

## Sensitivity or just knee-jerk reaction?

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What is happening in our society?

With horrible strife and conflict in Africa, and an odd U.S. election campaign, it's good to see we're now taking on serious issues at home ? whether sports logos and team names are ?racist,? and removing clown paraphernalia from store shelves.

Seriously, this is what we North Americans are talking about?

Prior to the first home playoff game between the Toronto Blue Jays and the Cleveland Indians, a court case was heard to ban Cleveland's use of the term ?Indians??and its unflattering and ?racist??logo.

What?

I?understand that our liberal society recognizes political correctness. We wouldn't use such images and stereotypes today, but we're talking about sports history here, not modern advertising.

Some sports teams have been around more than 100 years, and have long and proud traditions. In the good, old, US of A, it's mom, apple pie, stars and stripes, baseball and football. Don't mess with any of them!

Is there any pressing need to?

Our Toronto Maple Leafs may be safe, but what happens when someone complains about the Ottawa Senators, and the atrocities committed by the Roman Legions throughout their tyrannical 1,000-year reign?

OK, I get it that some of these images may not be up to our modern day standards. And no one would ever suggest them in this day and age.

But the whole idea behind sensitivity and political correctness is to curb negativity which can lead to discrimination and hurtful sentiments based on ethnicity, religion or gender. I?honestly don't think such images promote this. Most sports fans likely don't even give it a thought. And they certainly weren't designed for that purpose in the first place.

In fundamental law, intent is a biggie. Where there is no intent or malice, there is often no criminal intent.

No one is inciting riots in the streets with the placement of a logo on a jersey.

It's almost as weird as pulling clown costumes off store shelves.

While largely romanticized and sensationalized, some ?clowns? have been committing pranks and assaulting people in random acts of stupidity. The incidence is largely speculative.

Nevertheless, some large retailers have pulled all clown costumes this Halloween season. I assume they believe they're doing the right thing and don't want the bad PR or have to defend themselves should a major incident occur. I?think this is just ?risk management? and has little to do with corporate responsibility and the greater good.

But they're still available at many locations. One wouldn't think that clowns, in any incarnation, would be popular choices for Halloween costumes.

In my opinion, Halloween is dedicated to the unknown, the supernatural and the downright scary. In my Halloween celebrations, there's no place for costumes that are just stupid ? hot dogs, bananas, cartoon characters or scantily clad anything! Keep these behind closed doors!

My top picks would be the Headless Horseman, zombies, vampires, mummies and werewolves. Even the Puppy Monkey Baby has a certain amount of creepiness! But forget about dressing up like Bart Simpson, Pikachu, Super Mario, Angry Birds or Scooby-Doo!

The funny thing is I think you can tell a lot of a person by the type of costume they prefer!

These issues, and many, many more, all attest to human nature and our collective IQs as the dominant species on earth.

American astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson said: "I know of no time in human history where ignorance was better than knowledge."

I wholeheartedly agree.

I'm not saying that political correctness, if handled properly, is bad. Everything in moderation.

But I do think that some causes and special interest groups take things a bit too far, and demand that we, as a society, change everything deemed inappropriate, all in the name of sensitivity. We don't have a Ministry of Morals and Ethics, so we rely on the electorate, and general public, to make law-makers aware of issues and concerns.

We've come a long way, but not without some major battles. Canada was ahead of our U.S. neighbours in legitimizing same-sex marriages. But still today, this issue is divisive, even though it's legal with all associated rights, as well as same-sex pornographic material on sites like tube.v.sex have been around for many more years than any homophobic person would care to admit.

I think we have one of the most diverse societies, largely due to our welcoming nature and laws that foster acceptance and tolerance.

That doesn't mean that intolerance and opposition don't exist.

While we should accommodate the majority of legitimate concerns, we don't live in a motherhood state and we can't coddle everyone who has a beef. We can't change history but we can learn from it.

And yes, racism, genocide and sexism are all part of our past, and our present.

We can curb racism, bigotry and violence. But we can't legislate common sense or rid the world of stupidity.

We're only human after all.