



HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: H1N1 MAY NOT BE OVER

Concerns about the H1N1 pandemic may have ebbed for many, but it is an issue **George Dehner**, history, and health organizations find at the forefront of public health issues.

"It's a good thing it wasn't as awful as feared," he said. "It's a serious threat that people have forgotten how awful these diseases are. It would have been disastrous if we hadn't taken preparation and then the H1N1 pandemic had turned out to be very nasty."

He is referring to previous world pandemics, outbreaks of disease across the globe that affect large parts of the population. The speed of such epidemics moves rapidly and then drops off quickly, compacting the duration into a few weeks. Sometimes there are reoccurrences that trail several months later.

The last documented pandemic was the Hong Kong Flu, which killed more than one million people worldwide in 1968. However, in spring 1918, the deadliest pandemic struck. Many thought this Spanish Flu pandemic would end by fall and misinterpreted the first wave as a minor illness. Then came the second wave. Fairmount College students soon learned how virulent the disease was. From the Nov. 1, 1918 Sunflower:

"At first the plague was light in character and the opinion was that it was not really influenza at all. One after another, the men began to fall sick until one fine day about the 10th of October five men were moved out of their rooms into the big south room in the basement of (F)iske Hall ... The next day our numbers

increased to nine, and by Sunday there were eleven of us."

Over the course of 18 months, the Spanish Flu virus infected one-third of the world's population and killed between 30-50 million people.

"It was the second wave of Spanish Flu that was so awful," Dehner said. "It emerged in late August 1918 and hit its epidemic peak in October. It killed so many people; it was enormously deadly."

The pandemic coincided with World War I, infecting soldiers and civilians. From the "History of the Rollins Administration, 1914-1921," by Bliss Isely, Special Collections and University Archives, Wichita State University Libraries:

"That fall came the terrible influenza epidemic, which cost the whole world so many millions of lives and which struck down so many soldiers. The epidemic swept through the SATC (Student Army Training Corps) barracks and practically every man was seriously ill."

Dehner believes there is still cause for enormous concern regarding the H1N1 virus, also known as the Swine Flu.

"Nobody knows yet if it is going to fizzle out and be nothing. It's a wild card," he said.

Virologists don't have a lot of experience to draw on when predicting pandemic influenza because the cases are random and sporadic. When they develop plans for response,

they have few episodes to use as models. Complicating this is widespread global travel for business and leisure.

“Public health folks have written off the possibility of stopping all international travel,” Dehner said. “The volume of movement is something the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recognized a long time ago. They realized the better way to plan is to prevent it (illness) off our shores by funding immunization and eradication programs.”

He also said some researchers argue that social distancing mechanisms such as closing schools and banning public gatherings can flatten the wave of disease. In 1918, Fairmount College followed a similar protocol, sequestering and then transferring students infected with the Spanish Flu. Isely described the process in his report:

“The former dining room at Fiske Hall was used as a detention hospital, and as soon as a case was diagnosed as influenza, the patient was immediately transferred to one of the hospitals or Red Cross stations that had been established in the City. Fortunately all the Fairmount boys recovered.”

to produce vaccines, the U.S. uses the same technologies developed in the 1930s for growing influenza virus in chicken eggs. This method requires a lengthy incubation time.

“Production for vaccines in this nation is not sufficient to get it out quickly,” Dehner said. “As it stands now we can’t produce enough in short order to offer protection to everyone who is going to need it—and with pandemic flu everyone is going to need it.”

For H1N1, the vaccine became available locally after the first wave of influenza.

Dehner observed, “Now we’re sitting on vast stockpiles of vaccine that no one will take because the first and maybe the second wave of the flu has already trailed through.”

However, he said, that’s not a complete loss. Viruses experience antigenic drift, where over time a virus evolves subtly, changing the shape of its outer coat. A vaccine is built upon the predominant strain, but become less effective when it’s no longer a perfect match. However, the vaccine still offers a level of protection because the person’s immune system will recognize the changed



FISKE HALL CIRCA 1917. Photo courtesy of Special Collections and University Archives, Wichita State University Libraries.

In using such mechanisms, Dehner said, “They can’t prevent the spread, but they can flatten the epidemic peak, making it have a longer duration. The hope is that it won’t be as overwhelming for the health care system, and the virus will evolve into something that’s a little milder over time.”

A challenge the United States faced with the initial wave of H1N1 was the delay in vaccine production and dissemination. In contrast to Europe, which uses mammal cell lines

flu virus as a similar strain and mount an immunological response.

Although it is unclear whether the H1N1 pandemic is over, Dehner advocated that everyone get the vaccination.

“Even if you don’t contract the Swine Flu, you’ll be building up immunities to that particular virus that will serve you well. The more influenza vaccines you get, the bigger your immune system library becomes.”

FLU PANDEMICS IN RECENT HISTORY

1918: Spanish Flu—Mounting a death toll of 30-50 million people worldwide, with approximately 675,000 in the U.S., the flu appeared in spring 1918, and was followed by more deadly second and third waves in fall 1918 and spring 1919. Some historians believe it originated in Haskell County, Kansas, and officials documented more than 26,800 cases statewide between September and late October. Nationwide, the virus killed many young adults 20-50 years old. Affected communities closed schools, churches and businesses, or restricted access to such public gathering areas.

1957: Asian Flu—Originating in Asia, the virus started with small outbreaks. However, once children returned to school in late summer they spread it between themselves and their families. Approximately 69,800 died in the U.S., with the elderly experiencing the highest death rates.

1968: Hong Kong Flu—First appearing in Hong Kong, the disease did not spread widely in the U.S. until late in the year. The number of deaths in the U.S. reached 33,800. The virus returned in 1970 and 1972.

2009: H1N1 (Swine Flu)—Appearing in the U.S. in April, delays in producing the vaccines and the relatively slow spread of disease raised questions about the seriousness of the outbreak. The CDC estimates 42-86 million cases occurred between April 2009 and Feb. 13, 2010. Between 8,520 and 17,620 H1N1-related deaths occurred during this same time frame.

For more information, go to:

- <http://1918.pandemicflu.gov/>
- www.hhs.gov/nvpo/pandemics/flu3.htm
- http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/estimates_2009_h1n1.htm

STUDENT ACCOLADES

Undergraduates in the Student Organization of Social Work have been involved with two recent projects. President **Katie Maddox** coordinated a T-shirt drive to raise money for the family of deceased classmate **Jessie Foust**. The group also donated clothing, gift certificates and house goods to a family at Price-Harris Elementary School who had lost their home and belongings in a fire in February.

Carol Oliver, social work, received the Presidential Gold Volunteer Award from the White House. This is her third time to win this award for her commitment to volunteering in Wichita.

Eric Robinson, political science, was named an All-American and **Mia Bonitto**, communication, was identified as a Summa Cum Laude

National Debate Scholar during the National Debate Tournament at the University of California, Berkeley.

Aaron Rivers, political science, received the Outstanding Delegate Award at the Midwest Model United Nations Conference, February 2010. He represented Brazil in the Commission on the Status of Women.

María Cecilia Paltán and **Terilyn Abbott** presented papers at the Association of Hispanic Classical Theater Conference in El Paso, Texas. Abbott also won the Hesse Graduate Student Travel Grant Competition for best graduate student paper of the conference. Both are graduate students in Spanish.



GEORGE DEHNER

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: GEORGE DEHNER

Assistant Professor **George Dehner's** interest in the diseases of history, most notably the H1N1 (Swine) Flu, was influenced by two books he read during his master's program: Alfred Crosby's "Ecological Imperialism" and "America's Forgotten Pandemic."

His research into the diseases of history have led him to the conclusion that public health is chronically underfunded. He encourages citizens to pressure congressional parties to give more money to agencies charged with protecting the health of communities, especially given today's climate.

"There's been a lot of concern about bioweapons following the anthrax scare," he says. "We're really in a vulnerable position with a large, mobile population that's interconnected globally, and our vaccine production methods are very slow."

In his free time, Dehner and his wife Jodi support their children, Brendan, Patrick and Sean, in their sports endeavors. A Philadelphia native, Dehner earned his doctorate degree in history from Northeastern University and his master's degree in history at the University of Denver. He holds a bachelor's degree in education from Temple University.

HAITI EARTHQUAKE HASTENS WSU PROF'S ADOPTION PLANS

By Lainie Rusco

Family has always played an important role in **Jean Griffith's** life.

For as long as she can remember, the youngest of 10 children has been surrounded by siblings, cousins, nieces, nephews and in-laws.

"Being part of a family that is the size of a small country exposed me to an idea of family that goes way beyond boundaries of blood kinship and traditional social groupings," said Griffith, an assistant English professor at Wichita State University.

So when she and her husband, Ross Haskell, decided to adopt a child, they looked toward Haiti, a place Griffith had always had an interest in.

"My upbringing has contributed to my willingness to parent a child not mine by birth and across borders of race and nationality," she said.

Although matched with a baby boy named Alexander in April 2009, Griffith and her husband weren't expected to be able to take him home to Wichita until sometime in late 2010 or early 2011.

But all plans went out the window the second a devastating earthquake hit Haiti on Jan. 12.

Their immediate thoughts were about whether their son was even alive.

"There was an hour where we didn't know anything," Griffith said.

Once they received word that Alexander and the other children at the orphanage were OK, they started thinking about what would happen next for the children, who were stuck outdoors with limited clean water and poor security.

"My husband and I thought this would end our adoption," she said. "We were just fighting for him to survive."

They were lucky enough to be in contact with Alexander's caretakers, who said that the children — who were getting dehydrated and sick — would die if they were left for too much longer in the worsening conditions.

Working in emergency mode, Griffith and her husband did everything they could to arrange for water and safety for the children. All their thoughts were on Alexander and Haiti, a country Griffith holds close to her heart.

"We were up at 7, in bed at 3 in the morning," she said. "We didn't eat. It was a constant state of panic."

A week later, they were given word that more than 50 of the kids were on a plane out of Haiti, headed to Pennsylvania. Without knowing for sure whether Alexander was part of that group, Griffith and her husband jumped on a plane to find out. As soon as they saw his caretakers' faces at the



JEAN GRIFFITH AND ALEXANDER

airport, they knew their new son was there and was going to be OK.

ADJUSTING TO A NEW LIFE

More than a month later, life is returning to a new normal for the family. That has included scrambling to get all the things necessary to care for their son, who is now 18 months old. It also means keeping a lower profile than in the days immediately following the earthquake, when the couple was interviewed on CNN by Anderson Cooper, as well as other TV stations and newspapers.

"Alexander — his face has been on CNN. People are dying to see him," Griffith said. "But we're trying to give him time."

He's doing well, but still gets scared on outings and needs to touch her or her husband as he sleeps at night.

Griffith said she is happy to be able to raise her son in Wichita. A native of Philadelphia, she has also lived in Massachusetts, Oklahoma and Texas, where she earned her Ph.D.

She came to Wichita State to pursue a tenure track, which she said is highly competitive, especially in the humanities. She teaches courses in American and ethnic literatures, focusing on fiction, and wrote "The Color of Democracy in Women's Regional Writing," which published in August 2009.

"The urban-serving research mission at WSU suits my needs as both an educator and a scholar perfectly, and being in the city suits my personal life and that of my family," Griffith said.

Even though her son is finally home, Griffith's thoughts are never far from Alexander's homeland. If there's one thing she wants people to know about her, she said, it's that she is still very much dedicated to Haiti and its people.

She said she's still trying to help in any way with the effort to provide safety for the remaining orphans.

"It's heartbreaking for those of us who love Haiti," she said, adding that she looks forward to the day she and her husband can take Alexander to visit. "I used to focus on the day I brought him home. Now I focus on the day we can bring him back."

FLEMING-RANDLE RECOGNIZED FOR WORK, SERVICE AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Ask her students and colleagues, and they will enthusiastically respond that **Marché Fleming-Randle**, assistant dean, is a phenomenal woman.

WSU's Office of Multicultural Affairs formally recognized her with this distinction when they presented her with the Phenomenal Woman Award.



DAVID MASON, OMA, AND MARCHÉ FLEMING-RANDLE

"The award is meaningful to me because my three years on campus have not gone unnoticed," said Fleming-Randle. "It means a lot that phenomenal women are recognized. I thank OMA for having this award."

Award criteria include distinguished work in academic, career, leadership and public service commitments; contributions to the personal growth and success of others, especially women, through education, research or service beyond expected job responsibilities; and achievements that have created positive social change, increased equality for all, and built community through service.

"Marché is always trying to connect the dots and reaches out to everybody to include everyone at Wichita State," said Martha Lewis, director of TRIO Disability Support Services and one of her nominators. "She's just a joy to be around. You can't be sad around her because she makes everyone feel special."

Known as an engaging educator and public speaker, Fleming-Randle is highly visible on campus and in the community.

"I work in a supportive office and I wouldn't be able to do a lot of these things without the support of Dean Bischoff and my colleagues," she said. "In all that I do at least one of my colleagues comes to my events."

As an assistant dean, Fleming-Randle is the college liaison for student services planning and implementation, encompassing undergraduate recruitment, enrollment and matriculation to

degree completion. She also regularly teaches ethnic studies courses. Her campus service commitments include African American Staff and Faculty Association, Academic Operations Council, Tilford Diversity Committee and Council of University Women, of which she is president. She also advises or supports four of WSU's TRIO programs. She volunteers for local community organizations including It's All About Me Breast Cancer Awareness Committee, American Red Cross, Center for Health Equality Advisory Council, HIV and AIDS and Honoring Our Diversity. She is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc.

Fleming-Randle recognizes several phenomenal women who have served as her own role models: Walter Mary Fleming, mother; Lilly Lee Randle, mother-in-law; Amanda Wallace and Izora Fleming, grandmothers; Patricia Heard, family friend; and the poet Maya Angelou. From them she learned the following:

"Make sure everything you do is from the heart and not for popularity or reward."

IN MEMORIAM

George W. Collins, 89, retired associate professor of history, died Feb. 24 in Olathe, Kan. Internment was at Fort Leavenworth National Cemetery. Memorials may be made to the American Red Cross.

Janice L. Cryer, 68, retired administrative assistant, English, died March 31 in Wichita. Memorials may be made to Countryside Christian Church in Wichita.

A.C. "Tony" Genova, 80, former professor of philosophy, died March 20 in Lawrence. Responsible for creating WSU's philosophy department as an independent academic unit, he was hired as an assistant professor in 1962 and later became full professor and the first department chair. Memorials may be made to the Genova Fund for Graduate Students in Philosophy at the University of Kansas.



A.C. "TONY" GENOVA
Photo courtesy of Special Collections and University Archives, Wichita State University Libraries.

Margaret Rabb, 56, assistant professor of English and director of the Creative Writing Program, died Jan. 3. Internment was in the Old Chapel Hill Cemetery, North Carolina, in the "Poet's Corner," established by writer Max Steele. An award-winning poet, she was most recently honored in 2006 with the Rumi Prize in Poetry given by Arts and Letters. Memorials may be made to Doctors Without Borders.

FACULTY & STAFF

Dorothy Billings, anthropology, was honored with the Chester I. Lewis Distinguished Service Award, given by the Wichita Branch NAACP at its 65th Annual Legacy Awards Banquet in October.

Deborah Ballard-Reisch, communication, was the lead organizer for a WSU Feed Haiti million-meal event Feb. 5-8 at the Eugene M. Hughes Metropolitan Complex. The effort was in partnership with international hunger relief organization Numana Inc.

Sherry Chapman, social work, is the recipient of the Getting Involved with Volunteering award from Zeta Phi Beta sorority, Inc., recognizing her community service.

WSU's criminal justice program was ranked seventh in the nation by the Southwest Journal of Criminal Justice for the number of books written by department faculty.

Jay Price, history, has been appointed by Gov. Mark Parkinson to the State Historic Sites Board of Review, which considers applications for grant funding and nominations to the National Register of Historic Places and the Register of Historic Kansas Places.

Niall Shanks, Curtis D. Gridley Distinguished Professor in the History and Philosophy of Science, participated as an invited speaker on the "Panel on the Science and Ethics of Animal-Based Research." Held in February at the University of California, Los Angeles, panelists presented their views on animal research.

Carolyn Shaw, political science, will serve as a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Marie Curie Skłodowska in Lublin, Poland during the 2011 spring semester.

John Wong, professor, Hugo Wall School, was appointed to the Transportation-Leveraging Investments in Kansas Task Force, filling a vacancy created by the departure of **Bart Hildreth**. Former Gov. Kathleen Sebelius created the T-LINK Task Force in August 2008 to examine the state of transportation in Kansas and to develop a set of recommendations for a new strategic approach to future transportation needs.

COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY AWARDS

Les Anderson, communication, John R. Barrier Distinguished Teaching

George Bousfield, biological sciences, Excellence in Research

Jeff Hershfield, philosophy, President's Distinguished Service

David Soles, philosophy, Excellence in Teaching

Mark Schneegurt, biological sciences, Leadership in the Advancement of Teaching

RECENT GRANT ACTIVITY

Andi Bannister, criminal justice, and director, Regional Community Policing Institute, secured a grant for \$600,500 from the U.S. Department of Justice to support the institute's operations.

Bill Hendry and **Jeff May**, biological sciences, received a \$2.9 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to renovate laboratory space in Hubbard Hall.

Hugo Wall School of Urban and Public Affairs received \$190,000 from the Environmental Protection Agency to establish an Environmental Finance Center. The EFC's central goal is to help create environmentally and financially sustainable communities. The center will help communities, tribes and private entities comply with environmental and public health protection requirements.

Nicole Rogers, gerontology, procured external funding in the amount of \$10,000 from the Hygienic Corporation to support research on physical activity and aging.

Kyong Lee and **Brien Bolin**, social work, were awarded a \$15,000 grant from the Gridley Hoover Pilot Research Program Award through WSU's Regional Institute on Aging.

Wan Yang, geology, received an \$86,000 grant from the Chinese Academy of Sciences for his project, "Sedimentology, Sequence Stratigraphy, and Petroleum Geology of Fluvial and Lacustrine Sediment Fills in Tertiary Dongying Basin, Eastern China."

DEAN'S MESSAGE

Dear alumni and friends,

You may recall that in 2007, the National Science Foundation approved a \$240,000 matching-fund grant to build a research and classroom center at the Ninnescah Reserve field station. Now nearing completion, the approximately half-million dollar center includes a library and seminar room, wet and dry research labs, classrooms, a storm shelter and two offices. The center serves as headquarters for three parcels of land totaling more than 500 acres: the Ninnescah Reserve, the nearby Sellers Reserve and the recently acquired Gerber Reserve in Kingman County. At these parcels, students and faculty study grassland restoration, river ecology and general wildlife biology. Each of the reserves represent habitats west of the Flint Hills and not found at field stations owned by other public universities in Kansas.

Many alumni and community friends stepped forward to give matching funds for the construction of the center. I am grateful for your generosity. We will hold an open house and ribbon cutting ceremony in September 2010 to celebrate the research and your support. Your involvement exemplifies the strong relationship we enjoy with alumni and friends, and illustrates your support of science and science education.

Sincerely,

William D. Bischoff, dean



THE CENTER IS LOCATED AT THE NINNESCAH RESERVE.



WORKERS NEAR COMPLETION OF THE BUILDING.



THE CENTER INCLUDES LABORATORIES, CLASSROOM, OFFICE AND MEETING SPACE.



WILLIAM D. BISCHOFF

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