



# Willamette Freethinker



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Corvallis Secular Society (CSS) is a Humanist and Freethought society for all nontheists of good will.

CSS is affiliated with the American Humanist Association (AHA) and the Council for Secular Humanism (CSH).

## From the Editor:

As I write this, on June 23<sup>rd</sup>, my Great Uncle Edward has just died. (I have this urge to write "passed away", but damn it, he hasn't wandered off somewhere, he's DEAD.)

We'd seen it coming for the last few months. He had developed an especially aggressive form of cancer in his spinal column, spreading into his brain. They tried chemotherapy, but it wasn't enough.

I've never dealt with death in my life; not really. Nobody CLOSE to me has ever died. Oh sure, my grandfather (my mom's dad) died when I was three, but I don't remember him at all. My grandmother (my dad's mom) died when I was around 12, but I'd only met her once. My cousin Billy died when I was 15 or so, but I'd only met HIM less than a dozen times, mostly when we were younger and played a bit together.

Even Edward doesn't REALLY count. I knew him better than Billy, but not by much. He was the "cool Uncle"; the one who liked computers and could actually discuss them intelligently. He was extremely friendly and generous, and we always wanted to see him more than we did.

But I still didn't really KNOW him. Like Billy, I'd only ever been in his presence less than a dozen times. I guess that's what comes of being part of a family that is mostly MUCH older, scattered, and that doesn't travel much.

Sometimes I envy religious folks. It must be nice to be convinced that no one REALLY dies; you'll just see them again in heaven some day. That's so nice and tidy. It solves all those pesky emotional issues that come up when someone you care about dies.

Of course, we atheists don't have that luxury. Preferring fact (however cold and hard) over fiction (however warm and fuzzy), we don't tell ourselves these comfortable lies. We see reality as it is, and we accept it on those terms.

Some of us handle the idea of death fairly well. I've heard John Dearing speak about death on several occasions, and he seems perfectly serene (downright philosophical) about it.

As for me... I've never handled it so well.

(continued on page 3)

## CSS Meetings and Events

### Calendar:

Saturday, Jul 16<sup>th</sup> 2:00-4:00 CSS regular meeting  
Saturday, Aug 20<sup>th</sup> 2:00-4:00 CSS regular meeting  
Saturday, Sep 17<sup>th</sup> 1:00-4:00 CSS potluck

### Regular meeting time:

Third Saturday of each month, from 2:00-4:00 pm.

### Regular meeting location:

Corl House (3975 NW Witham Hill Dr, Corvallis).

## Obfuscating Intolerance

*NY Times Editorial, 6/23/2005*

A Pentagon inquiry's finding of no overt religious discrimination at the Air Force Academy strains credibility, considering the academy superintendent has already acknowledged it will take years to undo the damage from evangelical zealots on campus. Indeed, amid its thicket of bureaucratese, the report by an Air Force investigative panel goes on for page after page describing cases of obvious and overt religious bias. But it tosses all of these off as "perceived bias," as if the blame lies with the victims and not the offenders, and throws up a fog of implausible excuses, like "a lack of awareness" of what is impermissible behavior by military officers.

(continued on page 10)

## In this issue:

- From the President of CSS p.2
- Good News/Bad News p.3
- Leading Cardinal Redefines Churches View p.4
- Quotes from The Devil's Dictionary p.5
- A Mom Talk About Disgusting WH Meeting p.6
- Newspaper Letters p.7
- Keep Your Jesus Off My Penis p.8
- Open Letter to Kansas School Board p.9
- Astrologer Sues NASA Over Comet Mission p.10

# From the President:

## All the Views That Are Fit to Print

What follows are one Humanist's comments on articles in the front section of one issue of *The New York Times*: that of Sunday, July 3, 2005.

"All the News That's Fit to Print" is the famous tagline or slogan of *The New York Times*. (I'll also call it the *NYT*; I won't call it "The Times," because it isn't. *The Times* is a newspaper published in London.) I'd love to know what news they consider to be **unfit** to print, but there's still plenty in any issue to interest Humanists.

### Replacing a Supreme Court Justice

The lead article on page 1 and others in this issue discuss the possible replacement for Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, who, at this writing, has very recently announced her plan to retire. As a moderate, Justice O'Connor has been a unifying voice of reason in an increasingly-divided Court. It would be reasonable to replace her with someone of similar independence. But of course, these are not reasonable times. Radical, extreme conservatives are in charge of the Executive and Legislative Branches of our federal government, and they seem determined to control and mold the Judicial Branch. If these traitors are successful, this will weaken or destroy the **Separation of Powers**. By pitting three branches of government against each other, the Separation of Powers was designed to prevent the majority from ruling with an iron fist. This has provided a system of shared power known as **Checks and Balances**. Unfortunately, radical Republicans control both the White House and Congress, and seem not to care for fundamental American constitutional principles. Hence the speculation at this early point is only what kind of archconservative will be selected to replace O'Connor (and perhaps other Justices). One of Humanist's worst fears may be coming true: a Supreme Court remodeled by the Radical Religious Right that will overturn the progress that has been made in civil rights, women's rights, reproductive rights, homosexual rights, church-state separation, environmental protection, and so on.

### Economics

Those Americans working in manufacturing (or who **used** to work in manufacturing) have been well aware for some time of the economic harm their families have suffered due to the exporting of their jobs to third-world countries. This has been done to lower costs, thereby increasing profit (and making the rich richer). But today's *NYT* (p 1) reports: "In the last three years, profits at the seven largest companies in Silicon Valley by market value have increased by an average of more than 500 percent while Santa Clara County employment has declined to 767,600, from 787,200." This is part of the present trend to export

technical jobs as well. While this trend may make the captains of industry more rich and powerful yet, I wonder what this means for the future of our country. With ever more citizens un- or under-employed, who will buy all these products made, and, increasingly, designed, overseas? At some point, the China's and India's of the world may decide they don't need us at all and that they might as well keep the profits themselves. Then the USA will gradually lose its preeminent position in the world.

### Religious Violence

A long article entitled, "A Casualty on Romania's Road Back From Atheism" (p 3) reports the death of a 23-year-old woman in a monastery, at the hands of its priest and some nuns. (In the Orthodox Church, monasteries accept both monks and nuns.) Maricica Irina Cornici moved to the monastery; within weeks she was displaying signs of mental illness. A local psychiatric hospital diagnosed her condition as schizophrenia. "But for the monastery's two dozen nuns and its eccentric priest, it was not Ms. Cornici mocking and cursing them: it was Satan. They chained her to a makeshift cross for three days, trying to cast him out. She died." The article reports that the nuns forced a towel into her mouth to stop her cursing while they prayed. An autopsy revealed that she had died of dehydration, exhaustion and a lack of oxygen. Many people in the area of the monastery strongly support the priest, and he has defended his methods. He says God took her.

Humanists support the right of all people to hold any religious (or nonreligious) beliefs they choose, but not to hurt others. If this is part of "the road back from Atheism," maybe Romanians are on the wrong road.

### Concerts for African Aid

This issue of *NYT* (p 6) reports on ten concerts held around the world to press for aid to fight poverty in Africa. Their map indicates that concerts were held in Barrie, Canada; Philadelphia, USA; Edinburgh and London, UK; Paris, France; Berlin, Germany; Rome, Italy; Moscow, Russia; Johannesburg, South Africa; and Chiba, Japan. (Oddly, the article itself replaced Edinburgh with Cornwall.) These concerts "were intended to send a loud message to the leaders of the Group of 8 industrial nations scheduled to meet in Scotland starting on Wednesday." Of course, the industrial nations could do much to help Africa, but will they? Stay tuned.

### Sharp Increase in Classified Documents

An article (p 12) reports that government secrecy has reached a historic high since 2001, "with federal departments classifying documents at the rate of 125 a minute as they create new categories of semi-secrets

bearing vague labels like ‘sensitive security information.’” Last year, a record 15.6 million documents were classified, nearly double the 2001 figure. Among other disadvantages, such as the weakening of our democracy, all this secrecy costs taxpayers a lot of money: about \$7.2 billion last year. At the same time, the declassification process, which makes historical documents available, has slowed to a relative crawl. Do we really benefit from a “trust us, we know things you don’t” government by secrecy? How can citizens monitor their government, and replace bad officials, if these citizens don’t know what their government is up to?

### More Wealthy People Pay No Tax

Another sign, in my view, of the increase in the power of a ruling elite in this country, is the increase in the number of wealthy who pay little or no tax. The article (p. 13) reports that “The number of affluent individuals and married couples who paid no federal income taxes jumped more than 15 percent in 2002...” It seems that those that benefit most from America’s economy do all they can to avoid supporting their country. And they are generally the ones who send off other people’s kids (not their own) to wars of economic conquest! Isn’t patriotism marvelous?

### Macy’s 4<sup>th</sup> of July Fireworks

There is much bad news, in my view (largely related to the present Administration), reported in this issue of the *NYT*. In contrast, Macy’s has a colorful two-page ad (pp 10-11) (what does a two-page color ad in the *NYT* cost?) promoting “the biggest Independence Day celebration in the nation!” It will involve over 120,000 bursts of color and light and over 35,000 shells from around the world. I hope this spectacular display will remind citizens that our independence and freedom are under attack today from within our borders as well as from without, and that only renewed vigilance will restore and preserve the independence our country won some 229 years ago.

*John Dearing*  
President of CSS

## Good News

- Spain joined the Netherlands and Belgium this month, becoming the third country to legalize gay marriage.
- Canada’s House of Commons passed legislation this month that would legalize gay marriage by the end of July as long as their Senate also passes the bill, which it is expected to do.
- It’s looking more and more likely that Karl Rove has finally been caught as the person who leaked Valerie Plame’s identity as a covert CIA operative. Spin as they may, there’s a word for this — treason!
- Britain just keeps on leaking secret papers that are damaging to Bush. Ya just gotta love this...

## From the Editor

(cont. from page 1)

The idea of just ENDING doesn’t sit well with me — but neither does the idea of being around forever. There are simply no “answers” to the subject of death that I am comfortable with. (This is actually a very serious issue for me — I’m seeing a counselor about it.)

As it happens, my parents chose to have children comparatively late in life. Even though I’m only 37, my mom is 76 and my dad is 92. My grandmother (my mom’s mom) is 95 and in a nursing home, as is her sister (my Great Aunt Blanche). Edward was their brother.

So I’m facing several increasingly-close-to-home deaths in the near future. My grandmother and Blanche are the two relatives that always lived right nearby, and whom I know the best outside of my nuclear family. And then there’s my dad, who’s not exactly in the best of health.

Both of my parents read this newsletter, although my mom (as regular readers know) doesn’t always agree with what she reads in it. But even though her strength and health are failing as well, it’s on her (being the closest and best-equipped of my Houston relatives) that the care of Edward, my grandmother, Blanch, and my father have all relied.

So I guess I just want to end this column by saying, thank you, Mom, for shouldering such a heavy burden. I love you. And Dad, I love you more than I can say. Try not to give Mom such a hard time.

Finally, goodbye, Edward. I wish I had had the chance to know you better — and I wish you and Angela could have met. You’d have liked each other...

*Reed Byers*

Editor, *Willamette Freethinker*

## Bad News

- Subway and bus bombings in London. But remember, we’re winning the War On Terra!
- Congress is busy looking for ways to renew — and make worse — the various expiring portions of the Patriot Act.
- We’ve been expecting Rehnquist to step down from the Supreme Court — between his age and his cancer, he just can’t do the job anymore. And having Bush nominate HIS replacement would be bad enough. But at least he was a hard-line right-winger. The damage Bush could do replacing HIM wasn’t too bad.

But now, SANDRA DAY O’CONNOR has just retired! And SHE was at least a mostly-reasonable voice on the Court. Bush replacing her is MUCH more likely to do permanent damage to the Court, and to the country.

If I were religious, I’d be praying, God help us all...

# Leading Cardinal Redefines Church's View on Evolution

by Cornelia Dean & Laurie Goodstein, *New York Times*, 7/9/2005

An influential cardinal in the Roman Catholic Church, which has long been regarded as an ally of the theory of evolution, is now suggesting that belief in evolution as accepted by science today may be incompatible with Catholic faith.

The cardinal, Christoph Schönborn, archbishop of Vienna, a theologian who is close to Pope Benedict XVI, staked out his position in an Op-Ed article in *The New York Times* on Thursday, writing, "Evolution in the sense of common ancestry might be true, but evolution in the neo-Darwinian sense — an unguided, unplanned process of random variation and natural selection — is not."

In a telephone interview from a monastery in Austria, where he was on retreat, the cardinal said that his essay had not been approved by the Vatican, but that two or three weeks before Pope Benedict XVI's election in April, he spoke with the pope, then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, about the church's position on evolution. "I said I would like to have a more explicit statement about that, and he encouraged me to go on," said Cardinal Schönborn.

He said that he had been "angry" for years about writers and theologians, many Catholics, who he said had "misrepresented" the church's position as endorsing the idea of evolution as a random process.

Opponents of Darwinian evolution said they were gratified by Cardinal Schönborn's essay. But scientists and science teachers reacted with confusion, dismay and even anger. Some said they feared the cardinal's sentiments would cause religious scientists to question their faiths.

Cardinal Schönborn, who is on the Vatican's Congregation for Catholic Education, said the office had no plans to issue new guidance to teachers in Catholic schools on evolution. But he said he believed students in Catholic schools, and all schools, should be taught that evolution is just one of many theories. Many Catholic schools teach Darwinian evolution, in which accidental mutation and natural selection of the fittest organisms drive the history of life, as part of their science curriculum.

Darwinian evolution is the foundation of modern biology. While researchers may debate details of how the

mechanism of evolution plays out, there is no credible scientific challenge to the underlying theory.

American Catholics and conservative evangelical Christians have been a potent united front in opposing abortion, stem cell research and euthanasia, but had parted company on the death penalty and the teaching of evolution. Cardinal Schönborn's essay and comments are an indication that the church may now enter the debate over evolution more forcefully on the side of those who oppose the teaching of evolution alone.

**The cardinal, Christoph Schönborn, archbishop of Vienna, a theologian who is close to Pope Benedict XVI, staked out his position in an Op-Ed article in *The New York Times* on Thursday, writing, "Evolution in the sense of common ancestry might be true, but evolution in the neo-Darwinian sense — an unguided, unplanned process of random variation and natural selection — is not."**

One of the strongest advocates of teaching alternatives to evolution is the Discovery Institute in Seattle, which promotes the idea, termed intelligent design, that the variety and complexity of life on earth cannot be explained except through the intervention of a designer of some sort.

Mark Ryland, a vice president of the institute, said in an interview that he had urged the cardinal to write the essay. Both Mr. Ryland and Cardinal Schönborn said that an essay in May in *The Times* about the compatibility of religion and evolutionary theory by Lawrence M. Krauss, a physicist at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, suggested to them that it was time to clarify the church's position on evolution.

The cardinal's essay was submitted to *The Times* by a Virginia public relations firm, Creative Response Concepts, which also represents the Discovery Institute.

Mr. Ryland, who said he knew the cardinal through the International Theological Institute in Gaming, Austria, where he is chancellor and Mr. Ryland is on the board, said supporters of intelligent design were "very excited" that a church leader had taken a position opposing Darwinian evolution. "It clarified that in some sense the Catholics aren't fine with it," he said.

Bruce Chapman, the institute's president, said the cardinal's essay "helps blunt the claims" that the church "has spoken on Darwinian evolution in a way that's supportive."

But some biologists and others said they read the essay as abandoning longstanding church support for evolutionary biology.

"How did the Discovery Institute talking points wind up in Vienna?" wondered Glenn Branch, deputy director of the National Center for Science Education, which advocates the teaching of evolution. "It really did look quite a bit as if Cardinal Schönborn had been reading their Web pages."

Mr. Ryland said the cardinal was well versed on these issues and had written the essay on his own.

Dr. Francis Collins, who headed the official American effort to decipher the human genome, and who describes himself as a Christian, though not a Catholic, said Cardinal Schönborn's essay looked like "a step in the wrong direction" and said he feared that it "may represent some backpedaling from what scientifically is a very compelling conclusion, especially now that we have the ability to study DNA."

"There is a deep and growing chasm between the scientific and the spiritual world views," he went on. "To the extent that the cardinal's essay makes believing scientists less and less comfortable inhabiting the middle ground, it is unfortunate. It makes me uneasy."

"Unguided," "unplanned," "random" and "natural" are all adjectives that biologists might apply to the process of evolution, said Dr. Kenneth R. Miller, a professor of biology at Brown and a Catholic. But even so, he said, evolution "can fall within God's providential plan." He added: "Science cannot rule it out. Science cannot speak on this."

Dr. Miller, whose book "Finding Darwin's God" describes his reconciliation of evolutionary theory with Christian faith, said the essay seemed to equate belief in evolution with disbelief in God. That is alarming, he said. "It may have the effect of convincing Catholics that evolution is something they should reject."

Dr. Collins and other scientists said they could understand why a cleric might want to make the case that, as Dr. Collins put it, "evolution is the mechanism by which human beings came into existence, but God had something to do with that, too." Dr. Collins said that view, theistic evolution, "is shared with a very large number of biologists who also believe in God, including me."

But it does not encompass the idea that the workings of evolution required the direct intervention of a supernatural agent, as intelligent design would have it.

In his essay, Cardinal Schönborn asserted that he was not trying to break new ground but to correct the idea, "often invoked," that the church accepts or at least acquiesces to the theory of evolution.

He referred to widely cited remarks by Pope John Paul II, who, in a 1996 address to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, noted that the scientific case for evolution was growing stronger and that the theory was "more than a hypothesis."

In December, Bishop Francis X. DiLorenzo, chairman of the Committee on Science and Human Values of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, cited those remarks in writing to the nation's bishops that "the Church does not need to fear the teaching of evolution as long as it is understood as a scientific account of the physical origins and development of the universe." But in his essay, Cardinal Schönborn dismissed John Paul's statement as "rather vague and unimportant."

Francisco Ayala, a professor of biology at the University of California, Irvine, and a former Dominican priest, called this assessment "an insult" to the late pope and said the cardinal seemed to be drawing a line between the theory of evolution and religious faith, and "seeing a conflict that does not exist."

Dr. Miller said he was already hearing from people worried about the cardinal's essay. "People are saying, does the church really believe this?" He said he would not speculate. "John Paul II made it very clear that he regarded scientific rationality as a gift from God," Dr. Miller said, adding, "There are more than 100 cardinals and they often have conflicting opinions."

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## Quotes from *The Devil's Dictionary* (1906), by Ambrose Bierce

**Christian**, n. One who believes that the New Testament is a divinely inspired book admirably suited to the spiritual needs of his neighbor. One who follows the teachings of Christ insofar as they are not inconsistent with a life of sin.

**Evangelist**, n. A bearer of good tidings, particularly (in a religious sense) such as assure us of our own salvation and the damnation of our neighbors.

**Faith**, n. Belief without evidence in what is told by one who speaks without knowledge, of things without parallel.

**Infidel**, n. In New York, one who does not believe in the Christian religion; in Constantinople, one who does.

**Pray**, v. To ask that the laws of the universe be annulled in behalf of a single petitioner, confessedly unworthy.

**Religion**, n. A daughter of Hope and Fear, explaining to Ignorance the nature of the Unknowable.

**Reverence**, n. The spiritual attitude of a man to a god and a dog to a man.

**Saint**, n. A dead sinner revised and edited.

# A Mom Talks About “Disgusting” WH Meeting

## by Greg Szymanski, Arctic Beacon, 7/5/2005

Cindy Sheehan has already had her heart ripped into a million pieces by the illegal Iraqi war, losing the son she loved more than life itself only five days after he arrived in Baghdad in April 2004.

There is nothing more painful or more heart breaking than a parent losing a child.

And for Sheehan to lose her 24-year-old son, Casey, must have been like someone taking her very own heart and soul and, without warning, ripping them out and throwing them into the depths of hell.

No one should have to experience such pain, but the cold reality of war is that someone's child actually dies and there are actual parents left living with the hopeless task of trying to cope with the pain.

And anyone with any semblance of a heart and soul knows a mother coping with such a loss needs all the help and understanding she can get.

Anyone with the slightest bit of compassion knows a kind word or a shoulder to cry on helps a mother, who experienced the ultimate loss, get through another day when every day feels like it could be the end of the world.

So when Sheehan received an invitation to meet privately with President Bush at the White House two months after her son died, the least she could have expected was a bit of compassion or a kind word coming from the heart.

But what she encountered was an arrogant man with eyes lacking the slightest bit of compassion, a President totally “detached from humanity” and a man who didn't even bother to remember her son's name when they were first introduced.

Instead of a kind gesture or a warm handshake, Sheehan said she immediately got a taste of Bush arrogance when he entered the room and “in a condescending tone and with a disgusting loud Texas accent,” said: “Who we'll honor here today?”

“His mouth kept moving, but there was nothing in his eyes or anything else about him that showed me he really cared or had any real compassion at all. This is a human being totally disconnected from humanity and reality. His eyes were empty, hollow shells and he was acting like I should be proud to just be in his presence when it was my son who died for his illegal war! It was one of the most disgusting experiences I ever had and it took me almost a year to even talk about it,” said Sheehan in a telephone conversation from Washington D.C. where she was attending a July 4th anti-war rally.

Sheehan said the June 2004 private meeting with the President went from bad to worse to a nightmare when

Bush acted like he didn't even want to know her name. She said Bush kept referring to her as ‘Ma’ or ‘Mom’ while he “put on a phony act,” saying things like ‘Mom, I can't even imagine losing a loved one, a mother or a father or a sister or a brother.

“The whole meeting was simply bizarre and disgusting, designed to intimidate instead of providing compassion. He didn't even know our names,” said Sheehan. “Finally I got so upset I just looked him in the eye, saying ‘I think you can imagine losing someone. You have two daughters. Imagine losing them?’ After I said that he just looked at me, looked at me with no feeling or caring in his eyes at all.”

Sheehan said what really upset her about the meeting is that Bush appeared to become annoyed and even angry at her daughter Carley, 25, who also attended the White House get-together.

“My daughter said to him directly ‘I wish I could bring my loved one back’ and he said something like ‘so do we.’ Later she told me that after he made his remark he gave her one of the filthiest looks she had ever had gotten in her life.

“I just couldn't believe this was happening. It was so surreal and bizarre. Later I met with some of the other 15 or

16 families who were at the White House the same day and, sure enough, they all felt the same way I did.

“It's interesting that they put us each in separate rooms. I heard this was done to prevent any type of group outburst and since it's easier to control a situation when people are separated. Looking back, all I can say is that the meeting with Bush was one of the most disgusting experiences in my life.

“And I even asked him: ‘Why did you even bother to bring us here when I didn't vote for you and don't support the illegal nature of your war?’ He said it wasn't political but I know it was just another one of his lies, as he probably wanted to be able to say out on the political stump that he wasn't afraid to meet with families who lost loved ones in the war.”

Although Sheehan was opposed to the illegal nature of the war from the outset, it wasn't until January that she began to become politically active.

Besides speaking at rallies and becoming known in Washington for her outspoken criticism of Bush, Sheehan formed a group called Gold Star Families For Peace, joining together families who lost loved ones in an effort to expose the illegal nature of the war and to hasten the return of troops still fighting in Iraq.

Her involvement with the anti-war movement also led her recently to join forces with the After Downing Street

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movement, a civic, political and activist group seeking to open a Presidential impeachment inquiry based on the release of damaging British intelligence documents showing Bush doctored WMD intelligence reports to justify his war policy.

"Americans need to wake up and we need to put public pressure on our leaders to end this illegal war," said Sheehan, adding that if the public remains passive, recent statements by Donald Rumsfeld that the war may last another 12 years will come true. "We can't let these people continue to murder our children and also continue murdering innocent Iraqi citizens, now totaling more than 100,000.

"This is an immoral war based on a false premise. Iraq was never an imminent threat and the Downing Street Memo proves Bush went to war for oil, greed and all the wrong reasons.

Commenting on Bush's recent speech at Ft. Bragg intended to rally America behind an unpopular war, she said:

"He never mentioned the WMD threat and repeatedly brought up 9/11 in an attempt to scare and frighten everyone again. People have characterized the speech in many ways, but if I had to pick a few words, I would say hypocritical, manipulative, condescending, meaningless drivel."

After the speech, Sheehan was unexpectedly invited on the CNN Larry King Show June 28, but expressed concern and outright anger over the fact she was only given 82 seconds to be "the token anti-war peace speaker" in an hour show which essentially contained a pro war message from all the other guests.

In a recent rebuttal article placed on the Internet, expressing her displeasure with some of the CNN guests and the short time given for her anti-war message, she wrote:

"My absolute favorite guest of the evening was Sen. John Warner, powerful chair of the Senate Armed (Disservices) Committee. Of course, he fell in lockstep behind his Führer (Bush) and praised the speech.... I sat in the Green Room with Sen. Warner's entourage. I wondered (even out loud) what price they have paid for our administration's misdeeds in Iraq. They all looked like happy, well-fed, well-dressed, well-educated, and well-hydrated Americans.... I sincerely doubt if any of them had a loved one ripped from their lives by a car bomb, IED, or bullet in an ambush.

"I spoke with John Warner after his interview and told him unless he was prepared to sacrifice even a good night's sleep over this senseless and criminal war, then he should work on ending it, not prolonging the carnage. He told me that I was "entitled to my opinion," but he would respectfully have to disagree with me. That was awfully Constitutional of him!

"I finally got to speak for my 82 seconds (all the time Larry King Live could spare for the peace message) about how this war is a catastrophe and how we should bring the troops home and quit forcing the Iraqi people to pay for our government's hubris and quit forcing innocent children to suffer so we can allegedly fight terrorism somewhere besides America. How absolutely racist and immoral is it to

take America's battles to another land and make an entire country pay for the crimes of others? To me, this is blatant genocide.

"After my brief advocacy for peace, my position was refuted by another mom whose son was killed in Iraq in 2003, saying she "totally disagrees" with me and "feels sorry" for me.

"Well, you know what? I ache for her blindness and for the millions of 'sheeple' who have had the wool pulled over their eyes by this bunch of hypocritical, bad shepherds who are running a disastrous herd over the world. I have distressing news for the 'Soccer Safety Moms' and the 'NASCAR Dads' who are such ardent supporters of this administration and war:

"Your grandchildren and children who will be entering Kindergarten this fall will be fighting George's endless war if he gets his way and is allowed to continue spreading the cancer of imperialism in the Middle-East....

"Think about it when you tuck your child into bed tonight."

## Newspaper Letters

Eugene Register-Guard, 6/23/2005

Where is the outrage now?

Why do many people now get their news from the Internet? The June 14 edition of The Register-Guard could be Exhibit A.

One would think nothing was happening in the world when Michael Jackson rates a headline font size not seen since the end of World War II. Also there was a puff piece about the U.S. Senate apologizing for their inaction on lynching.

Only on the Internet do we learn that Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist vetoed a roll call vote to protect Republicans. We also learn that Sen. Gordon Smith embarrassed Oregon by being one of only 17 senators who did not co-sponsor the resolution.

I was also hoping to read about the new documents from London that flesh out the Downing Street Minutes. Ever more details are emerging about the key players and their amoral actions in this unconscionable con game.

Instead, there is a remarkable piece by Todd Purdum claiming that these documents are old news! That means the media knew the rationale for war was a fraud all along but either didn't think that was worth investigating, were intimidated by the administration or were willing propagandists. I'm not sure which is worst.

How ironic that Watergate is back in the news to provide a stark contrast. Investigative journalism has been replaced by fawning stenography. As the media uncovered more and more details about Nixon's lies and abuse of power, the American people and Congress became increasingly outraged.

Where is the outrage now? Where is the coverage now?

DOUG HINTZ  
Eugene

# Keep Your Jesus Off My Penis

© 2004 Eric Schwartz

<http://www.eric schwartz.com/video.html>

[Editor's Note: Yes, this is the "worst language" we've ever published. But you know what? We're all adults here. And besides, this is, without a doubt, the best, funniest music video we've seen in a long, long time. Printing the lyrics and pictures below just doesn't do it justice. PLEASE, go visit the web site listed above, scroll down a bit, then download and watch this video. Then you'll be glad we printed the lyrics — because after watching it the first time, you're going to want to sing along...]

## Chorus:

Keep your Jesus off my penis.  
Keep your bible off my balls.  
Keep your prayers out of my ears,  
And your crosses off my walls.  
You can keep the virgin mother,  
And the resurrection too.  
Keep your Jesus off my penis,  
I'll keep my penis off of you!

Well I'm frickin' sick and tired  
Of turning on the news,  
And seeing the religious right's ungodly fight  
To take our right to choose,  
When to bear our children,  
Who to love and how,  
Education and protection,  
If we're just "practicing" for now.  
So dubya, look, obey a book,  
If that's what works for you.  
But I don't tell you how to pray,  
So don't you tell me how to screw!

## [Repeat Chorus]

So you're screaming bloody murder  
'Bout the taliban regime  
For subjugating women,  
And being too extreme,  
And basing legislation  
On some ancient holy book.  
Does that sound a bit familiar?  
Here's a mirror, have a look!

And as for the ten commandments,  
They need one more at least:  
Thou shall never cover up  
The acts of pervert priests!  
How'd they let that happen,  
Unless they just abhor us?  
Well anyway it adds  
Another layer to the chorus.

## [Repeat Chorus]

So you'll execute a person,  
And protect a single cell.  
But mercy-kill the terminally ill,  
And you're goin' straight to hell!  
I don't know much about the word of God —  
Far be it from me —



But I can tell you what it ain't:  
Hypochristianity!

I am not anti-Christian,  
Before you grab a rope.  
There is beauty in religion,  
And joy and love and hope.  
We're all looking for an answer,  
Some colossal cosmic cause.  
But who the fuck are you  
To turn your views into my laws?

It's just believers in the bible  
That would have abortion banned.  
Anti-choice agnostics?  
I could count 'em on one hand!  
And as for killing babies,  
I have but one retort:  
If someone raped your daughter, George,  
You'd beg her to abort!

And if some young girl from your church  
Shows up with child or some infection,  
'Cuz you taught her what a horrid sin  
It was to use protection,  
One day you'll face the pearly gates  
And whatchu gonna say?  
When that long-haired Jewish peacenick  
Sends your ass the other way, sayin':

Keep your Jesus off my penis.  
Keep your bible off my balls.  
Keep your prayers out of my ears,  
And your crosses off my walls.  
I've had it up to here  
With all the bibbible you spew!  
Keep your Jesus off my penis  
(at least that's what I would do).  
Keep your Jesus off my penis,  
I'll keep my penis off of you!

That's if'n you want me to!



"Well, I'm going to hell..."

# Open Letter to Kansas School Board

by Bobby Henderson

<http://www.venganza.org/>

I am writing you with much concern after having read of your hearing to decide whether the alternative theory of Intelligent Design to be taught along with the theory of Evolution. I think we can all agree that it is important for students to hear multiple viewpoints so they can choose for themselves the theory that makes the most sense to them. I am concerned, however, that students will only hear one theory of Intelligent Design.

Let us remember that there are multiple theories of Intelligent Design. I and many others around the world are of the strong belief that the universe was created by a Flying Spaghetti Monster. It was He who created all that we see and all that we feel. We feel strongly that the overwhelming scientific evidence pointing towards evolutionary processes is nothing but a coincidence, put in place by Him.

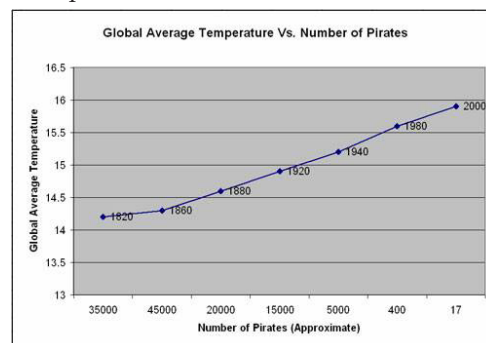
It is for this reason that I'm writing you today, to formally request that this alternative theory be taught in your schools, along with the other two theories. In fact, I will go so far as to say, if you do not agree to do this, we will be forced to proceed with legal action. I'm sure you see where we are coming from. If the Intelligent Design theory is not based on faith, but instead another scientific theory, as is claimed, then you must also allow our theory to be taught, as it is also based on science, not on faith.

Some find that hard to believe, so it may be helpful to tell you a little more about our beliefs. We have evidence that a Flying Spaghetti Monster created the universe. None of us, of course, were around to see it, but we have written accounts of it. We have several lengthy volumes explaining all details of His power. Also, you may be surprised to hear that there are over 10 million of us, and growing. We tend to be very secretive, as many people claim our beliefs are not substantiated by observable evidence. What these people don't understand is that He built the world to make us think the earth is older than it really is. For example, a scientist may perform a carbon-dating process on an artifact. He finds that approximately 75% of the Carbon-14 has decayed by electron emission to Nitrogen-14, and infers that this artifact is approximately 10,000 years old, as the half-life of Carbon-14 appears to be 5,730 years. But what our scientist does not realize is that every time he makes a measurement, the Flying Spaghetti Monster is there changing the results with His Noodly Appendage. We have numerous texts that describe in detail how this can be possible and the reasons why He does this. He is of course invisible and can pass through normal matter with ease.

I'm sure you now realize how important it is that your students are taught this alternate theory. It is absolutely imperative that they realize that observable evidence is at the discretion of a Flying Spaghetti Monster. Furthermore, it is disrespectful to teach our beliefs without wearing His chosen outfit, which of course is full pirate regalia. I cannot stress the importance of this, and unfortunately cannot describe in detail why this must be done as I fear this letter is already

becoming too long. The concise explanation is that He becomes angry if we don't.

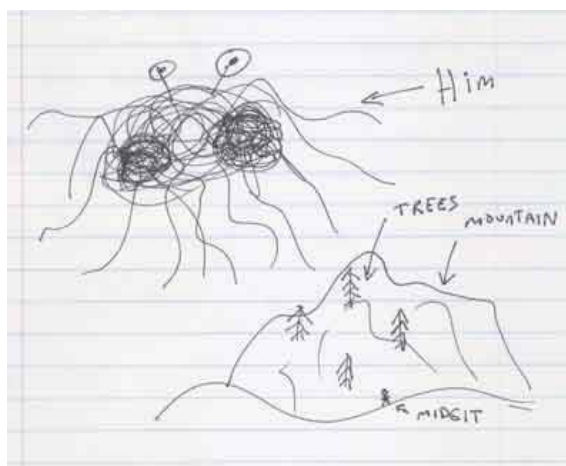
You may be interested to know that global warming, earthquakes, hurricanes, and other natural disasters are a direct effect of the shrinking numbers of Pirates since the 1800s. For your interest, I have included a graph of the approximate number of pirates versus the average global temperature over the last 200 years. As you can see, there is a statistically significant inverse relationship between pirates and global temperature.



In conclusion, thank you for taking the time to hear our views and beliefs. I hope I was able to convey the importance of teaching this theory to your students. We will of course be able to train the teachers in this alternate theory. I am eagerly awaiting your response, and hope dearly that no legal action will need to be taken. 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.

Sincerely Yours,  
Bobby Henderson, concerned citizen.

P.S. I have included an artistic drawing of Him creating a mountain, trees, and a midget. Remember, we are all His creatures.



# Astrologer Sues NASA Over Comet Mission

by Associated Press, 7/5/2005

MOSCOW (AP) — NASA’s mission that sent a space probe smashing into a comet raised more than cosmic dust — it also brought a lawsuit from a Russian astrologer.

Marina Bai has sued the U.S. space agency, claiming the Deep Impact probe that punched a crater into the comet Tempel 1 late Sunday “ruins the natural balance of forces in the universe,” the newspaper Izvestia reported Tuesday. A Moscow court has postponed hearings on the case until late July, the paper said.

Scientists say the crash did not significantly alter the comet’s orbit around the sun and said the experiment does not pose any danger to Earth.

The probe’s comet crash sent up a cloud of debris that scientists hope to examine to learn how the solar system was formed.

Bai is seeking damages totaling \$300 million — the approximate equivalent of the mission’s cost — for her “moral sufferings,” Izvestia said, citing her lawyer Alexander Molokhov. She earlier told the paper that the experiment would “deform her horoscope.”

NASA representatives in Russia and at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, Calif., could not be reached for comment on the case.

# Obfuscating Intolerance... (continued from page 1)

This muddle stands in stark contrast to an earlier investigation by Yale Divinity School that found widespread problems with intolerance at the academy. That study described faculty members, chaplains and even the football coach as pressuring cadets toward Christian beliefs and hazing them about divergent views on religion. The Pentagon study insisted that this did not amount to a widespread problem for non-Christian cadets who complained of ranking officers encouraging an evangelical fervor.

Without offering details, the Air Force panel did refer seven specific incidents to the chain of command for possible investigation. These hardly had a sense of urgency, however, as investigators insisted the problem was merely accidental insensitivity by some “probably well-intentioned” faculty and staff members who were expressing their faith in “inappropriate” ways. There was far less hedging in the earlier apology and admission of a considerable problem by Lt. Gen. John Rosa Jr., the academy superintendent, when he addressed Jewish leaders concerned about possible anti-Semitism on campus.

Lt. Gen. Roger Brady, who headed the study, said the entire nation was increasingly facing questions about the proper bounds of religious expression. That is so, but he vastly overstated his case when he said that keeping religion out of military education was a complicated matter. Religious faith, or lack of it, is a precious individual right and everyone on the academy’s campus has sworn to protect the Constitution in which it is enshrined. Sadly, now that Air Force investigators have spoken to this point so equivocally, the burden of actually restoring the academy’s reputation is more than ever a problem.

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