

# VIEWPOINT

The Gamecock

3

Wednesday, June 13, 1990

## Emotion

### Flag amendment drive proves sense is out, sensational in

"Love it or leave it," was what GOP Rep. Arthur Ravenel said about people who burn the United States flag in protest of national policy. "The flag burners don't love this country, so they just might as well get the hell out. Just exile them."

This bit of insightful commentary came yesterday after the United States Supreme Court just barely saw the light of reason and overturned the law that prevents the American flag from desecration. Desecration, that is, at the hands of legitimate protesters who have a huge problem with some part of U.S. policy.

So in response, the nations lawmakers, in their ultimate wisdom, have stuck their tongues out at the justices and said, "Fine. We'll just make it a Constitutional Amendment. Where will you be then?" Of course what most politicians don't seem to want to understand is that if they would let the issue drop, people would probably forget about it altogether.

What the governmental leaders keep forgetting is that our system of democracy is based on personal freedoms, and also that the United States is infamous for publicly getting things off its chest. Regardless of the fact that England probably had a law against boarding ships and dumping the cargo, the Boston Tea Party still took place.

Since those early days, one of the high priority items in the minds of Jefferson, Franklin, Adams and the like was the freedom to get out in the street and let the politicians know what was ticking them off. The founding fathers knew what they were doing, for public protest has served the U.S. well in every arena.

Women can vote, Jim Crow is gone and the Vietnam War is over. Some of the methods for accomplishing those goals were rather unpleasant, but they worked, and for the better. The suffrage marchers of the 20's burned their effigies and got arrested, the civil rights marchers of the Sixties sat in Woolworth's and got fire hoses, and the students at Kent State protested and got shot by their own countrymen, but things changed.

"Thousands of our country's men and women have died in defense of the flag and everything it stands for," said Rep. Liz Patterson, a Spartanburg Democrat who supports the amendment. "I want the families of these brave Americans to know their sacrifice was not in vain."

If the politicians would think for a moment, without letting the emotion of the issue interfere with their duty to the Constitution, they would realize that the best way to do justice to those that have died for this country would be to avoid diluting the Constitution with useless amendments, and allow Americans the freedoms that make our system work.



## The truth behind the wedding bouquet

Due to certain romantic ties, and the obligations that automatically accompany them, I found myself at a major league, no foolin', jump-down-turn-around-pick-a-bale-of-cotton southern wedding this past weekend. There was lots of white, lots of food, lots of flowers and lots of people I really didn't know very well at all. But alas, there was an open bar at the rehearsal party, so that made things just a wee bit better.

Whenever I attend functions like that, I usually feel alternately gleeful and terrified. Gleeful because I know some other sucker is up there signing his life away in front of God and everybody, and terrified because, being a 21-year-old male, I know I've already set a firm course into the high seas of serious romantic entanglement. But I try not to let that get me down, and there's no need for you to let it get you down either. Just follow these helpful hints compiled by me in the process of repeatedly viewing the marital spectacle (here come those nifty bullets again).

● **Hang out with little kids.** Yes, it sounds kind of odd, but you'd be surprised what fun a bunch of bored little kneebiters can be when you get them away from uptight folks like their parents or the wedding director. The best way to enjoy the company of youngsters is to encourage them to misbehave during the rehearsal, and then watch the twitch begin on the director's face. After a couple of hours you can get him or her more jittery than a kangaroo in a mine field, and the kids will be the only ones who really appreciate it.



SCOTT PRUDEN

● **Eat.** Free food is free food, and heck, if you don't know anyone anyway, what's to worry about.

● **Check out the family.** Everybody comes out for weddings, so you're bound to see both the best and the worst of both sides. See if you can peg particular character traits that have been carried down to the bride and groom, and then pay close attention to how they interact with their mates. Do they fight? Do they constantly kiss on each other in public? Do they have attractive children? Are they divorced? How many times? How young or old is the new spouse? The list of questions you could ask yourself is inconceivably long.

● **Observe the parents' behavior.** Ooo, this one's a goody. The trick is to determine who is going to be dominant and who will be submissive as grandparents. Will they be constant nags, or will they take it easy when the kids are out on their own? These are important questions, because as everyone knows, a good set of in-laws will take massive amounts of stress off a relationship, but a set of bad ones is like a time bomb ready to blow problems out of prop-

ortion and scar the minds of grandchildren indefinitely.

● **Peg who out of the wedding party will marry next.** Everyone knows the bouquet and the garter don't mean squat when it comes to predicting the next guy or gal to take the plunge. Actually its most likely the one who constantly avoids even being in the line of fire of said projectile, because he or she knows that time is short, and the last thing they need is public humiliation to go along with that feeling of impending marital bliss.

● **Take out the bride or groom the night before the wedding.** Nothing makes the realization of what someone is about to do hit home like a good, well earned hangerover from Hell. "Sure, drink that bottle of tequila," you say. "The wedding isn't until 7 o'clock. It'll have plenty of time to wear off." That's you, as Satan incarnate, speaking to the lowly fool who believes your stories of wild, single adventures with multiple members of the opposite sex who make sure to tell you that they're so glad you're not married and settled down.

Then, the next day, splash some cold water on their face, drag their sorry butts out of that spinning bed and stick them in their respective tuxedo or gown, then shove them right down that aisle to do what they've been planning to do for the last few months.

They'll thank you for it, and you'll just be glad you're not doing the same thing. Even so, they'll be sure to remind you, your time will come.

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