

Our Flags Should Fly on Fourth of July

NOT MANY American flags were flying in the Oklahoma City area on Flag Day, June 14. Probably more will be waving in the breeze on Independence Day, but likely not as many as should be seen.

For one thing, Independence Day comes on Sunday and no one may be designated to put up the flag on many stores and office buildings that will be closed. Because crowds will flock to resorts and lakes, there won't be flags in front of lots of homes, either.

Displaying our flag on national holidays and other occasions is the easiest and least expensive way of saying that we love our country and appreciate opportunities it gives us.

Unfortunately, great numbers of businesses and families do not even own flags. Others have no convenient places ready to display the banner. In Oklahoma's wind it takes a stout pole to support a standard 3-by-5 foot flag, but smaller flags might be used.

Because flags are seasonal merchandise in peacetime, stores do not regularly stock them, or perhaps

managers forget to bring them out of warehouses. Nevertheless, American flags can be found by persistent shoppers.

Reports indicate that the gross disrespect shown to our flag in the 1960s and afterward has been declining. Such things as sewing the Stars and Stripes on the back sides of blue jeans and dragging or burning the flag publicly caused sharp pain to those who had bravely fought to preserve the freedom for which our flag stands.

Yet, some of these same patriotic individuals may not show the flag themselves in a positive manner.

Oldtimers recall noisy, enthusiastic Fourth of July picnics and parades, with bands and speeches that were a highlight of the summers back in days before Hollywood outdid them in showmanship.

Fireworks displays that once kept Fourth of July picnic crowds long after dark may seem like puny sparkles after we have watched rockets blast off to carry men to the moon and back.

What was spectacular in the past

appears less so in this day when show business has glorified the insignificant to the point of boredom and hardly anything now seems glamorous and exciting.

We can't expect to return to past customs of celebration, but shouldn't we fly our flag as a symbol of freedom in a world where most people are oppressed and others are threatened?

If a patriotic celebration is to have meaning, it must be one in which the crowd participates; not one it simply observes.

Sunday, many will celebrate Independence Day by attending worship services, which is one of our greatest freedoms. Others will be on the highways, in boats, in the water, in the mountains, or in the woods. And there will be parades and picnics in places.

Wherever we celebrate, we may express our patriotism in unison by flying the Star Spangled Banner to let the world know that we are Americans, and that we are proud of it!