fact that it's also Baked Bean, Hot Dog, and Ice Cream Month. The North American Blueberry Council wants you to know that July Belongs to Berries Month, so get out there and toss some berries on your ice cream and celebrate. July 3 – 15 has been selected as the Dog Days of summer and July 22 is National Hot Dog Day.



Environment a Great Success (?)

Gloom and doom coverage of environmental issues by the media has distorted the fact that the environment is the "greatest success story of the last 30 years," according to the Pacific Research Institute (PRI). The institute recently released its Index of Leading Environmental Indicators, which comprises local data for the 50 states and 100 U.S. cities.

To demonstrate its point, the institute compared trends in aggregate air pollution emissions from 1970 to 2000 with progress in the crime rate and percentage of U.S. households on welfare for the same period. Air quality has shown steady improvement in comparison with the highly irregular showing of the other indicators. The institute notes other positive trends in water quality and urban sprawl.



"Despite widespread media attention and public concern about urban sprawl, only five percent of all land in the continental U.S. is developed," states PRI.

The study finds that positive environmental trends are likely to continue as a result of improving technology, market-based incentives, and local activism, which people generally rate more highly than government efforts.

"For too long the commitment to environmental protection has been measured on the basis of growth of EPA's budget, the number of enforcement actions brought, and the amount of fines levied," said the institute. "The next 30 years of environmental progress will be led by local control, cooperative dialogue, and results-oriented technological and market-based innovation, rather than cumbersome bureaucracy and decades of litigation."

You can count on ChemStation being right up there with our commitment to protect the environment by developing state-of-the-art techniques to formulate water-based, biodegradable cleaning compounds; with no contamination from discarded containers or residue; and rigorous analytical processes that exceed virtually all environmental standards. ■

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Ergonomics Law
Are We Winning or Losing?

Awhile back, the U.S. Department of Labor (USDL) was going to tell everyone how to handle workplace injuries. The regulation would have affected every industry in the U.S. and would have cost a fortune to implement. It was pulled back when industry screamed its head off about it.

It's not dead and buried, yet. Three hearings on work-related injuries are scheduled for July to decide what the USDL will do following Congress' repeal of the Clinton Administration's ergonomics regulation. Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao will decide by September whether she will pursue another government regulation or go to a voluntary policy to address the issue.

The hearings will focus on the definition of an ergonomics injury, how to determine if the injury was work-related, and what the government regulatory response should be. Under the law used to repeal the Clinton ergonomics rule, if the USDL decides to pursue a replacement regulation, it can't be substantially similar to the one rejected by Congress. While that may be good news, the problem is… nearly two dozen states operate their own workplace safety programs under OSHA. These states must now decide whether to move ahead with ergonomic standards.
Source: Capitol Line-Up



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Soapbox

He who builds a better mousetrap these days runs into material shortages, patent-infringement suits, work stoppages, collusive bidding, discount discrimination…and taxes.
H. E. Martz

Men occasionally stumble over the truth, but most of them pick themselves up and hurry off as if nothing ever happened.
Sir Winston Churchill

Last night I dreamed I ate a 10-pound marshmallow, and when I woke up the pillow was gone.
Tommy Cooper

For every action there is an equal and opposite government program.
Bob Wells

He who hesitates is not only lost, but miles from the next exit.
Unknown

Americans will put up with anything provided it doesn't block traffic.
Dan Rather

The brain is a wonderful organ. It starts working the moment you get up in the morning and does not stop until you get into the office.
Robert Frost

When someone tells you something defies description, you can be pretty sure he's going to have a go at it anyway.
Clyde B. Aster

There is hopeful symbolism in the fact that flags do not wave in a vacuum.
Arthur C. Clarke

Research is the process of going up alleys to see if they are blind.
Marston Bates

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