

**Missoulian, July 14, 2008**

## **Check out critter camp instead**

Youth Trapper Camp (Missoulian letters, July 3)? I can only guess what fun lessons are learned.

“Hey kiddies, welcome! Today we get to watch a demonstration you’re all sure to enjoy. We’ve got a wolverine with us today (a volunteer, of course) who will show you how she is strangled as she is deprived of oxygen because of the noose around her neck. Tomorrow will be even more fun, as we get to watch our other volunteer, the fox, chew off his foot trying to get free from a trap. We will also learn how to release domestic animals from traps - hopefully, before they die.”

OK, so I don’t really know what goes on at Youth Trapper Camp, and I really don’t want to know. All sarcasm aside, Darby Martin seems like an adventurous gal who just wants to keep our heritage alive.

Yes, it certainly is a different world than in the 1800s and 1900s. That’s a good thing. There are many things that are part of our heritage that don’t need to be preserved. Vigilantes, bootlegging, brothels, gunfights, lynchings, slavery, the governments’ attempts to exterminate the Native Americans - are all part of the Wild Wild West and have all become obsolete. As society becomes more educated (enlightened?), all of these practices have been deemed unacceptable on moral or ethical grounds.

I am not a member of PETA. I am a meat eater, but I believe trapping is barbaric and inhumane. Animals do not need to die inhumanely to feed and clothe us or keep our wildlands wild.

I have a suggestion for Martin and her fellow youth trapper campers: Check out Critter Camp at the Humane Society of Western Montana. I guarantee learning how to care for animals is a lot more satisfying than learning how to inhumanely kill them.

*Marilyn Schmidt, Missoula*