

Press Clippings 10/13/2021

---Daily Herald---10/11/2021

How controversy has changed the way Columbus' story is taught in schools

By Madhu Krishnamurthy

For generations, students in American elementary schools were taught Christopher Columbus "sailed the ocean blue" to discover America in 1492. Today, that lesson is changing in schools across the suburbs and country.

Contrary to the once-popular rhyme and belief, the American continent had been inhabited for centuries, and other explorers from Europe, Asia and Africa already had been here. And lessons about Columbus have become much more nuanced in suburban classrooms, at least in the higher grades.

Critics say Columbus was responsible for atrocities committed by his crew, some perhaps at his direction, against the inhabitants of the islands he encountered.

Columbus statues nationwide have sparked protests, leading to the removal of many of them, including monuments at Chicago's Grant and Arrigo parks.

Although Columbus Day -- observed today -- is recognized as a federal and state holiday in Illinois, a growing number of states, cities, towns and counties now celebrate Indigenous Peoples Day instead, to honor Native American history and acknowledge the impact of colonialism on Indigenous communities.

President Joe Biden commemorated both holidays on Friday, noting in his remarks the contributions to society Italian Americans have made and continue to make.

The debate between Columbus Day and Indigenous Peoples Day also is raging in classrooms nationwide, said Anna Veksler, who teaches honors U.S. history and current events at Round Lake High School.

"We do have to realize that the story has shifted, and we do have new resources, new information and new viewpoints that we want to present," Veksler said. "Of course, we never want to teach (students) the wrong narrative, but very often we present them with the sources and we let them create their own narratives."

Many educators say it's not revisionist history, but rather teaching students a more accurate version of Columbus' story, which includes the Indigenous perspective and uses original sources to paint a more realistic picture.

"It's changed because we share the truth more," said Paul Friedrich, who teaches global studies, Advanced Placement U.S. history and current events at Vernon Hills High School.

"We share the actual narrative of what happened. It's not hard to make it accurate. All you've got to do is read (Columbus') notes on his first voyages."

Columbus' description of the natives he encountered from his notes reveals he didn't see them as a threat because they didn't possess metal tools or weapons.

"He keeps describing the perfect slave," Friedrich said. "He fits in with the general, European worldview of others as less or even not human at all. It's the beginning of a cultural narrative of purposeful and accidental (because of disease) genocide of the aboriginal people here."

Friedrich said he guides students "to approach history like a historian does" and draw their own conclusions based on actual evidence.

"That's the impetus of this broader cultural discussion about, 'Do we really want statues of this guy?'" Friedrich said. "I am not saying that we should think about Columbus either this way or that way. Thomas Jefferson was not either a bigoted, racist slaveholder or a progressive liberal thinker about democracy. The challenge is that he's both."

Columbus still is a hero to many people, young and old alike. Particularly, for many Italian Americans, Columbus Day is a time to celebrate Italian heritage and the contributions of Italian Americans to the nation.

"This is a 130-year-old tradition that means a lot to us," said Ron Onesti of Wood Dale, president of the Joint Civic Committee of Italian Americans, a congress of more than 50 groups in the Chicago area. "It's the one day of the year that our Italian heritage is celebrated, and that's what people can't forget. We believe in reconciliation, righting wrongs and making amends. We just want to be a part of that discussion."

History always has been reinterpreted over time, and teaching students how to be historiographers helps hone their critical-thinking and inquiry skills, said David Bell, social studies coordinator for Round Lake Area District 116.

"When I taught high school, our big topic with Columbus was always, 'Was he a hero?'" he said. "Forcing the kids to choose one or the other isn't the goal. There's nothing more important (that) we do as historians and as social studies teachers than teach kids how to look at a source critically and ask questions about it."

A positive byproduct of the Columbus controversy is a growing call for re-examining the facts surrounding historical figures.

"At young ages and elementary levels ... they're kind of learning this, sort of, airbrushed, quasi-nationalistic, patriotic version of history ... where everything is kind of bright and shiny and everything is good," said **Geoffrey Guiney**, who teaches sociology at **Elgin High School**. "But when we get them into high school, we're doing them a disservice if we're not teaching them to look more critically at those things. It's kind of teaching them to look at their own society critically and to look at their 'historical heroes' ... more critically. You don't really understand history if you only know those bright, shiny parts of it."

---Daily Herald---10/11/2021

As a student, here's what I want to know to best recognize Columbus Day

By Mirian Salvador, Guest Columnist



Today is Columbus Day, and of course I am aware that it is a no-school day, which I am very excited about!

Being a senior in high school, people might assume I know a lot about Christopher Columbus, but most of my knowledge centers on the voyage this explorer made trying to find a better way of reaching Asia by sailing west from Europe. He executed the voyage with his three boats, the Niña, the Pinta and Santa Maria. Additionally, he had Spain's support on the daring trip.

Correspondingly, to best recognize Columbus Day, I would need to know his origins, the true purpose of his trips and his true identity. I would also need to have information on his true impact on the Americas.

Columbus Day is seen as a way to celebrate Italian American heritage and to honor Columbus' achievements. Italians feel special knowing that someone with the same origin changed the world drastically. You cannot deny that his exploration led to the expansion of our understanding of geography and culture.

The Columbian Exchange had a significant impact on the world. It transferred people and animals across cultures and continents, along with a long list of crops and food -- including bringing wheat, sugar cane, and coffee to the New World and tomatoes, potatoes, and corn to Europe.

Indeed, Columbus started off centuries of exploration and expansion in the American continents.

People say we should celebrate him based on his positive effect on the Americas.

On the other hand, people argue we should not celebrate Columbus Day based on his treatment of Indigenous people. His arrival introduced diseases to the Americas that decimated native populations who had no immunity to them.

He believed that Indigenous people needed to be enslaved. He wrote in his diary: "They would make fine servants ... With fifty men we could subjugate them all and make them do whatever we want."

He would cut native people's hands off if they did not find enough gold, and he executed rebellious Spanish colonists. He was a cruel and egocentric man. While the reason for his journeys was to find an easier route to Asia, the true motivator was wealth, fame, and fortune.

The Spanish monarchs who funded his trips had the same goal, in addition to the spreading of Catholicism. The contract between Columbus and King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain stated that he would receive 10 percent of the riches and governorship of any lands he would encounter. Accordingly, we need to realize that his ideas were very selfish.

On one side, you have Italian Americans celebrating someone they view as a hero and his accomplishments. On the other side, people argue we should remove this holiday and bring down monuments of Columbus based on his actions that led to so many deaths from disease and murder.

It's also important to note that Columbus was not the first person to propose that a person could reach Asia by sailing west from Europe, and he was not the first European to visit the "New World." Students should learn that in school, and information that indicates he was the "first" should be cleared up in classrooms.

Columbus kicked off centuries of exploration and "discoveries," but we cannot forget the terrible impact of his actions on native populations. All of Columbus' history needs to be considered and discussed when people decide if he should be labeled as a hero or villain.

We should recognize him for changing the New World but we should not celebrate a criminal. In the end, we all acknowledge that the world would not be the same without his daring trips.

- **Miriam Salvador, of Hanover Park, is a senior at Bartlett High School.** She plans to attend Northern Illinois University and major in business.

---The Examiner of Bartlett---10/13/2021

U-46 hikes budget spending by \$61.3 million

By Seth Hancock; Note – This story also ran in The Examiner of South Elgin and in The Examiner of Streamwood

The **Board of Education in School District U-46** unanimously approved, via a 7-0 vote, of the Fiscal Year 2022 budget which increases spending by \$61.3 million and revenue by \$59.9 million at its Monday, Sept. 27 meeting.

Spending will have risen 53.7 percent while enrollment has declined 11.4 percent since 2012, under this budget.

The trend of increased spending with enrollment declines continues for the seventh straight year, with enrollment projected to drop by 451 students to 36,049, while it expects to lose an average 791 students a year for the foreseeable future eventually dropping to 33,676 by the 2024-2025 school year.

Spending is set at \$660.8 million (up 10.2 percent) and revenue at \$662.3 million (up 9.9 percent).

Salary and benefits are the largest spending item at \$446 million, a \$26 million increase (6.2 percent) from \$420 million last year. Property taxes are the largest revenue line as the district plans to take the maximum amount from taxpayers allowed under the law, as usual, with \$5.5 million additional for \$324.6 million, up from \$319.1 million.

Board member Melissa Owens lauded the district for increasing spending including adding \$9 million in salaries and benefits specifically to add 34 new elementary and 26 secondary teachers, who she said were cut in previous years because of enrollment declines, as well as 12 new elementary and 26.4 secondary teachers “in order to reduce class sizes to provide for greater social distance.”

“I believe we are truly budgeting for the future,” Owens said.

Board member John Devereux also praised the budget and said the state should give U-46 more funding, despite Illinois being \$171.5 billion in debt according to usdebtclock.org.

“We’re well aware of the property tax burden that falls on our local community,” Devereux said. “This is again a product of our school funding structure in the State of Illinois that requires local property taxes to fund an outsized portion of local school budgets.”

U-46 property taxes only represent 49 percent of this budget’s revenue while most school districts are more self-reliant with an average 66.4 percent of their revenue from property taxes, according to the state board’s annual report card.

Also, to be noted, since the so-called “evidence-based” funding formula was approved in 2017, taxpayers have seen 21 new tax and fee hikes, including income and gas taxes, to go along with increased property taxes.

The most recent data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress shows Illinois spends more per student while having the worst academic results of all of its neighboring states.

---The Examiner of Bartlett---10/13/2021

U-46 teacher asks board to ‘step in’ for students’ good

By Seth Hancock; Note – This story also ran in The Examiner of South Elgin and in The Examiner of Streamwood

School District U-46 has wasted \$18.5 million in taxpayer funds, according to one district teacher.

José Rosa, a dual language teacher, submitted written public comments to the Board of Education at its Sept. 27 meeting. In it, Rosa describes the reaction of teachers after an all-day training on Sept. 24 with Learning Sciences International (LSI).

Rosa stated the training left teachers with confusion as “nothing we heard... at the training is new, nothing we practiced at the training is groundbreaking, nothing they suggested at the training is unknown.” Every technique and strategy has been in place in U-46 “for more than a decade,” Rosa wrote.

The board unanimously approved of the \$18.5 million LSI contract, which runs through 2025-2026, in April. The work, described by LSI, is based on theories with Penny Sell, LSI’s executive director, stating it’s to “align on our thinking” on a “theory of action.”

The district, in a memo at the time, stated the contract was needed because the administration is “not organized to support principals as the instructional and operational leaders of their schools.”

Rosa stated that Superintendent Tony Sanders is spending time “promoting an apparent million-dollar initiative” and ignoring real issues.

“I understand that the Superintendent with his staff is in charge of making all these decisions and this is the reason why the Board puts him there,” Rosa wrote. “But when mistake after mistake keeps happening, and the district keeps getting worse, that’s when the Board, as a governing school entity, must step in and make decisions for the good of our students and the school system. Staying quiet and not doing anything at all is not an option. You as part of a ruling entity have an obligation. The decision is in your hands, it is not very complicated. I implore you to listen to what the teachers have to say. Please, just listen to those in the classroom who are dealing with the problems of our system on a day-to-day basis. It’s really not that difficult.”

Bruce Phelps, director of business services, said in April that the district can end the contract “with no penalties with a 30-day notice.”

---The Examiner of Streamwood---10/13/2021

Sabres soccer ends week with a victory and draw

By Seth Hancock

The **Streamwood** soccer team couldn’t stop a second half surge by **Bartlett** as the Sabres fell 3-1 in Upstate Eight Conference play on Monday, Oct. 4 at Bartlett.

Bartlett did score the game’s first goal about midway through the first half, but the Sabres controlled the pace of play in the opening 40 minutes leading to an unassisted goal by junior Michael Garcia to go into the break 1- 1.

However, Sabres coach Matt Polovin said his team has struggled to put a complete game together, and Bartlett went on to score two unanswered goals in the second half.

“This has been how we’ve been all season,” Polovin said. “We’re young. It’s a tale of two halves. We have a good first half, but just seem to fall apart in the second half. We’re not together in the back, not disciplined and doing what we were doing in the first half.”

Sophomore goalie Jason Ramirez made three saves.

The loss was the sixth straight for Streamwood, but the Sabres ended that skid with a win and a tie in UEC play to end the week as they are now 5-9-3 overall, 2-5-1 in the UEC.

Streamwood defeated Glenbard South 3-1 on Wednesday, Oct. 6 at Glenbard South. Garcia netted two goals, freshman Ricardo Aguilar had one goal and freshman Jairo Sanchez and sophomore Cristian Sandoval each had an assist while Ramirez made three saves.

Senior Miguel Gutierrez found the net twice and Garcia once in a 3-3 tie against Fenton on Saturday, Oct. 9 at Millennium Field. Sanchez and junior Aaron Taboada each had an assist, and Ramirez made four saves.

“You know, this is exactly what we needed – to establish some rhythm, some momentum so we can get out of the loss column. Now we’re in the win column,” Polovin said. “We’ve got guys stepping up and getting us in the shape that we need to be in for those last two games of the season before playoffs start.”

Streamwood has one game before the Elgin Regional where the No. 12 Sabres open with No. 5 Rockton Hononegah.

---Elgin Courier-News---10/13/2021

Owning October: Alyssa Worden puts away 10 kills as ‘improved’ South Elgin overpowers Bartlett, inches closer to conference title

By Paul Johnson, Aurora Beacon-News; Note: This story also ran at chicagotribune.com



South Elgin's Alyssa Worden (7) comes up with the kill as Bartlett's Kaitlyn Iverson (2) tries to block during an Upstate Eight Conference match in Bartlett on Tuesday, Oct. 12, 2021. (H. Rick Bamman / The Beacon-News)

Junior outside hitter Alyssa Worden remembered **South Elgin's** first week of the season, which featured a tournament loss to rival **Bartlett**. That was forever ago, in August.

Welcome to October.

“One of my teammates was like, ‘Wow, we improved a lot,’” Worden said. “And I was like, ‘Yeah, we did.’ We’ve improved so much.

“Everyone got more comfortable with each other as teammates. I’m really proud of these girls. They worked really hard to get to this place.”

This place was Tuesday night for the Storm with a 25-15, 25-20 Upstate Eight Conference win at Bartlett. It showed how much they have grown since the beginning of the season.

Worden had a relatively quiet start with two kills and an ace as South Elgin (23-3, 8-0) rushed out to a 16-10 lead.



South Elgin's Loreal Wilson (11) and Alyssa Worden (7) block an attack by Bartlett's Bria Lomax (12) during an Upstate Eight Conference match in Bartlett on Tuesday, Oct. 12, 2021. (H. Rick Bamman / The Beacon-News)

But according to Storm coach Joni Plach, that doesn't faze Worden. Loreal Wilson and Maddy Shaner each had two kills in that run.

“Alyssa is obviously a really great player,” Plach said. “That being said, everyone knows who Alyssa is. I have a lot of other great players. We’re really focusing on getting the ball to other players and mixing it up.

“She appreciates the fact that other players on the team get kills. She is excited for them. She’s just as happy when another player gets a kill. She wants to win.”

Worden had three kills down the stretch of Game 1 as South Elgin cruised to the win. Bartlett (18-14, 5-3) never led in the second game.



South Elgin's Loreal Wilson (11) tips the ball over the net during an Upstate Eight Conference match against Bartlett in Bartlett on Tuesday, Oct. 12, 2021. (H. Rick Bamman / The Beacon-News)

Three kills from Worden sparked the Storm to a 17-10 lead. Bartlett cut it to four a few times late in Game 2, but Worden closed out the win with a kill from the back row.

“It seemed like we were playing nervous,” Bartlett coach Bob Schwantz said. “I said, ‘Girls, just have fun and go out there and play.’ This match just brings out the nerves. They went to middle school with these girls. They’re best friends. They want to beat them.

“I told my girls, ‘We can sit here and talk about numbers and stats. Ultimately, they were just the better team.’ They beat us.”

Worden finished with 10 kills and seven digs for South Elgin. Maggie McGough contributed 13 digs and Emma Hunter had 11 assists.

Jaden Lindstrom paced the Hawks with seven kills and Maddie Hankins had five.

“I thought mentally our team proved ourselves today,” Plach said.

Schwantz was complimentary to Worden, who sat out the spring season to play club volleyball but returned to South Elgin for her junior season.

“Alyssa is fun to watch,” Schwantz said. “She’s going to go (Division I). She’s amazing.”



Bartlett's Bria Lomax (12) and Madison Hankins (1) put up a block against South Elgin's Maddy Shaner (12) during an Upstate Eight Conference match in Bartlett on Tuesday, Oct. 12, 2021. (H. Rick Bamman / The Beacon-News)

South Elgin only has West Chicago left on the schedule as the Storm attempts to finish off a perfect season for the conference title. Then the focus shifts to the regional.

The Storm earned the second seed in the Class 4A Grant Sectional. They open play Tuesday, Oct. 26 in the St. Charles East Regional against either Larkin or Rockford Jefferson.

On Tuesday, however, Worden and her teammates celebrated beating their rival.

“Rivalry games are so exciting,” Worden said. “We were pumped for this game. I know they were too. This is their house, so we were really happy to get this win.”

---Daily Herald---10/13/2021

Girls volleyball: Larkin sweeps rival Elgin

By Allen Oshinski, Daily Herald Correspondent

Elgin's version of Rivalry Week kicked off Tuesday night.

With the Town Jug football clash on tap Friday night, the **Elgin** and **Larkin** volleyball teams took center stage at Chesbrough Field House.

The Royals secured bragging rights on the court, surviving a back-and-forth first set before pulling away late in the second for a 25-22, 25-12 win.

Katrina Zamudio's 6 kills led Larkin's balanced attack. Amiya Jackson and Ava Willigman added 4 apiece. Yoanna Hernandez delivered 10 assists while Lilah Hanson contributed 7.

Larkin lacks a great deal of size and power on its front line, but makes up for it by doing the little things and literally keeping balls in the air.

"We really work on those fundamentals and just putting the ball in the court," said Larkin coach Mattie Boyd. "I told them we don't have to go up and take that big swing, we don't have to get those huge blocks, all we have to do is put the ball in the court because volleyball is a game of errors. Whoever makes the least amount of errors is going to win the game."

Elgin made its share of mistakes in the first game and the Royals eventually took advantage. After 8 ties and 4 lead changes early, the Royals took control with a 6-0 run to go up 17-11 with Ariela Bermudez at the service line for most of it.

The Maroons fought back getting within 24-22 on a Nela Magana kill and a Larkin error, but Jackson's kill put it away for Larkin.

The Royals found their rhythm in the second set, rolling to an 11-3 lead. A 6-1 run, including back-to-back kills by Alyssa Wysuph, got Elgin with 12-9, but the Royals took off from there, winning 13 of the final 16 points.

"We told them to calm down and relax," Boyd said. "This is our third time playing Elgin this year. We know what to expect. We told them to just put the ball on the court and things will go our way. They were just much more relaxed in that second game."

Wysuph finished with 5 kills, and Trinity Evans added 3 for the Maroons.

"We take awhile to get rolling and once we get rolling then it's kind of a roller-coaster ride from time to time," said Elgin coach Amy Zapata. "That comes with a young team. We've got a pretty inexperienced team, so we're going to keep working through that. They're going to keep learning that tempo of the game. We're hoping that once we get those out of the way, we're going to take off."

---Daily Herald---10/13/2021

Girls volleyball: South Elgin tops Bartlett, stays in control of UEC race

By Craig Brueske, Daily Herald Correspondent

South Elgin's volleyball team made itself feel right at home in enemy territory Tuesday night.

Junior outside hitter Alyssa Worden recorded 14 kills and 7 digs, while senior libero Maggie McGough had 13 digs and senior setter Emma Hunter added 11 assists to help lift the Storm (23-3, 8-0) to a convincing 25-14, 25-20 Upstate Eight Conference victory in Bartlett.

"Rivalry games are so exciting," said Worden, who had 9 kills in the second set, including the match-winning smash from the back row. "We were pumped for this game. I know they were, too, and this is their house so we're really happy to get it done in two (games)."

South Elgin never trailed, scoring 12 of the last 16 points to take the opening set before jumping out to a 13-5 lead in the second set before fighting off a late **Bartlett** comeback bid.

While Worden enjoyed her usual standout performance, the Storm received significant contributions from others, including middle blocker Loreal Wilson (3 kills, 3 aces), junior outside hitter Maddy Shaner (5 kills) and sophomore outside hitter Jazmine Binion (3 kills) -- along with McGough and Hunter.

"Obviously, Alyssa (Worden) is a really great player," said Storm coach Joni Plach. "That being said, we're at the end of the season. Everybody knows who Alyssa is. I have a lot of other great players, so we are really focused on getting the ball to others and mixing it up.

"Loreal Wilson has been on my team for three years. She's an athlete and a competitor. My libero, Maggie McGough, is also a 3-year varsity starter and senior. They're both ready to finish out their senior year strong."

The win, which snapped the Hawks' 4-match winning streak, avenged South Elgin's 3-set loss at the hands of Bartlett back on Aug. 28 during the U-46 tournament.

"We were without three seniors that day, including two seniors who were taking the SAT test," said Plach, "and it was our second match of the season. We didn't have our full team.

"We haven't lost a match with our full team."

Worden echoed her coach's sentiment.

"The difference tonight was attitude," she said. "We've improved a lot since we played them the first week of the season. Our confidence level is growing."

South Elgin, which extended its winning streak to 8, visits St. Charles East Wednesday evening in what could be a Class 4A regional championship preview.

Bartlett (18-14, 5-3) was led by Madison Hankins (6 kills, 1 block), Bria Lomax (6 kills, 2 blocks, 1 ace), Jade Lindstrom (4 kills) and Madison Neer (3 kills, 1 block).

"In the first set, they had five tip kills just over our block and we had six missed serves," said Hawks coach Robert Schwantz. "Teams make errors, but we just made too many. It seemed like we weren't on our home court. We were playing nervous.

"They were the better team tonight and we gave them a lot of points. I always say, 'it's hard to beat six girls -- it's impossible to beat 12.'"