

LEE MILLER

I agree with the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals' decision from an historical standpoint because the Pledge of Allegiance didn't have the "one nation under God" phrase in the original. We already have "In God We Trust" on the money — isn't that enough?

It ought to say "In Greed We Trust!"

THEDA SPRACKLIN

I'm against patriotism, all for *Matriotism*, so of course I agree with the court's decision to remove the "under god" clause in the Pledge of Allegiance. I didn't like it years ago in kindergarten either, but at that time it was because I had trouble with the concept of feeling safe and protected by a man hanging nailed to a cross. It scared me. Still does.

I say, "One nation, under Mother Nature, with liberty and justice for all."

PATRICIA LONGNECKER

The insertion of "under God" into the Pledge of Allegiance interferes with iambicpentameter as well as being a theological slap in the face to several people. The Pledge was always a slap in the face to the Bill of Rights because Congress is telling us we should pledge our allegiance and whom we should worship. It's presumptuous, period.

When "under God" was added to the Pledge in 1954 I felt awkward. I thought using the word 'God' did not represent all of us. Now it is getting even more complicated.

I tried to look up the population of Muslims and Jews, but only organizations are listed. I think non-Christians in this country are about half of all immigrants. And they are going to public schools where the Pledge of Allegiance is recited.

It would be nice if the government lived up to all that is said in the Pledge and quit stepping on everybody's inalienable rights. I hate dishonesty. I don't mind people disagreeing with me, but to patronize, lie and think and I'm stupid makes me very angry. Our leaders think we are stupid as a society and want to keep us that way.

God forbid if democracy works!

MICHAEL MILLER (aka 'SASHA')

I think it's fantastic. The fact is, we have a defacto Christian nation. Theoretically we have freedom of religion in this country and to a large extent that is true, except the Judeo-Christian majority has found some subtle ways to sanction their God and for government to sanction their God.

We don't have "In Allah We Trust" or "In Buddha We Trust" or "In The Great Spirit We Trust" on our money. Most of our holidays are Christian holidays and are sanctioned by the government. So if you're not a Christian you are constantly hearing the government put forth the Christian God. The easiest way to see this is to reverse it — that this is instead a Muslim nation and you are a Christian and everything is in the name of Allah; you pledge allegiance to Allah.

The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals made exactly the right decision. The government should never force anyone to recognize any form of deity or take part in any ceremonies recognizing any deity. The Pledge of Allegiance recognizes the Judeo-Christian deity. This would not be tolerated if the Pledge had Allah one week, Buddha the next. Christian parents wouldn't tolerate it and would pull their kids out of school.

I think the U.S. Supreme Court could go either way if the decision got up to them, depending on the political pressure. It's like the Ten Commandments — you can't have them posted in public buildings including schools. I hope the Supreme Court goes this way about the Pledge of Allegiance.

DARA SOLLIDAY

I think it's really good. It's very important we shed the old doctrine and evolve — like the Church persecuted people who said the Earth wasn't flat or the center of the universe. The Church has always influenced politics and time and time again has been proven wrong.

I think it is right that the term "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance be questioned because we are no longer a nation exclusively Puritan or Protestant. We've grown into a nation of people of every color, every religion and every science, and I think a pledge of alliance should reflect our diversity.

URIAH HULSEY

They're right. I think The Pledge of Allegiance should go back to the original. It was not designed just for this country. It was designed for any country. The guy who wrote it (Baptist Minister Francis Bellamy) intended it for everybody, not just the United States.

The first thing that was added to the original Pledge was "United States of America." The second was "under God." (Bellamy) would be rolling around in his grave.

I think we should go back to the original and cut out the bullshit. It was silly for anybody to bring a lawsuit — I'm tired of all these lawsuits — but the man did, and the court was right.



STEVE MENDELSON

PAUL EVALT (9E²X)

One nation under 9E²X.

I think 9E²X is an improvement on God.

RON BALDWIN

I'm just surprised with the political climate that anybody's thinking about the Constitution at all.

TIM BISH

Whatever form it takes, even without "under God," I would like to see the Pledge of Allegiance continue in schools, and in public and government meetings because standing in front of the flag and reciting it is a sign of patriotism. It is a pledge to the United States and is what patriotism is all about.

I think people are placing too much emphasis on the "under God" phrase and battlelines are being drawn. I find the phrase basically harmless, but if it's got to go, then it's got to go. But keep the Pledge. It was important when I was a kid and it's even more important now.

People are afraid that by taking "under God" out of the Pledge is showing a lack of faith in the country, but that is out of context with the real issue.

I think the Pledge and God are separate issues. If you want to worship God, go to church. We are pledging allegiance to the United States, not to God.

INSIPID HOLLOWDAYS

I am a veteran of the Vietnam War. I spent most of a year as a USMC 'combat correspondent' with infantry and reconnaissance up around the DMZ and south to My Lai which we roared through a year earlier than Calley's platoon.

The war is never far from my thoughts, essentially an underlying music scored for horror movies which I expect to last until I finish up on the other side of the dirt with my war-mates who did not survive Vietnam or died later from wounds, drugs, suicide or just plain numbed inertia. Well meaning friends insist I forget about the war but that is as impossible as it is dishonest to deny war's insights into the real human character we generally camouflage to protect ourselves from self-knowledge.

I think that is a major reason I seriously object to the manner in which we in the USA commemorate Memorial Day — and for that matter the equally empty celebration of Labor Day (unions don't march anymore). Each seems to be little more than a bookend holiday weekend beginning and ending the annual Silly Season.

Memorial Day was first established as a single day of national mourning for its war dead (with a powerful element of jingoism inherent), inspired by the Civil War in which every one killed on either side or caught inbetween was an American. The questions of *just* and *unjust* wars are momentarily transcended by annual recognition of their grim costs. Now that we are at war again, which might prove to be pyrrhic as well as perpetual, it is essential that all of us are truly aware of what we are countenancing.

I think Memorial Day should return to a single day, May 30 as it was traditionally, and be regarded in its original intent or discarded entirely. The present 3-day holiday makes a mockery of commemoration of the nation's war dead and public ceremonies appear tawdry and comically manipulative.

If we are to honor Memorial Day we should do it for real, the same with Labor Day, or abolish both in acknowledgment they have been trivialized to little more than facades for commercially sponsored partying. Chambers of Commerce will yowl at any such return to basics, of course, and regard it as obviously anti-business as well as palpably unpatriotic.

Perhaps public celebrations (such as July 4th, which is the centerpiece of summer holidays) are meant to go only skin deep — as insipid officially sanctioned observances of things that profoundly affect us individually and as a nation — to ease the itch of nagging deeper reflections that might be dangerous.

~MICHAEL McCUSKER

PETER UNANDER

I love this country, but I don't like the politics very much. I don't like being a superpower.

I think this thing about the Pledge of Allegiance is a side issue. There are a lot more important things happening right now. What happened to Enron? I think attention is being focused away from the Middle East and from India and Pakistan. This seems like another diversion like flag burning to get our minds off the real issues we should be paying attention to.

"Under God" is an idiotic play of words — a battle brought on by the religious right. We're not a nation with only one church. We never were. But the religious right wants us to have one church exclusively. We have a President who is a born again Christian and even though he is politically religious he's pretending not to be — but he is also trying to pretend he was elected.

SEAN McMULLIN

God should not have any place in government. What if you are Buddhist or atheist, are you excluded?

Freedom of religion should also include freedom from religion. A lot of people think freedom of religion means it's their religion the rest of us are free to worship.

Wasn't freedom of religion established because our ancestors came from religiously oppressive governments? We were most definitely established as a Christian government but that has to change because we have Muslims, Buddhists, Native American religions which are still barely recognized, atheists and agnostics. We are moving closer every day to a religious dictatorship and minorities are being excluded.

The very statement 'freedom of religion' is a joke. I don't remember when freedom of religion was taken away from us, so how can anyone give it back?

We are apparently in the middle of a nationalistic orgy, very anti-Islam, and we are starting to exclude them. Part of this nationalism is based on "good" against "evil", Christianity against Islam.

I am an anarchist and it is hard for me to discuss rights given to us that are inherently ours to begin with. The only people who take freedom of religion away from us are governments — who else has?

CHARLOTTE BRUHN

I have always thought the Pledge of Allegiance is the country's school prayer.

AGNES FIELD

Instead of trying to force anyone to say the Pledge of Allegiance, I think we should learn its origin and why it is being said as well as why it is considered important.

There are issues of nationalism as well as of God inherent in the Pledge, and rather than focus only on its religious aspect, there should be a greater discussion around it.

TERRY ERICKSON

The Pledge of Allegiance is a great pledge and we ought to keep it. I like the flag; it's pretty. But we need to redefine God.

R. LOUIS RICHARDS

How about:

"One nation indivisible under the Constitution"?

AMY CODISPOTI

I think a phrase like "under God" is a Christian connotation that usually reverberates negative feelings in our society because Christianity has become a commercialized consumer oriented religion, and that is very sad. I think the fundamental teachings of Christ are beautiful, but the negative way Christianity has evolved in this country (and perhaps around the world), I think it is right for the phrase "under God" to be declared unconstitutional. Our ideas of God are various and are not represented in that phrase. It should never have been added in the first place.

BARBARA BROWN

I agree with the Court. I believe our country should not say it is founded under God. That's a hypocritical statement for our behavior.

It's hard for me to put God and war together. My God is based on love not war, on diversity and learning to understand each other and find ways to get along with different cultures and peoples.

Afghanistan has had enough devastation without us pounding it with bombs. I have to find out what underlies this — is it about oil? Do God and oil mix?

KEVIN VIOLETTE

I used to say the Pledge of Allegiance every day in school. The words "under God" never hurt me. Nor did they affect my perception of God much. The words probably should not have been added in 1954, but now it wouldn't be worth the hurt feelings to take it out. Those who don't believe in God should mumble during that part, and no one will notice. I do think that no one should be required to say the Pledge at all if they don't want to. It's a free country, after all.

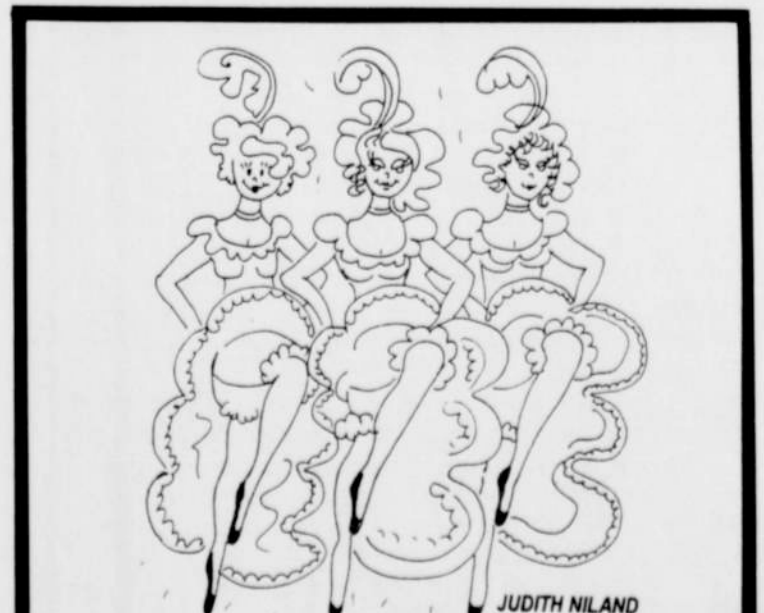


DENIS BOURLAND

'Studio IV'

DENIS BOURLAND RHONDA BURKE
TIM DALRYMPLE ERIC SWENSON
THROUGH JULY 17

RIVERSEA GALLERY, 1169 COMMERCIAL ST., ASTORIA



SHANGHAIED IN ASTORIA

JULY 11 TO SEPT. 14, EVERY THURS, FRI & SAT NIGHTS
UNDER THE BRIDGE ON MARINE DR., ASTORIA • 325-6104