



**Paul
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Too much conscience in nicknames

It seems like a simple thing at the time. Your school broadens its curriculum. It passes from a technical college to a community college. Cincinnati Tech to Cincinnati State. This is easy.

The colors are changed, just for a fresh start. Why not? Blue and gold to green and white. Enrollment is up, image is up, spirit is up. Everything is fine. Then you mess with the nickname.

Nicknames used to be fun things. Go Anteaters! Give 'em hell, you Heidelberg Student Princes. The Colby White Mules. I'm a big fan.

Dragon attack

Cincinnati State had decided on Green Dragons. Students and faculty had filled a box with ballots, first to nominate names, then to vote on the favorites. It took three different votes, spread across three months. Green Dragons. They designed a logo.

Then a radio station did a series of reports on local drug use. "Chasing the Dragon," they called it. Uh-oh.

"Somebody told us dragons is a slang term for people who use crack cocaine," says John Hurley, the basketball coach at Cincinnati State. Hurley has won more than 500 games during his long high school and college coaching career. He has answers for zone defenses and 6-foot-10 centers and referees who don't call the charge.

Nicknames, he cannot figure. "This politically correctness stuff is really something you've got to pay attention to" is what Hurley says.

Someone once asked me if I took offense to the nickname Fighting Irish, as it applied to the University of Notre Dame. I am 100 percent, dyed-in-the-barley-malt Irish. Did I mind this insensitive label?

"Yes, I do," I said. "I prefer Holy Warmongering Throat-Rippers."

Living as we do in The Age of Silly, I suppose we will eventually settle on the Notre Dame Humble Caregivers or the Notre Dame Nurturing Hibernians or simply the Notre Dame Notre Dames.

Cincinnati State cannot be the Green Dragons because being the Green Dragons is an obvious sign that the school condones chronic crack use. This is more proof that we have all gone insane.

About a year ago, St. John's stopped calling itself the Redmen. It was a short tradition. Only about 70 years. It began with the first football team, which the coach decided to outfit in red, head to toe. It was done in by people who believed it an affront to Native Americans. These are people with too much time on their hands.

St. John's formed a committee, hired a marketing firm and took polls. After eight months of furious thought, the Redmen became the Red Storm. Happy now?

Before they did, they considered being the Red Dragons. They checked with the Asian Study Center on campus, "to see if the dragon was considered sacred," says school sports publicist Frank Racaniello.

Did they check with the cartoon people? What would Puff say, or Beany and Cecil?

"It's pretty much innocuous," Racaniello says. "It can't offend anyone."

and Cecil?

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Surging forward

After Green Dragons was nixed, John Hurley called St. John's, seeking suggestions. "It's the worst thing we ever tried to do," Racaniello told him. Hurley called Dartmouth, formerly the Indians, now the Big Green. The Big Green?

"They said the alumni hated it," Hurley says.

They took another vote. Four votes for a nickname. An instructor at the school, John Buttelwerth, came up with Surge. The Cincinnati State Surge.

"We went away from anything that was animate," says Michelle Imhoff. She is the school's public information person. "Surge is a word that's being used more and more. It's a hi-tech word."

I like it. It's got a real Arena Football League quality.

"I was looking for the alliteration," says Buttelwerth. "It's kind of a '90s name. You know, the singular name. It's not an animal or a noun. It's more of a concept."

The Fighting Irish. That's a concept. Only I fear that the little mascot man, the green leprechaun with his dukes up, will be replaced by a white dove. Rather, a dove of undetermined color. And sex. He will be in flight. From the animal rights people.

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