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To: [Clerk](#)
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To the Board of Commissioners public comments care of clerk@leelanau.gov

Columbus day is to celebrate our countries History. Celebrate indigenous people on October 1st and the land on that day.

Columbus didn't bring cruelty to peaceful, benign peoples. The indigenous people were also cruel to one another.

Iroquois Indians were famous for their practice of torturing enemies to death over a period of days. The Kwakiutl Indians in the Pacific Northwest practiced cannibalism. A mass grave dating to the 14th century, in what is now South Dakota, turned up 500 murdered, dismembered and scalped bodies of men, women and children. Many tribes scalped their victims alive.

Ritual child sacrifice was common among the Mayans, the Aztecs and many other peoples. The Great Pyramid of Tenochtitlan contains the remains of 42 children around age 6 who were murdered to appease the god who made the rains fall. Because the tears of children were required to prime the pump, some of the kids' fingernails were torn off to make them cry.

The Incas would drug little girls with alcohol and coca leaves, then freeze them, then mummify them. In a spot that today is right across the Mississippi River from St. Louis was a burial site where scores of teen girls were ritually sacrificed. There is a theory that poor people and slaves captured in war were literally fed to rich Aztecs because protein was so scarce. In the 15th century, life was cruel. Columbus didn't invent cruelty in the Americas.

Hey, but we're only thinking of the good things done by indigenous peoples, right? That's exactly the point of Columbus Day, to celebrate the good stuff.

The arrival of Columbus in America kicked off an era of rapid technological advancement and cultural ferment. While the clash of civilizations was bloody, celebrating Columbus Day is not a salute to conquest. Columbus is simply a handy symbol for all of the energy Italians and other Europeans brought to the Americas. That's why the fifth-oldest university in the US, the capital of Ohio, a province in Canada, a traffic circle at the southwest corner of Central Park, a country in South America, one of the big five Hollywood studios, one of the four TV networks (the C in CBS), the vice presidential anthem and, oh yeah, the seat of the federal government are all named in honor of Christopher Columbus.

Columbus paved the way for the world's first modern democracy, the one we live in today. America (named after another Italian) was a gigantic leap forward for human liberty and the possibilities for human flourishing that go with it. Or would you rather teen girls were still having their heads chopped off so they could be sacrificed to the gods outside St. Louis?

The Americas owe most of our culture — our politics, our freedoms, our languages, our civilization — to Europe and its greatest thinkers and traditions. Christopher Columbus wasn't the first European to set foot on these shores, but he is as handy a historical spokesman as any for our historic roots in the Old Worlds.

Sure, celebrate indigenous cultures if you like, but it's preposterous to argue there is nothing worth celebrating about what Columbus represents.

Do these people that denounce Columbus even know the seat of the federal government is called the District of Columbia? That's a much bigger deal than some Monday parades in October.

Institutions of higher learning specifically designed to teach young people about their place in the world and in

history are instead ripping us away from our roots and denying plain facts. The indigenous peoples are not why we have America and the shining example of liberal democracy and human rights it became. Look around you. Most of the things you have and love are derived from the European settlers tracing back to Columbus.

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