

## 52 Weeks to Patriotism

Discovering your "power of one" and finding out what you can do to make this an even better country is the beginning of your journey to patriotism.

Pat Gavros,Neighbor

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Hello,

My name is Pat Gavros, a long-time resident of Oswego, and I'm thrilled to be a new blogger for the Oswego Patch! I hope you'll become friends and followers of my blogs and that we'll have something to offer one another in our exchange of ideas. Hopefully, I'll put some ideas out there that will give you pause to stop and reflect on some of the issues that I think are important in today's world.

Over the last several years I've begun to think a great deal about the direction of our country and of the role that each of us plays in its daily life. I had

allowed myself to feel helpless and gave in to the feeling that I was powerless to change things. I don't really believe that, but circumstances, at least for awhile, had made me feel that way.

With the highly charged political atmosphere in America; elections, the Tea Party, the growing deficit, the housing crisis, etc., I've come to question the ideas of patriotism and being patriotic. Webster's Dictionary defines patriotism as "love and devotion to one's country" and the word patriotic is defined as "feeling, expressing, or inspired by love of one's country."

There are certainly some broadly defined ideas, so then my question is, how do we express our love of country? What inspires us? I don't actually like the idea of "being inspired", but instead would like to think of how each of us can inspire others.

I've always considered myself patriotic, loving our flag, what our country stands for and being grateful to our veterans and service men/women. I believe in being a good citizen, obeying our laws, helping out in our community when possible, taking responsibility for my actions, acknowledging other people's points of view, being a good mother, exercising my right to vote, etc.

What specifically have I done as a citizen of this wonderful country to show my patriotism? What defines me as patriotic? What is it at my very core of being that makes me a patriot, or a valuable addition to this democracy?

Recently, after I'd finished my little "chapbook", *So Gallantly Waving - Words of Patriotism and Gratitude*, and sent it off to the printer, I'd begun to think a great deal about that very question; so much so that I decided to challenge myself to exploring that very question in depth over the next year!

I'm calling it *The Fifty-two Week Challenge to Patriotism*. Every week I'm going to begin working on specific goals that will define how I fit into this society as someone who is patriotic. I'm going to implement ways in which I can become a more active, more vital, part of America, and in so doing find my "power of one".

Each of us has incredible power to do so many good things. You and I have untapped potential just waiting to be called forth to do things both great and small...but all important. I would like to challenge each of you to join me in my journey and help me along the way.

I look forward to your ideas, input, suggestions, and maybe even criticisms. Each of you has so much to offer that I'm expecting great things - surprising ideas, different points of view, but ultimately all of us heading toward a greater goal of "patriotism".

This week I will begin keeping my patriotic work journal (sounds fancy, but actually a three ring binder with all sorts of ideas and things I'm going to work on). I will commit at least one patriotic act each week to express my own patriotism.

Now that you have my challenge, I hope you will begin to explore the "power of one" within you and your own patriotic ideas. I look forward to hearing about your individual journeys and to supporting and encouraging you. I hope you'll support my journey and cheer me on too. Have a great - inspiring week!