

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

Uproar unnecessary

"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

This is how school children learned and recited the Pledge of Allegiance before and during World War II. It is how the "Greatest Generation" recited the pledge.

In 1954, following the excesses of the McCarthy era (when loyal citizens could lose their jobs and their reputations based on allegations of "sympathy" toward people who were alleged to be communists), the United States was seeking an acceptable way to expound on the difference between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., the difference between democracy and communism. One suggestion, endorsed by President Dwight Eisenhower and approved by Congress, was to add the words "under God" to the Pledge of Allegiance.

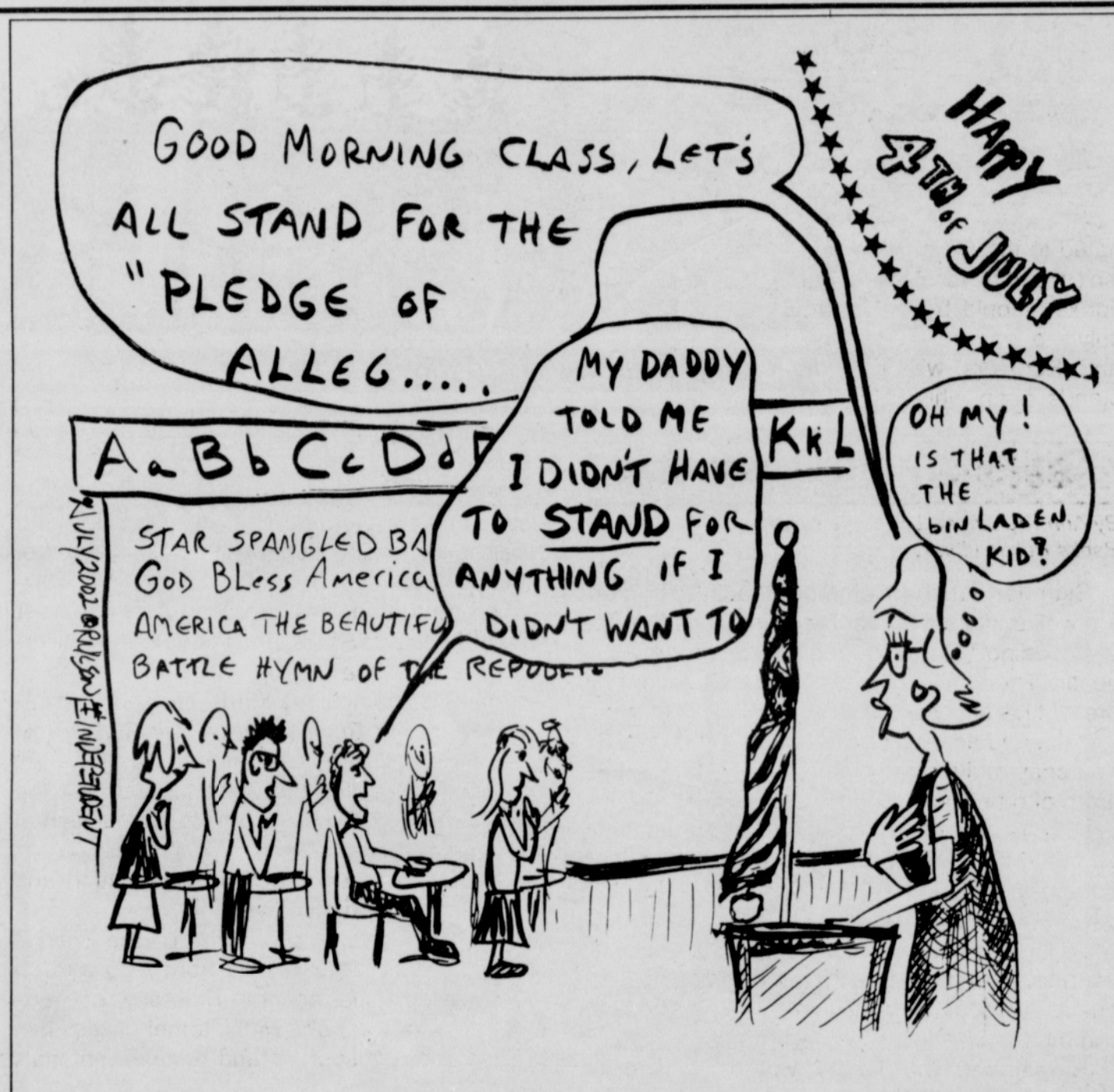
There have been other changes to the pledge. The original didn't include the name of the country, it was a pledge "to the flag," so the words "of the United States of America" were added. During the American Civil War, the word "indivisible" was added.

The recent challenge to the pledge was based on the first amendment to the Constitution, that Congress "...shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..."

It's easy to say that "under God" doesn't *force* anyone to be religious, but reciting the pledge in *public* schools obviously establishes religion as an element in the classroom.

There are at least 40 million people in the U.S. who have alternative belief systems. They have not set out to destroy the foundations of our democracy. They just don't believe in "God" and don't want the government establishing that concept in their children. They are part of the minority that delegates to the Constitutional Convention were concerned about. Freedom of...or from...religion was considered vitally important by our founders. That is why it was included in the very first amendment, along with freedom of speech and freedom of assembly.

Whether the U.S. Supreme Court upholds the Appellate Court decision that the pledge is unconstitutional with the inclusion of "under God," is not terribly important. What is important is understanding the basis of the challenge. That is our heritage.



Ike Says...

By Dale Webb, member
Nehalem Valley Chapter Izaak Walton League



will be our fish populations.

I have been working with the City of Vernonia to implement a water curtailment plan for years that are abnormally dry and would have a major impact on local fish stocks. The reason for water curtailments is that, as water levels become critically low, fish are stressed by warm water temperatures, disease, predators and overcrowding. While the City of Vernonia is still using only about 20 percent of its water rights in Rock Creek, it is socially irresponsible to continue unlimited water usage while natural resources wither on the vine. Can anyone really argue that a clean car, sidewalk or green grass is more important than all the living organisms in our cherished streams? Data show that drought conditions occur about 30 percent of the time, with most (68 percent) stream droughts during the months of September and October. Of these drought periods, only 37 percent were longer than 20 days, with extreme drought conditions occurring about six-percent of the time. While the criteria for implementing water curtailment are still undetermined, most water restrictions would

occur for only short durations of time of up to two weeks in most instances even under an aggressive plan. Only very extreme conditions would require curtailment of all outside watering. The plan is still a work in progress and a public hearing will be announced in the future. One point to remember is that our actions have an impact for 90 miles downstream. Unfortunately, we may be experiencing a drought year again; the Nehalem River is currently flowing at about 66 percent of normal for this time of year.

Speaking of fish, I recently had an interesting conversation with a local fisherman who insists that you can keep trout caught in local streams. I told him to read the synopsis more carefully. I also looked up the fishing regulations on the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife website and, in black and white, it reads that fishing for trout in streams from Neskowin Creek north is catch and release ONLY. This information is found on the Northwest Zone page under general regulations for streams/rivers, not lakes! Unfortunately this person told me that his friend had called ODF&W to clarify this issue and was told that if there wasn't a special exception by individual stream in the pages following the general regulations then he could keep trout from the streams. Wrong! Personally, I think there should be a consumptive fishery in the Nehalem system, but I would not advise anyone to do so.

On the hunting front, the issues remain the same. ODF&W is cutting antlerless tag numbers in the Trask and Alsea units, but they are not cutting any in the Wilson, Scappoose and Saddle Mountain units. I sent an e-mail expressing my outrage to ODF&W in Portland. I ended up with

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