

Opinion



Free Press Viewpoint

It's time to get this year's flu shot

Most winters Americans only have to worry about one flu. This year, and perhaps in future winters, Americans might have two types of flu on their minds.

One is, for purposes of simplification, the regular flu — this year's version of what comes around every fall and stays until spring.

The other flu is the Avian flu, and there might not be anything regular about it if and when it starts making the rounds. Researchers fear that this flu, which originated in birds in Southeast Asia — killing millions of them and most of the 100 or so humans who have contracted it from poultry — will mutate to the point that humans can pass it to other humans. That could result in a pandemic that claims millions of victims worldwide.

In the meantime, it's October, winter is approaching and citizens would be prudent to protect themselves from this year's strain of flu.

With the two types of flu to think about, we offer two thoughts. First, the Avian flu is something citizens ought to learn about but not a reason to panic. Hopefully, with successful research, planning, coordination and luck, we will be spared its ferocity.

Second, while this year's strain is not the avian flu, it can still inflict a lot of misery. It's also worth remembering that about 36,000 Americans each year die of the flu and many more are hospitalized.

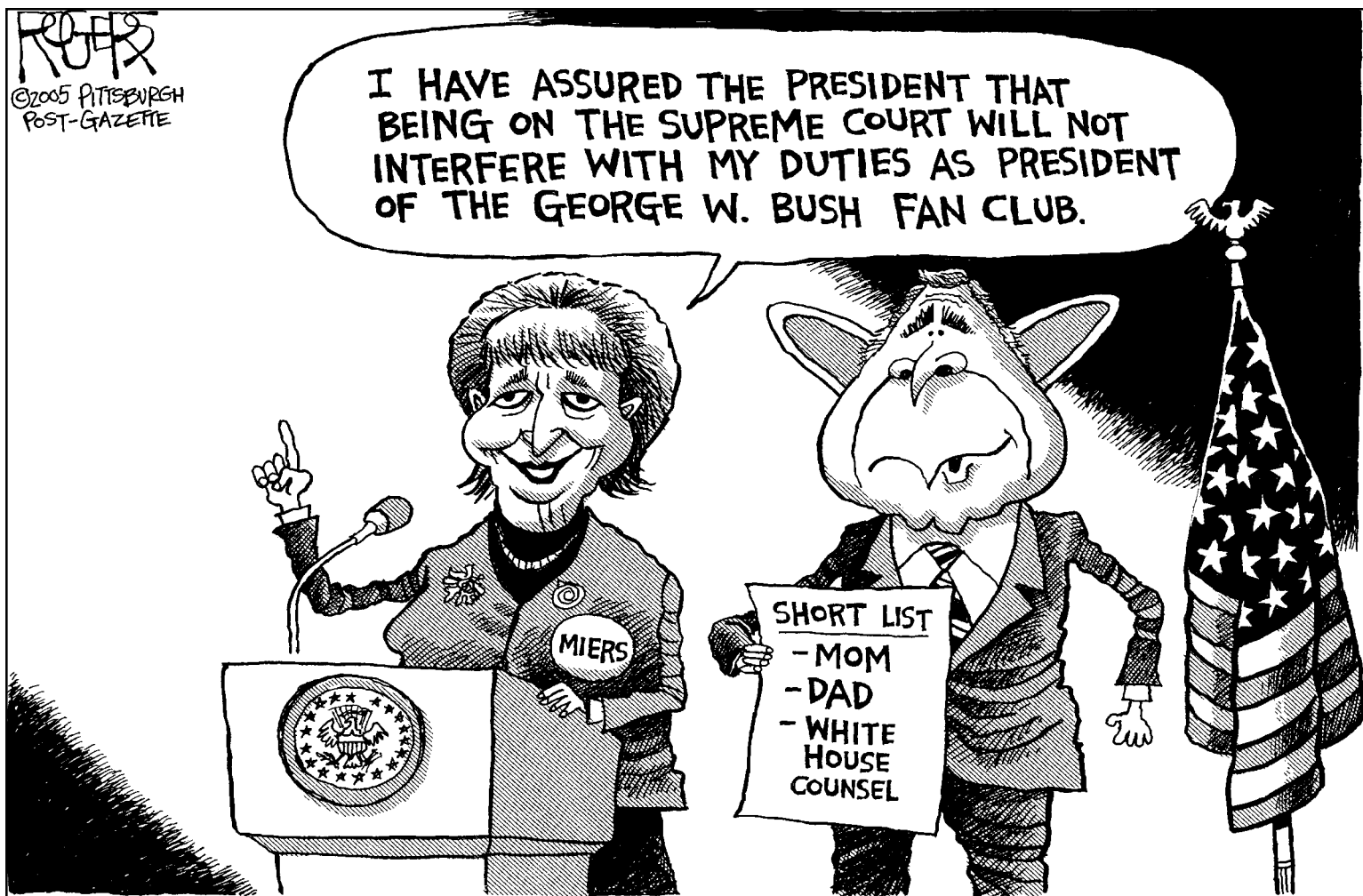
Washing your hands regularly will help you, and keeping your germs to yourself will help others. Adding a flu shot can provide another layer of protection.

The Manhattan Mercury

Comments to any opinions expressed on this page are encouraged. Mail them to the Colby Free Press, 155 W. 5th St., Colby, Kan., 67701. Or e-mail pjschief@nwkans.com or pdecker@nwkans.com.

Where to write, call

U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. 202/224-4774
U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. 202/224-6521
U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran, 2443 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. 202/225-2715 or Fax 202/225-5124
State Rep. Jim Morrison, State Capitol Building, 303 SW 10th St. Rm. 171-W, Topeka 66612. 785/296-7676 e-mail: jmorriso@ink.org web: www.ink.org/public/legislators/jmorriso
State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, State Capitol, 300 SW 10th St., Rm. 128-S., Topeka, Kan. 66612, 785/296-7399 ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us



Give the confirmation hearing a break

The recent earthquake in Pakistan has bumped Harriet Miers from the front pages for a while, but rest assured - she will be back.

Arlen Specter, a mustang Republican and chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee has vowed he will press Miers hard during confirmation hearings, especially concerning the possibility she has given assurances as to how she would vote on certain cases.

Considering the Democratic contingent of his committee consists of some of the true heavyweight of liberalism and the Republican side includes some equally influential conservatives with a smattering of less right-leaning, but no less strong-willed moderates, one can assume Sen. Specter will not be the only one pressing Miers.

Given the egos on that committee and the level of rhetoric already in play by both sides, I suspect the grandstanding will take at least as much time as the questions and the Capital Dome might even need to be secured more tightly in case the hot air lifts it off it's moorings.

One of the more interesting developments in the war of words has been Sen. Patrick Leahy's edict that he could not vote for a nominee who had given assurances as to how he or she might vote.

Leahy even went so far as to say that "all 100 senators" should vote against a nominee on that basis alone. Interesting considering some of his fellow party members voted against Chief Justice John Roberts because



Jay Kelley

• Speaking MyMind

he wouldn't give such assurances.

I'm glad to see Leahy has an independent mind instead of towing the party line. However, one wonders how independent he might be were it not so convenient.

As for how Miers might vote on particular issues, no one really knows. Of course, no one really knew how John Marshall, who also had no real judicial qualifications, would vote.

On the other hand, it would be nice to have a justice with a proven conservative track record, but the last justice with a real conservative track record to be confirmed was Antonin Scalia and some think William Rehnquist's nomination as Chief Justice diverted attention in his case.

We all know what happened to Robert Bork and nearly to Clarence Thomas.

Here are some things, however, of which I'm pretty sure.

If Miers is close to the president, she's pretty conservative. I might not agree with some of her views, but I don't agree with all of George Bush's views, either.

If Miers is confirmed and turns out to be a

closet liberal, it will not be the end of morality in America. We have done that to ourselves.

Roe vs. Wade did not invent abortion; it only legalized what was already being demanded. The same goes for the cry for homosexual rights, the legalization of drugs and other blights on our society.

Conversely, if Miers turns out to be a conservative, it will not be the salvation of America, either. In order to achieve change, we have to change hearts and minds and to do that we have to not only exchange ideas, but also make judgments concerning their worth.

Unfortunately, we have somehow decided that we can't discuss the validity of ideas and doctrines because it is judgmental and therefore wrong.

That is why we have a hodgepodge of religious, secular and even some pagan views about what constitutes a moral society with no consensus on anything.

The result is spiritual schizophrenia and, sadly, modern Christendom is leading the way. The differences in the core beliefs of the 'church' are staggering, yet we seem to be afraid of any open discussion of such.

As long as we ignore such foundational differences we can have no unity. And as long as we have no unity, we are handicapped at best.

Jay Kelley is a local minister and writer who speaks his mind from time to time. His e-mail is jkelley@st-tel.net.

A classic church rising on the plains

As the church was rising on the plains east of Denver, we started referring to it as "Our Lady of the Barren Plain."

Obviously Catholic, it was nothing like the frou-frou modern architecture of suburban churches. Hard aside I-70 at Watkins, it had no neighborhoods around it to feed a parish.

It has the form of a classic Roman church from a century ago, and it turns out, that's pretty much what it is.

St. Isadore the Farmer is the home church now in Denver of the St. Pius X Society, that group of Catholics formed after the Vatican II conference of the 1960s to fight change and preserve the old ways.

It's not fair to say the group split from the church; they would tell you the church split from them. But the names of the pope and the archbishop of Denver are chiseled indelibly into the cornerstone — in Latin.

We had been curious about the service at St. Isadore, but leaving Denver on a Sunday, we're often not dressed the way this parish lives: Coat, tie, dress shoes for men; dresses and head covering for women. We had the clothes last week, though, even if Cynthia did have to borrow a lace mantilla to cover her head.

It's hasn't been that long since these things were part of Catholic worship around the world, and not just in the Roman church. When I joined the Episcopal church in the 1960s, you wore a tie and ladies were expected to cover



Steve Haynes

• Along the Sappa

the heads. It didn't last long.

The reforms of that era swept traditions away from all the mainstream churches, but none changed more dramatically than the Catholics.

A lot of people didn't like it.

Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre of France led the Pius X movement, citing theological grounds to cling to the old ways, especially the "tridentine" Latin Mass. The protest not just about form, but substance.

So St. Isadore is a church frozen in time. The Mass book comes from the 1962 missal, the last one issued in Latin. It includes a good English translation for those who can't follow the Latin, and these days, who can?

There is a school now, struggling, but teaching the old ways to new students. Bingo is the big fund-raiser, and please, Father says, the parish really needs the money from extra sessions to make budget.

For the 10 a.m. service, though, the pews are

only half full. There are fewer old traditionalists than you might expect, but lots of young, conservative ex urban families.

There's a scattering of Hispanics, many of them older couples. And a few you wouldn't expect — a biker in leathers, wearing a scarf for a tie; a guy in a mullet and leisure shirt, straight from the '70s.

Except for a more modern Colorado-style roof, the church is finished not in the style of the last century, but the one before.

The kneelers are wood, the altar rail mounted on cold marble. Did you ever consider how much harder marble is than wood? Me neither, until then.

The ushers knelt flat on the marble floor for five minutes before communion. It's a place, and a service, more about penance than celebration.

In his sermon, the priest talked about why it's a sin to eat meat on Friday, even if you like fish better, and, I swear, pushed indulgences.

It's impossible to know who's right and who's wrong in these arguments. I'm comfortable seeing those who cling to tradition have their time and place.

St. Paul said we won't know these things until it's time, and then we'll understand. Meaning, the harm done is mostly in the animosity that develops when one group tries to force its ways on any other, in any church, in any time.

Doonesbury

• Gary Trudeau



COLBY FREE PRESS
(USPS 120-920) (785) 462-3963
155 W. Fifth Colby, Kan. 67701
freepress@nwkans.com

State award-winning newspaper, General Excellence, Design & Layout Excellence, Column Writing, Editorial Writing, Sports Columns, News, Photography.

Official newspaper of Thomas County, Colby, Brewster and Rexford.

Pat Schiefen - Interim Publisher
pjschief@nwkans.com

NEWS

Patty Decker - Editor
pdecker@nwkans.com

Tisha Cox - General Assignment
tcov@nwkans.com

Jan Katz Ackerman, Area Reporter
ackermanjk@ruraltel.net

ADVERTISING

Crystal Rucker - Advertising Sales/Director
crystalr@nwkans.com

Jasmine Crottinger - Advertising Sales
jasminec@nwkans.com

Cindy Davis - Advertising Sales
c.davis@nwkans.com

BUSINESS OFFICE

Lea Bandy - Circulation Manager
lea@nwkans.com

Jeanette Applegate - Bookkeeping & Ad Building
japplegate@nwkans.com

Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator
support@nwkans.com

NOR'WEST PRESS

Jim Bowker - General Manager

Richard Westfahl, Lana Westfahl, Ron VanLoenen, Judy McKnight

THE COLBY FREE PRESS (USPS 120-920) is published every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, except the day observed for Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, by Haynes Publishing Co., 155 W. Fifth, Colby, Kan., 67701.

PERIODICALS POSTAGE is paid at Colby, Kan. 67701, and at additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to The Colby Free Press, 155 W. Fifth, Colby, Kan., 67701. THE BUSINESS OFFICE at 155 W. Fifth is open from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday to Friday, closed Saturday and Sunday. MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, which is exclusively entitled to the use for publication of all news credited to it or not otherwise herein. Member Kansas Press Association, Inland Press Association and National Newspaper Association. **SUBSCRIPTION RATES:** In Colby by carrier: 4 months \$38, 8 months \$53, 12 months \$70. By mail with in Colby and the nine-county region of Thomas, Sheridan, Decatur, Rawlins, Cheyenne, Sherman, Wallace, Logan and Gove counties: 4 months \$50, 8 months \$62, 12 months \$78. Other Kansas counties and surrounding states: 4 months \$57, 8 months \$67, 12 months \$81. All other states, \$81, 12 months.

Nor'West Newspapers
Haynes Publishing Company