

BILL FLICK
 EDITORIAL
HENCE FOURTH: A trivial side dish for your holiday fare
 796 words
 5 July 1996
 The Pantagraph Bloomington, IL
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 English
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So it's only Day 2 of America's annual historic salute to itself and already you've weathered a holiday picnic; perspired enough to leave stains in the driveway like a '78 Ford pickup; been munched on by mosquitoes so large, by month's end they'll qualify as zoo exhibits; and heard the neighbor kids set off enough fireworks that if this wasn't America, you'd swear it was Baghdad, or Tehran, or a Bruce Willis movie.

And yet - have you learned anything historic on this, the most historic of all American holiday weekends?

Our own annual Fourth of July clip-and-save primer of Generally Unknown Trivial Stuff About Us:

Abe Was Here, Honest

Stand at the northwest corner of Jefferson and McLean streets today, just north of the old Bloomington Junior High, and you're standing on land Abe once owned and walked.

See The D.A.

D.A. Weibring has become our most famous golfer and yet you wonder - what does that D. and A. stand for? Donald Albert Weibring. (That's his Dad's name, too. So they called him D.A. instead.)

July's 'Reign' ...

Now that your yard's drier than a Maytag and there's no sign of rain, remain positive - historically, July is this area's absolute rainiest month. (Four of our 10 all-time wettest months have been Julys.)

Buys 'n Dolls

Next time you see an American Girl Doll commercial on TV and the surroundings look familiar, it's because many of the scenes were shot at Bloomington's historic David Davis Mansion.

Former Navel Base - Not!

Bikinis were outlawed at Bloomington's Miller Park lagoon when they first appeared 50 years ago this summer. Too much navel, the City Council said.

State's Top Farm

As home of Chicago, one of the world's largest cities, Illinois naturally is home, too, of several Fortune 500 companies. But Illinois' highest-ranking Fortune 500 company - at No. 12 on the list - is not Chicago-based but Bloomington-bred instead. Yup, State Farm.

Cooperstown West

Site of organized baseball's second-longest completed game (26 innings) in one day was here, May 30, 1909, when Decatur beat host Bloomington, 2-1, in a Three-I League (today's Triple A) game.

How Time Flies, Elsewhere

Among the nuclear sites of World War II war planes, had the Nagasaki bombing mission been scrapped for another in August 1945 - Asahikawa, Japan. Fifty years later, ironically, it is Bloomington-Normal's sister city.

What They Once Were ...

Alexander's Steak House was once Showtime Pizza Palace. Pizza Hut on College in Normal was Rocky Rococco's. Schnucks was Zayre's department store. The Center For Human Services (downtown at 108 W. Market St.) was Red Lion Inn, a popular nightclub. ("Cheap Trick" once played there, for a \$1 cover.) The Fun Factory area of Eastland Mall was an A&P grocery store.

Just A Boob?

Jenny McCarthy is on magazine covers everywhere, co-host of MTV's "Singled Out" TV game show, an ex-Playmate of the Year and being hailed as today's pop culture queen. Probably lesser known is that four years ago, the southside Chicago native flunked out of Southern Illinois University, after choosing it over Illinois State University.

World One-Way Capital

One for Ripley's - before Feb. 1, 1952, Bloomington did not have a one-way street. Not one. Allegedly.

Joycelyn Elders, Move Over

Reason for dismissal of ISU health services director in 1971 - he told state officials the university was considering offering birth-control pills to students.

The Fourth, By The Numbers:

- Actual number of flags Coldwell Banker Heart of America Realtors plunked in B-N front lawns this year - 18,000, says Chris Harrison. But B-N is getting so large, there weren't enough to go around this year.

- Pricetag of those fireworks shot off last night at Miller and Fairview parks - about \$12,000, per location.

- Amount paid by each city for an insurance liability policy to offset the possibility you might sue or a worker might be hurt - nearly \$1,200 per city, or roughly \$1 per second of show.

- Percentage of fireworks that actually were made in America - about 7 percent. (90 percent were imported from China.)

- Largest firework shot off - it was rounded and measured about 12 inches wide, resembling a paper-wrapped bowling ball with a wick.

- Estimated number of stiff-neck reports afterward - BroMenn Hospital said traditionally, there are none.

Bill Flick is a Pantagraph columnist. To hear the FLICKLINE bulletin board, call 829-9000, enter 2450. To submit your own entry, enter 2400. His e-mail address: flickpantagraph.com

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