

# e faith

o tell the world that they had reached that point. It was the same kind of courage that allowed some colonists to throw tea into Boston Harbor and others to gather in Philadelphia to write the words that would echo around the world.

But Iran is not the only place where its people have suffered a long Train of Abuses and Usurpations."

What has been described in some quarters as a coup in Honduras — when its military ousted President Manuel Zelaya on a plane to Costa Rica — was in practice an effort to save the Honduran constitution and what remained of the rule of law. It was that nation's Supreme Court which ordered Zelaya's ouster and its democratically elected congress which approved it.

"We have established a democratic government," said Roberto Micheletti, a legislator, first in the line of succession, and now the caretaker president named to serve out Zelaya's term, which ends this year.

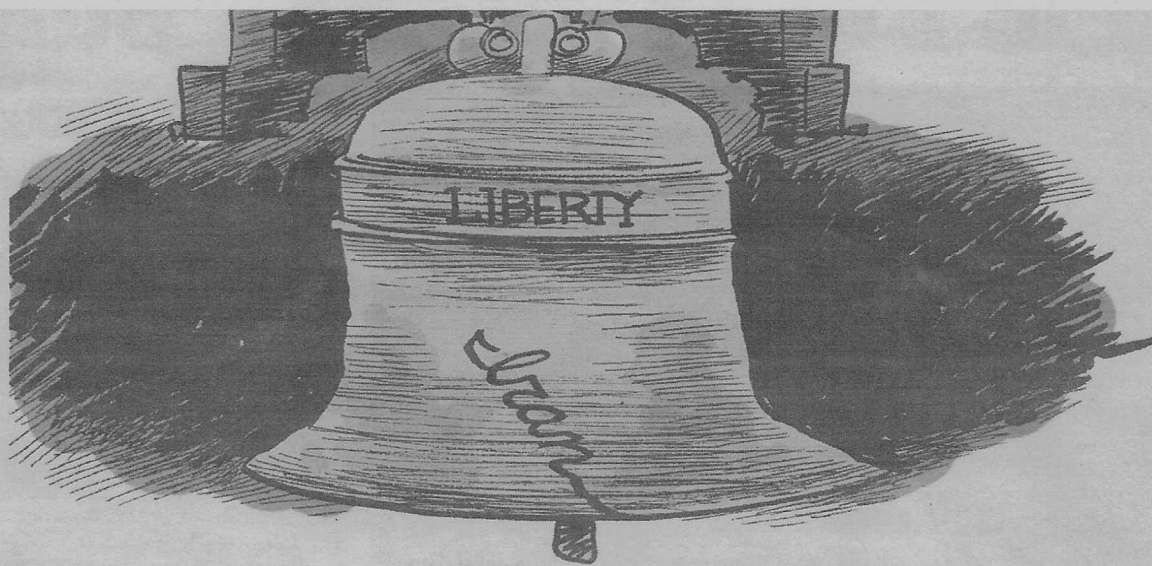
In the process neither blood or tea was spilled.

Our nation by its very existence remains a light to the world, an inspiration to freedom-loving people everywhere. To deny that, to abandon those who still fight for their freedoms; to deny our history. And that would make this day not one to celebrate but just another day in the summer calendar.

# om taxes

he tax the most. That's because the higher sales tax scheduled to take effect on Aug. 1 will encourage shoppers within any reasonable distance to start buying their big-ticket items in New Hampshire. Meanwhile businesses that look forward to promoting the tax-free shopping weekend each summer are struggling to stay afloat in an economy that has consumers in hibernation.

Of course we can view the rest of July as a "holiday" from the new 6.25 percent sales tax that will remain with us long after this crisis is over. That's very small comfort indeed.



LET FREEDOM RING

# The Thriller is not gone

**While I had never defined myself or my generation by Michael Jackson, his songs were, in fact, a constant backdrop during my childhood, adolescence and those formative post-grad years.**

**AS YOU WERE SAYING ...**  
**Amy Halzel Willis**

I'm obsessed with Michael Jackson. Ever since the news of his death broke, I've been flipping TV channels and radio stations to get all the details, and to hear all the music now on the air. It's 24/7 Jackson. My kids think I've gone nuts. Usually fairly reserved and reflective in nature, I'm now bopping about, singing at the top of my lungs and waving my arms around in the car.

As Michael himself asked in his 1982 hit, "Human Nature," why? Why? What has happened to me? It's not as if I ever loved Michael Jackson consciously. I don't even own any of his music (yet). But the past few days, I'm just drinking in all the sweet Jackson 5 tunes and the later songs — "Pretty Young Thing," "Billie Jean," you name it. Every song takes me back to somewhere in my youth, beginning with Saturday mornings in front of the TV watching that cool Jackson 5 cartoon.

"Don't Stop 'Till You Get Enough" was popular when I was a teenage camp counselor, and

"Thriller" was all the rage during my college years.

When I started hearing all the great songs being played back to back, I realized that while I had never defined myself or my generation by Michael Jackson, his songs were, in fact, a constant backdrop during my childhood, adolescence and those formative post-grad years. I actually got choked up when I heard "We Are the World" the first time in so many years. We were the world at 20, weren't we?

The news commentators and deejays are at no loss for words about Jackson. They are reviewing all the highlights of his career, his troubled childhood and the bizarre coping methods he turned to as an adult to drown his pain. Thankfully, most of the chatter keeps returning to the music and the dancing in hopes that the freakish behavior will be forgotten in the long run while the artistry will live on.

But unlike the coverage of other music and political icons, I notice that no one has referred to Jackson as someone who "defined a generation." That's because the generation that grew up with the Jackson 5 in the '70s and the King of Pop in the '80s — my generation — has really had no identity of our own up until now. The Greatest Generation has Sinatra and their World War II pride; the baby boomers have the Beatles and their impending retirements and the resulting skyrocketing health care costs; and even the Gen-Xers have Kurt Cobain and their grunge and their

start-ups. Those of us now in our mid-40s don't remember where we were when JFK was shot. We weren't at Woodstock because we were busy watching Mr. Rogers. And by the time the term Generation X was coined, we were walking down the aisle and established in our careers. We were a generation defined by mostly bad trends — disco, big hair, yuppies — all gone to the archives.

But now we have Michael Jackson, and we're Bad with a capital B. And while we're on a roll, Madonna is ours too, as is the Brat Pack, Adam Sandler and Tom Cruise from his original hunk-role in "Top Gun." Sure, Jackson became a freak in recent years, but he's our freak. And most importantly, he was ours before all that craziness began.

So Michael Jackson's death, while tragic, has taken me back to places and people I hadn't thought about in years. Yes kids, long before mom was rolling meatballs and doing eight loads of laundry a day, I was moonwalking and sunbathing with SPF-zero. Now that I'm feeling a little more confident in my identity, I have an admittedly unkind message for the baby boomers, the Gen-Xers and the Gen-Yers (whoever they are): Keep your mitts off our icon.

Boomers, go back to solving the Social Security crisis, and you younger people, back to your twittering. The King of Pop is ours.

*Amy Halzel Willis is a freelance writer and editor in the Boston area.*

p. 14 Boston Herald 7/4/09