

Empathy for the Devil

Spit sucks!

By Colleen Fromknecht
Collegian Staff

By John Amorose
Assistant Opinion Editor

Amen. Amen. Amen. Forgive me, but where I come from, you say amen after you hear a sermon. And in last week's *Collegian*, that is exactly what I received in the article "Racism in America", by Joneatra Henry. Please do not misconstrue my following article; I am simple going to give my own personal "White American" reaction to the various points raised by Ms. Henry. I realize that I am not an Africa-American, or "black" as Ms. Henry puts it, but please bear with me.

To quote Mark Twain, regarding his book *The Mysterious Stranger*, I needed "a pen warmed up in hell" to write this piece. Racism is a topic that journalists take a great care in commenting upon. One must portray both sides as equals, and back up any and all comments with actual concrete facts. If Ms. Henry would have done this, my response would not be necessary. But such a one sided generalization of the "white" race, to which I am a member, required, if not demanded a reply.

In the article, a large portion was in regards to the Ku Klux Klan, and their planned march on the city of Pittsburgh. Ms. Henry was outraged at the fact that this hate group was to march on the very

city she planned to attend law school in the future. To tell you the truth, I was not exactly happy about this either, considering I reside in the greater Pittsburgh area. But, as Ms. Henry pointed out, it is the Klan's right, as specified by the First Amendment of the Constitution, to congregate peacefully and express their point of view. Marches such as these happen in this country all the time; small towns have anti-crime marches to "clean up their streets", homosexuals have marches to support their causes, even the African-American community had a "million man march" a couple of years ago to support their cause. My point is, whether you agree with what the group stands for, or not, they have the right to free speech. If you do not support the Klan, which I do not, then do not go to the rally; that is the choice you have to make. But that is definitely not my main problem with the mentioning of the Klan.

What bothered me most is how the only "whites" mentioned in the article were Ku Klux Klan members. I feel that this type of inclination is comparable to me, being a white man, writing an article on reverse racism, and only mentioning black males as being nothing more than gang members. And if that is racism, than Ms. Henry is guilty of that same crime; letting one bad apple ruin the proverbial bunch. Which brings me to my next point, or

should I say Ms. Henry's next point. She says in her article that racism should be illegal. As good of an idea as this sounds, the entire concept is ludicrous. The shakedown of this would include the vast majority of television and movie creators, as well as every person walking the face of the Earth; all guilty of expressing cultural generalization of some kind. Being of Italian descent, I, too, experience a form of racism on an everyday basis from these people. From "Dago" jokes about only eating pasta and being affiliated with the Mafia, to the shameless display of Italian-Americans in movies and television (not all Italians are named Franky or Fat Tony and have greasy hair and low IQs). So, Joneatra, you are not alone.

Finally, I can never know what hardships African-Americans have faced for the last two hundred plus years. Frankly, I have not been around for that long. But I do know that it is like being a white Christian male of European descent, and it is no fun and games. Every facet of society blames its problems and struggles on little twenty year old me (or should I say my ancestors). Homosexuals call me homophobic, or consider me a bigot. Minorities blame me for centuries of mistreatment and oppression. Women say that I am sexist and make more money in the job market because I am vaginally challenged (I made minimum wage last summer working at Burger King). Even

the citizens of foreign countries, which our government supports, call me fat, out of shape and lazy. I have been forced to wear these masks for as long as I can remember. I am not saying that I am

perfect, in fact I am the furthest thing from it. But I am tired of apologizing for the actions, or should I say mistakes of my forefathers. And I am not going to do it anymore. I am not asking for anyone's sympathy, just your empathy. Put yourself in my shoes for a while.

In closing, I wish Ms. Henry nothing but the best of luck in her future, both in law school and beyond. But I did not own slaves, or oppress an entire people in 1865, and I am sure I will not in 2065. Please leave me alone!

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Letter to the Editor

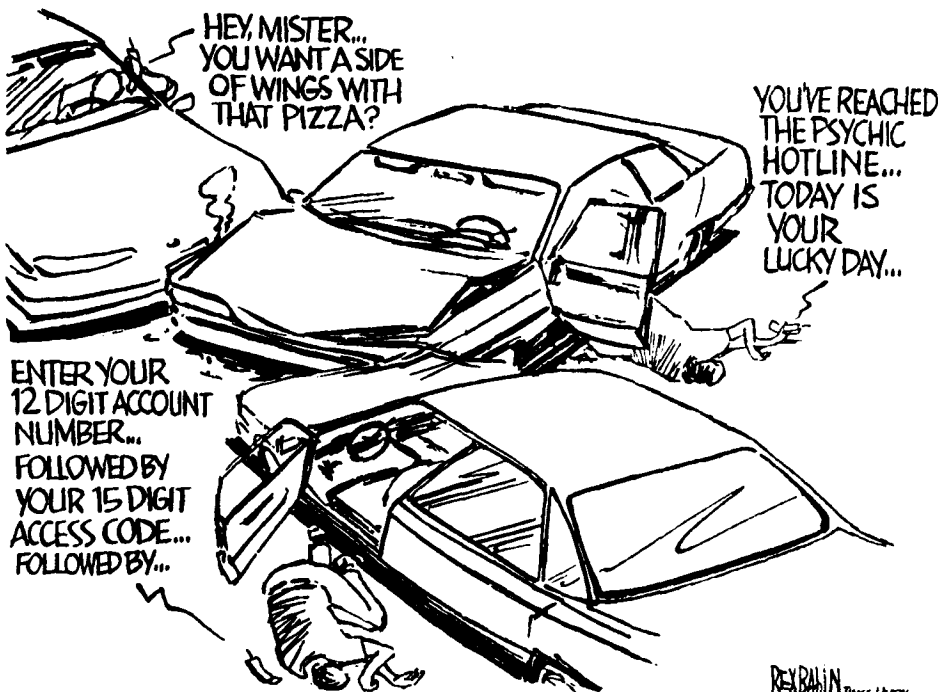
When I entered college, I wanted to improve my outlook on life, so in order to achieve this, I had to raise my knowledge content to another level. I enrolled in classes that would help me reach my goal. One of these classes, African and African American Studies; The Life and Death of Martin Luther King Jr. enriched my view of life. When I told friends that I was taking this class, they responded by saying "what else is there to learn about him, he had a boycott and made that famous "I Had a Dream" speech. But not only did he fight for the rights of African Americans but he opposed any type of social or economic poverty, he was also vehemently against the Vietnam War. As I look back at history, and see the vast amount of people who fought for my

rights, your rights: human rights. I wonder if we as a generation are doing our part for society. Have you helped someone in need? Did you volunteer your services when you had the time? Just by giving the support, we help aid the cause. The MS Walk, Behrend's Sleepout for the Homeless and The Day of Caring, are only a few that I can mention. I've realized that higher education can not only be obtained from books but by volunteering time and effort to a cause. You not only benefit yourself but others in the process. And by doing so, you've already reached a plateau of "higher education."

Ayodele Jones
Political Science, 02

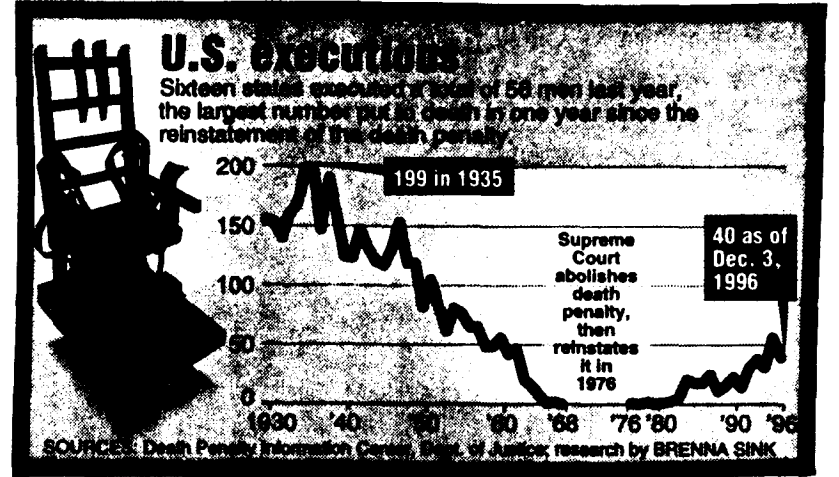


1/5/97 CEN/WOODHART/STAFF



Life at Behrend

Mike DeSantis



Fascism lives in America

By Colleen Fromknecht
Collegian Staff

I'm sure everyone by now has heard about the judge in Montgomery, Alabama who displays a copy of the Ten Commandments on his courtroom wall and makes no bones about starting the day with a Christian prayer before he hears cases in his courtroom. I was really appalled when I read about the interview with him where he states that his rights to do so are protected under the First Amendment of the Constitution. Yes, he does have First Amendment rights to freely practice his religious beliefs, but not at the expense of my religious beliefs. He also has conveniently forgotten that the Constitution also has mandated a separation between church and state. Whether or not the document should be interpreted strictly or loosely is beside the point, the judge seems to think that the Christian dogma is the only religious viewpoint which is valid.

I am also concerned with the support the judge's views have from the right wing conservative people of America. The people wholeheartedly support the judge's views, but they have not thought out their position. What happens if the judge wakes up some day and decides that he has been following the wrong path? He decides he has been given a revelation and from now on he will start his day in court by requiring the participants to read a copy of Dear Abby's and Ann Landers' columns and try to live by the principles that were set down in these columns.

The point is that no one creed should be given precedence over another creed. To do so opens the door to a myriad of problems. Today's creed which is widely accepted and followed

by many people could tomorrow become power. The situation with the judge terrifies me.

His thinking is similar to the thinking of those in power immediately before the rise of the Nazis in Germany. The country was on the brink of anarchy; most Germans approved of Hitler because they felt he would bring

Germany back to the position by having "values" the citizens felt were sorely lacking. As a result, the world watched in horror as eleven million (that's 11,000,000!) people died in concentration camps so that Germany could return to a way of life which had true values.

This is the same kind of thinking that the judge is promoting. The only acceptable viewpoint for Americans is the Christian viewpoint. If Americans are too ignorant to realize the error of their way, he will be happy to educate them. I think he goes too far. I'm scared. His policy strikes at the core of my existence, and once again I am threatened because I do not follow or believe the tenets of middle class conservative Americans. Does this mean I will be persecuted for it? Do I have to lie awake in fear because I do not fit into the mold of what the majority of people think I should be and fear for my safety?

Has everyone in America forgotten how to think? What are we teaching our children? The only way we will continue to exist on this earth with its shrinking resources, and massive problems which have been caused by our technological "progress" is to come together. We must learn to understand and accept our differences and realize that the majority point of view is not the correct point of view just because the majority of people hold it.

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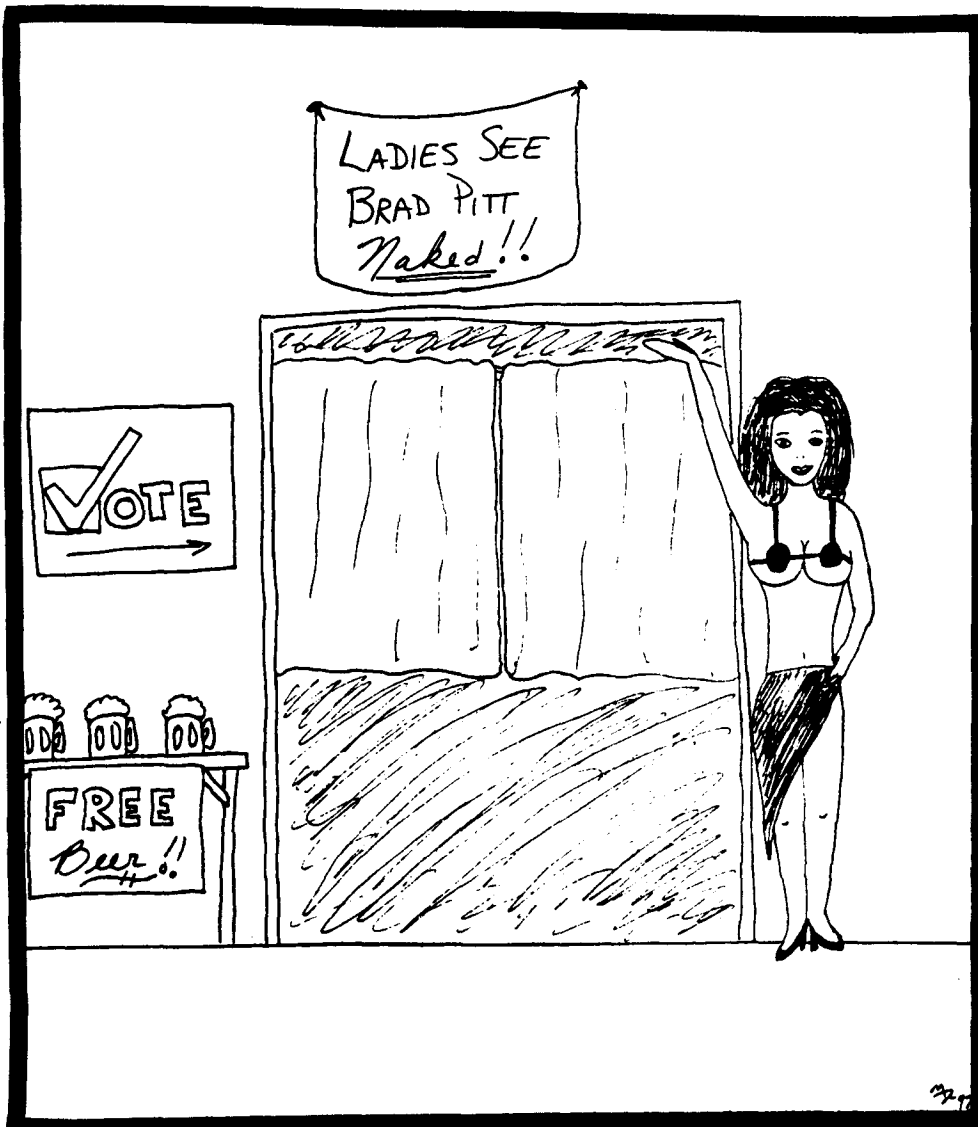
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The SGA, desperate for student involvement, tried tons of different tactics to get the students to vote in this year's election.