Celebrate A Great Notion

OK, here’s what we know: in 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue.

What we don’t know is this: the man was hiring a savior.

When I was growing up, Christopher Columbus was right up there with Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King Jr. and Willie Mays among the all-time greats. He was strong and courageous, faithful and true; a scholar, a statesman and, probably, a swell dancer.

In other words, First Class Hero.

But times—and heroes—have changed.

Contemporary historians insist that Lincoln was moody, Washington was a philanderer and Willie Mays occasionally promised a critical child that he’d be home for lunch—and then he shook out.

As for Columbus...well, we don’t think there is a creepy, cruel thing that he hasn’t been accused of. During the past decade or so we’ve heard enough stuff about Captain Chris to make the good folks of Columbus, Ohio, seriously consider a name change to something more respectable. You know, maybe Italians.

In other words, First Class Jerk.

Smaller-than-life.

Which sort of leaves us in a bind.

Columbus Day next week, anyway, who wants to celebrate the life of a man whose life may have been so... you know... “Chronicled”? On the other hand, what if historians are wrong (hey, it could happen) and Columbus really IS a hero? Do we want to dump the whole Columbus Day/Douglass Day paradigm? What about Columbus Day in the white-collar suburbs, where people are supposed to talk about Columbus Day furniture sales?

I’ve always known this was coming, didn’t you? From now on, we don’t celebrate Columbus Day; we celebrate The Notion.

Think about it: what other traits and characteristics does a hero need?

You know what Chris did was bold. Daring. Adventurous. Pioneering. And we all know this was coming, didn’t you? But I think we are going to find that the tenacity to plan and the courage to see the plan through to the end of the dream is what makes a man a hero. Because the notion was heroic. Even if the man wasn’t.

From now on, we don’t celebrate Columbus Day any more than I want them to celebrate The Notion. Think about it: what other day do we have to pay tribute to the bold, adventurous, pioneering spirit that led to America’s emergence among the nations of the world? And what better day to honor the brave men and women throughout the land who are daunted to open exciting new doors by giving pious no one has ever done and living things no one has ever done? Sure. We can still call it Columbus Day. But it would also be Lewis and Clark Day, Sir Francis Drake Day, and Thomas Edison Day. And Susan B. Anthony Day. It could be Jackie Robinson Day. And Charles Lindbergh Day. And Neil Armstrong Day. And Chris Baker Day.

What? You never heard of Chris Baker? According to my crack research staff (which consists of a bored teenager, a laptop on Google and a bag of Doritos), Chris Baker was a member of the Oxford University Dangerous Door Darting Club back in 1979. On April 1 of that year (is it coincidental that this happened on April Fool’s Day? I think not), Baker was the first person ever to wrap a bungee cord around his ankles and jump off a bridge (in this case, the 250-foot Clifton Suspension Bridge in Bristol, England).

Some think of Chris as a visionary, while others think of him as whacko.

Regardless, you’ve got to admit that what Chris did was bold. Adventurous. And exciting.

From now on, we don’t celebrate Columbus Day any more than I want them to celebrate Columbus Day.

This is the last book you read?

Or did you?

Or... did you?

But here’s what I think. First, I think we should be asking ourselves what Columbus did, not what he didn’t.

If he had never seen the ocean, the discoveries of the 1490s, the crossing of the Atlantic to the New World, would have driven Columbus mad. The real reason for Columbus’s voyage was not, as many believe today, to hold small European states in the far reaches of the Spanish Empire. It was to open new doorways through which to connect the Old World with the New.

Sure, it was a good idea. It would have been a good idea if Christopher Columbus had been a better man. But he was just one man. And there were millions of others who knew this was coming, didn’t you?)

So what’s the alternative? What about Columbus Day? We celebrate The Notion.

What about Columbus Day? What about the tenacity to find new ways? What about the courage to see the plan through to the end of the dream? What about the notion? What about The Notion? I don’t think it’s coincidental that Columbus Day fell on April Fool’s Day. You know what I mean? What about The Notion?

The Notion. Think about it: what other famous traits and characteristics does a hero need?

You know what Chris did was bold. Daring. Adventurous. Pioneering. And we all know this was coming, didn’t you? But I think we are going to find that the tenacity to plan and the courage to see the plan through to the end of the dream is what makes a man a hero. Because the notion was heroic. Even if the man wasn’t.

What about Columbus Day?

Or is it more important to change the name of Columbus Day to something more appropriate?

The Escalante-Dominguez Expedition of 1776

This week, the Library is pleased to announce something new at the Library. We will now be featuring the Top Ten Favorite Books of a number of our community with a new list each month.

This month, the Library staff and volunteers have shared with us some of their favorite reads.

In a Heartbeat: Sharing the Power of Cheerful Giving by Leigh Anne Tuohy

What was the last book you read?

What are you reading now?

Would you recommend it?

Why or why not?

If you are always asking friends for book recommendations, the Morgan County Library is pleased to announce something new at the Library. We will now be featuring the Top Ten Favorite Books of a number of our community with a new list each month.

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