

Eye on Columns

Verbal Fisticuffs: Round 1, Flag Burning

Daniel Delaney and Michael Bruder go head to head in a debate over the controversial topic of flag burning

The power of America's flag is found in its status in our society as an emblem of peace, justice, equality, and a balanced governing body. This badge of democracy represents our nation just as the White House does; or the Statue of Liberty does; or the World Trade Center did. The malicious destruction of our flag broadcasts one message - a message of terror.

Americans should not only feel disgust towards the desecration of our national banner, but also fear. Flag burners threaten national security just as militant terrorist organizations do. Both target symbols of liberty. An organization armed with guns and explosive devices attack structures that represent power, hope and pride. Flag burners assault the 50 stars of our great states and 13 bands of national unity.

Flag burning is nothing but impractical decadence. Demonstrators armed with fire claim that their act is a call for help and a distress signal from a sinking ship. Flag burning, in this analogy, hacks another hole in the vessel. Using the tools provided by national, state, and local governments, law-abiding citizens can change how their administrators make the laws they should abide by.

Demonstration is not a bad practice. One can demonstrate by voting in the plethora of elections held for the executive and legislative branches of all levels of government, creating petitions and documents that alert leaders of public concern, or even directly participating in the mechanisms of democracy by becoming a public leader. Demonstrating your opinions through lewd conduct is the method of an ignorant person.

In demolition of the flag a person demonstrates that they are oblivious of how their own nation changes laws. Choosing to be uninformed creates blind fear and leads to the acts of terror. If a person says the only way to purvey their point is through flag burning than that person is extremely narrow-minded and blinded by their own fear. **-Dan**

To begin, I would like to note that I personally have never set fire to a flag nor do I intend to burn a flag. I do however love what little liberties we still have in this country and feel that we should always do our best to protect those freedoms.

Some neo-fascist conservatives in this country would have you believe that any person who would desecrate the flag is a threat to the security of the nation. Founding Father Benjamin Franklin once wrote, "Those who would sacrifice their freedom for safety will find they inherit neither." A statement that now may be more important than ever to consider.

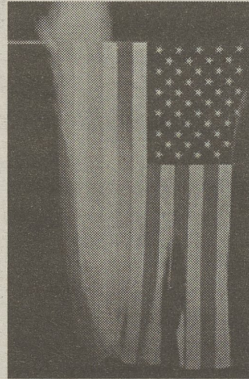


Photo-by google

To take away the people's right to express themselves in any way is an attack on freedom. Any person who would attack freedom stands hand in hand with those who attacked the symbols of freedom, which fell on 9-11. These same people fought against the advancement of civil rights, fought to secede from this great Union to keep slaves, and fight today to keep people from having the right to marriage, or the right to bear arms.

In 1990 when flag burning was ruled as a legal action the U.S. Supreme Court stated: "If there is a bedrock principle underlying the First Amendment, it is that the Government may not prohibit the expression of an idea simply because society finds the idea itself offensive or disagreeable. Punishing desecration of the flag dilutes the very freedom that makes this emblem so revered, and worth revering."

It is important to note that all flag burners are not committing an act of malice. The Boy Scouts of America disposes of thousands of flags annually by burning them, as mandated by the U.S. Flag Code.

If violations of the flag code were illegal it would call for the punishment of a majority of the country's population. President Bush himself desecrated the flag when he autographed a small one in July of 2003. It is a violation of the codes of conduct for the flag to be "printed or impressed on." It is also a violation to manufacture a flag "that is designed for temporary use and discard." If those who would argue against the right to desecrate the flag had things their way I'd expect to see the United States Postal Service jailed for making a flag stamp.

I also expect to see those who feel so strongly about the treatment of this symbol to be outside removing those cute little American Flag stickers from their cars, as they also violate the U.S. Flag Code. Stickers are of course only temporary and according to code the only proper way to display a flag on a car is to have the staff fixed firmly to the chassis or clamped to the right fender. Of course those of you who see flag burning as desecration have found yourselves in a catch-22 - the proper way to dispose of the flag is to burn it. **- M.Bruder**

Eye on Alumni: Shawn Manderson

by Paul Huych

Shawn Manderson graduated in December 2003 from Penn State Delco with a degree in Information Sciences and Technology. He does miss Delco due to his level of involved on campus. While attending Delco, he met many people and made a great amount of contacts that he still utilizes today. Manderson is the perfect example of a successful Delco graduate.

Manderson has good memories of his campus life, he said "what makes it special is that Delco has a certain culture to it that is uncontested by any of the other campuses in PSU...with the area that we are in culture rubs off on the students and the faculty...that is what makes PSU Delco special." Aside from his career, he currently has aspirations to revive the Delco constituent's society, which is part of the alumni association. Most of all, he wants to bring our student government and the constituents society together to revive the Penn State presence in the Philadelphia area.

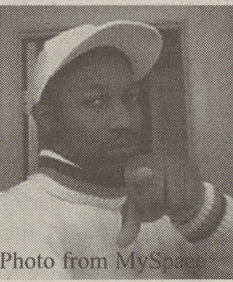


Photo from MySpace

Shawn currently works for Ernst & Young, one of the four biggest accounting firms in the world. He holds a position in their Information Technology auditing department working with technology security and risk services. When he graduated the IT industry was trying to rebound from a sharp decline, which makes Manderson feel lucky to have found a job.

Manderson described his transition from college to career saying "how the baby is in the womb and suddenly it comes out into the emergency room. College is a nice cushy environment, and once you're out there ain't no going back." Of the world outside of college he said "no PhD or masters degree can teach you what the world is really like"

Manderson's job requires a good deal of travel which he finds important and notes that it will most likely be required with any future job he takes. He considers traveling with all expenses paid a highlight as well as a benefit that comes with working for such a large firm.

Manderson's advice: Don't expect to come out of college with no experience and earn a huge income. Instead, find companies that will help your career grow, understand your work/life balance, and finally in a job nothing beats benefits. He says if you find those three things in a company the rest will fall in place.

The Computer Guy: Always Use Protection

It's about that time of the semester where we get a lot of people coming in with slooow, sluuuugish computers. More times than not, it's an unusual amount of spyware and adware that have latched themselves onto the system; however, the most common item I find on an infected machine is this usual suspect:



It's not a flower. It's not ... uhh ... a wheel. It's LimeWire, and it is a file sharing utility. It opens up your computer to other LimeWire users to search and download files that they may want. In return, you get to search and download files off of other LimeWire users. LimeWire also boasts that no adware, spyware, trojans, or viruses will be installed with LimeWire. So what is

the big deal? Party on, dude!

The big deal is that LimeWire is giving you a distortion of the truth. When you install LimeWire, you will not be infected. When you actually use the program is when the fun begins. Since this is a realm where anyone can share files with others (the term anyone includes the communities that eat fish food, and people that intentionally drive really slow in the ultra fast lane), there's no telling what other little snippets of code are latched onto any given file. Also, since you're opening up your computer for the world to see, it's very viable that a hacker could use those openings to gain further access to your machine. All in all, sharing files can spell danger to your computer.

The best way to protect yourself is to stop. Uninstall LimeWire. Another great way to protect yourself is to get yourself some antivirus software. Download, update, and perform a full scan with Symantec Antivirus. You can get it from the ITS downloads site (<http://downloads.its.psu.edu>). If you have any questions, drop me an email at jmd394@psu.edu. You can also swing by the office located at the lower level of the John D. Vairo building.



The Computer Guy, Justin DiMateo is the campus Network Support Specialist in the IT department.