

Will money and greed trump football tradition?

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

To be that young and unafraid

Now, before you start lecturing me about the dangers of picking up hitchhikers, let me explain. It was Sunday morning and I was almost late to church. Jim was at an antique show, so I was going by myself.

Six miles from town, I spotted three young women sitting by the side of the road. No vehicle, not even a bicycle, in sight. At first I drove by. But my conscience wouldn't let me.

I pulled off the road, flipped a "U" turn, and drove back to the intersection where the girls were, by now, waving in hopes of getting my attention. When I asked if they were having any trouble they answered, in a distinct French accent, "No trouble. We are just trying to get to the next town. We have walked all this way and no one will stop."

At first I tried to make the excuse that I would be late for church, but then, I thought, "What would be the more Christian thing to do? Go to church or help these young women?"

"Hop in," I said. "I'll give you a ride to the next town." They were so grateful. And we had a lovely visit as we drove. See, I would have missed meeting these beautiful girls had I not turned around. I learned they were 20, 21 and 22. They had been studying cinematography in New York for the past year, but they wanted to see America before their return to France. They had taken a train from New York to Chicago and hitchhiked from Chicago to Kansas.



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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Their plan is to hitchhike to Denver, then to Las Vegas, fly back to New York, then home to Paris.

I asked if their parents were OK with what they were doing. And, Ophelia, who was in the front seat, therefore the spokesperson for the group, said, "Not so much. But what can they do?"

Oh, to be that young and unafraid, willing to venture out into the unknown. I admire them for their courage and am a little (just a little) remorseful for not having done something wild and crazy like that when I was their age.

Wait a minute. Maybe I did. By the time I was their age, I was married, had a baby and was waiting for my soldier-husband to come home from a war. That was pretty wild and crazy.

I dropped Marion, Gaelle and Ophelia off at a convenience store with the admonition to stay together and be careful. I also told them how to distinguish between poisonous and nonpoisonous snakes.

They gave me their e-mail addresses (isn't technology wonderful?), so I will forward this on to

them.

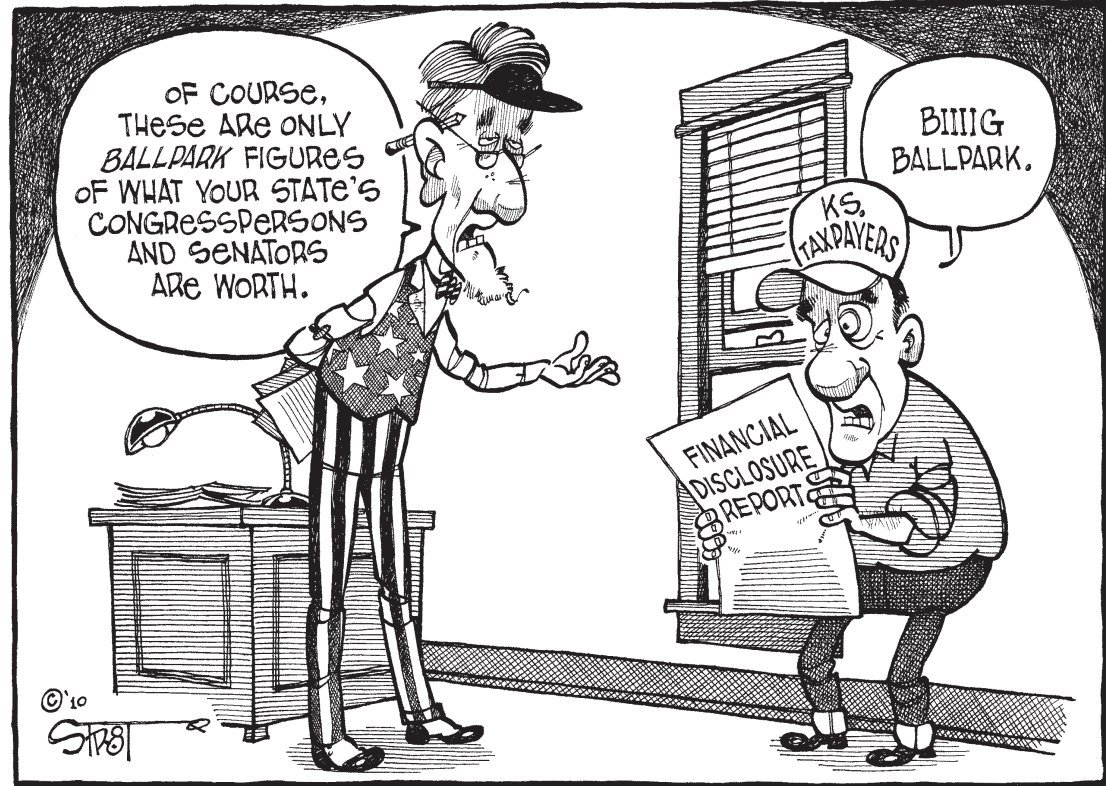
Finally on my way to church, I decided to call the sheriff's office. I asked if they could arrange with the next county west to take the girls at least to the county line. Sure hope that worked out for them. Just a little insurance in case they didn't find a ride.

I can hardly wait to hear the "rest of the story."

From the Bible

So Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

Hebrews 9:28 NIV



Bugs on counter annoy her

I've been really bugged this last week.

It started out with ants in my kitchen.

This seems to be an annual problem.

Little bitty ants suddenly appear behind the coffee maker. They crawl around the canisters, behind the sink faucets and down the cupboards.

I don't know where they come from, although one year I found them trooping in through a minuscule hole in the kitchen window from outside. I quickly cut off that entrance and stopped hundreds of them in their tracks with a can of Raid.

I suppose the latest, hole, which I have yet to find, is still there, but I haven't found an entire colony moving into my house bag and baggage, this year anyway.

This year it's just an ant here and an ant there.

I'll see one moving along the drain board. In a few more minutes there's another on the window sill.

Finally, on Sunday, I moved the canisters, coffee maker, toaster, soap and scrubber, cutting board and window decorations to the kitchen table. Then I took the Raid and gave the window ledge, back splash and sink edges a good shot. I'm also going to get some new ant traps from the hardware.

I put some new ones out a few



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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weeks ago, when I first noticed my unwelcome visitors, but there seems to be more ants than traps, so it's time to up the ante, again.

While the ants are annoying, the other problem I came up with this week was truly creepy. It still makes my skin crawl to think about.

I found a tick in my hair. He was just wandering around looking for lunch. What he found was the bathroom and toilet.

I hate ticks. They just creep me out. There's something so nasty about them, and not just that they suck your blood and carry all kinds of diseases. Heck, mosquitoes do that, and they are just an annoyance.

The next day, I was working at a pharmacy and I reached up to adjust the back of my earring. I lost one last summer and now I check the backs a couple of times a day to make sure they are still secure.

I seemed to have two posts on the back of one ear. It took me a few seconds to figure out what I

was feeling, and then I yelped. (I'd have "screamed like a little girl," but I was working, and besides I'm getting closer to the "yelled like a little old lady" age.)

Beth, my co-worker, looked and sure enough, the second post was a tick.

She removed the offending insect with a pair of tweezers. He came out with some skin attached, but apparently had not had time for much of a meal.

I took the tweezers with their burden to the bathroom and gave Mr. Tick an after-dinner drink of fresh toilet water.

Then I swabbed my ear with peroxide and tossed the tweezers.

Yuck. Talk about being bugged.

I'm not sure why a disease-carrying, blood-sucking tick is worse than a disease-carrying, blood-sucking mosquito.

But they are. They really, really are.

He'll need to defend chef title

When we left to spend the weekend in Colorado, entering a chef competition was not on my mind. Let alone winning one.

In fact, it's been years since we'd made our annual spring trip to Creede, high in the Colorado mountains, where we had our first newspaper and raised our little family, on Memorial weekend.

Memorial Day used to be just another blustery spring weekend in the former mining town, but over the 17 years since we moved to Kansas, it's added events and contests until it's pretty busy. Nothing like the Fourth of July, with its fireworks and mining contests and 10,000 to 15,000 visitors, mind you, but busy.

Over Memorial Day, they have something called the Taste of Creede, which features restaurants and others hawking food or handing out samples on Main Street. But it's more than that: Artists set up on the street to work on paintings they'll sell later, the theater previews its summer season and then there's the cook-off.

Our oldest Creede friend, Rick, was setting up for the cooking contest when we got downtown Saturday. Rick used to be a chef, but now he supplies chefs as a representative for a food wholesaler.

First, he said, they'd have the professional division, featuring six chefs from area resorts. Then the amateur contest.

"So why don't you come back and cook this afternoon?"

I deferred. Cynthia has plans for the day, I said, and they included church about that time. But when she heard about the contest, Cynthia thought it was a great idea. Maybe we could be a team.

The team idea didn't pan out, but somehow I wound up entered along with some summer people, a couple of locals and a guy I'd gone to high school with eons ago.

Everyone got a cooking station with pans, a gas grill and burner, utensils and plates. Central tables held every spice and condiment you could imagine, oils and vegetables, herbs and fruits. The main course remained hidden. Everything was ready, except for the knives.

Real chefs, it seems, bring their own, just like pool sharps.

"What," the amateurs wailed in unison. "You didn't tell us."



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
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But knives were obtained, and Rick brought out two hotel packs of—filleted trout. We had 45 minutes to make it into dinner.

I started gathering. Fresh mushrooms, lime juice, fresh chives, butter. Fresh garlic cloves. Fresh limes and lemons. Asparagus, a whole bunch.

For a sauce, I used lime, butter, chives and mushrooms. White wine would have been nice, but I substituted some white Worcestershire and started cooking the garlic and mushrooms.

We had a stiff south breeze, and the burner on my grill kept going out. Finally, Cynthia, who was giving me instructions from the sidelines, put pans in front of it.

Then I started the fish and the asparagus. The fish, thin and tender, didn't take long to cook. The asparagus did. Time was running out, but mine was ready. I plated the fish—one portion for the audience, one for the judges—poured on the sauce, garnished with lemon and lime rounds and a little cilantro—and waited. The judges tasted and pondered. People scooped up my fish. Two little girls nibbled away all my mushrooms and asparagus.

The winner: "Don't let this go to your head, Steve," Rick said, "but you'll have to come back next year and defend."

Cynthia was right about one thing: It was fun.

If anyone is interested, here are the winning recipes best as I can remember. It was all seat of the pants, you know.

LIME-ANCHO TROUT

Two trout, filleted.
1/4 cup lime juice.
White Worcestershire sauce, splash.
Ancho chili-citrus seasoning, cayenne pepper to dress.
Lemon and lime slices and wedges.
Salt.

Place fish on grill, skin side down. Sprinkle with lime juice, Worcestershire, ancho chili-citrus seasoning and salt. Cook about 5 minutes, with lid on, until just done. Scoop fish off of skin with spatula and plate. Garnish with lemon and lime rounds and a sprig of green herb. Sprinkle with cayenne.

LIME-MUSHROOM-CHIVE REDUCTION

2 cups sliced fresh mushrooms.
1/4 cup lime juice.
3 cloves garlic, minced, cayenne pepper.
1-2 pats butter to saute.
1/4 cup white wine, chardonnay or sauvignon blanc.
1/4 cup fresh chives, chopped.
Salt.

Saute garlic briefly in butter. Add mushrooms, lime juice, cayenne, wine, and simmer until mushrooms are done and sauce is reduced, 10-15 minutes. Add chives and cook a little longer. Salt to taste.

GARLIC ASPARAGUS SAUTE

1 bunch asparagus, cut into 1-inch lengths.
(discard any woody stems)
1/4 cup lime juice.
3 cloves garlic, minced, cayenne pepper.
1 tablespoon olive oil.
1 pat of butter.
Salt.

Saute garlic in butter and oil. Add asparagus, lime juice, cayenne. Cook until asparagus is done, about 5 minutes. Do not overcook; asparagus should be just al dente. Add salt and serve hot.

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