

## NEWS

**Flags, fireworks fly in July Fourth fun // Passion for independence displayed proudly**

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Their love of Old Glory stirred by the nation's highest court, Americans waved the flag with a passion July Fourth, handing out thousands of new ones and reverently retiring old and tattered ones by burning them.

A medal of liberty was awarded to Polish union leader Lech Walesa in Philadelphia, a Cuban immigrant opened up his home in gratitude to his adopted country, and Winthrop Paul Rockefeller, a great-grandson of Standard Oil founder John D. Rockefeller, put on an Arkansas fireworks display expected to draw 100,000.

"For me, there's more to it than just the cost," Rockefeller, son of Arkansas' late governor, said of the mountain display he has sponsored for the past 10 years. "I love it. To see the kids and the older folks, the people who fought to keep this country free, it's just a humdinger of a Fourth of July."

Seven Chinese students at the University of Tulsa in Oklahoma used an Independence Day ceremony to announce they want political asylum in the United States.

"We want to publicly denounce the Chinese government by asking for asylum," said graduate student Guohua Zheng, 25.

In Seattle, about 500 people representing 51 countries became Americans as hundreds of others, including two congressmen, welcomed them on a rare sunny Fourth of July in Seattle.

They weren't so lucky in the nation's capital, where it rained on the estimated 20,000 people who turned out for the annual Fourth of July parade.

Thousands of flags were given away in Milwaukee and Chicago, and a week after the Supreme Court ruled that burning the flag in protest is protected by the Constitution, American Legion posts retired old flags by burning them.

"It's the proper way to burn any tattered, torn flag that needs to be destroyed," said John Comer as Legionnaires in Manchester, Mass., destroyed 50 old flags in a ceremony that traditionally includes prayers.

Just outside Miami, Cuban immigrant and exporter Eduardo Martinez again threw open his Hacienda Mardenpaz to tens of thousands. As visitors examined scaled-down versions of the White House and the Statue of Liberty, bands played a mixture of Latin music, country and rock.

"I do this as a tribute to America because we are very grateful to this country," he said.

Solidarity leader Walesa was hailed for "his personal triumph" of hope in Poland as his wife accepted Philadelphia's first Liberty Medal and a \$100,000 cash award on his behalf in a ceremony outside Independence Hall.

"The timing of this Philadelphia Liberty Medal award coincides with a particular moment in Poland," said Danuta Walesa, speaking for her husband. "Our many years of struggle for the right to our own nation is entering into its decisive phase,"

She referred to Tuesday's events in Warsaw, where for the first time since the late 1940s an opposition group was installed in a Soviet bloc legislature.

The mood was more outrage than solidarity in Boston, where more than 3,000 abortion rights activists protested Monday's Supreme Court ruling on a Missouri abortion case.

"How ironic that the Supreme Court is poised to take away a cherished right when the nation is commemorating our extraordinary tradition of individual liberty," said Pam Nourse, director of Mass Choice.

In Milwaukee, about 18 volunteers were cheered by passers-by as they placed some 1,500 flags along the streets. "People were honking their horns, giving me the peace sign and giving me thumbs up," said Marietta Redding. "I love apple pie, grandmas and the flag."

PHOTO; Caption: Two-year-old Jeremy McCan holds an American flag as he tries to get a look at the Fourth of July parade in Oklahoma City.; Credit: AP

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