



U.S. CONSTITUTION SPECIAL EDITION

Sept 18, 2024

Brew Link Brewpub, Wednesdays

**FELLOWSHIP, SERVICE,
PURPOSE, IMPACT, GROWTH**

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ROTARY CLUB OF PLAINFIELD

www.plainfieldrotary.org

U.S. Constitution Week

To commemorate the September 17, 1787 signing of the Constitution of the United States, Congress has designated this date each year as Constitution Day and September 17-23 of each year as Constitution Week. In keeping with this spirit your Rotary Club provides this Special Edition Bulletin. Congress also mandates that every school that receives any Federal funds hold an educational program on the Constitution on this date. What will your children or grandchildren learn about the Constitution this week?

On a rainy Friday, May 25, 1787, delegates from 12 of the thirteen states (Rhode Island did not participate) began to gather in Philadelphia in convention. The purpose of what became known as the Constitutional Convention was to address all matters needed "to render the constitution of the Federal Government adequate to the exigencies of the Union." Over the next three and a half months, 55 delegates to this convention, presided over by George Washington, discussed, debated, and compromised on the composition of our U.S. Constitution. The Convention concluded its business on September 17, 1787, delivering by unanimous consent of the twelve states present, the same seven-article constitution that we are governed by today, to be further ratified by the PEOPLE.

The Framers of the Constitution believed that the purpose of a government was to secure the Natural Rights of its citizens. They believed that the PEOPLE, not the government, were sovereign. They specifically stipulated that the Constitution was to be ratified by the PEOPLE of each state. As Constitution signer James Wilson stated at the Constitutional Convention, final authority rests not with a central or a state government, but rather it "remains and flourishes with the PEOPLE.... That the supreme power, therefore, should be vested in the PEOPLE, is in my judgment the greatest panacea of human politics. It is a power paramount to every constitution, inalienable in its nature, and indefinite in its extent." This is why our Constitution begins with the words "We the People". The Framers also believed that the People were not angels. This is driven home in particular by their crafting a system of constitutional Checks and Balances, both among the three federal branches and between the federal and the state governments. In Federalist Paper #51, James Madison says "Ambition must be made to counteract ambition.... If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal control on government would be necessary. In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself. A dependence on the people is, no doubt, the primary control on the government; but experience has taught mankind the necessity of auxiliary precautions." Hence the focus on checking the power of every branch of government.

In order to secure Natural Rights of their fellow citizens, the Framers believed that there was a critical need to limit the powers of the federal government. In recent years, some politicians have lamented the fact that our Constitution is such a negative one, focusing much more on what government is not permitted to do.

Charlie's \$2 Worth

"We have no Government armed with Power capable of contending with human Passions unbridled by morality and Religion. Avarice, Ambition Revenge or Galantry, would break the strongest Cords of our Constitution as a Whale goes through a Net. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious People. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."
- John Adams

"If in the opinion of the People, the distribution or modification of the Constitutional powers be in any particular wrong, let it be corrected by an amendment in the way which the Constitution designates. But let there be no change by usurpation; for though this, in one instance, may be the instrument of good, it is the customary weapon by which free governments are destroyed."
- George Washington

"The powers delegated by the proposed Constitution to the federal government are few and defined. Those which are to remain in the State governments are numerous and indefinite."
- James Madison

Perhaps they have lost sight of the Framers' beliefs in the PEOPLE as sovereign and in the concept of Consent of the Governed. Our entire U.S. Constitution, including its 27 Amendments, can be written on 35 pages. Today we have bills passed by Congress that are so long, sometimes well in excess of 1,000 pages, that those elected to represent the people may have little true knowledge or understanding of what is in those bills. Unelected bureaucrats and Congressional staff have become the real decision-makers in our government. Is this truly the republican form of government devised by the Framers? Is it truly Consent of the Governed?

Other public leaders have said that we need a "living constitution", one that adapts to the times. The Framers debated the need to, and the potential methods of, altering the constitution. Most were reluctant to suggest easy means of changing the document. James Madison, in Federalist #49 said "frequent appeals [to change the constitution] would, in great measure, deprive the government of that veneration which time bestows on everything, and without which perhaps the wisest and freest governments would not possess the requisite stability." They believed in and wished for the permanence of the Constitution; nonetheless, they did incorporate a means of changing the document - it is known as Article V, and, including the first ten Amendments known as the Bill of Rights, has been used 27 times in our history. Article V has been used to free the slaves, make anyone born in the U.S. an American citizen, institute income taxes, prohibit the manufacture and sale of liquor, give women the right to vote, repeal the prohibition of liquor, institute term limits on the Presidency, and grant the District of Columbia electoral votes equal to those of the smallest states. The words of the Constitution itself allow it to be a "living" thing...

Club Meeting Attendance

Plainfield (3417)

Monthly Attendance Detail

July 01, 2024 through July 31, 2024

Member Name	Jul 10 2024	Jul 17 2024	Jul 24 2024	Jul 31 2024	%
Ament, Susan Beth	Y	Y	Y	Y	100
Baer, Janet S		Y	Y		50
Baer, John M	Y	Y	Y	Y	100
Bell, Danielle Renee		Y			25
Bennett, Joseph D	Y	M		Y	75
Biehn, John-Paul E	Y	Y			50
Burks, Diane Arnold	Y	Y	Y	Y	100
Carter, Royce	Y	Y	Y	M	100
Culp, Brian N	Y	Y	M	Y	100
DuBois, Brad	Y	M			50
Emerson, Donnie			Y		25
Graham, John		Y	Y	Y	75
Hank, Max C		Y			25
Kinnamon, Daniel L		Y	Y	Y	75
Klinger, Andrew		Y		Y	50
Olinger, Scott		Y	Y		50
Pies, Daniel Adam				Y	25
Poray, Reann			Y	Y	50
Rash, Ryan Allen			Y		25
Reagle, Dennis J. Jr.			Y		25
Sichting, Sherry D	Y	Y	Y	Y	100
Turner, Dean F Jr.					0



HAPPY BIRTHDAY! SEPTEMBER

Rocky Turner - Sep 19

Little Free Library Maintenance Schedule

Sep 4-10 - Susan Ament
Sep 11-17 - Sherry Sichting
Sep 18-24 - John & Jan Bear
Sep 25-Oct 1 - Royce Carter
Oct 2-8 - Max Hank
Oct 9-15 - Brian Culp
Oct 16-22 - Joe Bennett
Oct 23-29 - Susan Ament
Oct 30-Nov 5 - Max Hank

Please check supply, refill as needed.
Report any damage to Joe Bennett.
Books are available at the Library.



Committees and Chairs

Bulletin: Max Hank

Finance: Joe Bennett

Foundation: John Baer

Fundraising :

Golf Outing: John Baer, Brad Dubois

Crew Car Wash: Sherry Sichting

Membership: Brian Culp

Orientation: John Baer & Diane Burks

Programs: Brian Culp

PR & Website: John Baer

Quaker Day Parade & Picnic: TBD

Service Committees: Royce Carter

Literacy/LFL: Joe Bennett

Teacher of the Year: Max Hank

Youth: Diane Burks

Interact and RYLA: Diane Burks

Scholarships: Max Hank

Straight-A Salute: Sherry Sichting

The Imagination & Idea Labs: Diane Burks

UPCOMING SPEAKER ASSIGNMENTS

Please carefully examine the schedule below and let Max Hank know who you have obtained as a speaker for your date.

Jan 3	Brian Culp	Jun 26	Donnie Emerson
Jan 17	Max Hank	Jul 17	Andrew Klinger
Jan 24	Bob Sands	Jul 24	Royce Carter
Jan 31	Andrew Klinger	Jul 31	Ryan Rash
Feb 7		Aug 7	Sherry Sichting
Feb 21	Scott Olinger	Aug 21	Brad DuBois
Feb 28	Ryan Rash	Aug 28	Reann Poray
Mar 6	Donnie Emerson	Sep 4	Diane Burks
Mar 20	Royce Carter	Sep 18	Scott Olinger
Mar 27	Diane Burks	Sep 25	Max Hank
Apr 3	Joe Bennett	Oct 2	Susan Ament
Apr 17	Sherry Sichting	Oct 16	John Graham
Apr 24	Brad DuBois	Oct 23	Rocky Turner
May 1	Susan Ament	Oct 30	Daniel Kinnamon
May 15	Rocky Turner	Nov 6	Joe Bennett
May 22	Reann Poray	Nov 20	John Baer
May 29	John Graham	Dec 4	Jan Baer
Jun 5	John Baer	Dec 18	John-Paul Biehn
Jun 19	Bob Sands		

Upcoming Speakers/Events

Sept 18	- Scott Olinger - Brittney Stewart, PCSC ESL Instructional Coach
Sept 25	- Max Hank - Loren Delp, Hendricks Cty Prosecutor
Oct 2	- Susan Ament - Brandy Wethington, Executive Director, Made @ Plainfield
Oct 9	- Board Meeting - all Club members welcome
Oct 16	- John Graham
Oct 23	- Rocky Turner
Oct 30	- Daniel Kinnamon
Nov 6	- Joe Bennett
Nov 13	- Board Meeting - all Club members welcome
Nov 20	- John Baer

More on the Constitution and Independence Hall

Fifty-five men made up the delegation to the Constitutional Convention. Their average age was 42. The youngest was 26; the oldest, Benjamin Franklin, was 81. Eight had signed the Declaration of Independence. Thirty-nine had already served in Congress; seven had been state governors. They included lawyers, farmers, and merchants. Nineteen were slave owners. They were not perfect men, and the document they created was not perfect. Nevertheless, James Madison stated shortly after the Convention that "it is impossible for the man of pious reflection not to perceive in [the Constitution] a finger of that Almighty hand which has been so frequently and signally extended to our relief in the critical stages of the revolution." Those "Plain, Honest Men" as Gouverneur Morris described his fellow delegates, created a document that has survived for 237 years and is the world's oldest written constitution. Perhaps Madison was right... The senior delegate of the group, Benjamin Franklin, was relatively quiet during the Convention's deliberations, but his comments on the day of the approval and signing of the Constitution reflect the difficulties and challenges of the process and the potential benefits of the result - the Constitution of the United States of America. Excerpts of Franklin's speech are below:

"We have been long together. Every possible objection has been combated. With so many different and contending interests it is impossible that any one can obtain every object of their wishes. We have met to make mutual sacrifices for the general good, and we have at last come fully to understand each other, and settle the terms.... I confess that there are several parts of this constitution which I do not at present approve, but I am not sure I shall never approve them: For having lived long, I have experienced many instances of being obliged by better information, or fuller consideration, to change opinions even on important subjects, which I once thought right, but found to be otherwise. It is therefore that the older I grow, the more apt I am to doubt my own judgment, and to pay more respect to the judgment of others.... In these sentiments, Sir, I agree to this Constitution with all its faults, if they are such;... I doubt too whether any other Convention we can obtain, may be able to make a better Constitution. For when you assemble a number of men to have the advantage of their joint wisdom, you inevitably assemble with those men, all their prejudices, their passions, their errors of opinion, their local interests, and their selfish views. From such an assembly can a perfect production be expected? It therefore astonishes me, Sir, to find this system approaching so near to perfection as it does; and I think it will astonish our enemies, who are waiting with confidence to hear that our councils are confounded like those of the Builders of Babel; and that our States are on the point of separation, only to meet hereafter for the purpose of cutting one another's throats. Thus I consent, Sir, to this Constitution because I expect no better, and because I am not sure, that it is not the best. The opinions I have had of its errors, I sacrifice to the public good. I have never whispered a syllable of them abroad. Within these walls they were born, and here they shall die.... I hope therefore that for our own sakes as a part of the people, and for the sake of posterity, we shall act heartily and unanimously in recommending this Constitution (if approved by Congress & confirmed by the Conventions) wherever our influence may extend, and turn our future thoughts & endeavors to the means of having it well administered."

The members of the Constitutional Convention deliberated in the same building, in the very same room, as did the members of the Second Continental Congress when debating the Declaration of Independence eleven years earlier. Have you made the pilgrimage to this shrine of American Independence and felt the spirit of liberty in this wonderful place in Philadelphia, Independence Hall?



Independence Hall, Philadelphia, PA



the Assembly Room in Independence Hall, where both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution were debated and approved - feel the history & inspiration here...

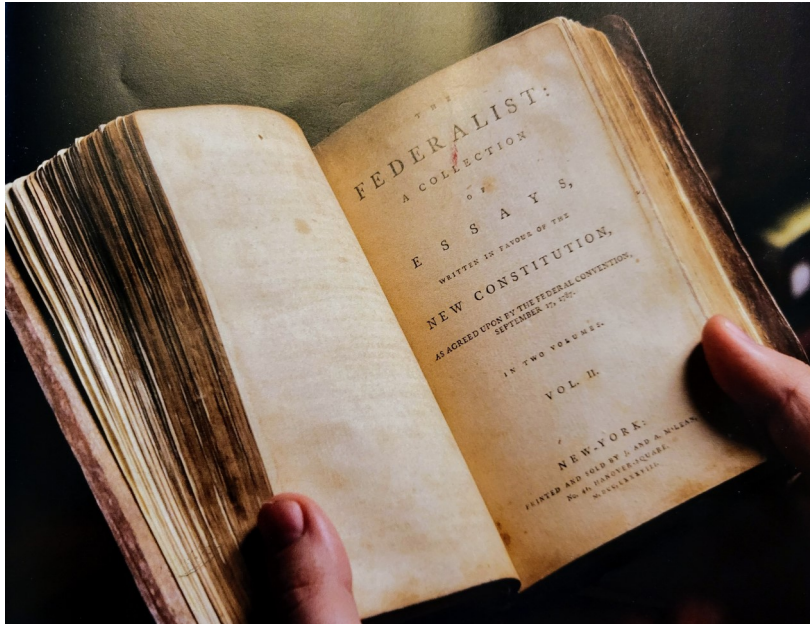


We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

To better understand our Constitution, read James Madison's Notes on the Constitutional Convention; and the Federalist Papers - the collection of 85 essays written by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay to persuade the citizens of New York State to ratify the Constitution

For further information and other learning tools regarding the Constitution, visit the National Center for Constitutional Studies at <https://nccs.net/> or your local library.

The Federalist Papers



Original bound edition of the essays published in New York newspapers explaining and advocating for the people of New York to ratify the New Constitution.

Your editor has spent some retirement time learning more about the Constitution, including the debates within its Convention from May-Sept 1787, and the outstanding collection of articles written in 1787-88 explaining the proposed Constitution to the people of New York who would be voting on it. These 85 articles were written by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay under the pen name of Publius, and became collectively known as the Federalist Papers. George Washington said of these papers, “When the transient circumstances & fugitive performances which attended this crisis (ratifying the Constitution) shall have disappeared, that Work (The Federalist Papers) will merit the notice of posterity; because in it are candidly and ably discussed the principles of freedom and the topics of government, which will be always interesting to mankind so long as they shall be connected in Civil Society.” Thomas Jefferson simply called the collected essays the “best commentary on the principles of government which ever was written.” This admiration of The Federalist Papers is not contained to 18th Century opinions. In 2011, the late Justice Antonin Scalia told a seminar organized by the Congressional Tea Party Caucus that each attendee should “get a copy of The Federalist Papers, read it, underline it and dog-ear it.” Legal scholars have dog-eared it too, writing more than 10,000 articles on these papers, providing our courts with

ample fodder for justifying decisions from multiple sides of the political spectrum.

In reading all 85 papers, this editor noticed certain words repeating themselves throughout the full set of documents. Virtue is mentioned 26 times; Moderation 32 times; Prudence 46 times; Faction 54 times; Passion 68 times; and Reason 138 times. The words Passion and Reason most vividly stand out because they can be opposites. Dictionary.com lists these definitions of passion: any powerful or compelling emotion or **feeling**, as love or hate; violent anger. The same source lists these as definitions of reason: the mental powers concerned with forming conclusions, judgments, or inferences; sound judgment, good sense; the power of intelligent and **dispassionate thought**, or of conduct influenced by such thought. So passion represents feeling, while reason represents thinking...

There are multiple instances within The Federalist Papers where Passion and Reason are directly contrasted. In Federalist #15, Hamilton writes “Why has government been instituted at all? **Because the passions of men will not conform to the dictates of reason and justice, without constraint.**” In Federalist #49, Madison says “**it is the reason, alone, of the public, that ought to control and regulate the government. The passions ought to be controlled and regulated by the government.**” Further in #49 regarding appealing to the People through additional Constitutional Conventions, Madison says “A reverence for the laws would be sufficiently inculcated by the voice of an enlightened reason. . . . The danger of disturbing the public tranquility by interesting too strongly the public passions, is a still more serious objection against a frequent reference of constitutional questions to the decision of the whole society.” In Federalist #55, which deals with the total number of Representatives in the House, Madison writes, “The truth is, that in all cases a certain number at least seems to be necessary to secure the benefits of free consultation and discussion, and to guard against too easy a combination for improper purposes; as, on the other hand, the number ought at most to be kept within a certain limit, in order to avoid the confusion and intemperance of a multitude. **In all very numerous assemblies, of whatever character composed, passion never fails to wrest the sceptre from reason.**” Madison says in Federalist #58, also on the topic of the size of the House of Representatives, “**the more numerous an assembly may be, of whatever characters composed, the greater is known to be the ascendancy of passion over reason.**” In Federalist #6, Hamilton takes on passion with the following, “Has it not, on the contrary, invariably been found that momentary passions, and immediate interest, have a more active and imperious control over human conduct than general or remote considerations of policy, utility or justice?”

There are thousands of conclusions that we can take from the almost 500 pages of The Federalist Papers. One is that for our republic to work, the people must permit the government to govern themselves (Consent of the Governed), then fashion that government such that it will control itself (Checks and Balances, i.e. the Constitution itself). Another that stands out to this writer is that the Framers of the Constitution believed that for our republican system of government to work best, if not to work at all, the people, and their representatives in the three branches of government, need to exercise reason over passion. To paraphrase Madison, passion divides mankind, inflames them with mutual animosity, and renders them more disposed to vex and oppress each other than to work for the common good.

So, should decisions be made by feeling or by thinking? How do you feel about this, or is it better said, what do you think about it?

Although they are written in 18th Century prose, and can be somewhat difficult to read, The Federalist Papers are well worth the time for anyone who is eager for a better understanding of our Constitution. And after a while, you may come to admire the writing style and vocabulary of Hamilton, Madison, and Jay, as I did, but keep your dictionary handy... For the complete text of all 85 Papers, please see:

<https://guides.loc.gov/federalist-papers/full-text>