

Big 12 faces an uncertain future

The upcoming dismemberment of the Big 12 conference would have been unthinkable just a few years ago. Now, the University of Kansas and Kansas State, together with Iowa State and Baylor, face an uncertain future as outcasts from major-conference football.

Imagine, the Jayhawks, who won the Orange Bowl just two years ago, and K-State, winner of all those games under Bill Snyder and Vince Gibson, cut adrift from traditional games, college bowls and all that. Even KU being a perennial basketball power doesn't seem to count for much.

Neither does more than a century of tradition, dating back to the days of the Big Six and Big Seven, known formally then as the Missouri Valley Intercollegiate Athletic Association. The league dates itself to 1907, though some of the individual rivalries go back much farther, to the dawn of football as we know it.

What happened?

Call it greed, maybe. Call it money, for sure. Call it television.

Maybe the trouble began when the Big 8 saw a chance to grow by scooping up the four biggest and best members of the former Southwest Conference: Texas, Texas A&M, Texas Tech and Baylor.

That left the rest of the conference out of a league, of course, but who cared if the Big 8 schools would prosper? Money and greed trumped tradition.

Then the new Big 12 voted to move first its offices and then its tournament to Dallas, leaving Kansas City to fend for itself. The tournament did return this year, but the center of action certainly shifted south.

Now, forces are pulling apart the Big 12, and having abandoned many of the old traditions, it lacks new ones to bind its members.

The Big 10 may want Nebraska and Missouri, both original Big Six members. If they go, the story has it, the southern football powerhouses, including maybe the three Texas schools and Oklahoma, might join a vastly expanded Pac 10 conference. That would leave poor Baylor, the only private university in the Big 12, plus weak-sister football schools like Kansas, K-State and Iowa State, without a home.

No "big-time" conference would have them.

And it's way too late now to appeal to tradition. Money has entered the room.

What will happen is anybody's guess. With the kind of television money being bandied about—as much as \$20 million a year for a Big 10 contract, for instance—it's hard to see the Big 12 schools sitting still. Not unless the league can come up with some cash of its own.

Kansas and Kansas State have vowed to work together to save their own skins, but their chances for success may not be bright. Few major colleges can raise money without success on the field. And state support continues to drop.

Are the Kansas universities and their kin reaping the wages of sin?

That may depend on how you value history, tradition and big-time college sports money. Only time will tell.

— Steve Haynes

A rare opportunity

Dear Editor:

It is a rare opportunity when a teacher can speak on behalf of a former students who is running for political office. For me, that opportunity presents itself in the election of 2010.

Tracey Mann was raised on a Western Kansas farm. He was a student of mine at Quinter junior-senior High school where he was an award winning participant in a program I sponsored locally, the National History Day Contest.

From those long-ago days, I have watched Tracey grow into the 33-year-old man who wants to represent the Big First District in the U.S. House of Representatives.

In my opinion, Tracey would be a tremendous asset to those of us who reside in the Big First.

Tracey is a young man of uncommon leadership ability, an asset recognized by his college classmates who elected him student body president of Kansas State University.

He has an ability to connect with us on a one-to-one basis, an ability to understand our cares and concerns because they are his concerns too.

Tracey would take common sense, high moral values and a tremendous energy to Washington. He believes that Congress should reflect the beliefs of the majority



of Americans: cut government spending while reducing taxes, reduce government involvement in businesses and the personal lives of Americans, repeal Obamacare, preserve social security and Medicare, protect Second Amendment rights, advocate for the livestock and agricultural industries and support legislation that recognizes the value of a human life.

Rep. Jerry Moran has done a tremendous job of representing the Big First in Congress.

I encourage you to send him to the U.S. Senate and to elect his former intern, Tracey Mann, to fill his seat in the First Congressional District in Kansas.

Joanne Emerick,
retired social studies teacher
Hoxie

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Lack of accountability and responsibility

The Gulf Shores beach in Alabama reminds me of sugar. The thought of tar balls washing onto those pristine white beaches not only saddens me, but angers me as well. The greatest problem with big business is the lack of accountability and responsibility. Unfortunately far too often, they will not do the right thing unless forced into it. They point to a vast array of other issues to identify as the culprit and search for shortcuts regardless of the damage to the environment or the loss of life. I wrote earlier of those who believe the only role of the federal government should be to protect us, i.e. as in waging war. Who is to protect us from those businesses who believe money entitles them to power at any cost?

The damage to the Gulf Shores region may take decades to ascertain let alone to calculate the monetary impact. This isn't the same as Mount St. Helens; this is man-made and preventable. It isn't the same as the Exxon Valdez oil spill; this is spewing an uncalculated amount from an unknown quantity.

One would hope in a country where

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



supposedly we value every human life, all safety precautions would be in place. The sad truth is the dollar seems to be the deciding factor, not the safety of workers or the environment. There is a reason big business is unfriendly toward environmental issues. It exposes them for what they are. It matters not if it is coal, oil, pharmaceuticals or countless other businesses. I would venture to say they would rather take big risks.

One can expect human error will sometimes result in accidents. By the very definition of being human we will make mistakes, but they aren't powered by greed. In the first quarter of this year, British Petroleum averaged \$93 million a day in profit. Pure profit. The damage to the Gulf is impossible to calculate as it

has already resulted in the loss of 11 lives. Beyond that, is the far reaching effect to tourism, the fishing industry and, yes, the oil industry as well.

I am sure we will soon see ads about the benefits of oil, just as we have seen the increase in advertising of the coal industry since the Montcoal Eagle Mine accident which claimed 29 lives last April. That particular mine had multiple safety citations and yet still continued to operate. We have agencies in place to monitor the oil and coal industries and yet they continued to operate without making needed adjustments.

Big business has much in common with children. They will never be accountable without parental consistency. They will never grow to be responsible if the parent/government is not consistent in its punishment.

In the ideal world children would always do the right thing because it is the right thing. In an ideal world big business would not have to be coerced into doing the right thing. Nothing like an oil rig explosion to remind us we are far from an ideal world.

Congress needs to honor Veterans

Capitol Views

Rep. Jerry Moran



simply unsustainable. This looming fiscal disaster threatens the ability to make good on the commitment our government made to veterans.

Kansas families and businesses are struggling to balance their budgets and live within their means; Congress must do the same. It is past time for our government to live within its means and cut runaway spending. We need to examine every department and every program within the Federal government and make the hard choices necessary so that we will have the resources needed to fund the fundamental role of the federal government: to keep our country secure and take care of those who make these sacrifices. This process should begin with a Congressional budget.

This is only a small step towards what Washington must do to better serve our veterans. The greatest concern I hear from Kansas veterans is the lengthy delay in processing disability compensation claims.

The number of claims will only increase as more troops return back home. As a member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, I have worked hard with

my colleagues from both sides of the aisle to address the antiquated and inefficient claims system the VA uses which leave thousands of frustrated veterans waiting for help. We have made some progress in fixings these problems, but much more work remains.

Our country must also help better prepare soldiers for life after they depart the service of their country. Veterans coming home from Iraq and Afghanistan are having a difficult time finding employment.

According to a recent report by the Department of Labor, 10.2 percent of veterans that served in Iraq and Afghanistan are unemployed. That number shoots up to over 20 percent for veterans between 18 and 24. The Congress should increase job training programs and expand incentives for private businesses that hire veterans.

The influx of veterans into the system will continue to grow in the coming years. Congress must immediately get its fiscal house in order so that we have the resources to address the challenges the VA system faces. These brave men and women deserve a government worthy of their sacrifice. To honor their sacrifice our nation must do everything in our power to make sure that when the guns finally do go silent, that we are in the best position possible to keep our commitments.

Rep. Jerry Moran (R-Kan.) is a member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee.



To... White Field's Coffee House for six great years. (E-mailed)

To... all the students and parents who donated school supplies to Helpus Learn... Give us Hope. (E-mailed)

To... the Flower Committee for all the nice flowers around town. (Called in)

To... the Rotary Club for bringing the Circus to town. (E-mailed)