

Blue

By Dennis Knight

More than half of the flags of the world feature the color blue, including Old Glory. "Our Flag," a book published by Congress in 1879 reports the color in our flag has no meaning but in our Great Seal it represents vigilance, perseverance and justice.

In Washington, blue suits are often the single commonality between any two legislators or bureaucrats, from the Chief down, liberal or conservative, woman or man. In the corporate world, executives often wear blue suits to show gravitas for business at hand. For several years in the eighties I recruited candidates for a management consulting firm that required their engineers to wear white shirts and reliable, responsible blue suits, period.

Marketing managers employ the color blue to convey strength and trust. Ford, Facebook, American Express, Chase, GE, even IBM, 'big blue' itself, have structured their corporate images around the color. K-mart's latest logo contains an image of their famous blue light. A few years ago K-Mart Holdings acquired Sears, whose logo, as you probably remember, is also blue. From the performance of the blended companies, don't be surprised if they soon put a blue light special out on the whole sorry outfit; maybe some kind of a BOGO deal.

A member of the nobility is often called a blue blood, but we know blood is not blue at all. It's always red because of oxygen and hemoglobin; it's red in the veins and arteries and heart, and it stays that way even when you die. So if some fancy pants aristocrat is in fact blue blooded, we can agree it's an oxygen deficiency.

The sky actually seems blue because of wavelengths and scattering and things that have to do with the sun, nature, even altitude. Science notwithstanding, if you think the sky needs a color boost, you can always cuss up a blue streak, or any gaggle of teens will gladly help you turn the air blue.

Does hearing the melody, "Blue Skies" bring to mind bluebirds singing their song? And how does that cheerful image square with that of another piece, "I've Got a Right to Sing the Blues?" This gamut of emotion is depicted in Vincent Van Gogh's masterpiece, "Starry Night." In billowing swirls of atmosphere and brilliant stars, the soaring blue of optimism and the deep blue of melancholy can together fill a soul.

But there I go getting philosophical again, and I've promised to control that vice. I'll make you a deal. Let's pack a picnic basket. I'll bring the Blue Ribbon beer and you can pack your blueberry pie. We'll fly Jet Blue off into the wild blue yonder and spend the day in a blue lagoon under the blue sky and watch blue herons in flight as the sun sets over the blue Pacific. Later, I'll sweep you off to the Blue Paradise Ballroom where we'll dance the Blue Tango until we're blue in the face, but please, please, don't step on my blue suede shoes.