

Big-time players disappoint legions of fans

Ted stopped by and shared the news. I never thought I would care about, let alone feel sorry for, the Milwaukee Brewers baseball team. But it seems another generation of kids, young and old, had been disillusioned.

I had flashbacks to my worst moments as a Royals' fan — the trade of hometown boy and reigning Cy Young Award winner David Cone to the Yankees, the Johnny Damon trade, the Carlos Beltran trade, etc., etc.

Oh, I almost forgot, Ted's news: The Brewers' star player, first baseman Prince Fielder, left his team and signed a \$215 million contract with the Detroit Tigers. To add insult to injury, the Tigers play in the same division as the Royals.

Ted can understand. He's a lifelong Cardinals fan. Earlier this off-season, their best player, Albert Pujols, possibly the best hitter of his generation, left the only team he had ever played for and headed to southern California for a semi-load of dollar bills.

Pujols' move came on the heels of another improbable World Series title. How does a star player turn his back on his fans after winning the World Series?

St. Louis is a so-called mid-market team. So now Cardinals' fans can relate to the small-market Royals as they watch their best player head off for a bigger paycheck elsewhere.

Pujols' wife was quoted in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* as saying that she and her husband felt "disrespected" by the Cardinals' five-year, \$135 million offer. Maybe that absurd comment will make it easier for fans to say goodbye.

People almost always root for the team with whom he or she grew up. Ted grew up in Illinois near St. Louis with the likes of Stan Musial, Lou Brock and Bob Gibson as



Smoky Hill Observer

By Alan Jilka
aejilka@swbell.net

heros. I even have a good friend here who roots for the Yankees.

How can anyone root for the Yankees? It turns out he grew up near New York, rooting for the Bronx Bombers. I understand. Other than that, he's a great guy.

I grew up with George Brett, Frank White and the Royals during their glory days. I'll stick with them no matter what.

But the Royals' long postseason drought has been particularly painful. The turning point came when Cone was traded away im-

mediately after the 1994-95 baseball strike. Ever since, then the team has languished in or near the cellar.

To add insult to injury, Royals' fans have had to watch their one-time starting outfielder — Johnny Damon, Carlos Beltran and Jermaine Dye, all play in World Series for other teams. Damon and Beltran both came up through the Royals' farm system.

So what do Prince Fielder and Albert Pujols say to the kids of all ages who spent years idolizing their every move, the fan base that was the foundation of all their fame and riches? What do Brewers and Cardinals fans do with their old baseball cards?

I know, I'm caught up in nostalgia for a world that doesn't exist anymore. I still vividly remember when the pre-Pujols California Angels won the World Series

several years ago and one of their fans held up a sign in the stands that proclaimed his team to be "Fourteenth in Payroll, First in Heart." They'll have to discard that.

Maybe we need to bust the baseball players' union. After all, baseball is the only major professional sport without a solid revenue sharing program. But, now that I think of it, players switch the color of their jerseys in other sports, too.

There is a bright side to all of this melancholy musing. Spring training is here. When the season starts, all of the small-market teams will be 0-0, like everyone else. And this year, the Royals might have a team. Seriously!

Not only that, all their star players are several years away from free agency. We have a window of opportunity. Let me tell you about several of their prospects.

Oops. I'm out of space. Hopefully, there are tickets left for Opening Day.

Big Oil selling off all our fuel

To the Editor:

Refined fuel is now America's No. 1 export. This indicates to me that all big oil companies are sticking it to us and laughing all the way to the bank. This could cause another recession, as we are a mobile country. Congratulations, you greedy buzzards.

Our do nothing (good) Congress

Letter to the Editor

is taking in big money from PACs, or political action committees. If you think they are representing us, you had better think again, as the big corporations are buying them off, both Democrats and Republicans.

We need to remember this at voting time and vote every incumbent out. If we do this often enough, maybe they will get the idea that they are supposed to represent us, "We The People." We also need to tell them to fix our Postal Systems, as they are the ones who broke it.

Some of our wonderful congressmen are beating the war drums again. Haven't we learned yet how expensive war is? All we need to do is send in a few expert rifle squads and knock off the dictators.

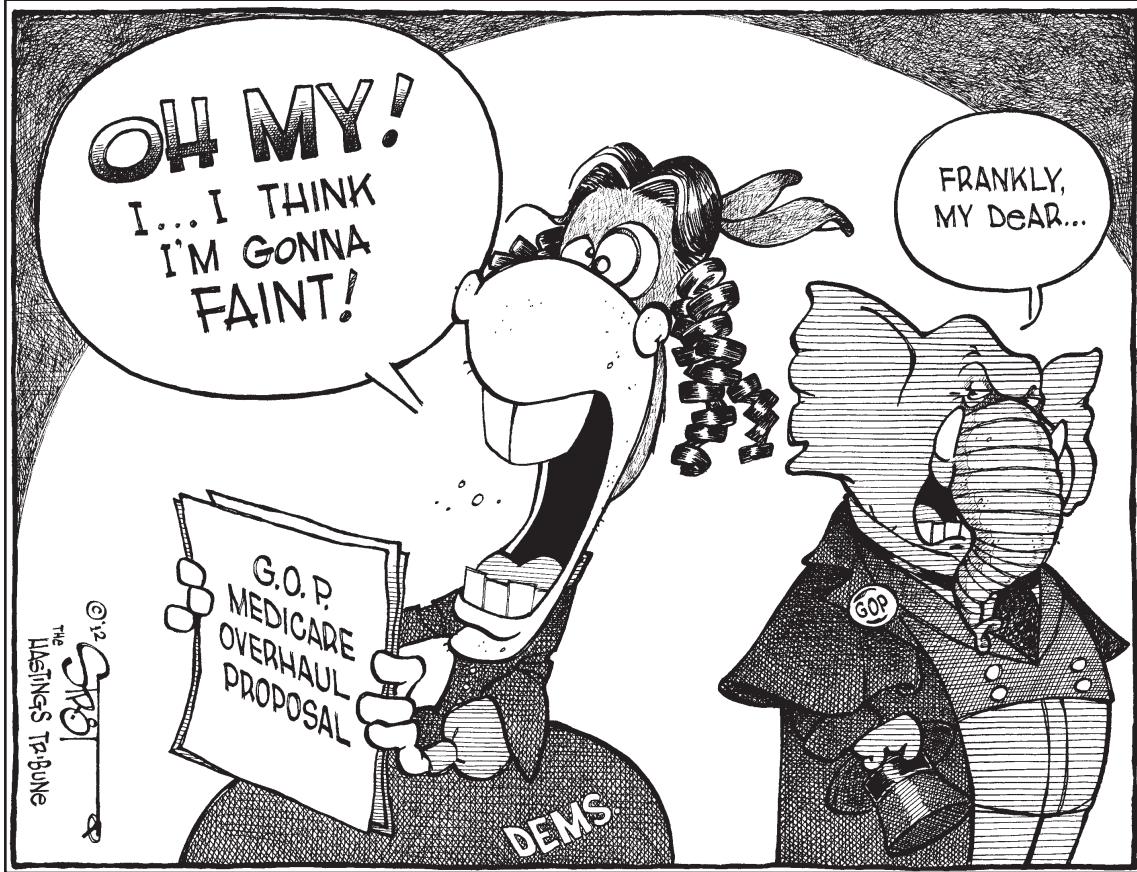
All foreign aid should be examined carefully and most should be stopped immediately. I don't remember any politicians asking the citizens of the U.S. if it is all right to give their tax dollars to any foreign country. Most of these countries don't like us anyway.

Auto insurance and credit ratings should not be. The insurance people should get their extra money from the bad drivers who cause the accidents.

Daylight Saving Time is a real pain and so very unnecessary; you just get used to one time and then we get the change. One time all year long would suit a lot of us just fine.

I also think when we get our auto tags, that people 65 and older should not have to pay the additional fees. Most of us are struggling anyway.

Jack D. Roberts
Longomont, Colo.



President tramples on rights

When President Barack Obama took the oath of office three years ago, he swore to defend the constitutionally guaranteed rights of all Americans.

There were no asterisks denoting exceptions for health-care providers, religious employers, service members or military chaplains. More than three years later, his inaugural words fail to match his actions and those of his administration.

President Obama gave America a preview of his warpath against organized religion and people of faith when he undid parts of an executive order by President George W. Bush protecting health-care providers from being required to perform, participate in, or provide a medical procedure with which they had religious or moral objection.

But in the past month alone the Obama Administration has gone guns-a-blazing, full-force against both religion and the Constitution.

First, President Obama and his "Catholic" secretary of health and human services, Kathleen Sebelius, finalized a rule that will require Catholic employers to cover and pay for contraception — including abortion drugs — and sterilization. The fact that the Catholic teaching excludes artificial contraception or abortion matters not a single bit to President Obama.

The Department of Health and



On the Potomac

By Rep. Tim Huelskamp
tim.huelskamp@mail.house.gov

Human Services argued that a one-year exemption is all religious organizations need in order to comply with this law. What President Obama and Secretary Sebelius do not get is that religious organizations and people of faith do not need time to renounce their faith; they need their views to be protected by the First Amendment.

Second, President Obama's Secretary of the Army — a political appointee — silenced Catholic chaplains from speaking out against this rule attacking religious freedom. If you are Catholic, you heard in your Sunday Mass a message from your bishop that "We cannot — we will not — comply with this unjust law." But not if you were serving in the military, defending the freedoms of other Americans.

Instead, the Army's Office of the Chief of Chaplains attempted to censor the reading of the letter from Archbishop of Military Services Timothy Broglio. After a conversation between Archbishop Broglio and Army Secretary John McHugh, it was decided that line would be eliminated.

Non-Catholics, those not in the military, and even those who support the use of abortion drugs and contraception should take offense at and be outraged by the actions of the Obama Administration. It could just as easily be something other than sterilization or abortion drugs next time. This rule requiring religious entities to act against their teachings is a clear violation of their rights to exercise freely their religious beliefs. The gag order on Catholic chaplains amounts to an obvious violation of free speech. Who or what is next?

President Obama and Secretary Sebelius are receiving the backlash they are due for their reckless, errant and unconstitutional requirement being forced upon the country. But, perhaps more concerning is that their rule shows how selective they are with protecting the rights of Americans.

And, for that, the Obama Administration is an abomination.

Republican Congressman Tim Huelskamp of Fowler represents Kansas' 1st District in the House.

It wasn't the place you think

To the Editor:

In my letter to the editor last week (Wednesday, March 21, *Oberlin Herald*, Page 4), I said "the owner's sister about spit out her food," sister being the key word here.

I have people asking why I said

the owner when it was her sister.

Joyce Carlton of the Frontier Restaurant asked if it was her restaurant. It was not. Please restate this so people know it was the sister of the owner of this "diner."

Audrey Johnson, Oberlin

Upcoming Auction Saturday, March 31st, 2012 10:00 a.m. CST

Auction Location: 4-H Building N. Hwy. 25, Atwood, KS.

Seller: Bessie B. Peterson Estate Tamzen Rooney Irrevocable Trust & Et al

Selling: Equipment, Furniture, Appliances, Antiques, Collectables, Misc.

Glad Real Estate

Rocky Hayes-Auctioneer

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Letter from Topeka

By State Rep. Ward Cassidy
ward.cassidy@house.ks.gov

Legislature near home stretch on 'Drop Dead Day'

Last Wednesday was Drop Dead Day, when most bills have to be acted on by the opposite of their house of origin.

The House tax plan was passed last week. I voted for it, but I have many issues with the plan. I like the reduction of the state sales tax and keeping several key income-tax exemptions. I received many e-mails supporting the earned income credit that was proposed for elimination in the governor's plan, and that is in the House plan.

Gradual reduction of the state income tax is a big part of many plans. I would rather lower property taxes than take income tax to zero. A constituent sent me the following comment: "When I am making money, I can pay my income tax; when I am not making money, I have trouble paying my property tax."

Last year, the Legislature passed a budget that, for the first time since 1972, decreased all-funds state spending by nearly a billion dollars and turned a \$500 million deficit into a \$100 million surplus without raising taxes. Since then, we've been fortunate enough to have a number of good months, and revenues are finally headed in the right direction.

However, we still have serious obligations facing the state, which makes it important for us to remain committed to keeping our spending in check. For too long, government has lived beyond its means.

That being said, I do support an increase in benefits to our state workers. We almost passed an amendment to restore the market-pay adjustment, and I will work to see if it can be done during the

wrap-up session. Even with the \$8.5 million cost, we would still be in line to have the 7.5 percent required ending balance.

The Kansas Public Employees Retirement System was debated for several hours. I will post an update on my website www.wardcassidy.com as soon as the final House brief is completed. Remember, it still has to be in conference with the Senate version and then signed by the governor. I did have some input to include a provision that 80 percent of the money from sales of state lands will go directly to the system.

The redistricting committee held hearings of 17 congressional maps and voted on over a half-dozen maps, with only the "Eisenhower B" gaining enough votes to pass. Because the 1st Congressional District lost the most population and the 3rd District gained the most, it was difficult to draw a map with clean district boundaries. The "Eisenhower B" plan would put the northern part of Wyandotte County in the 1st District with western Kansas. That is a bad fit for the 1st District, but it might be the only way the redistricting can be resolved.

I testified before the Senate State and Federal Affairs Committee about our home-owned carnivals this past week. We were able to eliminate all of the issues that would be a problem for the carnivals.

The bill passed out of the Senate committee with a provision that all home-owned carnivals would be required to send proof of insurance to the state Department of Labor, which regulates amusement rides.



DCA

DECATUR COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION

NOTICE OF 2012 ANNUAL MEETING

This is your official notice of the Annual Meeting of the Decatur Cooperative Association, to be held at the Gateway Convention Center in Oberlin on Thursday evening April 19, 2012.

The agenda is as follows:

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| 6:00 p.m. | Doors Open |
| 6:30 p.m. | Serving meal |
| 7:00 p.m. | Business Meeting |
| | Audit Report |
| | Election of Directors |
| | Chairman's Report |
| | Manager's Report |

Directors terms expiring are those now held by Rod Bryan and Chris Bailey. Rod Bryan will be retiring from the board. The floor will be open for nominations at the meeting. Financial Statements will be provided at the meeting for year ending January 31, 2012.

Please mark Thursday, April 19, 2012, on your calendar and attend your Cooperative Annual Business Meeting.

Sincerely,
Decatur Cooperative Association
Kurt Anderson, President