

Opinion

New-age Nazis & mystical spells

By MEREDITH BECKER
Staff Writer

"Give me a break." That's exactly what I thought when I sat down Halloween night to enjoy an episode of 20/20. The topic was book bans in regards to none other than the popular "Harry Potter" series. John Stossel of the 20/20 staff was on the television screen interviewing parents and kids who said they love the J.K. Rowling books. Then he veers off to the crowd that isn't so fond of these books.

Caryl Matrisciana, co-founder of Jeremiah Films, helped produce a movie to warn parents away from these books. She cites that the broomsticks the children ride on are a "a phallic symbol and it's very important in feminine cult worship," and that the lightning bolt on Harry's forehead is somehow connected to the swastika that Hitler put onto troops uniforms. Saying that the bolt is half of the swastika, uh Caryl, I think you're going a little bit far on that one. I was taught in all of my history classes that the swastika was a cross with broken ends as a sign that Hitler somehow outranked or was better than God. You would think that these right-wingers would know that.

Rev. Joseph Chambers of Paw Creek Ministries in North Carolina says, "one of the signs of the anti-Christ will be a mark on the forehead. [This book is] a how-to course in witchcraft and Satanism. They're actually being taught how to be wizards and witches."

What I cannot comprehend, is how people can ban books that children are rushing out to the stores to buy. Children are sitting down, and asking their moms and dads or big sisters and brothers to read them a chapter or two. They are actually asking to spend time with mom and dad. Most importantly, they are learning how to read and they are loving every second of it.

People against the books are saying how the pure fantasy of children flying around on broomstick puts evil thoughts into children's minds. They say that it's teaching them that Satan is good. In these books I've yet to see any mention of Satan in any part. These books are teaching children the power of imagination and dreams — that a goofy kid *can* be cool.

In the past there have been some been books banned that you would not, and could not comprehend as to why. People in the past have attempted and in some small minded countries succeeded in banning books such as, "Of Mice and Men," "The Giver," "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn," "The Chronicles of Narnia," even "Mary Poppins" for God's sakes! What could any human being find wrong with Mary Poppins! She's the one person who actually got me to take my medicine when I was sick. Oh, so she flew around with an umbrella, that's why people banned it because it was too "fanciful."

What kind of child is this type of society going to raise? Drones, that's what. Children who have no concept of imagination. Children who are so coddled and small minded that this pathetic attempt at trying to conform everyone into a simple cookie cutter way of life will never ever end. They will carry on what their parents instilled into them, that fanciful books — books which display in words every little and big person's dreams — are the enemy.

Then they will do what I found the most horrifying thing of this whole T.V. report. There were photographs of a book burning and — ironically enough — there, behind the flames, was a fat old man wearing none other than a Penn State sweat shirt.

How dare that small-minded, beer-bellied old fart wear a piece of clothing representing a place of education, where I go to school? Where you go to school; where we are taught everyday through examples like the flags representing the



countries we are all from, that conformity is not something to strive for but understanding and equality are.

It's sad to think that people are banning books these books of imagination saying that it's just too crazy to think of a child flying around on a broomstick. Here, I was raised watching mutant turtles doing martial arts in the sewers of New York, being taught by a huge Japanese rat. Yet I'm perfectly fine and mentally stable and any misgivings as to my mental stability have come from experiences of college applications and scheduling.

These books are loved by all ages. I've been in the book stores and seen adults who buy the books for themselves. Yet I've also been a witness to a parental protest against the books. I went online to the 20/20 site to take a look at some of the comments of the viewers of the episode and to my dismay one woman who called herself, "Supermom" stated that she was fretful that her child, if read this book, would eventually become "curious later in life about the occult," saying that, "it's just a natural path, when taught to be a witch one will want to be one."

Give me a break. In Stossel's interview, he closed with a little girl proclaiming my view, not quite verbatim but you get the idea, "The people who want to ban the Harry Potter books are really cuckoo!"

So my accusation to you, the people who find Satan among the pages of "Harry Potter," is that you are the people who are a reflection of the Nazis. You are the ones living in a world without dreams, living only in your sad, sad reality, trying to conform all those around you to live in that reality with you.

I feel so sorry for you, but that pales in comparison to how sorry I am for your children.

Have we reached our "Defining Moment"?

By SHAWN PETTIT
Assistant Editor

"Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country."

— John F. Kennedy

President Kennedy presented this quote in his inaugural speech in 1960. It applied back then, with the turmoil of racial segregation and the "threat" of communism already there.

Kennedy wanted people to be proud of being Americans as a whole, just like a generation earlier in World War II. Americans came together to fight oppression in their time and won. Kennedy wanted the same in the 1960s. Many argue that this quote can be applied today. Others, such as myself, beg to differ.

The horrifying attacks that occurred on Sept. 11 have been compared to Pearl Harbor. The one positive thing that came out of these attacks was that our country stood together and said, "We will not die without a fight."

Then, a few weeks ago, Newsweek wrote a story about "Generation 9-11". This is now the media staple for current college students. The paraphrase used at the beginning goes as follows: "After years of peace and prosperity, it's time for their defining moment."

They told the stories of bright young students at the University of Michigan who planned to fight for their freedom. The stories were meant to be inspiring. They were meant to tell other college students to take action. Personally, I don't see the inspiration.

I'd like to start my ranting and raving by asking this; is this really our defining moment? We are now expected to take charge and go and fight terrorism any way we can, even if it means getting our heads blown off.

On Sept. 10, the attitudes of most parents are, "My little Johnny isn't going to be in the army. He's going to make lots of money!" Only a day later, we're expected to grab a gun and hunt down Osama Bin Laden. We are not the World War II generation.

We were born in the '80s, grew up in the '90s, and we now have a reason not to go to war. We want to live our lives the way we want to without feeling obligated to our country. In 1941, parents felt honored to say, "My boy's a soldier." Today, that pride is almost lost unless the kid wins a Medal of Honor. We don't want to fight. We want to live to see the future.

The children of this generation shouldn't have to feel the burden of the previous generation. We have our own problems that we have to deal with. War with an old enemy of our parents isn't one of them.

This country is supposed to protect that right. They don't want to protect it. They want college students to protect it. If it comes to the point that we're forced to fight, we should refuse to.

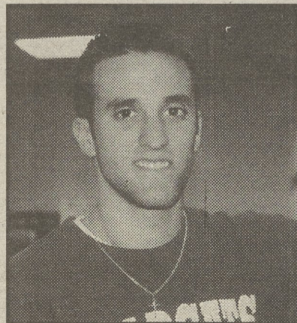
Our generation has learned to try and live peacefully. We should use that to our advantage. As for right now, before we do anything for our country, let's see what our country does for us.

Lion's Eye Poll

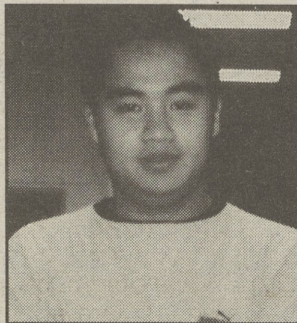
"What's the one gift you always wanted but never received for the holidays?"



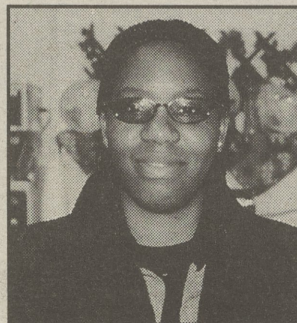
"A cure for cancer"
— THON crew



"A pony"
— Anthony Costantini, Junior, HDFS



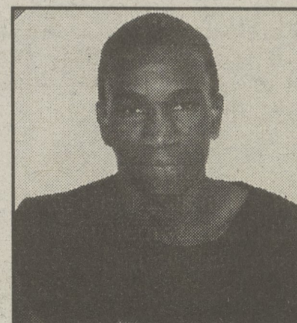
"A stripper"
— Oak Pra, Junior, IST



"Monopoly Millenium edition"
— Kia Joynes, Freshman IST



"A car"
— Megan Mann, undecided major



"A car"
— Melvin Clarke, Sophomore, Engineering