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POST-STAR STAFF REPORT

LAKE GEORGE – Before he became the third president of the United States, Thomas Jefferson commented that “Lake George is without comparison, the most beautiful water I ever saw.” Before that, he penned one of the most important documents ever drafted, the Declaration of Independence.

On July 4, Jefferson’s words will return to the place he dubbed, “The Queen of

American Lakes,” as the Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance will host a ceremonial reading of the Declaration of Independence at the ruins of Fort George, located on Fort George Road in Lake George beginning at 11 a.m.

“Other than the constitution, there is no more important document in American history than the Declaration of In-

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Declaration

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dependence. It is well that we hear the words of America's founding document, and appreciate the risk to those who signed it, to ensure we remain true to our foundational principles," LGBPA Trustee Bob Wilcox said in a statement about the event. "America was blessed to have Thomas Jefferson as the principal author of the Declaration.

His wondrous words have reverberated throughout world history. We should never forget the spirit and courage of the 56 signers of the Declaration. They literally put their lives on the line for the cause of freedom, and many paid a terrible price for doing so."

Constructed as a British fort in 1759 after the sacking of Fort William Henry during the French and Indian War, Fort George was captured as part of Benedict Arnold and Ethan Allen's daring campaign

to take the forts at Ticonderoga, Crown Point, and Lake George in May 1775. The fort became an important staging ground for the colonial forces including Henry Knox's artillery train in the winter of 1775-1776.

While there is no record of the Declaration being read to continental soldiers stationed at Fort George after it was ratified on July 4, 1776, the fortification and surrounding land in what's now Lake George Battlefield Park played a

key role for the newly established nation as the site of the army's largest hospital beginning on July 10. The hospital eventually served over 3,000 patients that summer, victims of smallpox. The remains of 44 individuals that will be re-interred next May in Lake George Battlefield Park are believed to have perished from the pox at the Fort George hospital.

The ceremony on Friday will feature re-enactors from Fort William Henry in 18th century military

garb. Each attendee will receive a copy of the Declaration of Independence, while supplies last. The reading will take place in conjunction with the Fort William Henry Fourth of July Celebration, which will also include readings of America's break-up letter with Great Britain at 1 p.m., July 4 through 6.

The Lake George Battlefield Park Visitor Center, located at 75 Fort George Road, will be open to the public from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Independence Day.