

Mark talks morals and sex education

The Missing Pieces

by Mark Owens

And now for something completely different: this week Christine Spanos and I are switching places. She'll try to write something frivolous and fluffy and I a piece of heavy, socially conscious work; designed to encourage thoughts of reform, outrage and purchasing a large firearm.

Don't panic though. This isn't going to be one of those long, boring accounts of an argument I had with a friend over diversity, unification or the right way to make pasta salad. Rather, Uncle Mark is going to tell you a story.

A couple of weeks ago I found myself on the Metro Bus from Hell.

My car had thoughtfully come down with some ailment the night before. My mechanic called it "Terminal Carboritis." I guess the carburetor gods required a virgin two-barrel or something. All I know is it's going to be expensive. Bill, my mechanic, looked under the hood and all he did was moan. As you know, when mechanics moan, you should be prepared to deliver your first born in payment.

But I digress. With no car, I had no way to get to class and, worse yet, found myself in a dilemma. Should I take a bus to school or sit at home, watch TV and eat an obscene amount of junk food?

It only took fifteen minutes of lounging around the kitchen in my underwear before the phone rang and my decision was made for me. It was my editor wondering when the #@#! I was going to get my #@#! into the office and work on that #@#! story. As you guessed, I wound up at the nearest bus stop fifteen minutes later, dressed in a fashionable sweatpant and t-shirt ensemble.

The route six bus rolled up a short while later (53 minutes and ten seconds, but who's counting?) and I clambered aboard. I wound up sitting in a nice first-class bus seat (defined as a seat next to a window but by one of the doors and as far away from small, sticky children as possible) with one loud lady in front of me and an equally noisy lady behind me. Both were arguing about sex education in the schools and shouting over my head to do it.

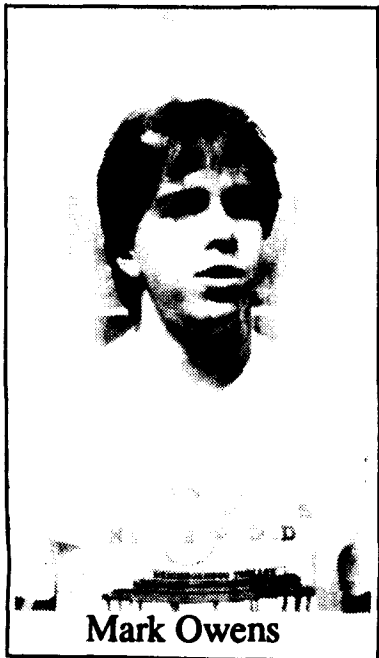
"You have no morals,"

snipped the lady in front of me. "How could you let children be exposed to such smut, you Satanistic toadie!"

"Satanistic toadie?!?" yapped the woman behind me. "Just because you don't have the courage to tell your kids about the facts of life and maybe keep them from getting killed!"

"What, from latex overexposure?"

"No, from sexually



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transmitted diseases or date rape!"

Right about here I wanted to move to another seat. It was rush hour though and all of the other seats were full. I tried to hunch down in the hard plastic seat, sort of like a soldier digging deeper into a foxhole to avoid large exploding things, like shells or officers.

Then lady in front of me frowned even more, to the point that the corners of her mouth scraped her shoulders. "So, teaching kids early all about sex is good. Giving them the idea sex is okay at an early age, that promiscuity is acceptable. Well, I think the moral fiber of today's youth is getting better and they won't stand for your long haired, tie-dyed, boney-butt--"

"Boney butt! Listen you beehive-wearing bovine - you can't even see my butt. And I want you to prove moral fibre isn't weakening. Go ahead - I dare you."

"Fine. I will." She looked at the woman behind me for a couple of minutes. I tried to scrunch down further into the plastic. Then her gaze, much like a gargoyle, fell on me. I felt like I was turning into plastic, or at

least Cheez Whiz.

"Excuse me young man," she said. "What do you think of sex education in the schools?"

I sat there for a couple of seconds, wondering how I could express myself without being jumped from both directions by 45 year old PTA mothers. After all, there were valid points to both sides.

Somehow, I didn't think they were listening to each other. Phrases like "beehive-wearing bovine" and "satanistic toadie" aren't conducive to a free exchange of ideas. Both of them looked at me, waiting for my reply, so I started the best way I could. "Ummm--"

"Well," said the woman behind me, "are you for education and enlightenment or the Moral Misfits?"

"Ahhh--"

"Misfits! Who do you--"

The bus was rolling into Behrend and I breathed a sigh of relief. They were still insulting each other as I got off the bus. I don't even think they noticed me leave.

Join me and my pet zebra mussel Ebert next week as we present our annual beach guide, "Mark and Ebert at the Beach."



Ask Louanne

The Collegian advice column by Dr. Louanne Barton Personal Counselor

Louanne tackles drugs

Dear Louanne,

Recently, my roommates asked me to do some shrooms. I'm really kind of nervous, because I've never done psychedelics before. I'm worried about health effects. Mushrooms are a natural substance. They use them on pizza. What kind of damage can these mushrooms do?

Signed,
Curious

Dear Curious,

Mushrooms are a hallucinogen like LSD. The technical name is psilocybin. These mushrooms usually come from Mexico. They can be eaten in their natural form, in pill form, and sometimes even smoked so I am told.

Though psilocybin is not as potent as LSD, it acts in the same way causing dilated pupils, high body temperature increased heart rate and blood pressure, sweating, loss of appetite,

sleeplessness, dry mouth, and tremors. Users can feel severely different emotions at once or swing rapidly. Sense of self and time change. Sensation seem to cross over. One "hears" colors and "sees" sounds.

This can result in euphoria or a "bad trip", panic, confusion, paranoia, and loss of control. It can trigger an onset to underlying emotional problems such as anxiety, depression, and psychosis.

Flash backs can occur where a person experiences the effects later without having to take the drug again. Heavy users of hallucinogens sometimes develop signs of organic brain damage -- impaired memory and reduced concentration. Particularly frightening is the fact that people have committed suicide or have had tragic accidents while under the influences.

Personally I'd advise getting your mushrooms from Dominoes.

Love,
Louanne

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