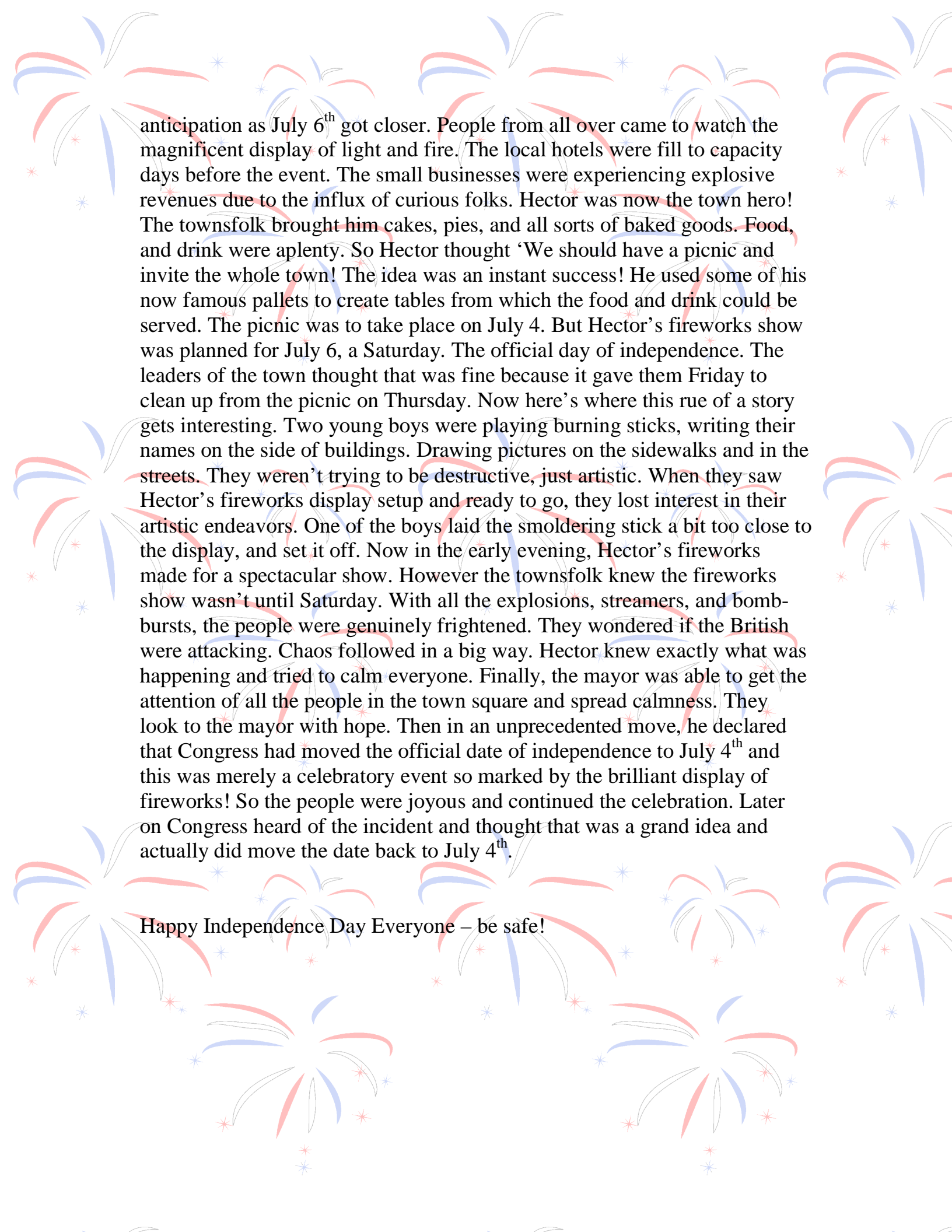


Date Line – January, 1776

Upon hearing the news that the Declaration of Independence was being crafted, Hector Pall, the local arsonist, became excited! For he knew this was an opportunity to exhibit his craft without being scoffed at by his fellow compatriots. He began to assemble what was sure to be an extravaganza of pyrotechnics that would amaze everyone! After a couple of weeks he had collected quite a sizable cache of materials, and so he began working to assemble what we know today as fireworks. Stacking these items was beginning to become a problem. Every time he needed to move them, he had to make several trips, an armload at a time. Then one day, he thought ‘AH-HA! I need to build a wooden platform that I can stack my fireworks on, that can be moved.’ So he set out to build this platform. He laid out a square measuring 10 foot square. Behold, he now had a means to move his fireworks easily. Easily that is with the help of two large horses. Now Hector, although a rather seasoned inventor, sometimes would overlook obvious stumbling blocks. Such as, being able to move his platform out of his shop of which the largest door was only six feet wide. All the townsfolk laughed at his unwittingly misguided endeavor, and had coined a new phrase ‘Hector’s palled platform’. Hector was not one to take such ridiculing sitting down. He embraced the new title and renamed his business Hector’s Palls. Due to the large size of his Palls, sales growth was non-existent. He only managed to sell one, and it was used for firewood. Hector was not discouraged however. He was actually motivated! He asked around town what about his Palls people didn’t like. Over and over the answer was the same. They’re too big, too difficult to maneuver. He sat down with tablet of parchment, a full inkwell, and his favorite sketching quill pen. He began drawing different styles of Palls. He put wheels on them, he tried rollers, balls, lift mechanisms. He even had drawn a self-powered sketch but discarded that idea because he could figure out how to slow it down if were headed downhill. Then very late, in the wee hours of the morning, he hit upon the ultimate answer. Reduce the Pall to four feet by four foot wide, and make it about six inches in height. Now he had a new problem. What to call it. He couldn’t call it a Pall because it was much smaller. He finally settled on Pall-ette. –ette meaning small, so by combining the name Pall and –ette, he came up with the word Pall-ette. The dash, and one of the ‘t’s’ was eventually dropped. The word pallet was now the official word! Hector was now able to not only move his fireworks more easily, but also his customer list for said pallets increased rapidly. As Independence day approached, Hector’s fireworks were completed and setup. The town was a buzz with



anticipation as July 6th got closer. People from all over came to watch the magnificent display of light and fire. The local hotels were fill to capacity days before the event. The small businesses were experiencing explosive revenues due to the influx of curious folks. Hector was now the town hero! The townsfolk brought him cakes, pies, and all sorts of baked goods. Food, and drink were aplenty. So Hector thought ‘We should have a picnic and invite the whole town! The idea was an instant success! He used some of his now famous pallets to create tables from which the food and drink could be served. The picnic was to take place on July 4. But Hector’s fireworks show was planned for July 6, a Saturday. The official day of independence. The leaders of the town thought that was fine because it gave them Friday to clean up from the picnic on Thursday. Now here’s where this rue of a story gets interesting. Two young boys were playing burning sticks, writing their names on the side of buildings. Drawing pictures on the sidewalks and in the streets. They weren’t trying to be destructive, just artistic. When they saw Hector’s fireworks display setup and ready to go, they lost interest in their artistic endeavors. One of the boys laid the smoldering stick a bit too close to the display, and set it off. Now in the early evening, Hector’s fireworks made for a spectacular show. However the townsfolk knew the fireworks show wasn’t until Saturday. With all the explosions, streamers, and bomb-bursts, the people were genuinely frightened. They wondered if the British were attacking. Chaos followed in a big way. Hector knew exactly what was happening and tried to calm everyone. Finally, the mayor was able to get the attention of all the people in the town square and spread calmness. They look to the mayor with hope. Then in an unprecedented move, he declared that Congress had moved the official date of independence to July 4th and this was merely a celebratory event so marked by the brilliant display of fireworks! So the people were joyous and continued the celebration. Later on Congress heard of the incident and thought that was a grand idea and actually did move the date back to July 4th.

Happy Independence Day Everyone – be safe!