

Rivalry Aside, We're All In This Together

Q: Why does Iowa State University never schedule its driver's education and sex education courses on the same day?

A: It's too hard on the mule.

HO-HO! Never mind that neither class is listed in the ISU course catalog or that when I first heard this joke years ago it was about Arkansas high schools. Never let the facts get in the way of a crude intrastate sophomoric joke.

Those of you who have recently been kidnapped by gypsies may not realize that today is the climax of the annual Iowa-Iowa State football rivalry, which sucks down a ton energy, emotion and printers ink. Not to mention misplaced displays of anti-ISU sentiment, sometimes in the form of crude intrastate sophomoric jokes.

I feel that Iowa has a national inferiority complex when compared to other states with larger populations and advertising budgets, so it seems like we Iowans should be sticking together. My loyalties are pretty much defined by concentric circles around a point originating at my house; it's the sporting equivalent of Buy Local.

In case you aren't sure, there is something just wrong about being against ISU even when it is competing in sporting events against Iowa. It really should be enough for us to be for the Hawkeyes; do we also have to be against our competitors? I'll even root for the Cyclones when they play other Big 10 teams.

Someone told me recently that their two favorite college football teams are the Iowa Hawkeyes and whatever team is playing the Cyclones this week. I like a healthy rivalry as well as the next guy, but add a little (or a lot of) alcohol to the mix and things sometimes get a little ugly near Kinnick stadium on game day.

I was at the Iowa/NIU game at Soldier field last Saturday, and there was a surprising amount of booing going on when NIU took the field. You can argue all

you want that it is “good-natured” booing, but I disagree. Save it for the guys that get paid – the coaches and the referees. They can take it, even if they don’t deserve it. [End Preach Mode]

Of course, nobody reading these words really needs this advice – Press-Citizen subscribers tend to be an empathetic and fair-minded bunch. And a fair number are no doubt Iowa State graduates.

Google up “Iowa-Iowa State rivalry” and you get more than 600,000 results, the top one being its own Wikipedia page. I was also surprised to see that the Cy-Hawk Trophy that goes to the winner of the annual overhyped skirmish also has its own page.

A lot of excess angst was emoted in 2011 regarding the newly proposed trophy. First introduced at last year’s Iowa State Fair, the sculpture atop the trophy depicted a farm family with small children huddled around a bushel basket of corn. Dean Taylor, then president of the Iowa Corn Growers Association, called it "a work of art that represents Iowans and their hard work."

What a shock when nobody could figure out what it had to do with football. The answer, of course – nothing – just wasn’t good enough for most folks. My tastes run more toward the whimsical and bizarre, so I was all for it.

But they took a vote and the people - darn them - have spoken and the new redesigned trophy features Herky and Cy (sigh) standing in a cornfield holding a brass football, which registers exceptionally low on my Whimsy-O-Meter. The whole controversy registers exceptionally high on my Tempest-in-a-Teapot-O-Meter.

Anyway, the Big Game will be played later today, and one team will win, much to the chagrin of the other team and its supporters. So everyone do me a favor and drink the Kool-Aid, hold hands and sing along with me; *“We’re from I-O-way (yes, all of us), I-O-Way. That’s where the tall corn grows!”*

Writers Group member Dave Parsons co-owns a business on the Coralville Strip.