

EDITORIAL

Chronicle urges new U. mascot

It should be easy for the *Chronicle* to take a tough and unmovable stand against the University of Utah's Ute mascot. After all, college campuses throughout the country have decided that using the Native American people as showpieces of school spirit is unquestionably racist.

Nonetheless, it's hard to attack a symbol you've grown to love.

As the U.'s official logo, the Ute represents all the warm and loyal emotions which the campus community feels for the university.

These feelings, though noble, have nothing to do with the historical significance of the Ute Indians in Utah or with the gifts their culture has offered to the generations of Europeans who took their land.

They do, however, cause a lot of trouble for anyone seeking to end the tradition of using ethnic and racial groups as mascots.

First, they make it difficult for students and administrators to realize the Ute mascot is offensive. And second, they make it very easy for people who do realize the symbol's problems to ignore them.

This can't be allowed to continue. It is time for the University of Utah to deal conclusively with the implications of the Ute mascot.

The mounted "Crimson Warrior" who makes his dignified appearance at the start of Ute football games is authentic and respectable enough to earn an "OK" from many Native American students on campus.

However, other rituals which accompany the Ute mascot are unforgivably offensive. These include the war whoop, face painting and the straight-out-of-Hollywood "Indian" song the band plays.

These traditional U. activities have little or no basis in authentic Ute history and merely serve to perpetuate the myth that Native Americans are not living, breathing human beings, but extinct and laughable caricatures.

The U. administration has made attempts to preserve the "Ute" as a symbol of the university's pride while diminishing the racism.

Unfortunately, good intentions from the Park Building can't erase the undeniable fact that mascots are, by definition, exploitable.

Since whooping, yelling "scalp 'em" and donning "Indian" apparel are part of what make games enjoyable for many fans, discouraging such racist activities would probably be both uncomfortable and unsuccessful.

The only way to maintain spontaneous fun at games and fight stereotypes is to find another mascot.

This doesn't mean the Ute symbol must be abandoned entirely. If ASUU, the administration and alumni organizations work together, they could undoubtedly discover a way to maintain the Ute as a symbol of dignity and history while finding another target for football game-debauchery.

This process won't be painless, but respect for human beings of all races and ethnic backgrounds demands that it begin.



EAT YOUR DINNER, KWAME... REMEMBER, THERE ARE PEOPLE LIVING ON TEACHERS' SALARIES IN AMERICA.



DEE NAQUIN

Death penalty immoral

I planned to write a column about Pierre Dale Selby's Aug. 28 execution for the Ogden Hi-Fi murders during summer quarter. I vacillated too long though, preferring not to think of the issue. My only conclusion was it made me feel squeamish. I didn't want the moral responsibility of state-planned death. But it didn't seem right that taxes support Selby for the rest of his life.

When I was younger, I was adamantly against capital punishment. But it seemed I too often read of senseless, unsolved crimes. As a single woman, living alone, rising crime rates scared me and hardened my feelings. In fact, I started out August "sort of" supporting the execution, but the more I read about it, the less sense it made.

I never before lived in a state where a person was legally killed. The media coverage and event-type feeling among citizens seemed macabre, especially the log of his last hours. We all knew what time Selby took a shower, what he ate for dinner and that he had a restless sleep.

I was watching videos with friends the night of the execution and the pizza delivery man asked us excitedly if Selby was dead yet. There is something really repulsive about a person looking forward to another's death. Maybe he wanted to know the exact moment so he could celebrate like some people at Point of the Mountain did, releasing balloons.

I've long known of the viciousness of the Hi-Fi murders. Hearing Orren Walker's testimony during Selby's commutation hearings made me visualize the reality. The crime was heinous. There is no question Selby should have been punished.

But the use of the death penalty in the United States makes me wonder how we can possibly call ourselves civilized. After all, what does the death penalty accomplish? It won't bring anyone back to life, nor will it mend lives that have been ripped.

According to the attorney general's office, the death penalty exacts retribution. But we're obviously not comfortable with it. That's why executioners never know which of them administered the fatal dose, or fired the bullet. Apparently, this is to negate, or at least diminish, the immorality of killing. Still, if this is a just punishment and people support it, I wonder why such an effort to distance ourselves from its use is made. Why not show it on television?

Earl Dorius, assistant attorney general, said a

society that wants revenge for what Selby did is a healthy society because such revenge is motivated by anger. "And thank God we get angry," he said, "because if we didn't, we would be an uncaring, amoral society."

That quote is ironic. Let's leave aside the obvious amorality of "Selby's going away" parties in Ogden bars.

Local newspapers carried accounts quoting people who said lethal injection was too painless, taking away the "deterrence" value of the sentence. Selby should be made to suffer like his victims, some said. One woman said it was a cop-out to call Selby's execution a racial issue. "It wasn't and I will be glad when the rest of the men on death row get it, too," she said.

Statistics show blacks are more than 30 percent likely to receive the death sentence, especially if they kill a white person. But perhaps the Selby case is not a racial issue. I've heard the horror of the torture killings is what angers people, not the fact that a black man killed white people.

However, during Mark Hoffman's preliminary trial for pipe bomb murders, a witness testified she heard Steve Christensen as he lay dying from the explosion of the packaged bomb he picked up. It sounded like a small child whimpering, gurgling and trying to breathe. "Horrible," she said. That was undoubtedly a torturous way to die although he did not linger as long as the Hi-Fi victims. Surely that doesn't mean just a little torture is OK.

Hoffman, a white man, premeditated and completed two murders. But for unexplained reasons and connections, he was only convicted of second degree murder, with a possibility of parole in 15 years.

The attorney, D. Gilbert Athay, defended Selby for 12 years without pay because he believes, "violence begets violence." And I remember the man with whom I discussed the execution. He became heated up when I disagreed with his opinion: "How would you like that to happen to your family?" he shouted.

I don't know how I'd feel. I do know the past can't be revised. And the hostile attitudes surrounding Selby's execution showed me clearly that violence does beget violence. That's why I can't agree with the majority of Americans who support the death penalty.

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The Daily Utah CHRONICLE

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