

commentary

from other pens...

Kansas flag design could use a facelift

The Hays Daily News on the Kansas flag:
The most instructive piece of information to come from a recent survey that ranked the Kansas flag as one of the ugliest in the nation was that one of the ugliest in the nation was that such a group as the North American Vexillological Association actually exists.

... NAVA says that it conducted a three-month survey and got responses from 100 members of NAVA and 300 members from the public. They rated 72 flags from the United States and Canada.

While we are inclined to tell the vexillologists to go get a life, we suppose they do have some valid points.

The Kansas flag ranks among the "seal-on-a-bedsheet" designs. Many other states have similar flags, as they were common designs for states joining the union in the 1800s.

Kansas' flag has a sunflower, the state seal and "Kansas" in plain, block letter. The inclusion of the seal is what makes it a busy design.

... Kansas' flag has too much tradition to change it radically. Maybe it could be updated a little, with bolder typography. If you like the state seal, however — and its depiction of buffalo, farming and settlement of the frontier are representative of the state's roots — it is a handsome flag. The gold lettering on the deep blue background is soothing, like a rippling field of ripe wheat on a warm June day.

Maybe the Kansas flag needs a facelift. Or maybe we should worry less about what the vexillologists think and concern ourselves with more weighty issues.

The Iola Register on flag burning:

A one-sentence amendment to the Constitution, giving Congress the power "to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States" is deceptively easy to support.

All three Republican members of Congress from Kansas voted for it on Tuesday.

Democrat Dennis Moore of the Third District thought a little longer. He voted no.

No is the right answer.

It is difficult to imagine a clearer challenge to the right of free political speech than a law forbidding a dissident from burning a flag in protest.

Flag burning is very uncommon in the U.S. Chances are that nobody reading this piece has ever been to a political meeting where a U.S. flag was burned to dramatize opposition to national policies.

... Soldiers don't really fight for the flag. They fight for the nation and the things it stands for. The freedoms spelled out in the Bill of Rights deserve to be at the head of that list.

It is no accident that the first of those rights is freedom of speech. The founding fathers understood that without the guarantee that government could not silence its critics our democracy would become a dictatorship ...

... When an orator climbs up on his soapbox on a public square, denounces Washington for supporting free trade and globalization and burns a U.S. flag to punctuate his polemic and the police do not come and pop him in the pokey that is a celebration of the Bill of Rights, a reaffirmation of our republican democracy, and it stirs up a breeze of freedom that makes our glorious banner wave all the more proudly.



Kitten conquers mighty trophy deer

A lynx can't bring down a deer.
A bobcat can't bring down a deer.
Even a K-State wildcat can't down a deer.
Usually, it takes a cougar to bring down a deer.
Or a rifle.

But last month Pomeroy, a two-pound house cat, brought down a trophy buck.

Pomeroy wasn't really trying to wreck havoc. But, he's a kitten. It's what he does.

Son is spending the summer at our home in the mountains — the place we built to raise our children when we lived in Colorado.

Son is washing dishes, bussing tables and bartending at a restaurant while Pomeroy is alternately sleeping and dashing madly around the house.

We have wooden floors with area rugs. The floors provide no purchase at all for tiny claws, and when he hits those rugs, they go flying.

He, like all cats, likes high places. So he fearlessly walks on the banister around the open stairway.

Leroy has been king of the stairway ever since we gave him a home.

Leroy was a trophy whitetail buck my brother-in-law Ken shot some 25 year ago. My father-in-



cynthia haynes

• open season

law had the head mounted and the trophy hung on the wall in their Emporia home for many years. Did I say he was big? Last time we looked, he was still on the Boone and Crocket top 10 list for Kansas. But that is another story.

Ken went off to college, moved to California, got married and never took Leroy away. When my mother-in-law died several years ago, Leroy moved to the Creede house and became king of the stairway.

He hung on the wall about 18 inches and a little below the banister.

This year, he became a target once again.

Pomeroy apparently decided that the deer head was a better vantage point to survey the world than the balcony. He tried to jump the deer one day while son was home.

He missed and fell to the landing eight to 10 feet

below.

But, he is a cat. He landed on his feet — his very sore feet, son said.

He was picked up, examined, loved and sent on his scampering way.

Two days later, son returned from work to find Leroy on the landing with a broken nose and Pomeroy prancing around the house.

He says while he really feels bad about Leroy, he would have loved to have seen the spectacle of the cat leaping on the deer head and riding it — all 20 claws extended and hanging on for dear life — to the landing.

Leroy goes to the taxidermist this week for a nose job. Hopefully, he can be repaired before Ken decides to visit us next.

Pomeroy goes to the vet for a front and rear end realignment. He'll have a little more trouble grabbing things without those front claws.

I'm going to leave Leroy in the hospital, however, until it's time for school again and son and cat depart town.

There's only so much a deer can take. Being downed by a cougar or a rifle is one thing — but a two-pound house cat?

How humiliating.

Sometimes we think sisters will never change

She teased me relentlessly. Hitting, scratching and yelling were common occurrences.

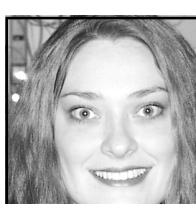
Of course, we all know I was totally blameless in all situations. It's just natural because I am the youngest.

She tried to choke me. She tickled me until I couldn't breathe and my bladder was about to explode. I'm sure it was all in sisterly fun.

One time she was sitting on my bike, not riding it, just sitting on it. When I asked her to get off so I could ride it she smugly refused. I bit her. I wasn't sorry either. Even after my punishment I wasn't sorry I had left that big welt of teeth marks on her arm. She deserved it.

We had to share a bed when we stayed with our grandparents. Every time we did she would tickle me so that I would get in trouble for laughing when I was supposed to be asleep.

She spent so much time in the bathroom before school that I would only have about five minutes



debra turner

• just beginning

to brush my teeth and do my hair before the bus arrived.

When we went out in public together she would always make sure people knew that she was the older one and that I was just a kid.

When she was giving me a ride to school one day I said something about a guy she used to like. She dropped me off at West Elementary. I was in junior high.

My senior year of high school there was something I needed that I couldn't get because I didn't have the money. I discussed it with my sister who

was just out of college.

She was pretty strapped for funds too so she could sympathize. Two days later I received a check for \$100. That will always be one of most meaningful things anyone has ever done for me. It was also the point when I realized our relationship had changed dramatically.

When someone is mean to me now she offers to beat them up. I'm sure her choke hold still works.

When my sister got married I was the maid of honor. My toast made her cry.

Instead of swapping insults we now exchange good recipes and funny everyday stories.

She gives me life advice and I remind her she is the older one and I'll always be a kid.

She's having her first child next month. Once again I'm reminded we've come along way together and would have never made it without each other.

It's funny how we come to love and cherish the things we once thought we hated.

Life is about determination and heart

It's no secret that the Colorado Rockies, the team with eternal promise in spring training, have been horrible this summer.

After a decent start in the spring, the Rocks dropped quickly to last place with a 4-27 slide up to Friday.

But it's also no secret that in sports, as in life, one person with heart and determination can make all the difference.

Friday night, that would be Brian Bohanon, the journeyman pitcher who holds down the No. 4 spot in the Colorado rotation.

Bohanon has never been a star. His best record in 11 years in the majors is just 12-10 last year with the Rockies.

He's no power pitcher. His fastball creeps up to the plate around 82 mph, 10 mph slower than the strike-out leaders. He's a *pitcher*, depending on a changeup and a curve (which run in the 70s) to fool batters. Speed, location and his mix of pitches make him a consistent winner.

But the big guy — a portly 6 foot, 2 inches, he reminds people of Babe Ruth — has a lot of heart.

Friday, Bo was stuck at 4-5 for the year. His team was hurting, and he wanted a win. He pitched well — holding the Dodgers to just three runs at Coors Field. But he started the game by giving Los Angeles a run with a wild pitch, runner on third, and bobbled the ball at the plate when he had a chance to save the play.

Later, when his offense didn't start behind him, Bohanon took matters into his own hands. With his own bat.

His first time up, he hit a double off the wall but was stranded on base. The second time around, he doubled again, scoring in a Rocks' rally that put the team ahead of the Boys in Blue.

Bo looked winded as he dragged his 250 pounds



steve haynes

• along the sappa

over the plate, but he came back to pitch another two innings. He led off the seventh with a single, pushing his average to a lofty 320. Manager Buddy Bell thought Bohanon, 33, had run enough and sent pitcher Mike Hampton (not due to start until Monday) in to run for him. Hampton scored yet another run in what would be an 11-3 Rockies rout and then had to bat for Bohanon later in the inning.

The hard-charging Hampton, who had led the club's pitchers in hitting at 294 with six home runs, struck out to end the seventh, but it was quite a show, all sparked by a guy who wouldn't give in.

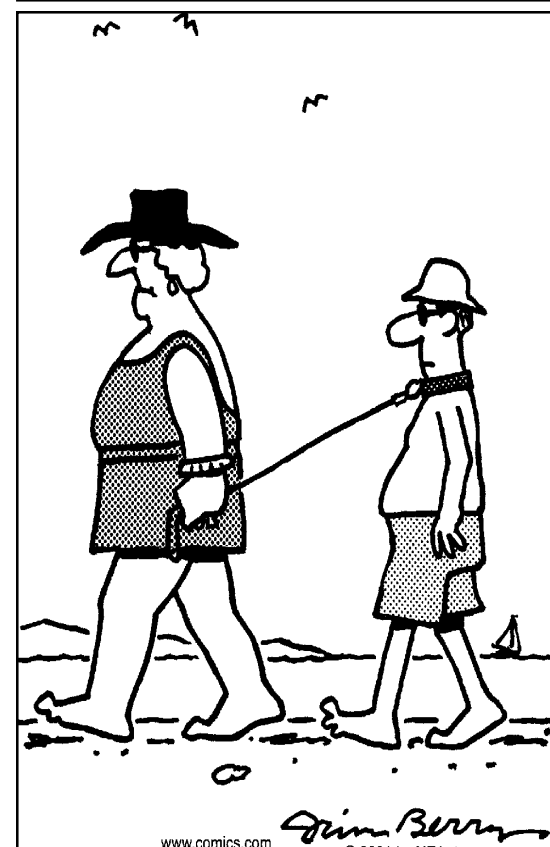
This is the same Bohanon who, when the Rockies ran out of relief pitchers in a game against the Atlanta Braves last year, took the ball from Bell and went out and pitched despite having started the night before. The win went to catcher Brent Mayne, who finished the extra-innings game, but it was Bo

who gave the spark.

Friday would turn out to be the only game the Rockies won against Los Angeles at home, but it was brilliant. Sunday, they stank. Monday, they could and should have won, but couldn't get a clutch hit with the bases loaded in the ninth.

But Friday ... Friday belonged to Brian Bohanon.

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