



Chicago faces disappointment

So today is decision day. Today we find out where the 2016 Olympics will be held.

What ever happens, the U.S. will be disappointed. Chicago was eliminated from the running at midmorning, which is midevening in Copenhagen where the Olympic committee meets.

The president and first lady had been making a huge push for Chicago, even going so far as to go to Copenhagen to support the city's bid. He wasn't the only world leader there; Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama flew in to make the case for Tokyo. Interestingly, Tokyo was eliminated early as well.

Beginning this morning, the Olympic committee heard each city's final presentation. There were four cities up this year, with Rio de Janeiro and Madrid still in the running. Tokyo's proposal was for more environmentally friendly games. Rio's push is for the first South American Olympics in history.

Chicago's major draw was, of course, an internationally popular president leading the charge. Not that it wasn't a good candidate for the games; it's a major population center, has an already rabid sports fan base, a well-established international airport, a thriving nightlife and an ample tourism industry. Chicago is already a major convention destination and a trade capital, being the home of the Chicago Stock Exchange and the Chicago Mercantile Exchange.

However, it does have its problems. While violent crime had been significantly reduced in recent years, 2008 saw those numbers rebound. Last year, the city had 510 murders, the most in the country. In 2007, 624 aggravated assaults and 555 robberies were reported for every 100,000 people. That makes for a lot of crime in a city of 9.8 million people.

However, crime problems plague any major city. Doubtless Tokyo, Rio and Madrid have their own problems with crime, poverty and gangs.

But the Olympic Games brings with them increased security. Athlete villages are guarded day and night. The crimes that do happen there are usually politically motivated, such as the killing of Israeli athletes by terrorists at the 1972 games in Munich or the bombing in Atlanta in 1996. These crimes rarely relate to street crime in the city.

And the Olympics can do a lot for a city. They bring not only athletes but fans from around the world. It would be a much needed boost to tourism, retail, and restaurant industries in a time when an influx of cash is just what the doctor ordered. If done right, it can raise the prestige of a city on the world stage and boost international opinion of the host county.

So it's too bad that the fair city of Chicago wasn't picked to bring the Olympic Games back to U.S. soil in 2016. But it's OK; we've had our fair share of games here in Atlanta and Salt Lake City, and we're sure to have them again.

For next time, we ought to make a proposal for Kansas City.

- Kevin Bottrell

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Be willing to disagree with your friends

America's polarization problem is inextricably linked to peoples' willingness to prefer ideology over reason.

Both parties are guilty of promoting this monopolistic system of thought, but today's pseudo-conservatives have always been more effective at making their manipulation of language appealing to people. Look at the masterful way they use words like liberal, bureaucrat, welfare, socialism and environmentalism to further their agenda, while demonizing their political opponents.

Their belief system has been so ingrained into the minds of their followers that several people at the recent town hall meetings said they believe a universal health-care system will start America on the road to Nazism. When people in a country start comparing supporters of a system every other industrial democracy has adopted in some shape or form to a regime that killed millions of innocent people, there is clearly something wrong with the intellectual atmosphere in our country.

When politicians play on to these fears by hinting that health care reform is nothing but a smokescreen for a sinister agenda aimed at killing old people or starting government-funded death panels, they are fostering a culture of hatred and intolerance that could lead to mindless violence.

But liberals should refrain from patting each other on the backs for their ability to detect the intellectual emptiness of today's Republican party. Both Democrats and Republicans have compared their opponents to Nazis in the past. The ideologues at the town-hall meetings are just the latest example of this despicable act.

It takes no courage to criticize your traditional opposition. It's the people who are



Andy Heintz

- Wildcat Ramblings

Sept. 11, 2001. In college, I had a friend who was a lot more book smart than I am, who believed our government was somehow involved in the attacks. This was a highly informed person who I agreed with 85 percent of the time when it came to political issues. But much to my disappointment he had let his ideology cloud his ability to think.

This made me realize how susceptible people are to ideology. While looking at the comments featured on a progressive website I was surprised to see many other liberals also fervently believed the government played a role in the attacks.

After examining the beliefs on both sides, I have come to believe that the real solution to what ails America has nothing to do with political affiliations. Even blaming our country's problems on those who are allegedly on the far left and right is a pointless exercise. Many of the people making these accusations themselves hold opinions many people consider radical.

This country will only solve its current problems when the majority of its people become allergic to all ideologies that offer simple-minded ways of viewing a complex world. They need also be willing to disagree with those they usually agree with and consider the arguments of people whose opinions are different from their own.

I hope this free-thinking majority comes together sooner rather than later.

Andy Heintz, a K-State journalism graduate, is sports reporter for the Colby Free Press. He says he loves K-State athletics and fishing, sports and opinion writing.

Eliminating polio a goal to get behind

Polio is a viral infection that causes paralysis in about 2 percent of those infected. Thanks to the Salk and Sabin vaccines, polio was conquered in the U.S. and much of Europe by 1980, but in 1985 at least 125 countries still reported polio as endemic.

That year there were 350,000 new cases of polio worldwide, mostly children. Today, parts of only four countries show polio as endemic, and the world incidence of new cases has declined to about 1,600 per year.

What happened in the intervening years?

The short and simple answer is: Rotary. In 1985, Rotary, at its annual International Convention, decided to set as its goal the elimination of polio in the world by 2005. That year was chosen because it marked the 100th anniversary of Rotary International. The goal was almost reached, but several factors inhibited Rotary from meeting this goal. Among them were population growth, politics, wars, cultural and religious beliefs, along with fear and distrust. But Rotary has not given up. We are so close to meeting our goal that we will not stop until polio is 100 percent eliminated.

How was this great humanitarian effort accomplished? First, the 1.2 million Rotarians contributed over \$700 million to this effort. Second, Rotarians made partnerships with important groups like the World Health Organization, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, the U.N. Emergency Children's Relief Fund and the governments where they were carrying out the immunizations.

Most important, Rotarians from around the

Other Opinions

- Gov. John Binder Hays Rotary district

world volunteered innumerable hours to organize, publicize and carry out extensive immunization campaigns in 122 countries. In fact, this is the only reason the drive, known as Polio Plus, has been so successful. Without the thousands of Rotary volunteers, there would never have been enough people to immunize more than 2 billion children.

Why is it important that some little kid in a foreign land be immunized for polio? First of all, there is the humanitarian issue. Who wants to stand by and see a child's life sacrificed to a disease that can be conquered for a mere 60 cents? That is right. The vaccine to immunize a child for life costs 60 cents. Second, in this country it costs us about \$10 million per year to immunize our children for polio. If this disease is conquered, that is \$10 million we can save or spend on some other important health care need. Third, if polio is not completely eradicated, it will soon once again spread across the world.

If you would like to be a part of this humanitarian effort, you can contact a Rotarian in your town. Or you can go to www.rotary.

org, click on "Contribute" and make a secure contribution electronically using a credit card or download a form and send a check.

Rotary is a volunteer organization of 1.2 million business and professional leaders united worldwide to provide humanitarian service and help build goodwill and peace. About 33,000 Rotary clubs in more than 200 countries and geographical areas conduct projects to address today's challenges - including literacy, disease, hunger, poverty, lack of clean water and environmental concerns - while encouraging high ethical standards in all vocations.

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.
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