



## Other Viewpoints

### More than sports, as Jayhawks march

After some meager years, it's great to see the Marching Jayhawks (at the University of Kansas) continuing to increase both in numbers and excellence.

Over the last three years, the band has almost doubled in size. It has been a steady increase from 150 members in 2006 to 175 in 2007 to 240 last year and 285 members this year.

Scott Weiss, director of bands at Kansas University, also points out that the band boasts the flashy presence of 22 tubas when it takes the field at Memorial Stadium.

The band has drawn some important financial support from a fund established just over a year ago by Sue and Dana Anderson, KU alums who live in Los Angeles, who made a \$100,000 gift to endow a permanent fund to benefit the band. A couple of months later, it was announced that Alan Riedel of Garden City had made estate plans that would leave an additional \$200,000 to the fund. Such generous gifts are important to the long-term future of the marching band.

When the two major gifts were announced, Weiss noted that although the band has money to fund its day-to-day operations, it often is hard to come up with money for instruments, uniforms and scholarships. A winning football program may be the best recruiting tool for the Marching Jayhawks, but it's also helpful to be able to offer more scholarships for band members willing to spend the time necessary to rehearse and perform on the university's behalf.

Congratulations to Weiss, who has worked hard to forge relationships with high school band directors across the state as part of his recruiting for the marching band....

Watching the colorful band running down the steps and onto the field in Memorial Stadium and returning to the field for the half-time show still is a highlight of any football game on Mount Oread. Thanks to all those who have given new life to such a wonderful KU tradition.

— Lawrence Journal-World, via The Associated Press

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## No respect left for Columbus?

Once the vaunted discoverer of America, Christopher Columbus today just can't get no respect.

It's been a long time since 1492.

It started with protest countermarches on Columbus Day, the federal holiday which used to be celebrated by parades, speeches and events. The American Indian Movement and others led protests of the Columbus tradition, sometimes threatening to mix it up with Italian-Americans and other groups who still celebrated the great explorer.

And while we learned in grade school that Columbus discovered the so-called "New World," later we learned that Norse mariners may have been here years before. They didn't claim any territory or make much of a written record.

And their public-relations machine may not have been as well-oiled as the Spanish crown's.

Spain, on the other hand, moved to establish an empire, subjugate the natives and bring them to Christ. In the understanding of European society in that day, it was the thing to do. Then, of course, there's the gold. Always the gold.

As for Columbus, later we learned he might never have fully understood his "discovery." He was looking for an all-water route to the East Indies, target of much spice and silk trade, and so called the Native Americans "Indians."

History does not record him as a kind or benevolent colonial ruler. Revisionists have ridiculed the common view of Spanish rule in



**Steve Haynes**

• Along the Sappa

general.

For years, Columbus was a hero to Americans. Because of his heritage, Italian-Americans especially looked up to him. He became the namesake for the Catholic Church's main social order for men. After all, he discovered the New World.

Today, school children learn about his flaws, the fact that he was "lost" and his treatment of the natives. Perhaps as many learn to revile him as revere him.

"How can you discover a place where people already lived?" one wag asks.

It was hardly a new world to those Columbus saw as "Indians."

It's true, he brought them Christianity, as well as smallpox and venereal disease, but those are hardly gifts they sought.

Now that we've seen his feet of clay, though, it seems that he should be able to appreciate Columbus for the visionary he was. No one else had the persistence to find backing and launch a voyage of discovery. Having failed at home, he set out for Spain, where visions of riches influenced the royals.

Most great discoveries involve more than a

little luck. Many are found on the way to other things, goals that often as not are never met. That Columbus "discovered" a world that Europeans knew nothing of, not the spice islands he was looking for, hardly matters.

He changed the course of history, proved you could sail west to landfall and turned Europe's eyes to the "New" world. From that sprang the colonial movement, the birth of America and the spread of democratic thinking, all great shifts in Western thought.

It would have happened without him, of course, but maybe not the same way. Someone had to set out across the Atlantic. Columbus just happened to be the one.

That is was no picnic for anyone in the way should be no surprise. The drive for conquest had ruled European history before being exported to the Americas.

Someone might argue that the East Indians were just lucky Columbus didn't find them. There's no way to prove anything, for history turned out the way it did. And history has been revised to fit our modern-day vision of ethical behavior, a quantum shift from 15th century Spain.

Hero or heel, discoverer or just lost, Columbus changed the world. Think of that next October when you come home from work on the second Monday, and there's no mail.

Steve Haynes is editor and publisher of The Colby Free Press and president of Nor'West Newspapers. In his spare time, whenever that is, he like to ride and watch trains.

## H1N1 vaccine can make a difference

This month marks the start of the largest vaccine deployment in history. As the first shipments of the H1N1 flu vaccine are arriving in Kansas, it's worth noting that a new chapter in humanity's long struggle with influenza viruses has begun.

For the first time ever, people have come together to stop a flu pandemic dead in its tracks by taking away the one thing the virus needs to survive: susceptible human hosts.

As the vaccine gives ever-wider immunity in the population, it promises to bend down the curve of the epidemic, leaving the H1N1 virus no place to go.

With all the attention the vaccine is getting, many Kansans are asking good questions about it. Is the vaccine really necessary? Will it protect me or my children against illness? How do I know it is safe?

A majority of Kansans will likely obtain the vaccine. For now they need to be patient as we await larger supplies of the vaccine, and as we distribute available doses to groups who are at especially high risk from H1N1 flu infections.

Meanwhile, a vocal minority has already begun an active campaign against the vaccine. Many others remain undecided about it.

It's easy to get confused, so now is a good time to review what we know and expect about the vaccine's safety and effectiveness:

1. The vaccine is needed. While the H1N1 virus has not been as lethal as the virus that caused the dreaded 1918 pandemic, for a fraction of cases it causes a very serious disease, even death. As of the end of last week we know of at least 146 hospitalizations, and believe the actual number is really much higher. We also know of six H1N1-related deaths in Kansas.

### Other Opinions

• Jason Eberhart-Phillips  
State Health Officer

(Editor's note: a seventh death was reported Wednesday, the first in Kansas without other underlying medical conditions.)

It is extraordinary to see so much influenza as early as mid-October, and the impact of this virus on children and young adults is unprecedented. Without the vaccine, the potential for significant absenteeism is high, causing disruption to schools, businesses and normal community activities.

2. The vaccine is effective. Clinical trials on volunteers during the summer yielded a pleasant surprise about the vaccine: It produces a robust immune response that should prevent disease in most people after a single dose. Children under 10 need two doses, three weeks apart, but nearly everyone else will be protected against H1N1 flu within a couple weeks of receiving a single dose of the vaccine.

3. The vaccine is safe. It really isn't a "new" vaccine at all. It has been manufactured using the same processes used for seasonal flu vaccines. Hundreds of millions have received these vaccines with very few serious adverse effects. We expect the H1N1 vaccine to have a similar safety profile, with only mild, localized reactions such as soreness or swelling at the injection site.

4. Vaccine safety will be monitored carefully. Just as we do with all vaccines, information on adverse events following H1N1 vaccination will be analyzed thoroughly to ascertain if such events are coincidental or possibly related to the vaccine.

With so many people being immunized, it is almost certain that a few recipients will suffer unfortunate outcomes that are probably not related to the vaccine. For example, every day in Kansas there are on average 27 heart attacks, 20 strokes, five first-time seizures, and 22 pregnancies that end in miscarriages.

It is inevitable that some of these events will occur in someone recently immunized. Judgments about whether a certain outcome is actually related to the vaccine will require a comparison between the rate in vaccinated people versus the expected rate in the general population.

I cannot say that the H1N1 vaccine will prevent the flu in everyone who gets it, nor can I say that getting the vaccine entails absolutely no risk. There are no risk-free options in life.

What I can say is that the odds of avoiding a potentially serious disease will be much better this flu season for those who are vaccinated against H1N1 influenza compared to those who are not. I can also say that the chances of serious adverse outcomes after getting infected with the flu itself are immensely greater than any theoretical risk of harm associated with the vaccine.

For me and my family, the choice is clear. I'll take my chances with the H1N1 vaccine over my chances with this year's flu anytime. I hope that you and your family do the same.

### Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

