

Is constitutional change needed to protect our flag?

Do we need a constitutional amendment to ban flag burning?

The Senate is debating what would become the 28th Amendment this week, and observers give it half a chance of passing.

The more conservative House passed a similar measure last year, so if this one gets by the Senate, it's likely that the amendment will go out to the states for ratification.

And it's more than even money that the states will give the required three-fourths consent, since all 50 legislators have passed resolutions asking for an amendment.

We may know by the end of the week whether burning an American flag will be just an insult, or a federal crime.

Why the amendment is so popular now we're not sure. Flags burned along with bras in the hippie era of the 1960s, but flag burning is not in vogue today, at least not in this country.

And the U.S. government isn't going to send the FBI out to catch flag burners in France or Syria.

Maybe it's just the emotional content of the act.

Most of us were brought up to revere the flag. We learned the stories of soldiers who risked their lives to snatch a fallen banner, who died carrying the colors, who braved enemy fire to raise it over a captured island.

We get misty-eyed when the flag goes by during a parade and irate when we see a city car dealership flying a faded, tattered Old Glory to bring in business.

When we were Scouts, we learned how to fold the flag, how to display it, how to keep it from dragging on the ground. We pledged our allegiance to the flag as youngsters and many of us swore to defend it — and the nation for which it stands.

Debate on the flag amendment splits mostly along party lines, with Democrats claiming Republicans are using the issue to boost their flagging numbers before the fall elections.

Not all Democrats have lined up against the amendment, though.

Wary of being branded as pro-flag-burning, such liberals as Senators Hillary Clinton of New York and Dianne Feinstein of California have come out for the ban.

Rest assured, even if the amendment passes, someone will burn a flag.

As Sen. Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania said, flag burning is a mean act, designed to hurt. In some ways, it's an ultimate protest.

Our enemies abroad will continue to burn Old Glory. The amendment may prompt them to even further excess.

But we should remember, glorious as it is, the flag is only a symbol. The nation for which it stands is stronger and more enduring than ever.

Protesters may burn a flag, but that does not hurt America.

It makes us wiser, tougher and more determined.

So why do we need a constitutional amendment? — *Steve Haynes*

Rains bring out pesky skeeters

It's not news to anyone in western Kansas that we've been in a drought these last few years. And, as hard as it is to find something good about that, the fact is that we've not been troubled with mosquitoes during that time.

The bad news is that the recent rains have brought on an abundance of the little pests. I think their years of dormancy have produced a breed of "super-skeeter."

Mosquitoes don't usually bother me. At picnics or other outdoor gatherings, everyone around me will be swatting 'squitos and I remain unbothered. I have always bragged that my body chemistry actually repelled the little buggers.

No longer. Mosquitoes this season seem to find me unusually appealing. After complaining to my husband he said, "They probably think you're a refueling station on board an aircraft carrier." Not too flattering an analogy but entirely apropos. I see citronella and repellent in my future.

—ob—

By the time I write my next edition of this column, our 7-year-old granddaughter Taylor will have been with us for four weeks. I meet Taylor and her mom somewhere midway between Dallas and here Friday night. My daughter Kara does not agree that Wichita is midway, so where we meet is still being negotiated. It'll probably be somewhere in Oklahoma. Taylor and I will drive back here Saturday.

She has stayed with us at least two weeks every summer since she was two. And, no, she doesn't get home-



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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sick. Unlimited phone calls help. She can call home any time she wants. The separation is harder on Taylor's mom and dad than it is on her.

The plan this year is for Taylor to spend the month of July with us. We will return her to Dallas about the same time our daughter Jennifer will be delivering her daughter in San Antonio. We'll be able to see everyone on the same trip.

Taylor has missed church camp and Vacation Bible School, but I did learn of a sports camp for her age group. I'll get her signed up for that and buy a swimming pool pass, and she's set.

And, lest you think I'm ignoring her cultural upbringing, she is also signed up for piano lessons. I'm not

sure how much she can accomplish in four or five lessons, but if she's half as smart as I think she is, she'll be playing Chopin and Beethoven before August.

Actually, I'll settle for "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star."

From the Bible

Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.
Revelation 3:3

Write

The Oberlin Herald encourages Letters to the Editor on any topic of public interest.

Letters should be brief, clear and to the point. They must be signed and carry the address and phone number of the author.

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Visit to Vegas can bake the brain

Las Vegas is hot!
I mean really hot!
I'm not talking about the shows, celebrities, gambling, glitter or glitz. I'm talking about hot enough to bake your brain in the desert sun. Steve had a meeting in Sin City. It was a place we'd never been and well may never go again, since gambling isn't at the top of our entertainment list.

Nevertheless, we were ready to have one look at the rhinestone capital of the U.S.

We knew that Las Vegas is in the desert, close to Death Valley. We figured we should take summer clothes. We just didn't realize how hot all that asphalt, concrete, metal and silicon can get and how fast you sweat through whatever you're wearing.

As the plane prepared to touch down, the captain reported that the temperature on the ground was 120 degrees.

Steve looked at me and said, "I thought that was a low baking temperature, not an ambient air temperature."

The official high that day was "only" 109, so I'm not sure how ambient the air was, but it sure was hot. The jetway, that long skinny tube you walk through to get from the plane to the terminal, was like an



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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oven. I decided Steve was right. That was a baking temperature, and we were being cooked.

Friends from our Kansas City days, Marci and Larry, picked us up and took us out to their wonderfully cool home at the edge of town. We visited, had supper and before we left, she handed us a case of water. "You'll need it," Marci warned.

I smiled, said thanks and thought, "Yeah right. This is enough water to last us a couple of weeks. We're only going to be here a couple of days."

My advice — never think you know more than the locals.

We ran out of water before our visit was over.

The temperatures got down to a balmy 95 degrees in the evenings and climbed back into the hundreds before noon each day.

When we visited Hoover Dam, we were told that it was 115 degrees

on top of the dam. It was only 110 back in town, but town is in a high valley and the dam is on the river at a lower elevation.

You go down, and it gets hotter. (I don't know where heaven is, but I think I saw a figure with horns slinking around the edges of the dam site.)

Back in Las Vegas, we took a cab to a restaurant. Two signs across the street from each other announced the temperature to be 118 or 123 degrees — take your choice.

By the time supper was over and we were outside waiting for a cab back to the hotel, the sun had gone down and the temperature signs declared it to be 110 or 115 — take your choice.

We had fun in Vegas, but I doubt if we ever get back. I'm just glad we went in June.

They say that it gets really hot in July and August.

Concert for military a special event

This e-mail from Technical Sgt. David Wedow to his family was published in the June 20 edition of the Norcatatur News.

Hey, everyone, just a note from me to tell you about my amazing night. Tonight, Saturday, May 27, I had the opportunity to attend a Toby Keith concert at the Balad Air Base soccer field and it dawned on me that Memorial Day was almost here.

For many, it is a chance to take a three-day weekend and get together for a good time with family and friends. Some may have no clue what the time off is for. Fortunately, I have great friends and family who are fully aware of what the day means, and it humbles me to know that I am in your thoughts and prayers. I thank you all for that from the bottom of my heart.

Tonight brought a lot into perspective. There were roughly 1,000

to 2,000 Army, Navy, Marine and Air Force folks out to enjoy a free concert put on by the USO. What hit home was when two buses full of wounded soldiers arrived at the stadium. When the medics opened the doors and pulled out wheelchairs, the entire place went dead quiet.

As the first soldiers got off the bus and were being escorted to their VIP seats, everyone in the stadium rose to their feet and began to give the biggest round of applause for their "brothers in arms" that I have ever heard! It was amazing. This is what has led me to this e-mail. If you get a chance to explain to someone what Memorial Day is all about, it's not just about us in the uniform, it's for those folks who gave it all, "the ul-

imate sacrifice."

Like I said before, God blessed me with the greatest family and friends anyone could ever ask for. This isn't a normal mail for me, but some things hit home, and I thought I would share. Thanks again for your thoughts.

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Editor's Note: David is the son of Ed and Lynn Hix Wedow, Scottsdale, Ariz., and a grandson of Lula Hix, Norcatatur, and the late Wilbur Hix. His wife, Kimberly Wedow, and children, Logan and Abby, live in Clinton, Utah.

Letter to the Editor

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