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Show Respect by Raising the Flag

EVER since the Supreme Court, in 1974, reversed the conviction of a Massachusetts hippie for wearing our country's flag on the seat of his blue jeans, the flag has been profaned with impunity.

The majority opinion of the court said, "Casual treatment of the flag has become a widespread contemporary phenomenon." That opinion has made it more so.

Our flag has been walked on, dragged, used as part of obscene decorations and publicly burned by those who indulge in adult tantrums to attract attention.

The Pledge of Allegiance to our flag has experienced similar denigration. It was an instant hit when first published in Youth's Companion magazine in 1892. It has been a target for critics ever since World War II.

Some people object to use of the words "under God." Others refuse to salute on religious grounds, and subversive groups try to destroy any sign of loyalty to our country.

Likewise, the singing of our national anthem, "The Star Spangled

Banner," is subjected to continual sniping. The critics say it refers to war rather than peace, that hardly anybody knows the words, and it is almost impossible to sing.

These are superficial criticisms. The anthem is beautiful and inspiring when played or sung with dignity. The words can be memorized by those who want to learn them.

Of course, opinions differ widely as to what constitutes good music, and a considerable number of people, including this writer, are unable to carry any tune whatsoever. There are a lot of other current songs that ought to be abolished before we change "The Star Spangled Banner"!

Our flag, our pledge and our anthem are symbols of our country, and there are others. In paying respect to them, we honor our country and those who died for our freedom.

Desecration of these symbols reflects attitudes of those who engage in such acts. Lack of respect expresses lack of appreciation for

what America has done for the world.

When Benjamin Franklin suggested the native turkey be chosen as our national bird, he didn't know that in the 20th century the turkey would come to symbolize a failure or "flop."

Perhaps if Congress were choosing a national bird now, the "greenback goose" would be representative of the Great American Taxpayers, an endangered species. Our lawmakers demand more and more greenbacks to feed a growing deficit.

But our flag is something else. Monday, we will celebrate the 201st anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. It won't have the magnificence or glamor of our Bicentennial, but at least we can fly our nation's flag.

The governor has vetoed a proposal to install an automatic flagpole to raise and lower Old Glory at the Capitol. True Americans won't mind a little exertion to indicate their patriotism, loyalty and appreciation for their country.