

Red Devils mascot far from worst problem here

I just can't get too worked up about the Red Devils mascot and logo for the Oberlin high school teams.

Given its history, this tradition is harmless enough. The story goes that the editor of the Norton newspaper wrote, back in the 1920s, that the Bluejays had to play "those red devils from Oberlin" the next week.

It's not recorded what the school's mascot was at the time, if any. But the sobriquet apparently caught the fancy of the Decatur Community High student body, and Red Devils they became.

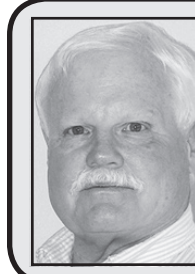
The mascot has come under attack time and time again, but it's a strong and dearly held tradition. In a day when many such images, team names such as "Indians" or "Chiefs," come under fire as politically incorrect, Red Devils seems sort of tame. Several colleges, the most prominent of them church-sponsored, use devil logos.

One Kansas town found out the hard way, you can't just copy someone else's mascot, at least, not if you sell merchandise with the logo on it.

Lord protect us from the dogooders of the left and the right. And while you're at it, from big-time colleges and their lawyers, too.

Besides, arguing about symbols like the Red Devil just keeps us from dealing with the real problems in our society. Church leaders, some of whom seem to have nothing better to do, ought to be tackling these.

Our society used to have rules. Some may have been arbitrary and unfair, but they served the common good by promoting behavior that was best for the individual, the fam-



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
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ily, for society as a whole.

And in those days, rules was rules: Marriage was considered sacred, sin was wrong—and a young woman who got pregnant out of wedlock was expected to give the baby up for adoption.

Starting about 1960, all of that went out the window. Our parents' generation started getting divorces. Blacks pushed for civil rights. Drugs became prevalent. The states muscled the mob out of the gambling business. And "Keep the baby, Faith" was not just a funny turn on a slogan. "Living in sin" became the thing to do.

Many of the changes were for the better. Many were long overdue. But with the rules thrown out the window, we lost the certainty that some things simply were for the best.

And so today, even though research shows that children do better with two parents, a stable home life, more financial support and a strong moral upbringing which gives a sense of responsibility, we're not allowed to criticize those who choose some other path.

Not that it's impossible for a single parent or a couple living outside the bounds of matrimony to raise good children, but that it's a lot more difficult. The child of a single parent will more often grow

up in poverty, without strong discipline and moral guidance, without a strong male figure to influence their development.

I'm not one to condemn the woman who decides to keep her baby, but in an era when we question parents who spank their children, shouldn't someone stick up for what's best for the baby?

Or do we live in a time when doing whatever feels good is not just your right, but OK, too?

After the beating death of yet another Kansas child at the hands of a live-in "boyfriend," someone said that "It's never OK to leave your baby with your boyfriend." But what about having the baby out of wedlock, or having the boyfriend rather than a stable family life? Those may not amount to abuse, but is anyone going to argue that this lifestyle is good for children?

As a Christian, I do believe in Satan, the Devil. I'm pretty sure I see his handiwork in our society. It's always been there. Temptations abound.

But instead of tilting at metaphorical windmills, shouldn't we tackle the real issues head on, for the sake of the children?

I wouldn't start with a high school logo. Start with the kids.

'I mean... whatever I mean'

What does, "I mean..." really mean?

That question keeps my brain busy. I will hear someone say, in response to a question, "I mean..." before he or she ever says what he or she meant to say.

In everyday conversations you hear "I mean..." coming from the mouths of friends, co-workers and others as you discuss the weather, or what's new, the list is endless.

Keep track next time you're watching television or listening to the radio or just gabbing with a friend, and you will be surprised at how often "I mean..." becomes a part of the conversation.

It drives this "Man of the Plains" bananas. Why would anyone say "I mean..." when they had already said what they meant. Often, "I mean..." ends up being a contradiction to what was said, leaving the listener wondering what the person really means.

I hear senators and congressmen or women use "I mean..." many times when being interviewed by members of the press. In their case, however, I think they use it to protect themselves in the event they said something they'll wish they hadn't.

And then to top this off, an acquaintance informed me he just purchased a new pet from one of those places where they shelter homeless dogs. I complimented him and asked what he named the new pet. He replied, fighting back laughter, "Well, Tom, knowing your impatience with people using 'I mean...', I named my pet, Peeve!" Seldom am I lost for words!

Well...here I go again! On Nov. 25, I will blow out 77 candles on my birthday cake. Or is it 76 candles? I use two ages because, for some odd reason, family records of my birth are in conflict. I am listed as entering "Occup Hospital Nursery" on Nov. 25, 1935, in some cases, while other records list my arrival as Nov. 25, 1934. But that's not all. My mother said I was born at St. Anthony's Hospital in Hays, but the State of Kansas Certificate of Birth, as submitted by our family doctor, has him delivering me at our home at 212 W. 16th St. So, what year is right?

I do get some cards showing two ages, with instructions to circle the correct one; I usually circle both.

Snippets: "Herman Cain is a man of the people – the tobacco industry people, the liquor industry people..."

"...The word is 'Leadership.' And if President Obama continues to ignore it as part of his vocabulary, the won't get that second four-year term!"

"... We need to do something, otherwise the already rich and greedy will go hog wild! ...The tax laws must be changed to level out the playing field...."

"Herman Cain's problem is easy

to explain: he's had more cuddle-ups than he can count! That would

make remembering names nearly impossible."



Man of the Plains

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There's No Place Like Home

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Chapter 14

The State of Kansas

Last Chapter: Millions of grasshoppers rained from the sky in 1874, and Jack and Mollie were caught in the midst of the plague. They find shelter in a sod house with the Hansen family and witness the total destruction of anything edible from gardens to field crops, and tree leaves, to hoe handles and cloth. Mollie wonders if the grasshoppers had hit Hays, too, that year.

Much of what the twins had witnessed of the grasshopper invasion of 1874, they now read about on the computer. It had been widespread across most of Kansas and neighboring states, in some places so thick they even stopped trains.

"That's impossible," Mollie said. "No, it's not," Jack said. "They made the rails so slick, the trains couldn't get traction."

"It says they ate everything," Mollie said, "even leather harnesses and wooden handles on farm tools." She shivered remembering the feel of the insects on her skin. "It's a good thing they're insects, or after they ate your food, your curtains, and your clothes, they'd probably have eaten all the small children."

"The big ones, too. Guts and all," Jack said. He laughed when Mollie gave him a shove. "You started it," he said.

The twins found a website with dozens of stories of those who remembered the grasshopper plague or had the stories handed down to them. There were stories of water so fouled with grasshopper bodies, they could not drink it, and of not being able to eat their chickens or pigs because the animals had eaten so many grasshoppers their meat tasted and smelled like grasshoppers.

They read about Mary "Mother" Bickerdyke, a woman who had nursed soldiers during the Civil War and had helped provide for them afterwards. After the grasshopper invasion, she gathered up enough food and clothing for those in need, to fill two hundred train cars.

"I know there is a Bickerdyke school in

Russell," Jack said. "Do you think it's named after her?" Jack said.

"Maybe," Mollie said, as she typed in the name and location. "It's named after her son," she said, reading the information on the screen. "He was the first superintendent at Russell."

The twins now only had seconds before the time machine would activate the system that would send them on. Both wished to go home, for like Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz, they realized there was still no place they'd rather be.

But instead of home, they found themselves on a street corner in the midst of a jostling, cheering crowd.

The twins felt the cold and turned up the collars on their coats and pulled their dark wool head coverings, Jack's a cap and Mollie's a bonnet, tighter over their red hair.

"Ain't it great?" A boy, a few years older than the twins, said grinning at them.

"What?" Jack said. "You don't know?" another boy pushed up beside the first. "Kansas has just become a state!"

"Oh, that's what you meant," Jack said with a grin big enough, he hoped to cover his



ignorance.

"What else could I mean?" The boy frowned and looked at Jack like he thought he was stupid, before he turned and disappeared into the crowd.

"Probably looking for someone not quite so dense to share his news," Mollie said with a grin.

"Do you remember the date Kansas became a state?" Jack asked, lowering his voice so those around them wouldn't hear.

"Sure, January 29, 1861. So that must be

Repealer told not to bother state's law on prairie dogs

By KAYLA CORNETT
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Dennis Taylor, head of the Kansas Office of the Repealer, talked with people from around northwest Kansas about prairie dogs, tax forms and vehicle tags at Colby's Pioneer Memorial Library.

At the meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 8, Taylor said he has been touring the state to hear from residents about issues of repealing or revising outdated state laws and regulations, among other issues. Colby was his 26th city in five weeks and the last stop of the tour.

He began the meeting by describing the purpose of the office, which Gov. Sam Brownback created by executive order in January. He placed it in the Department of Administration.

Taylor, who also serves as secretary of the department, said the office has already received about 250 to 300 suggestions on its website, repealer.ks.gov. He said he will make recommendations to the governor based on what he's heard from the public.

Taylor mentioned a couple of other ideas that came up throughout the tour, including a law forbidding people 18 and younger from riding motorcycles, legalizing "medical marijuana" in Kansas and eliminating criminal sodomy laws because of a recent Supreme Court decision.

Taylor then opened up the meeting to anyone who wanted to bring up an issue.

The main discussion dealt with making sure one specific law would not be repealed: the law that allows county officials to poison prairie dogs.

The 1901 law gives county officials the right to enter private property without the owner's consent, poison prairie dogs which the owner has not controlled and then bill the landowner.

Taylor said he had heard about this issue from people in several towns.

State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer talked about his feelings on the issue at length, saying he believes it's been a good law and it protects everyone, so it should not be changed.

Several others, including Jill Hansen, agreed that the law shouldn't be changed, but said it is not being enforced and it needs to be.

"We're having problems invoking this law," Hansen said. "We're not protected."

Taylor said the law is under review by the state Court of Appeals and there should be a decision on it in the spring.

"I think as far as this area (northwest Kansas), they'd recommend for you to go back to the governor and recommend to leave this law alone," said Logan County Commissioner Carl Uhrich. "The people you've heard from that want to repeal this law are from parasite organizations, they're from eastern Kansas. The people out here are the ones that are living with this problem."

"That would be our recommendation, to leave it alone. It was put there for a reason and it's still a good law."

After these comments, Hansen and others talked about how the prairie dogs have affected their land and how much it has cost them to deal with the problem. Taylor took notes while each person spoke about the issue.

Norman Olive of the Norton area changed the discussion to talk about a law that he actually wanted to be repealed.

He said he owns a camper that was destroyed in a hail storm and is no longer functional, but he said he is still required to pay personal property taxes on it according to the year, make and model of the camper, with no regard for whether it is usable or not.

"I think that's unjust," Olive said. "My camper's not worth anything now. I can't sell it now other than for junk. ... I think that's a bad law."

He also brought up another issue dealing with taxes on recreational vehicles.

Olive said he chose to help out family members who were having hard times by buying their car tags. However, the family owns a boat that they hadn't paid the taxes on, and he couldn't pay for the car tags until those taxes were paid.

"Now I can see banning it on your home, but on a recreational vehicle and the boat?" Olive said. "They hadn't used it for two years. It isn't even licensed by the state. And I thought well, golly, you're preventing this person from having a system of transportation that could help make him some money by having to pay taxes on a recreational vehicle that's not even been used for two years."

Taylor said the reason for the law is because recreational vehicles are considered personal property, and the tax isn't an ad valorem tax (on the value) like real property is. He said the state taxes these vehicles according to year, make and model because of the bureaucracy that would be associated with keeping track of people who are not paying the tax on these vehicles.

Still, Taylor said he hadn't heard about this issue before and was glad Olive brought it up.

Linda Franklin talked about an issue with filling out federal 1099 tax forms.

A 1099 is a federal form used to report the income of independent contractors, people who are not considered an employee of a business they perform a service for.

Franklin said she has people who are custom hires, so she has been filing them for many years.

Franklin said she was told by an accountant that these forms just go into a room and there's a whole building full of them, along with state form K-99s and K-96s. The accountant told her to not even bother filing them because nobody ever looks at them, but Franklin said she wasn't sure if that was true.

"If there's no money associated with them, are we required to file those to the state or not?" she asked.

Taylor said he's not sure about that, but said he would check into it.