

Letter writer says it's time to get off Michael Vick's back

On the 18th of August, the last published quote of the "Tuesday Snippets" expressed the indignation of the author at the reinstatement of NFL quarterback Michael Vick after serving his sentence for his involvement in a pitbull-fighting ring, involvement which included, but was not limited to, the execution of dogs and the disposal of their remains. This author, if he pardons my paraphrasing him for its probably bad form to pad a letter to the editor with other people's work when I should be padding it with my own, believed that it sent a bad message (to whom, he didn't say,) to give Mr. Vick a job with another NFL team at the same position as before his conviction. This Snippet author, if I understand him correctly, believes that providing Mr. Vick

with a well-paying job in light of his crime, was "a disgrace," and insisted further that it would have been better if we had locked Mr. Vick in a cage with angry dogs. I believe that this person is not only wrong, but disastrously wrong.

This person's central argument is that it is wrong to give a high-paying job to a man who has committed a crime as vicious as Mr. Vick, even if he served the sentence prescribed by the law written by the lawmakers selected by the people of their jurisdiction to write such laws. To support his argument, he said that 1.) rewarding Mr. Vick with his former status was a broken moral, and 2.) a more severe punishment was suited for Mr. Vick, a punishment involving maiming and possibly death.

I will first address the second



supporting argument. It recalls not only the Roman Coliseum, but also the faintest memories of human history when liars had their tongues burned and thieves had their hands cut off. These Dantesque chastisements appeal to us as fully lawful and appropriate, so why do we as a society no longer levy these tortures in the name of justice? When you cut a thief's hands off, you terminate his capacity for any work, legitimate or illegitimate. He can indeed be a thief no longer, but he can also no longer be a merchant, or a soldier, or even a slave. When you cut off a thief's hands, you make him useless. You take a bad man, and make him an un-man. The consequence of this kind of justice is to make a bigger problem. However, that is not the worst of it. When you maim the thief to satisfy the first burst of emotion that comes from witnessing a crime, you have to deal with the emotions that comes from witnessing a

maimed man. You lose the anger, a semi-pleasurable emotion that fills you with strength, and have that replaced with horror, sorrow, and pity, all emotions that have no pleasure in them. Such justice only compounded the damage of the initial crime, making tormented criminals and bitter executioners. Ancient law only made victims without any restoration of what was lost.

Regarding the argument that returning Mr. Vick to his job is a bad lesson, I would like to know what this person thought the lesson should be. I don't know for sure, but I infer from this person's argument that he preferred that Mr. Vick suffered some kind of social setback. He might have preferred it that Vick have been barred from the NFL, perhaps from professional athletics period, and can only manage a career as lowly as a grocer in rural Iowa. Perhaps he would have even preferred that Mr. Vick couldn't land any job, and be forced to wander the slums of an uncaring city until he entered a darkened alley never to walk out into sunlight again. I may be wrong, but I do not think I am, and so I will rebuke it as plain wickedness. His crime was terrible, but only because all crimes are terrible, all violations of our fellow men and betrayals against

our species. Why should one wish a fate on an animal abuser worse than one he would wish on a vandal? The victim of the former was a lesser life form, yet the victim of the latter was someone like this person, the vandal, the animal abuser, and I. If anything, the crime of the vandal is much worse than the crime of the animal abuser, but I would be angered to discover that the vandal was denied employment on the basis of his former actions. What kind of a message does that send? "At the slightest offense, you are an outcast until you die?"

Now, to the central argument itself, that Mr. Vick should not be allowed to return to a job that would earn him millions of dollars, I reply that it would be a crime to prevent him. Why shouldn't he be restored? He submitted himself to the lawful judgment of his peers, much better than most in his position have I may add. He served his sentence quietly, and it was no light sentence either, for a month in an American prison is no simple thing, and Vick served nineteen, which is more than most receive for his crime. Moreover, it's hardly a mockery of our sense of justice, as the submitter might imagine, but a triumph of it. It is the best result of our system of justice that we can hope to achieve, when a man

commits a crime, he is judged to be guilty by twelve impartial strangers, and is punished according to the wisdom of a grave judge, that he suffers his punishment with due dignity, and returns to his home a reformed man.

So, if the man is reformed, why shouldn't he regain all that he lost by his crime? Let us not insist that our society should exercise that barbaric practice of holding a grudge. That is undeniably wrong.

Derek Laughlin
Norton

Seasonal flu shots being encouraged, before H1N1

By ERICA BRADLEY

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The annual seasonal flu vaccine is coming early this year, and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment says it's a good idea to get it soon, before the expected rush for the new pandemic H1N1 flu vaccine when it becomes available later this fall.

The seasonal flu vaccine, usually given in the fall, is already coming into Kansas and will soon be available in large quantities.

"The seasonal flu vaccination will not provide protection against H1N1," said Dr. Jason Eberhart-Phillips, state health officer and director of the Division of Health at the Kansas Department of Health and Environment.

"The sooner that people receive their seasonal flu vaccination, the better," he said.

Norton County Health Department Nurse Gina Frack said it is important to get the seasonal flu vaccine as well as the H1N1 vaccine.

"It will provide people with the ultimate protection against influenza," she said.

She said a small percentage of the population gets vaccinated against the seasonal flu. She said getting vaccinated is voluntary, but it would protect against influenza.

Mrs. Frack said people who have children under six-months-old should get vaccinated because infants are at increased risk.

The seasonal flu vaccine will be available at the Norton County Health Department Sept. 1. It is not yet known when the H1N1 vaccine will be available.

According to the Kansas Department of Health, clinical trials are underway, with plans for the vaccine to be available in Kansas sometime in October.

Mrs. Frack said she is not sure how distribution of the H1N1 vaccine will take place in Norton.

"There are a lot of factors that will determine how and why we distribute," she said.

The vaccination has not been approved yet. If approved, the vaccination could require two shots to be administered, possibly 21 days apart. The seasonal flu vaccine could therefore be administered during the same visit that someone receives a dose of the vaccine for H1N1, if that becomes necessary.

"Separate vaccinations will be needed in order to be fully protected this flu season," she said.

"Regardless of how early individuals receive the vaccination, they will have the protection from seasonal flu throughout the season," Dr. Eberhart-Phillips said.

Smokin'

(Continued from Page 1) will run a concession stand with water and soda. The Norton Area Chamber of Commerce will run a beer garden.

"We wanted an activity that would benefit the community," he said.

Mr. Carlin said Tony Grysch, Jim Railsback and Bruce Colip organized the event. He said there is a strong interest for barbecuing in the community.

"There are a lot of people who barbecue, and we wanted to have an activity that everyone could

If approved, the H1N1 vaccine will initially be made available to individuals in certain groups, determined by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices. These groups have been identified as having the highest risk of having severe illness with the H1N1 virus.

The groups identified include pregnant women, household contacts and caregivers of infants younger than six-months-old, all children and young adults ages 6 months through 24-years-old, healthcare personnel and adults ages 25-64 with high-risk medical conditions.

"The amount of H1N1 vaccine that will be available at first is not currently known. Even if you are considered at high risk, it could take some time before you are able to be vaccinated," Dr. Eberhart-Phillips said.

Cases of H1N1 flu have now been confirmed in 49 Kansas counties. As is typically the case with almost any infectious disease, it is generally believed that unreported cases of H1N1 are also occurring elsewhere in the state.

The symptoms of infection with the pandemic H1N1 virus are similar to the symptoms of seasonal flu and include fever greater than 100 degrees, body aches, coughing, sore throat, respiratory congestion, and in some cases, diarrhea and vomiting.

Individuals who experience the above symptoms should contact their health care provider, who will determine whether testing or treatment is needed. There is no vaccine available yet to protect against the pandemic H1N1 virus, but there are treatments that can shorten the course of illness in severe cases, once the infection is diagnosed.

Individuals are encouraged to take the following steps to reduce the spread of infection: wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water or use an alcohol based hand sanitizer, stay home when you are sick to avoid spreading illness, cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue and stay healthy by eating a balanced diet, drink plenty of water and get adequate rest and exercise.

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment has established a phone number for concerned Kansans who have questions about the H1N1 virus. The toll-free number is 1-877-427-7317. Operators will be available to answer questions from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Monday-Friday.

Kansans can also email H1N1-fluinfo@kdheks.gov or go to the web site, www.kdheks.gov.

participate in," he said.

He said they had spent one and one half years planning. He said other surrounding towns have done it, including Hays, Oberlin and Atwood. He said the competition in Norton has already exceeded what the other cities have done. Last year Oberlin had 12 teams participate.

The team is already planning for next year and is looking at adding more categories, including a youth division.

"We're already looking at next year," he said.

Important Opening

The Norton Telegram is currently taking applications to fill a vacancy in the advertising department. The current ad director will be leaving the paper September 18.



This is a full time position, and compensation is based on one's ability to sell to an established, and expanding market. The commission allows for bonuses when sales have exceeded established goals.

Some computer knowledge helpful but not necessary
Training in sales will be provided

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