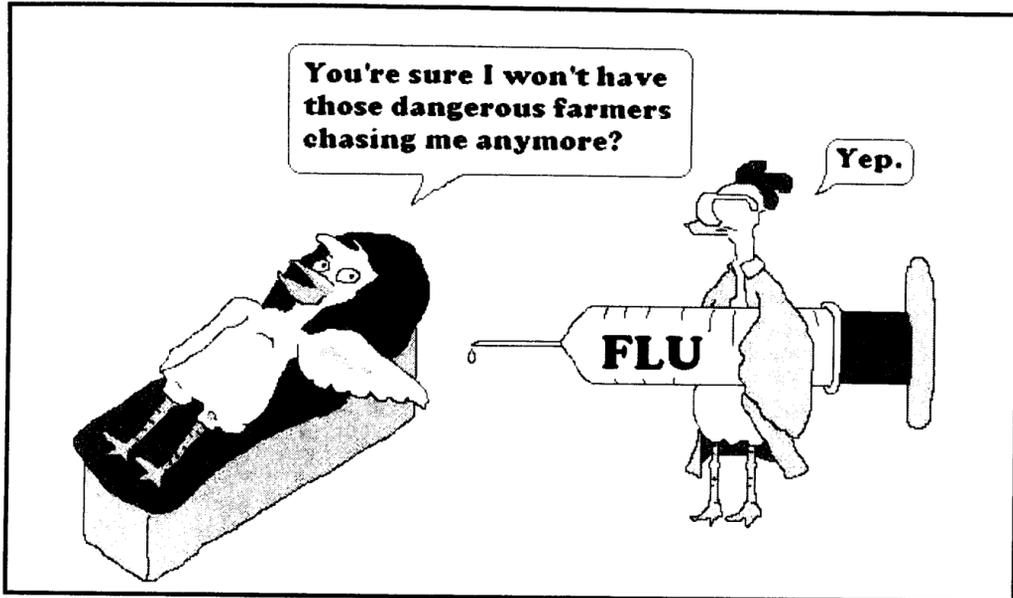


OPINION

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances. - The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution



ZACK MENTZ

Intelligent design includes tasty marinara

By Patrick Webster
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While the court is still out on the case to allow Intelligent Design (ID) to be taught in the science classrooms of Dover, Pennsylvania, the residents of that town have delivered a resounding message to the school board informing them of their own decision. Those residents voted out every single board member by overwhelming margins, letting it be known what their verdict on the matter is.

So what is Intelligent Design, and why are some people pushing for it to be included in school science classes? The main proponent of modern Intelligent Design is Stephen C. Meyer, who also co-founded the Discovery Institute, an establishment whose documented goals are to get God back into science and schools.

However, they claim God has nothing to do with Intelligent Design. Rather, there is a nameless, powerful, supernatural being that created the universe and all the animals in it to be a specific way. I'm sure the difference is obvious to you.

Now, this is all well and good. There's nothing really wrong with Intelligent Design, and it's a matter of belief similar to any ancient or modern religion. What is wrong is that it is being touted as science, and as such should be presented in the classroom. Supporters state that Intelligent Design is a theory, and should be given equal time with that other troublesome theory, evolution through natural selection.

As you can imagine, most scientists have a problem with this. While evolutionary theory is supported by hundreds of thousands of peer-reviewed scientific journal research documents, mountains of observable evidence, repeatable tests and is falsifiable and progressive, Intelligent Design has none of this. Not a single

peer-reviewed paper on the scientific evidence of Intelligent Design has ever been published. There is no science involved. The basis of its entire argument is that since some life forms are so complex and some parts of evolutionary theory are still unexplained, then the only possible conclusion must be that there is an Intelligent Designer involved. There is no theory in a scientific sense there; all ID is, is a criticism of evolution, and a poor one at that.

Intelligent Design being admitted to a science classroom only on the merits of its science is a circumstance so unlikely that it borders on impossible. Should it happen anyway, some people are prepared to use its own redefinition of science against it.

One of these people is Bobby Henderson, a 25-year-old physicist from Kansas, a state that is trying to push Intelligent Design into science classrooms. He has formulated a theory that uses many of the points that ID does, including ridiculous correlations, to proclaim that the universe is designed and controlled by an invisible but supremely powerful Flying Spaghetti Monster (FSM). He sent this theory to the school board, stating that, based on the "science" used by Intelligent Design, there is no way they could keep His Noodly Appendage out of schools should ID be admitted. Since then, the FSM has garnered international attention, millions of devout followers, and the support of academics. His entire letter can be read at www.venganza.org. I will conclude with his closing statement:

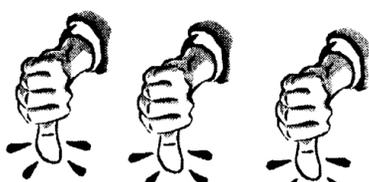
"I think we can all look forward to the time when these three theories are given equal time in our science classrooms across the country, and eventually the world; One third time for Intelligent Design, one third time for Flying Spaghetti Monsterism, and one third time for logical conjecture based on overwhelming observable evidence."

Beacon Thumbs Up



- The fantastic success of the "Cardboard City" campaign.
- Thirty-seven remaining days in the fall 2005 semester.
- Professors who cancel class due to the first day of hunting season.

Beacon Thumbs Down



- Able bodied persons who use handicapped facilities.
- Unsanitary restroom patrons who fail to clean up after themselves.
- Removal of the Reed kiosk laser printer.

Quote of the Week

"It is never to be expected in a revolution that every man is to change his opinion at the same moment. There never yet was any truth or any principle so irresistibly obvious that all men believed it at once. Time and reason must cooperate with each other to the final establishment of any principle; and therefore those who may happen to be first convinced have not a right to persecute others, on whom conviction operates more slowly. The moral principle of revolutions is to instruct, not to destroy."

~Thomas Paine

Have a "Thumbs Up" or "Thumbs Down"?



Send Suggestions to opinion@psu.edu

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Can't stop the wild hate

By Chris LaFuria
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The other day I was watching "Harold and Kumar Go to White Castle" when I had a realization or rather an epiphany. If you are not familiar with the movie, the premise of the movie deals with two minority, college-aged students and the endeavors that they encounter as they travel to a seemingly elusive destination of White Castle. Throughout the film, the Chinese Harold and the Indian Kumar come across and deliver many stereotypes of other races and ethnicities. As a metaphor for our current social status, these stereotypes hinder their journey.

As the movie ended and I was filled with many blatant stereotypical ideas about different races and ethnicities, I began to consider the many stereotypes and prejudices that our society has against other countries. Stereotypes such as: Why do Irish people love green beer? Why is it a German's instinct to drink beer with every meal? Why do all Indian people want to be American doctors? Are all Middle-East people terrorists? Is Frank Sinatra the epitome of an Italian? Is school the only activity associated with Chinese people? Are all Russians eternally drunk off of Vodka?

Many people who read that last paragraph may have been extremely offended. As a matter of fact, I was offended by writing it. However, denying that those stereotypes exist is perpetuating a silent killer that has more casualties than most wars. Some people may claim to be innocent of such accusation but having a stereotype of another country is not the only stereotypes that exist.

Aside from the mass number of stereotypes aimed at other countries, here in America, every aspect of society uses a stereotype, whether they are cognizant of it or not. How many times has a black actor been portrayed as a criminal in a movie? How many women or minorities have been denied a job because of a preconceived notion that their state of being is inferior? Why are homosexual people always immoral? How many "adults" use their stereotypes of teenagers to make vivid, inaccurate assumptions? The innumerable answers to these questions precisely reflect the nature of our country.

In the vast, boundless search for an end to such deliberate hatred and ignorance, people have begun to place the blame on the wrong people. In the component of Hollywood, surely there have been Caucasian directors creating stereotypes of black actors in a negative sense. Similarly, male actors give demeaning roles to some women actresses, but these contrasting groups aren't the sole provider in much of the unconstructive stereotypes.

The endless problem of stereotypes has been enabled and promoted by people in the specific race, sex, or ethnicity themselves. Actor/comedian Dave Chappelle places a negative image of African-American people in his comedy show. Likewise, comedians such as Carlos Mencia and George Lopez have made derogatory statements about their own Mexican heritage. Comedian Ellen DeGeneres once said, "I think they should have a Barbie with a buzz cut." This is a blatant mockery of herself as a homosexual female.

When dealing with such stereotypes, one must observe two different vehicles for such ignorance. The average person must stay perceptive of such stereotypes; furthermore, people who have the creative power to produce our nation's entertainment need to be aware that their message of ignorance and hatred does have an affect on the people of American society. Even though the aforementioned Hollywood entities are making a dollar and creating humor, they are simply perpetuating the cause of evil that is destroying lives and reputation. Finally, the next time a friend comes up to you and says, "I just heard the funniest black/gay/woman/Asian/Polish/etc. joke," don't express interest. You'd only be fuelling blatant hatred and ignorance.

Submission Guidelines

The Beacon welcomes readers to share their views on this page. Letters and commentary pieces can be submitted by email to opinion@psu.edu or directly to the Beacon office, located in the Reed Building.

Letters should be limited to 350 words and commentaries should be limited to 700 words. The more concise the submission, the less we will be forced to edit it for space concerns and the more likely we are to run the submission.

All submissions must include the writer's year in school, major and name as The Beacon does not publish anonymous letters. Deadline for any submission is 5 p.m. Tuesday afternoon for inclusion in the Friday issue. All submissions are considered, but because of space limitations, some may not be published.

All submissions must include consent to be edited before they can be edited for publication.