



July 10, 2008

## **Post-Independence Day Blues**

*By Sarah McIntosh*

There's so much build up for it. There are t-shirts with flags on them to purchase. Firework stands on nearly every corner to peruse. And then there are the hotdogs and ice cream---and possibly even a trip to the lake. Finally, in one night, it's all over. So maybe it is not quite so dramatic for everyone. It is not the same as the post-Christmas letdown you might say, but for me it's a big deal; it's the post-independence day blues.

This year my annual 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration started early. A couple of weeks before the holiday I traveled out to Denver, Colorado. It was there that I attended my first ATF party. The ATF party is an annual event hosted by Jon Caldara of the Independence Institute, a Colorado-based think tank. This year nearly 200 people came to celebrate the right to partake in alcohol, tobacco, and firearms---“vices” that the nanny state seeks to take away from the people. I will admit that my first time shooting a firearm---and hitting three out of five clay pigeons---was more intoxicating than my single glass of wine, but it was more than a party of consumption; it was a celebration of freedom.

As we wind down from the “high” of shooting off all those fireworks this year and the party buzz of the holiday, it's important to not let the celebration fizzle out with that last sparkler. Every day we should remain cognizant of the rights and freedoms we enjoy because we live in a country that recognizes that individuals possess the right to live freely.

But those freedoms should not be taken for granted. If we allow them to, they will fizzle out as well.

The founders of this country fought hard to create a government of the people, for the people, and by the people. But if the “people” stop paying attention then this all falls to the wayside.

We take it for granted that we have a representative government where we have a say in who is elected, and who governs us. We must exercise that right, but the responsibility does not end at the ballot box. In order to truly appreciate and ensure the continuation of our representative government, it requires us to remain vigilant. How do we know if our representatives are truly representing us if we do not pay attention to the policies they are supporting, and just as importantly, fighting?

The ATF party is over and all my fireworks have been used, but as I combat this post-independence day blues, I realize that every day should be a celebration, because we live in a country where we are free and prosperous---let's make sure that continues.

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