

Perspective

Why I fly the flag

"Why do you fly the flag?" someone will ask me now and then. When they have left my home, they have certain that I do not fly it because the red in the flag matches the color of the geraniums that bloom so profusely in my window boxes, or that I use it as a landmark to guide folks trying to locate me out here in the Martin County countryside.

There are many reasons why our nation's colors wave from a tall pole near a front corner of my house, and since this is the week we honor our country's banner by celebrating Flag Day, you may as well know why.

I fly the flag every day so that I don't forget the great sacrifices that were made in order to allow me the simple freedom of running up the colors. And, I don't hold too much esteem for those around me who don't take care of their flag once they hoist it high. To me, there is no greater disgrace in the world than a ragged, ripped, or completely faded flag that was raised in some moment of patriotic frenzy and then completely forgotten until the next attack of flag-waving hypocrisy takes hold. When I see a flag being flown in this manner, it makes my blood boil and my temper flare, and usually gets me in a scrap or two with whoever is responsible for such dishonor.

I keep a sharp eye on my flag. When I see a tear, I immediately haul it down and take it to a neighborhood friend whose sewing machine is readily available. She repairs it without charge, for she shares in the pride I have in this piece of cloth, and contributes in her own special way to its being flown with respect in my yard. A few years ago, a little "conflict" in Viet Nam took the lives of thousands of men and women from this country...most of them boys who were still too young to grown facial hair. Those who did return home, came back her to no reception, patting or rewards like others who have been welcomed home before them. Because we were so mixed up about something that shouldn't have happened in the first place, we tried to put it out of mind and out of sight as quickly as we could. No wonder the Viet Nam veterans feel they fought and died for nothing. They answered their country's call, forced to the far ends of the earth to fight for



freedom while this country was fighting among itself about their being there in the first place.

You can't deny freedom for someone else and expect to have it yourself. Things just don't work that way. We criticized and ridiculed those who fled and refused to fight, and yet did nothing to welcome home with pride, those who did.

I fly my flag every day so that I don't forget those soldiers who were shuffled about on conference tables and in newspapers like statues on a chessboard. It's my way of saying: "Thank you. You did your best. You did what your country told you to do and tried to believe that somebody, somewhere, responsible for it, knew what they were doing, even if you didn't."

I fly it for the ones who played cards together in a foxhole one night and then, the next day, had to place bits and pieces of those same buddies in plastic bags.

I fly it for my husband who says that the sight of that flag waving over his camp was the only thing that got him back home, and in memory of the one who returned, but in a flag-draped coffin.

I fly it for the ones who made it back in one piece and without pieces, but remain mentally tormented by death and disillusion they cannot forget, and for the ones that still remain behind somewhere, forgotten by their countrymen because we all got tired of the whole thing and just stopped looking for them.

So the next time you see my flag unfurling in the breeze or hanging stately still, slow down and take a long, hard look. Then, go home and do something yourself about showing respect for the ones down through the years who gave us the freedom to fly it in the first place. This week would be a perfect time to start.

Flag symbolizes freedom

"If you've traveled outside the country, what was the first thing you recognized upon your return? This question will bring a varied response, but to many, including myself, the single item that made me realize how fortunate I am to be an American is our flag.

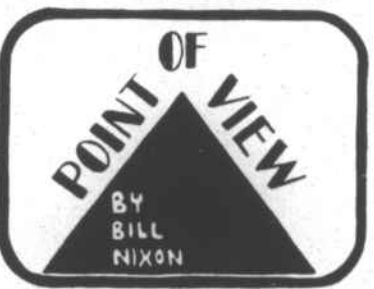
From our earliest childhood days, we begin to develop a sense of pride and love for this colorful piece of cloth. We don't really think about it much, and it is seldom a topic of conversation, but the American flag is probably the most recognized in the world. Whether viewed with respect, or with disdain, it is still a lasting tribute to the greatest experiment in freedom ever undertaken.

"We honor Old Glory for many reasons. We know she's been to the moon, mars and beyond Saturn and Jupiter to the darkness of outer space.

Down through the decades, she's flown, adding strength, wisdom and majesty. To thousands of men and women who have followed her into battle, she was a leader. For those who fell in her defense, she served as a cloak, providing cover until the casket was lowered to its final resting place. To generations of children, who have given her their pledge of allegiance, she is the hope for tomorrow. To many throughout the world, she is a guiding light, a defender of basic human rights. To the millions who set foot on our shores for the first time, she represented a dream come true.

While we may honor her for various reasons, we must remember her for the load she carries. Flowing gently in the breeze, it isn't always easy to visualize the burden she bears. People may talk of her stripes, stars, her red, white and blue, but little thought is given to the bravery she represents.

Conceived in the darker days of our



struggle for freedom, her ageless beauty was authorized June 14, 1777 by a Continental Congress unsure of her future. Two months later, soldiers at Ft. Schuyler, N.Y., fashioned a likeness from various pieces of scrap cloth. They proudly raised their homemade flag, and for the first time, Old Glory came under fire.

She gallantly served that war and many more. On a dark night near Fort Mchenry, a young lawyer viewing the battle strained his eyes to see if the Stars and Stripes still waved. They did, and in the early light of dawn, his fears were washed away. He quickly put down on paper his feelings of happiness and pride, and Old Glory had her own song.

To those who defy her principles, she is the enemy. But no torch can destroy her. Burned on the streets of many nations, and even the streets of America, she rises from the ashes stronger than ever.

Some may view her as only a symbol. But she's much more than that. She is a living feeling that should be in all of us. In her, we should remember the importance of being Americans.

June 14 is Flag Day and as we notice the many red, white and blue banners, let us remember her as more than just a flag. He is the glory of the past, the promise of the future, and the best hope for mankind. Fly her proudly.

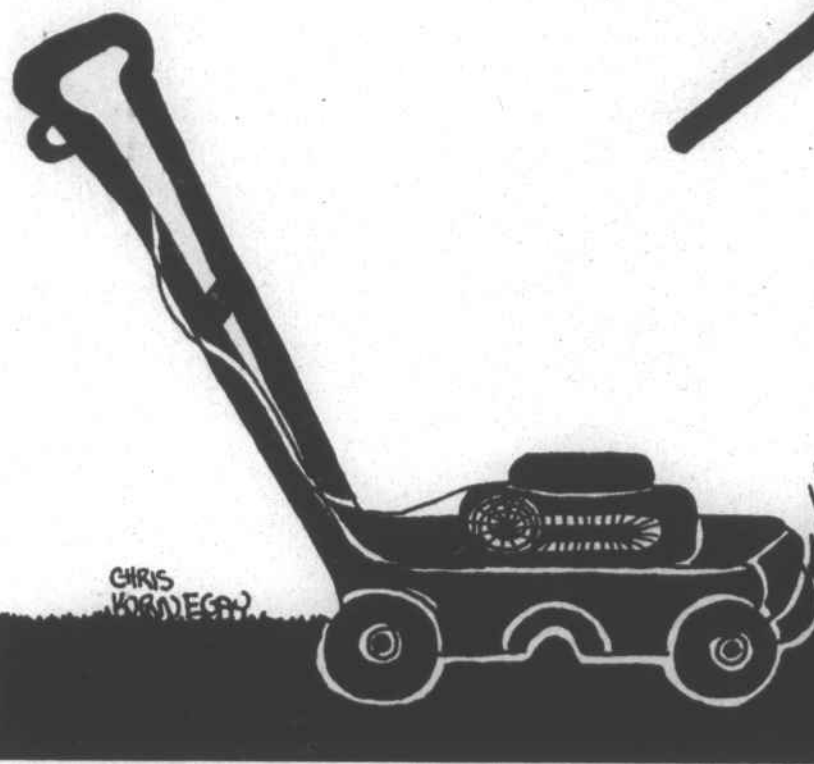
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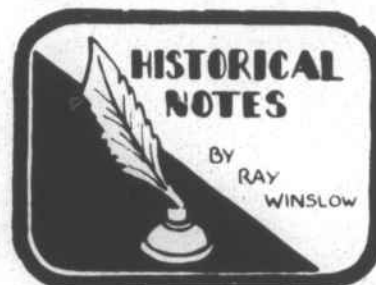


River plays important role in county's heritage

Without the river from which it take its name, Perquimans County might not exist. Perquimans River is the gatherer of most of the waters that run through the county, and the county was created in the 1660s to encompass the lands on both sides of the waterway.

Rising in the southern edge of the Dismal Swamp, the Perquimans cannot be ranked among the world's great rivers for its length—barely twenty-five miles in a straight line from source to mouth although its twisting nature carries water a greater distance. In width, however, the Perquimans is more than a match for many a noted river, its lower course being typically a mile wide.

The river brought Perquimans its first inhabitants. The Yeopim Indians canoed it and named it, and the



shores of the river and its tributaries still yield traces of Indian villages and camps.

The first European explorers noted the existence of the river, with John White depicting its mouth on his maps of the 1580s. Settlers followed explorers and by 1663 the river had been chosen as a desirable place to locate farms. For over two hundred years Perquimans River served the

county as a major route of travel. Canoes, periaugas, schooners, sloops, and other water craft transported people, export commodities, and import goods. Ocean-going vessels were frequently sailing up the river as far as Belvidere in the eighteenth century, and steamboat traffic developed in the nineteenth.

The same river which served so necessarily as an economic artery could also bring danger. It was the primary means by which the Union forces reached Perquimans County on numerous occasions during the Civil War, especially for battle of Hertford in December 1863.

Perquimans River also presented a transportation problem for many years. For those traveling by water, it was a boon, but to those going by land it was a barrier. Its width made crossing very difficult. Ferries were

in operation by the end of the seventeenth century, but they were unable to keep a regular schedule due to wind variability.

Not until 1798 was a bridge thrown across the river at Hertford, and that was a float bridge thrown across the river at Hertford, and that was a float bridge susceptible to frequent damage. It was not uncommon for a land traveler from Stevensons Point to reach Harveys Point only by way of Belvidere even though the two points were practically in sight of one another.

The railroad and modern highways and bridges ended Perquimans' economic dependence upon the river, but our primary body of water is much desired for homes sites. The county still cannot do without Perquimans River.

Harrell joins the staff at community college

20 YEARS AGO

Pat Harrell Joins Staff At COA: Dr. Bruce Petteaway, President of College of The Albemarle, announced that James "Pat Harrell has joined the staff of the College of The Albemarle as Assistant Director of Continuing Education. He will officially assume his new position on July 1st. Mr. Harrell comes to College of The Albemarle from the Perquimans County School System where he has served as principal in Hertford. Prior to his service in Hertford as principal, he served as a teacher and coach at Millbrook High School in Raleigh and at Marriott High School in Raleigh and at Marriott High School in Aylett, Virginia. Harrell is active in organizations on



the local, state and national scene. He is a member of the Hertford United Methodist Church where he serves as a Sunday school teacher and youth counselor.

Professionally he is member of the local and state NCEA units, the North Carolina Division of Princi-

A note from Gina

This week many local youngsters as well as others across the state will be graduating including my brother. This is a very special time in their lives wheter they are graduating

from high school or college. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all the area graduates, and I wish them the best of luck.

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 Established In 1932
 Published Each Thursday By The Daily Advance, Elizabeth City, N.C.
 Second Class Postage Paid at Hertford, N.C. 27944 USPS 428-080

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 Anzie L. Wood
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Just clip and fill out this coupon. Include as many details as possible (Names, addresses, telephone numbers, etc.)

It may not be possible for us to use some of the stories suggested but we are always looking for new ideas.

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