

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Sunday Edition: Flag Day Could Help Us Change Old Habits

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Since the mass murders at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, there has been an overwhelming patriotic high that transcends national boundaries. The flag waving patriotism that Americans and their allies have embraced prove that people view the American flag and democracy with renewed understanding and respect.

As recent as Memorial Day in May, and all around us we read newspaper stories and see blurbs on the flag. Commercials are highlighting the importance of the flag, while local and cable television news have their backdrops embedded with the flag.

The patriotism gives the country a revised spirit, but we could all use a civics lesson on the meaning of the flag. If we do not know the substance of our civic institutions or symbols, we help those who hate us. Since the 911 tragedy, and in support of American soldiers in Iraq and Syria, and those across the globe including veterans, many of us vow not take our flags down, but we have to take it down sometimes. Flags should not be flown in inclement weather, when raining, thundering, or when there is a hurricane.

Many people know about the 50 stars, one for every state, and about the 13 stripes, one for each of the original colonies. The white stands for purity and innocence, the red for hardiness and valor, the blue for vigilance, perseverance and justice. The rope used to raise and lower the flag is the halyard. The hoist and fly are the width and the length, and the union or canton are the upper corner of the flag.

During the last few decades, cornerstones of the American republic have become weak, but that is changing. Flag Day is a holiday that unfortunately has not merited much attention. Surely from June 14, 2002 till now—and moving forward, Americans will pause and stop and watch a flag flapping in the breeze as President Harry S. Truman officially intended, when he made June 14, Flag Day in 1949.

It seems certain that small habits will change, as we realize that if we do not take care of politics of our nation and our civic institutions, we help terrorists. It also seems certain that sports enthusiasts will not attend another Yankees, Lakers, Knicks, Cowboys or Sixers game and not have enough respect to remove their hats or to face the flag during the National Anthem.

There is a new and improved breed of the Americans that understand that the flag connects us with freedom, democracy and our republic as the democratic way of life is at this very moment being directly assailed by terrorists across the globe and their cohorts who seek to destroy unity and promote discord.

In the midst of the fight against ISIS in Iraq and Syria, patriotic duties fall upon us, but we put the unity of people first. We put unity ahead of any divisive partisanship. It is true that a house divided against itself, by the spirit of dissension, of party, of region, of religion or of race is a house that cannot stand. As our flags are raised and flown, to the dismay of anti-Americans, there is no division in the American house.

We have continued America on its course, binding our wounds, working diligently to heal our history, moving forward in unity, keeping our commitment, and supporting our brave troops.

With Old Glory, we have kept and enlarged our commitment to freedom of the American way of life. With our brothers, fathers, sons, sisters, cousins, and uncles far away in the desert with temperatures exceeding 130 degrees Fahrenheit, and with America's future under attack right here at home, terrorists and their cohorts everywhere must know that whatever the price, whatever the burden, and whatever the sacrifices our patriotic duties require, Old Glory will not be moved.