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With it, nothing can fail; without it,
nothing can succeed."

Abraham Lincoln

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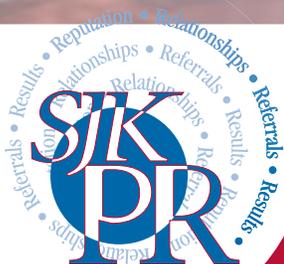
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Office (904) 388-7447 Fax (904) 388-7100 results@SJKPR.com

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*Happy Birthday,
America!*

"I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival. It ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illumination, from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward forever more. You will think me transported with enthusiasm, but I am not. I am well aware of the toil and blood and treasure that it will cost us to maintain this Declaration and support and defend these States. Yet, through all the gloom, I can see the rays of ravishing light and glory. I can see that the end is more than worth all the means. And that posterity will triumph..."

John Adams, July 3, 1776

Happy Birthday, America! We hope our annual card finds you well and celebrating our Season of Freedom. For almost a quarter century, we've sent these greetings to **share our thoughts and pride in winning life's lottery – being Americans.**

Since we wrote last, much has changed...for America...and for the Kaufman clan (more on our family in Lindsay's letter). For America, we experienced the worst economic upheaval since the 1970s...and, of course, elected a new president.

For those of us who believe in **the magic of The American Soul**, we know that whether or not we voted for President Obama, **his election speaks volumes about whom we really are as a people and a society.** You don't need to agree with his politics to appreciate the historic nature of America electing her first black president...of partial Muslim descent...while we're at war with radical Islamic terrorists. **We exercised our God-given right of freedom**, put aside prejudices anchored in the past, and **opted for a choice in a way the rest of the world would never do.** *American Exceptionalism in action.*

As President Bush said, his successor's election was "...a moment of hope and pride for our whole nation." It serves as a powerfully symbolic weapon against America's enemies abroad... **and a much-needed wake-up call to her detractors at home...** ironically, many of whom were President Obama's most vocal political supporters.

Sadly, **some of them still don't understand the true significance** of this event, believing that only now America is finally deserving of their ardent support. To quote Theodore Roosevelt: "Bullfeathers!" America is not suddenly special because we elected our first black president; **we elected our first black president because America is – and always has been – special.**

On election night, the then president-elect said, "If there is anyone out there who still doubts that America is a place where all things are possible, who still wonders if the dream of our founders is alive in our time, who still questions the power of our democracy, tonight is your answer." **But those of us who cherish the special nature of America never doubted, wondered or questioned the uniqueness of our country and what we can accomplish.** We didn't blame America for all the world's ills, or claim defeat with our troops still in battle. We never felt some unexplained guilt for our culture, which, blemishes and all, remains the aspiration of the world.

In his inaugural address, President Obama actually captured this theme when he said, **"We will not apologize for our way of life, nor will we waver in its defense..."** and he followed through on at least part of that sentiment by retaining Defense Secretary Gates and most of President Bush's war team. It's a tacit yet **tangible affirmation** that we *must* win this fight against radical Islamic tyranny.

These terrorists fear the very liberty we've sacrificed so much to maintain. But because we remain vigilant, and took the fight to Baghdad and Bagram rather than waiting for the barbarians to bring it to Baltimore or Burbank, **we struck a blow against the radical extremists who seek our total destruction.** They've been at war with us for almost 30 years...whether or not we admitted it...or even fought back. With two administrations of different political parties understanding this fact, we may *finally* be learning history's lesson:

the appeasers' embrace of a phony "peace" is simply another victory for the enemies of freedom.

We must also fight for our liberty in the marketplace. In his inaugural, the president spoke of "...the risk-takers, the doers, the makers of things...who have carried us up the long, rugged path towards prosperity and freedom." These sentiments – *only words that must be supported by policy* – gave us hope he understood a key component of American Exceptionalism: *we refuse to be driven by fear.* **Our birthright, protected by the sacrifices of generations, was, is and always will be hope and opportunity.**

We know that IF we remain secure from attack and true to our heritage of individual freedom, responsibility, risk and reward, **the best for America, as President Ford once said, "...is always yet to be."**

It's The American Way...driven by the unstoppable, impatient, *beautiful* American Soul. **A soul so unique we're celebrating its birth – a time for our rebirth – today.** And if the Broadway classic 1776 got it right, **not much in our collective character changed in 233 years**, as Benjamin Franklin described it in the play's key debate: "First of all, our very character (has been) stifled....we've spawned a new race here...rougher, simpler, more violent, more enterprising, less refined...we're a new nationality – we require a new nation." **Our forefathers rejected becoming a western hemisphere Europe 233 years ago – and we must reject the same sentiment today.**

But we wonder, similar to the biblical story of Esau and Jacob, **will Americans squander our blessing of economic freedom** and be satiated by the gloom and mediocrity of a state-run economy, or *fight* for our birthright of freedom, hope and a better tomorrow?

Together, let us fight...and ensure our nation's leaders fight with us. We'll pray for and encourage President Obama and our national leadership to get it right. But if they don't, be ready to defend at the ballot box **The American Way – and the promise it has always represented to our children...and the world.**

In an ironic twist for a 4th of July card, we'll close with a saying Steve learned from a British Army lieutenant colonel who led a planning group Steve worked on. When **discussion ended, and action was needed, the colonel ordered, "Crack on!"**

The American Soul has never been afraid to act, **especially when it's threatened...from without...or within.** Now's the time to get involved...to speak up about our future...*to act.*

"Crack on," America!

May God always bless America...may God always bless The American Soul.

Happy Independence Day!

Polly, Lindsay & Steve Kaufman with Ariel the Feline Princess and Minnie the Magnificent Chi-Mutt

