

To the Editor:

An open letter to the citizens of the United States of America,

I am a seventeen year old High School Senior, and I have a very disturbing matter I wish to talk of.

I have been raised and taught since I was a young boy to love my country and honor its flag. It is a sad day to see when that very basic loyalty to our nation is being disregarded.

What do I speak of? The daily acts of dishonor I behold of the United States flag being disgraced. It seems to me that less and less people have respect for this nation and show it by having no regard for its flag.

My brother served one year in Iraq in service for this nation, and may be going back for a second year; two of my grandfathers served in World War II and one served in the Korean Conflict, and every male member of my family back to the Revolutionary War has fought to defend this nation. They, along with my father, have instilled in me a love of my country and to abhor those that would do it harm.

Enough of the past of my family; I wish to get to the matter at hand. One week ago, on Tuesday, February 19th 2008, I went to Lenoir to tend to some business with my father and was taken aback when I saw the blatant disregard for the United States flag upon the cellular tower/flag pole situated beside the ABC store.

The flag flew by only one of the eyelets; it was left to twirl in the wind to be matted and marred. I suspected that this happened earlier in the day and that it would be tended to as soon as possible, so I went on my way.

I was mistaken. On Wednesday, February 27th 2008, I again went to Lenoir only to see that the flag was still in the same condition.

I am greatly disturbed that no one has taken action on this matter, and further more disgusted that such a defacement of the United States flag goes unchecked.

Even this same day I saw McDonalds' flag had somehow been wrapped around the eagle that adorns the flag pole. I understand it was windy that day, but this cannot be an excuse.

During the Revolutionary War, as you may well know, the flag bearer would lead the men onto the battlefield. Our forefathers loved this nation's flag, their symbol of freedom, so much that if the flag bearer were shot, a man would sprint faster than you would think possible to keep the flag from touching the ground.

These days, and it has been happening since before I was born, the flag of these United States has been reduced to little more than material. We must remember that this flag is not just material, but it is the symbol of our sovereign nation, of our rights, and our heritage. But daily the flag is disregarded, disgraced, and plain desecrated. You can drive through neighborhoods and see how people have no respect for the flag. Not all people are so, but the majority of the houses I have seen the United States flag flown at it has been shredded, twirled around the top of the pole, caught in the line, beaten to pieces by the wind, or washed to a pale white as to not know what colors were where.

What is my point in writing this letter? To inform the citizens of this country and this nation that they must respect our country enough to care for its flag. This nation has given us all so much. Our freedom to have "Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" has been promised us by the Declaration of Independence, and the symbol of this is the

United States flag. If we cannot honor a flag, how then can we honor something much more important; that is, the sacrifice of lives the men and women, who in defense of our nation for over two hundred and thirty years have given their lives to ensure our freedom to live as we choose?

"I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." The flag is what represents our one nation. We're not Canada, we're not Mexico; we are the United States of America and the only physical symbol that we can all see, hold, and feel of this is the flag.

You may not share my belief, you may not like my thoughts on this subject, and this is your right, the freedom of speech, which is protected by this nation and symbolized by the flag. We must remember; we must not forget those that died in this nation's defense. If we fail the flag, mar it by ill use, by leaving it to weather and tear in the wind, then we, as citizens of this nation, fail those who have died so that we may have freedom.

Remember why we have a flag; remember the sacrifice that it represents.

Sincerely from the deepest part of my heart,

James Moody