PEARLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Dedicated to preserving the history and heritage of "Old Pearland"

President's Message

At the April Society meeting, Mayor Tom Reid gave an interesting update on what was going on in Pearland. Mayor Reid mentioned that Pearland has approx.

92,000 residents and will soon be looking at a population of some 136,000 residents as soon as the City annexes areas out in Silver Lake. WOW!! In a 1998 issue of the Newsletter, we marveled that the Mayor said our population would soon hit 52,000. How high can we go? Even with all the growth and all the problems always associated with rapid growth, our Historical Society is very appreciative our City has recognized the importance of maintaining the history of the "Old Pearland Townsite."

We keep emphasizing the need for a younger generation to participate in the **Pearland Historical Society** and recently requested some of our younger members might write of their memories of growing up in **Pearland** or perhaps about someone in **Pearland** who stands out in their memory. In this issue of the Newsletter, a couple of our members have contributed excellent stories. One is by **Ken Eddings** about his memories of working in the fig fields for **Mr. M. S. Drake.** The other is by **Laura Martin Vuittonet** and her memories of **Glenda Dawson. Ken** is a 1955 **PHS** graduate and **Laura** is a 1993 **PHS** graduate; but they both have written really interesting stories about two **Pearland** citizens who contributed greatly to our community. More about that further in the **Newsletter.**

I hope everyone had a great 4th of July. Every Memorial Day and 4th of July I think about the Pearland men who have served our country and of those who never made it back home. I guess the older each of us gets the more we appreciate this great and wonderful country. I recently made a quick internet search looking for meaningful quotes from some famous person about the glories of the 4th of July. I think maybe the

following quote from **Emma Bombeck** is appropriate for most people in the **U.S.**

"You have to love a nation that celebrates its independence every July 4, not with a parade of guns, tanks, and soldiers who file by the White House in a show of strength and muscle, but with family picnics where kids throw Frisbees, the potato salad gets iffy, and the flies die from happiness. You may think you have overeaten, but it is patriotism."

The reason I thought it appropriate is because hot dogs and watermelon have long been our family tradition for the 4th; and when we went to **Kroger's** late in the afternoon of the 3rd of July to pick up wieners and buns, we bought the last package of hot dog buns **Kroger's** had. So apparently a lot of **Pearlanders** have the same tradition. I think, however, as we enjoy the hot dogs, barbecue, watermelons and whatever we all do think about how great this country is and give thanks to the men and women who went ahead of us and fought to keep it free and great.

See you at the next **Historical Society** meeting and hopefully at our **Reunion Luncheon.**

Mickey Mark

What's Happening

At the April Society meeting Dwight Bittick, Chairman of the Historical Home Committee nominated the home of Larry and Deborah Johnston, 2309 San Antonio to receive a plaque as a Pearland Historical Society historic home. Members unanimously approved the nomination.



Historic Johnston Home on San Antonio Street

The **Johnston** home was built by **Larry's** grandfather around 1910 and except for a very short period has been in the **Johnston** family throughout the years. **Larry and Deborah** do a great job in landscaping and keeping the century old historic home in a really good condition. Previously homes of **Edwin and Peggy Long** on **North Houston Street** and of **Luther and Helen Cunningham** on **South Washington.** Bronze plaques for the **Pearland Historical Society** historic homes are on order and hopefully will arrive before the next **Society** meeting.

Thanks go out to the **Alvin Historical Museum** for giving our **Society** several desks, tables and shelving recently. Also thanks to the **Pearland School District** for providing an area where we can store items while we are awaiting the work on the old depot to be done by the **City**.

PHS Class of 1960 To Be Honored

At the Pearland Historical Reunion on October 23rd the Pearland High School graduating class of 1960 will be the honored class. According to the silver anniversary edition of the Gusher Yearbook the 1960 class had 27 members. They were Richard Arcemant, Donald Bell, Aurora Corpus Rodriquez, Jim Duty, Patricia Ferri Scopel, Alice Gonzales, Betty Halik Todd, Phylis Haney Vaughan, Betty Huckabee, Claudia Jamison Rost, Ronald Kaminsky, Clifford Kliesing, Carolyn Lesikar, Patricia Louden, Cookie Martin Edwards, Nancy McClain, Mary Helen Miller, Mike Mitchell, Donald Patterson, Luther Raney (deceased), Antonia Rico, Willie Joe Rost, (deceased) Franklin Sprouse, Donna Stringer,

Robert Suttle, Lynne Thurman Rodgers, and Bill Wallace

Special invitations are being sent to all class members for whom we have addresses. We do need addresses for **Antonia Rico, Phyllis Haney, Nancy McClain, Donald Patterson, Franklin Sprouse, Donna Stringer and Bill Wallace.** If any of you know addresses for these exes, please e-mail me at mark325@prodigy.net Thanks

Be sure to circle **Saturday**, **October 23rd**, on your calendars. That is the date for our annual **Historical Society Reunion Luncheon** at the **Pearland Community Center** from 11:30 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. **Central Texas Barbecue** will again be catering the meal, which is usually served after a brief ceremony honoring the graduating class of 50 years ago and also the lighting of candles in memory of members who passed away since the last luncheon. Every year we light quite a few candles, which makes every reunion more meaningful. Reservation form is attached to last page of Newsletter.

Among our Members

It is always sad to report the deaths of our members and their immediate family members. It is particularly sad to report on the deaths of children of our members. Society Members Roy and JoAnn Suttle Mark's oldest son, Roy Suttle Mark passed away at the age of 59 May 21st in Washington, D.C. after a battle with cancer. Roy S. was a Texas University journalism graduate and had been in D. C. for a number of years. He was an on-line reporter for e-Week, a technology industry newspaper. Roy Suttle was an avid baseball fan. He spent quite a few days each summer with Carleen and me and while still in high school even covered little league baseball for the old Pearland Progress one summer while at our house. Our sympathies go out to Roy and JoAnn and family.

Johnnie Christofferson, sister-in-law of Society
Member Barbara Christofferson Maynor and widow
of C. J. Christofferson passed away back in April.
Johnnie was living in Idaho with her daughter,
Christie, at the time of her death.

We were all saddened to learn that **Nina Hill** passed away **June 3rd. Nina and Verral Hill** were two people for whom you never heard a bad or negative comment. They were tireless workers for the **First Baptist Church** and friends to most everyone in "**old Pearland.**" They moved to **Carthage** to be with daughter **LaVerle** and husband **Earl Spurgeon**; but their hearts and roots remained at **Pearland.** She was preceded in death by

Verral. Nina will be remembered for all her good works but perhaps the one thing most Pearland students of the past will remember were the great hamburgers Nina and Bobbie Martin turned out at the old Corner Drugstore owned by Louella and Albert "Smitty" Smith. Nina would have been 98 this coming September. Our sympathies go out to LaVerle, George Daniel and families. Nina was a Pearland jewel.



Nina and Verral Hill

Former Pearlander Ann Haskins Hill passed away June 30th in Corpus Christi after a battle with brain cancer. Ann was the younger sister of Society Member Johnnie Haskins, who lives in Cambridge, Minnesota, and of Louise Haskins Wisley of Pearland. Many of you older Pearlanders will remember Ann as the daughter of Hamilton and Bessie Haskins. Ann was born deaf and was educated in a special school for the deaf. She was a pretty and intelligent lady.

Historical Society Secretary Brenda Martin Riggs has finished her rounds of chemo treatments for lymphoma. Chemo is a rough treatment and **Brenda** has really been through a rough time. Please keep her in your prayers and hopefully she will be on the road to recovery.

Brenda's Mother Society Member Claudia Martin recently had a fall and fractured a vertebra in her neck, the same one for which she had surgery after a car wreck a couple of years ago. First word was that Claudia would have to again have surgery; but the good news is her doctor has determined Claudia does not need surgery and she is now back at Colonial Oaks and feeling very good. Great news.

Also in **Colonial Oaks** assisted living facility are **Basil** and **Carrie Mae Cogbill.** Son **Steve** reports that although **Basil** is in a wheelchair, both he and **Carrie** are doing well.

Society Member Neil Geyer had his aortic heart valve replaced on June 28th. **Neil** had gone to his cardiologist for a stress test and collapsed during the test. He was rushed to **Methodist Hospital** where tests showed his heart valve was so calcified it was hardly opening. The surgery went well; and **Neil** was back home on July 2nd and reports he is back walking his dogs and glad to be back on his feet.

Society members Larry and Nancy Phillips have been through a lot health wise in the past couple of years. Nancy with cancer in her mouth and Larry with knee and heart surgery. It is great to report Nancy got an all clear report recently after a couple of years of intensive treatments; and Larry continues to improve each day.

Long time **Pearland** resident and **Society Member Patsy Talbot Burkett** moved from her home on **Grand Blvd.** to live with her daughter, **Toni Detzler** in **Ada**, **Michigan. Ada** is a beautiful community of somewhere around 9000 residents in central/western **Michigan** near **Grand Rapids. Ada** was founded in 1821 at the junction of the **Grand and Thornapple Rivers**. We will all miss **Pat**; but we also know that with her outgoing personality, **Pat** will soon have numerous **Ada** friends. Good luck, **Pat.**

Society members Dwight and Cecelia Bittick are spending the summer at "The Villages" in Florida. If you have ever seen the commercials on TV, you know it is a beautiful area with lots of golf courses. Have fun, Dwight and Celia.

Society Member Barbara Christofferson Maynor got some really good news recently. Her scan showed she was free of cancer; and she does not have to return for another scan for a year. **Way to go, Barbara!**

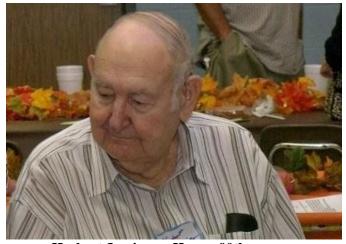
Congratulations to Jerry and Carrie Ann (Keith) Mitchell who celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in June at the Atlantis Hotel in New Providence, Bahamas. Accompanying them were their son Keith and wife Amy (who were celebrating their 13th anniversary) and grandchildren Maura and Ellie (Elizabeth)

Carrie Ann, a native of Pearland, and Jerry are both graduates of Pearland High School. Keith and Amy also are PHS graduates. Amy is a teacher in the Pearland School District.



Jerry and Carrie Ann Mitchell with son Keith, daughter-in-law Amy, and granddaughters Maura and Ellie

Jerry was a corporate pilot for many years and later owned a construction business. Carrie Ann retired from Uncle Ben's Foods, a subsidiary of M&M Mars Candy Company, after 41-1/2 years of service. They have traveled extensively throughout the world. Carrie Ann says she still loves to travel and gamble but has a hard time getting Jerry away from their fishing retreat in Seadrift, Texas. A 50th wedding anniversary to remember.



Herbert Jamison - Happy 90th

Society Member Herbert Jamison celebrated his 90th birthday July 3rd. Herbert is the 2nd oldest native born male resident. The oldest is **David Scott** who turned 90 last **January. Herbert's** home on **Yost Road** is right next to the site of the original **Jamison** farm house where **Herbert** was born. The **Jamison** family has played a major role in the history of **Pearland**. The picture below taken in 1957 shows the twelve **Jamison** children with their **Mother**, **Martha Jamison Moore**. Still living are **Pearland's** oldest native born citizen, **Emma Jamison Wells**, who will be **97** in **November**,

Allen (92), Herbert (90), Quinton (88) and Florence Jamison Gum who will be 86 on Sept. 23rd.



PICTURE TAKEN IN 1957 Ages 33 to 56

Jamison's Left to Right Florence, Quinton, Herbert Allen, Will, Emma, Verna

Jean, Bert, Jim, Jake Sam and mother Martha Jamison Moore

Speaking of birthdays, Society Member Mary Lee **Smith Miller** will celebrate her 100th birthday August 22. Mary Lee is a charter member of the Pearland Historical Society and our oldest member, although not the oldest native born. The **Smith** family came to Pearland in 1928. In the April, 1995 Newsletter Mary Lee told of the family moving to a ranch off Old Chocolate Bayou Road (now Cullen) when she was a senior in high school and brother Clarence was a sophomore. She recalled they had to drive all the way to **Webster** on mostly mud and shell roads to attend high school. She recalled that "Old Chocolate Bayou" was a shell road. In 1935 she married Jack Miller and they moved to a house that Jack had built for them on the corner of Orange and Austin Streets which was to be her home for 59 years. At the time their home was on the very edge of **Pearland**. When asked what she thought were the best things that happened to **Pearland**, she said probably getting gas, water and sewage. Husband Jack Miller passed away in 1991; and Mary **Lee** moved into **Holly Hall in Houston** in 1994 which is still her home. One quote from Mary Lee's interview concerning the growth of **Pearland** probably speaks for the majority of our **Historical Society** members was the following: Mary Lee said, "I know more people in South Park Cemetery than I do in Pearland." Have a great 100th Mary Lee.



Mary Lee Smith Miller

Ken Eddings - 1955 PHS Grad.

Fond Memories of Mr. M. S. Drake

In conforming with your request in an earlier Historical Society Newsletter for some memories that occurred in our early years in Pearland, I have one.

Perhaps you remember Mr. M.S. Drake. For those that do not know or remember him, he was a prominent business man who resided on a farm east of Pearland(approx. halfway between Pearland and Friendswood) on Fm 518.

Mr. Drake raised figs that he also processed & cooked in Friendswood & Alvin. He cooked the figs in huge

kettles, bottled them and sold them to the Bama Co. in Houston, who would affix their label to them for resale.

I worked for Mr. Drake, along with Weldon Flannakin and Joe Alexander, during the summers of 1953, 1954, and part of 1955, the year I graduated from Pearland High School. We would do various jobs, whatever needed to be done at any given day.

When Mr. Drake would have the figs cooked in the huge kettles, one of my jobs was to add the sugar to them. You had to pour the sugar in very slowly, trying not to splash the extremely hot liquid onto yourself. I did not go unscathed! On one occasion I did splash too much and the liquid splashed onto my hand between the thumb and forefinger, leaving a scar that I bear to this day.

I'm not sure how many different businesses that Mr. Drake had, but he also planted, fertilized, and watered large St. Augustine grass fields. He not only sold the grass but also sold and planted it. I also worked in this venture, doing various jobs.

His grass fields were mostly situated on the south side of FM 518. Watering of the St. Augustine grass was a must, and he had large water sprinklers that would cover a long distance across the fields, being moved when necessary. Mr., Drake had a gas powered grass cutter that cut the exact length and width of grass to be sold. We heard that he, or his son in law had invented this cutter.

Mr. Drake was on the Pearland School Board for many, many years. After I graduated in 1955 Mr. Drake approached me and inquired if I would be interested in attending college, and if I was, he would finance this for me. I refused his offer because at the time I had no idea what I wanted to do in life. I had received some partial scholarships from various schools, due to the fact I had finished third in my class. The following month I had begun work for Mr. Drake and at that time he asked me again if I wanted to attend college and he would be happy to finance it. I turned him down again! Don't know what I was thinking!

Meanwhile my buddy Bob Mack Furnace and Iona Mae Delawder had decided to attend Baylor University in the coming fall in Waco, Tx. I really started thinking then! Sounded reasonable to follow my classmates to Baylor.

A few days later I was working in Mr. Drake's grass fields when I finally made my decision. I picked up my

tools, walked to Mr. Drake's house and told him I accepted his offer. He naturally wanted to know what I would be majoring in at college, and I told him Accounting, and he thought this was a very good choice.

I applied to Baylor, passed their entrance exam, and attended for one year having passed all the courses necessary to become a sophomore.

I don't know if Mr. Drake had ever extended this invitation to anyone before, or, after me, but I am extremely grateful and pleased that He did so.! I only attended college for that one year, and then I joined the U.S. Army. I made arrangements with Mr. Drake that I would pay him back monthly for the loan, which I did, making the last payment with my last Army payment.

Ken Eddings

Editor's Note: Thanks, **Ken**, for the story. **Ken** graduated from PHS in 1955 and was an outstanding all around athlete and obviously a good student. His story about working for Mr. Drake adds another chapter about the generosity of a man who was highly respected by all in **Pearland. Mr. Drake** is a man who really did play a major role in the history of **Pearland.** Much has been written about how if Pearland were named for the fruit which did the most for the economy of the area we would have been "Figland". In 1930 there were 28 fig packing plants in the area between **Beaumont** and Victoria, Texas. Sometime in the 1930's, M. S. Drake bought the Pearland Packing Plant. Although Mr. **Drake** was a very quiet spoken man, when he spoke he commanded respect. After Mr. Drake's death his nephew, Roger May, took over Mr. Drake's business and continued the fig packing business until just a few years ago. M. S. Drake served Pearland very well. He was a pillar of the Methodist Church and served on the **Pearland School Board** for several years.

Childhood is that wonderful time of life when all you need to do to lose weight is take a bath. ~Author Unknown

God gave us memories that we might have roses in December. ~J.M. Barrie



Laura Martin Vuittonet with grandmother Claudia Martin

My Memories of Glenda Dawson by Laura Martin Vuittonet

My senior year at Pearland High School was 1992-1993. My school day started at 7:15am at the new high school (I was the second class to graduate in the new school building) and under the direction of Mrs. Glenda Dawson. She taught the class what I believe was then called "Business Administration," although most people are familiar with the previous term "coop," which means that I was allowed to go to school for half a day and work for half a day.

In Mrs. Dawson's class, we learned a variety of things from software programs to professional etiquette. I already knew Mrs. Dawson as I had the pleasure of having her as my typing teacher during my 10th grade year. In fact, Mrs. Dawson had also taught my mother when she was in school, and my mother graduated from Pearland High School in 1966. In addition, my mother had informed me that Mrs. Dawson sent my father a "get well soon" card while he was in the hospital recovering from surgery to remove his cancer in the early part of 1987. Mrs. Dawson sent this card while she was in the hospital, herself. Sadly, my father did not recover but this kind gesture on her part was never forgotten. So by my senior year in high school, I already knew I just loved Mrs. Dawson. She already held a special place in my heart.

On the first day of school during my senior year, Mrs. Dawson was taking attendance, calling out each individual's name. One student had a last name that was similar to a curse word, and he jokingly took the Lord's name in vain using his last name instead of the curse word. There was some snickering in the class

room but the laughing immediately stopped when Mrs. Dawson very firmly told this student that she was a proud Christian, and that she would not have anyone taking the Lord's name in vain in her class like he did, even if it was a joke and even if it wasn't really using the curse word. She definitely commanded respect in her classroom and in just a few short minutes she most certainly received it on that first day of class.

At some point later in the year, Mrs. Dawson had some attendance issues with some of the students. I remember her telling us, "Listen up, class because this is very important and something you need to remember. It is absolutely vital that you go to work every single day and be a dependable employee. The world is run by those who show up." To this day, I still quote that to myself pretty frequently as a motivator when I just really don't want to get up in the mornings to go to work! "The world is run by those who show up." It's quite helpful, actually.

Mrs. Dawson also really didn't mind telling her opinion and was able to do so in a way that would be rather humorous. I'm not certain what prompted this, but one day Mrs. Dawson shared with the class that it really bothered her to hear people complain about their spouse. I don't remember the examples she provided exactly, but it was something similar to "My husband/wife is so stupid. I just can't stand him/her." Mrs. Dawson said that when she would hear those kinds of comments from someone, she just wanted to ask what it said about them, when they are the ones who chose their spouse! She declared right then that she loved her husband and that she would never say that her husband is stupid, even if he were! She said that luckily she married an intelligent man so she didn't have to lie!

My memories of Mrs. Dawson include the fact that she taught us so many things, and not just the things that were included in her Lesson Plans. She taught us to stand up for our beliefs. She taught us the importance of being relied upon to be at work every day. She also taught us the importance of not just loving but also respecting our spouse. These are just a few of the reasons why I wanted so badly to help with her campaign when she first decided to run for State Representative. I just had a small part, which was to stand outside the voting polls and tell voters that Glenda Dawson would sure appreciate their vote. Now that she is no longer with us, I often wonder if Mrs. Dawson knew just how much I appreciated her. I really hope she knew

Laura Martin Vuittonet

Editor's Note: Although someone who graduated from PHS in 1993 is comparatively very young to most of our Historical Society members, Laura's roots go back about as far as anyone either in Pearland or our Historical Society. Laura is the daughter of Buddy and Jackie Watts Martin. Her great, great Grandfather was Samuel Pleasant Martin, a man who was in Pearland before Witold von Zychlinski the founder of our town. Samuel Pleasant Martin is famous for having won a city lot on the corner of Park and Jasmine when he won the contest to decide the most handsome man in **Pearland.** Her children are sixth generation Pearlanders. Her father, Roy F. Martin III (we all knew him as "Buddy") sadly passed away from cancer in his early 40's. Those of you who remember **Buddy** probably agree that if **Pearland** had held another contest to select the most handsome man in **Pearland** in the 60's or 70's, **Buddy** probably would have been the winner just as was his great Grandfather, Samuel Pleasant.

Laura has a 16 year old daughter, Taylor, a 14 year old son, Shane, a 3 year old son, Joshua, and a 3 month old baby girl named Haley. Laura's memories of Glenda **Dawson** also remind us of the influence teachers have on their students. Many of our older members have often reminisced about the wonderful teachers who came to **Pearland** when the high school re-opened in 1937 after Pearland high school students had gone to Webster for high school for 22 years.

Any of you who knew **Glenda Dawson** must really appreciate Laura's story. Glenda was probably the most positive thinking person any of us ever met. Her death was a real shock to us all. Thanks, Laura, for your memories of Glenda Dawson.

Question: When is a retiree's bedtime?

Answer: Three hours after he falls asleep on the

recliner.

When a group of **Pearland "old timers"** get together at an event such as our **Reunion Luncheon** one topic that invariably comes up is how different it is for kids growing up in today's society than it was back in those depression days of the 30's and even the 40's, and 50's. We reminisce about the fun kids of our era had with

homemade toys and how we would go out in the mornings and play outside virtually all day. Lester Hood wrote a story a few years ago about "Growing Up in Pearland" which is on the web site of LeRoy "Red" Watson's son. In his story Lester talks about the fun he and Red and friends had building go carts from scrap lumber, sleeping outside over night and other activities kids of the thirties found to do that didn't cost any money. It's a great story. To read Lester's story go to this website:

http://www.thebicyclingguitarist.net/dad/pearlandhs.

Lester even talks about how he and "Red" would sometimes get on their bicycles and ride the 5 miles or so up to **Hobby Airport** to watch the planes land and take off. The conclusion always seems to be the same - - times were hard back in those days but if we had it to do all over again; we wouldn't change with today's kids.

Recently **Carleen** and I had a conversation with one of our great grandsons which I think sort of epitomizes the difference between growing up in "old Pearland" in the 30's or 40's and growing up in the **Pearland** of today. We had our two great grandsons, Blayne age 7, and Ethen age 5, for the day awhile back. To Blayne and Ethen I am "Granddad" and Carleen is "Grandy". Blayne was outside playing in our side yard and came in and said that a lady who looked just like Grandy had just passed by in a car and waved at him. Of course we knew it was her sister, Armilda, who lives just down the street. Everyone always talks about how much Carleen and Armilda look alike; and there have been times when we are out shopping and someone will come up to talk to Carleen assuming she is Armilda. We explained to Blayne that the lady he saw who looked so much like Grandy, was Grandy's sister Armilda. Carleen then asked Blayne if he waved back and Blayne replied, "no, I'm not supposed to wave back when I don't know for sure who it is." Obviously, Blayne's parents have done a good job emphasizing not to associate with strangers; but it really started me thinking about what a difference in growing up today than back in those days when we all knew everyone in **Pearland** and when a couple of kids like LeRoy and Lester could hop on their bikes and ride to **Hobby Airport** and I feel sure their parents never said "now don't you be waving back at any strangers." Sort of makes me feel sorry for the kids of today.

Words of Wisdom

Remember, half the people you know are below average.

He who laughs last thinks slowest.

A clear conscience is usually the sign of a bad memory.

Change is inevitable, except from vending machines.

When everything is coming your way, you're in the wrong lane.

Everyone has a photographic memory. Some just don't have film.

Inside every older person is a younger person wondering what happened.

Don't forget the regular quarterly meeting of the Pearland Historical Society Tuesday, July 20th at 7:00 P.M. at the Knapp Senior Center on Park St.

This meeting will be a joint meeting of the Historical Society and the "Old Pearland Neighborhood Group".

As usual cookies, coffee, cold drinks and visitation follows the meeting. See you there.

Let's all keep our servicemen and women in our prayers and remember these gems from an unknown author:

It is the soldier, not the reporter, who gives you the freedom of the press.

It is the soldier, not the poet, who gives you freedom of speech.

It is the soldier, not the community organizer, who gives you the right to demonstrate.

It is the soldier who salutes the flag, serves the flag and whose coffin is draped with the flag who allows the protester to burn the flag.