

# Get the Beep Button Ready

By Reg P. Wydeven  
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When my daughter was really little, she adored Disney's Tinker Bell. She had Tinker Bell t-shirts, pajamas, and toys. I thought we'd show her how it all began, so for Christmas we got her the 'Peter Pan' movie on DVD.

We sat down to watch the film as a family, but before the opening credits a disclaimer appeared on screen saying that the movie was a product of its time. In addition, the movie may depict some of the ethnic and racial prejudices that were commonplace in American society and while the views expressed don't represent those of Disney, the movie is being presented as it was originally created.

I thought that was an odd thing to see before an animated Disney movie. I hadn't seen 'Peter Pan' for probably 30 years, so I must have forgotten some parts.

As we watched the movie, I realized that I had definitely forgotten some parts.

Disney's treatment of the Native Americans in the film would definitely not be considered politically correct by today's standards. They are portrayed as stereotypical caricatures, resembling Chief Wahoo, the Cleveland Indians mascot. In addition, Captain Hook even refers to them as "redskins."

If John Banzhaf III gets his way, however, Disney may have to 'beep' out the word "redskins" in 'Peter Pan.'

Banzhaf, a law professor at George Washington University, recently filed a petition with the Federal Communications Commission to revoke the broadcast license of WWXX-FM, a Washington D.C. radio station, for repeatedly using the word "redskins." According to Banzhaf, the word is racist, derogatory, profane and hateful, and using it is "akin to broadcasting obscenity."

In response, FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler announced that, "We'll be looking at that petition, we will be dealing with that issue on the merits and we'll be responding accordingly." He added that, "There are a lot of names and descriptions that were used over time that are inappropriate today. And I think the name that is attributed to the Washington football club is one of those."

If the FCC determines the word "redskins" is indecent, its use could be banned from being broadcast on radio or TV hours when children might be listening. If the FCC determines the word is obscene, it could be banned altogether and errant broadcasters could be fined.

The FCC petition is the latest legal action taken in an effort to get Daniel Snyder, the owner of the Washington Redskins, to change the team's name. Coincidentally, Snyder also owns WWXX. In June, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office revoked the team's trademark registration on the grounds that it was "disparaging to Native Americans." The team is currently appealing this decision.

In addition, last month the Senate introduced legislation that would strip the NFL of its tax-exempt status because of its use of the name "Redskins."

Despite the opposition, including intervention by President Obama, Snyder has been quoted as saying, "We'll never change the name."

Maybe someday the League will use Disney's disclaimer at the beginning of DVDs put out by NFL Films.

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