

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Soldiers died for our right to protest

TO THE EDITOR:
I applaud editor James Clark's very thoughtful opinion piece in this morning's *Southern Standard* (Friday, May 25) regarding our right as Americans to peacefully protest injustice and its applicability to the protests by NFL players when they "take a knee" during the playing of our national anthem.

It really doesn't matter what they are protesting. What does matter is that they are exercising their right as Americans for which so many of our fellow Americans have died to preserve and protect.

We should all stop and think for a minute about what we are saying about these sacrifices when we criticize the NFL players for exercising their rights particularly on this Memorial Day weekend which was set aside to honor these sacrifices.

Dean Anderson
Oviedo, Fla.

I wish pool would have longer hours

TO THE EDITOR:
It is great the pool will be opened longer for two days a week in June. But I don't understand the pool closing when school starts. What is up with that? Except for staying open Saturday, of course.

Does the recreation center not take in consideration that people who are employed, when they are not working, would like to use the pool, before or after their shifts?

This is not to mention, the seniors or parents with preschool children would like to spend the day there, since it stays pretty hot, even after Labor Day, when most pools close.

This pool is more than a showpiece. It was designed to be a recreation device for the city and county residents.

Linda Salter
Meiser Lane
McMinnville

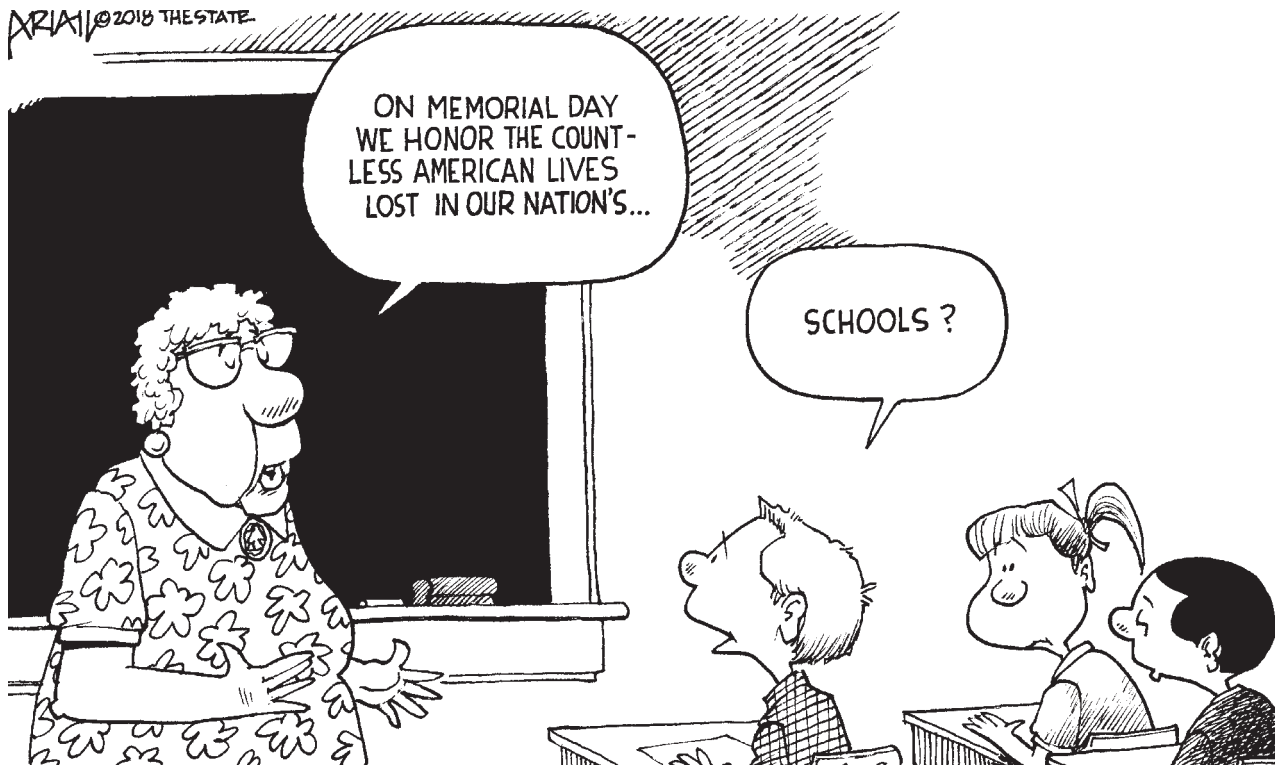
WRITE A LETTER

Members of the community are encouraged to write letters to the editor for publication in the newspaper

EDITOR@SOUTHERNSTANDARD.COM



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Memorial Day reflections

Tomorrow is Memorial Day in the USA. Its purpose is to remember and honor the men and women who died while serving our nation in the United States Armed Forces.

Memorial Day began shortly after the American Civil War. Originally known as Decoration Day, it was a way to commemorate Confederate and Union soldiers who had died in the war. The day was not an official national holiday at first. Instead, it was started as a simple occasion for decorating the graves of fallen soldiers from both sides of the war in various places around our country.

The significance of Memorial Day has changed through the years to encompass and recognize all American soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, and Coast Guard, active and reserve, who have died in war. It is now a U.S. federal holiday which happens every year on the final Monday of May.

Unfortunately, the meaning of Memorial Day has become blurred over time. For example, it is often confused with Veterans Day, which honors all people who have served honorably in our armed services. In the words of Billy Ray Cyrus, "All gave some, some gave all."

As good songs often do, that phrase captures the essence of the difference in Veterans Day and Memorial Day. Veterans Day honors all those who "gave some" in service to our nation. Memorial Day is

meant to honor those who "gave all."

Worse, in my view, is the crass commercialization of Memorial Day in recent decades. The three-day weekend is exploited fully by merchants and media in the pursuit of luring Americans to sales of everything imaginable. And it works.

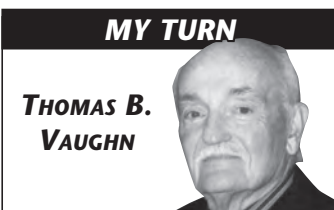
Now I'm all for capitalism, in moderation, that is. However, I'm against it in the extreme, especially when it is used to profit from what should be a solemn and sublime holiday.

I realize my opinion on this matter will be controversial to some, perhaps to many. Still, I feel compelled to state it and strongly.

Fortunately, the true meaning of Memorial Day is being preserved, primarily by patriotic organizations like the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Marine Corps League, and Vietnam Veterans of America. Locally, they will be in action at the Warren County Memorial Airport tomorrow morning, starting at 7 a.m. I hope to see many of you there.

As for the rest of my vast reading audience around our country, I urge you take time to reflect on what Memorial Day means to you, and if you're so inclined, find a Memorial Day service near you and attend it.

Retired Army Col. Thomas B. Vaughn can be reached at tbovwmi@blommand.net.



THOMAS B. VAUGHN

Let's make good homes

Sometimes a name reveals more than you realize at first glance. "My father, Bill Foster, was a real foster child," Serrin Foster explains. "He experienced both the best and the worst of foster care. Horrifically and brutally treated by some, he was later placed with a loving couple and stayed with them for the rest of his life. ... The good couple who took him in for the rest of his life would find food under his pillow after he had fallen asleep because he was so terrified about where he would find his next meal."

Serrin Foster is the president of Feminists for Life. She's made it her mission to bring to bring a pro-life message to audiences that only know the left's caricature of anti-abortion arguments.

As you can tell from her description of her late father, foster care is deeply personal for her.

And it should be deeply personal for all of us. That was the takeaway from a National Review Institute event I just hosted in Washington, D.C., about foster care. It brought in a variety of speakers from throughout the country who play different roles helping to solve the foster-care crisis in the United States.

"This can't be tolerated," Archbishop Joseph Naumann of Kansas City, the incoming chair of the Catholic bishops' pro-life office, said during the event. He said that taking in foster children is another way families can be "open to life" and made clear that foster-care and adoption must be pro-life priorities.

The most compelling testimonies about these issues come from the children who are living in foster care or from adults who once lived in it. These stories can be spread via social media, where they can serve as inspiration. Foster stressed the importance of getting such stories out in the

world. Feminists for Life, on the website womenservebetter.com, have resources on foster care worth sharing.

Because of some of the things that happened to him over the years, her father couldn't handle baths or bodies of water. At another foster-care event, I listened to a mother talk about something similar involving her son whom she and her husband adopted. The opioid crisis has added an urgency to the crisis, and children are suffering so much trauma in addition to addiction.

When I ask Foster about priorities she says: "Children first, of course." That means we must be adults about the debate and not let it fall into the same kind of ideological silos that every other issue tends to fall into once it hits the political arena. That means keeping our emotions in check in our rhetoric and considering agreeing to disagree on some fundamental, complex issues. I've

heard more than one former foster child tell me how they were literally starving at some point in their lives -- for food and for love.

If one family in every church in America became a foster family, we would not have the crisis we have today. Children would have homes. This was one of the takeaways from our forum. That's something for people of faith to take as an examination of conscience and an action item. That's something for activists who find themselves arguing with people of faith about marriage and family life to consider as well. People who believe in the message of, say, the Beatitudes, are people who might just provide good homes for these children. Maybe we can have a truce on some of those issues while we get some children into loving homes.

Kathryn Jean Lopez is senior fellow at the National Review Institute. She can be contacted at klopez@nationalreview.com.



KATHRYN LOPEZ

JUST A THOUGHT

LISA HOBBS



Snakes not great around the house

There are good and bad ways to wake someone up.

Being a mother of two, my children have run the gamut on ways to wake mom up effectively, but Friday morning will go down in the books as unique. I woke up to Merissa saying, "Your big snake got out and is climbing the house."

Prologue: The night prior I went outside to retrieve something from my car. Nothing out of the ordinary, until I attempted to go back into the house. I found my route blocked by a rather large snake in front of my screen door.

I guessed it was four feet in length, but it was somewhat curled up and difficult to tell exactly.

Regardless, it was her -- another assumption on my part -- and me. I grabbed a rake and my trusty bucket. She put up a struggle, but I did manage to get her into the container and placed a cover over it to "secure" her in there.

Then, I took a few deep breaths and tried to calm down. When people talk about an adrenaline rush, I know exactly what they mean. I sent a text to my daughter that was direct and straight to the point, "Don't touch the bucket on the porch. Snake" and went to bed.

To Merissa's statement that the snake had gotten out of its not-so-secure confinement, I jumped up. In my delusional state, I grabbed the prongs that I use to pick up smaller snakes -- not going to work in this case.

That snake was scaling the side of my house. It looked like King Kong in the movie as he climbed the tower to the finale. Much like poor Kong, I was bound and determined to get her off my house and back into the container.

Bucket in one hand and prong in the other, I quickly assessed the situation. It was climbing up the window frame on its way to the attic. At this point, the snake is harmless and much less threatening than the night before. No way that it could strike at me as it clung to the house. Its length was still unnerving.

I started from its tail and eased it back into the bucket. When it was about half way in, I grabbed it by the neck and pulled it away from the house. It dropped into the bucket. It was heavy. I eased the bucket to the porch and covered it quickly. This time, I placed weights on top.

My daughter measured the area where the snake hung. She said it was five feet long, not four. Correction made. The snake was almost as tall as I am. It took me more than 30 minutes both times to stop shaking.

I'm writing this Friday morning. Hopefully, the snake will be there when I get home after work today. While opinions differ, I believe it to be nonvenomous.

Regardless, I will relocate it away from my property this evening.

Standard reporter Lisa Hobbs can be reached at 473-2191.

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Patricia Zechman, Publisher
James Clark, Editor

Phyllis Vanatta, Business Manager
Dale Stubblefield, Circulation Director

Phone: 473-2191
105 College St., McMinnville, TN 37110
FAX: 473-6823
Email: standard@blomand.net
Website: www.southernstandard.com

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