

Evolution of debate slipping backward

In the 1925 Scopes Monkey Trial, Clarence Darrow unsuccessfully defended a high school teacher who presented the Darwinian theory of evolution to his students. Teaching evolution was against the law in Tennessee.

The case is considered a landmark because it helped spark debate on the values of scientific evidence over religious traditions in the public schools. Despite John T. Scopes' initial setback, evolution is now recognized by most scholars as a valid explanation of human existence.

In Vista, Calif., a similar debate is shaping up today. However, this time the tables are turned. The Vista school board may vote in June to make creationism — the theory that the Earth and all its inhabitants were created by a supreme being (God) — mandatory learning for all students, thereby destroying the boundaries between church and state devised by the U.S. Supreme Court.

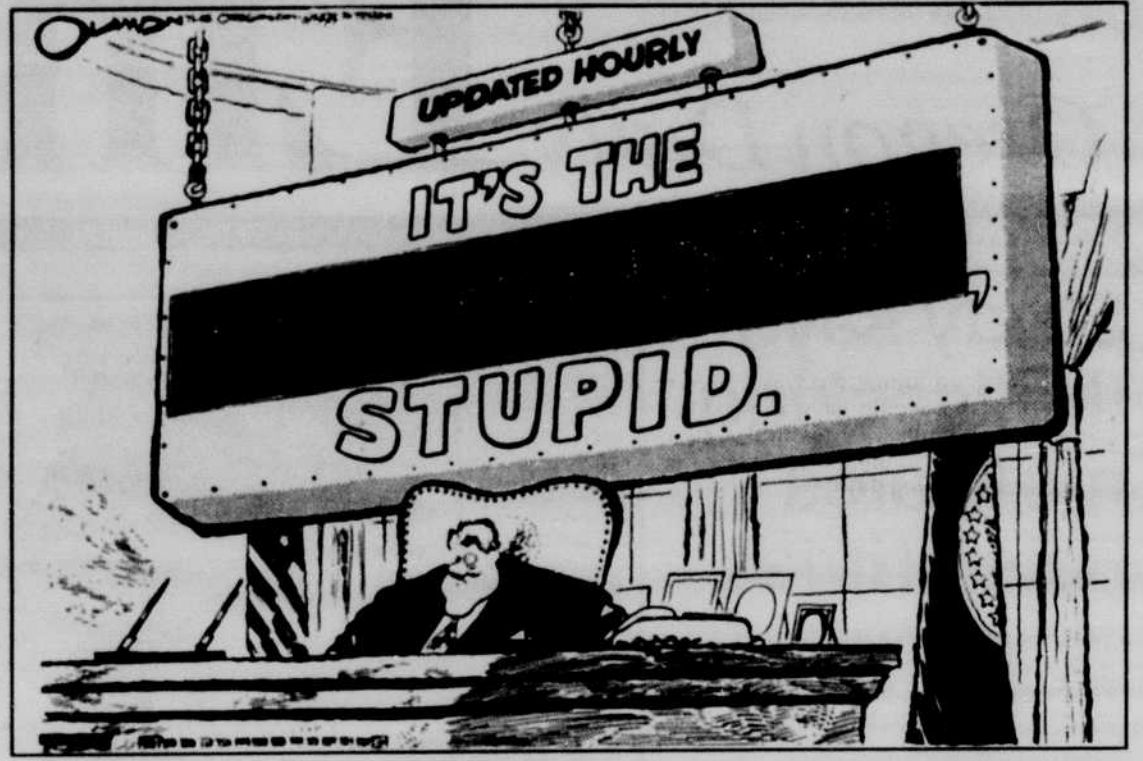
To honestly evaluate the debate, one needs to understand the purpose of a public education — to prepare students for the future by teaching them the skills they will need in the real world. Aside from basic subjects like math, writing and science, it also involves discussing and evaluating such topics as life, sex, society and death. These subjects are taught on the basis of researched information combined with theoretical musings.

Evolution belongs in public schools. It is a scientific theory proved to a satisfactory extent through research. Science, which is knowledge derived from observation, accepts evolution as a legitimate theory, as well it should. Although people can interpret scientific discoveries differently, the goal of science is always the same — to further our understanding of the world around us.

Christianity, unlike science, is based on faith. And regardless of how hard you try, you cannot teach faith. Because accepting creationism as a valid theory means believing in God, that is like teaching an unteachable concept.

The school board's proposed policy would encourage teachers to show "weaknesses that substantially challenge theories in evolution." But if the board were to truly implement such a policy, it would have to teach *all* alternative theories. In other words, every religion that makes a claim about the genesis of human life deserves equal time. That is one of the main purposes of separating church and state; no one religion is favored over another, whether it be Catholicism, Buddhism or atheism.

While different theories on the same subject have a place in schools, students' educations should be based on the most plausible facts available. Creationism is based too much on religious interpretations of facts and belongs in the church or the home. If parents really want their children to learn religious theories, they should send them to private religious institutions, not public schools.



LETTERS

Super cynic

Having worked alongside Jason Moore as an EMU Board of Directors member, I know him to be intelligent, involved and endowed with a keen sense of humor; however, more often than not, I find myself in strong opposition to his public pronouncements.

A good case in point are the remarks attributed to Moore in the May 19 *Emerald* in his angry denunciation of the Incidental Fee Committee members who ousted Steve Masat. Moore called a majority action of the IFC undemocratic, adding that members acted in a "vile and reprehensible manner."

This is quintessential Moore at his bombastic best, using hyperbolic rhetoric and theatrics in an attempt to smear a film of righteous indignation over a patently absurd accusation.

Moore is also quoted as stating that "to blame the IFC's problems with the EMU on Steve is a cynical attempt to get him out of office." Cynical? Masat helped mastermind the most unconstructive and vindictive series of joint IFC/EMU budget committee hearings that I witnessed during my three years on the board, and Moore can summon the gall to survey the alienation that Masat left in his wake and call it student empowerment.

Sheesh! Moore ought to stake his own claim to the title of super cynic.

**Mark Watson
Knight Library**

the ASUO — give us a break. Bobby Lee is at the plate, everybody play deep! They got one run — did he hit a homer? We say that because we know you had to pitch to him because Karmen Fore was on deck.

Why don't you play a real team? We don't normally lower our standards to your level of competition, but the all-star game is not until July. We used to think our grandmas were uncoordinated until we saw you paper boys.

Step up to the mike. If you aren't out on the softball field by 18th Avenue on June 1 at 3:30 p.m., we know your softball team is as worthless as your paper. Come one, come all, because we are willing to have the losing team reps appear on the front page holding a sign that says LOSER!

**Dean VanDecoevering
Pre-Business
Larry Rapp
Sociology**

Streetwiser

In regards to the May 17 "Streetwise" question, a neighbor of mine who lived in a big apartment house (only because of inherited money, and not because he could keep a wellpaid business position) despised everyone.

Seeing me one evening in a well-filled lobby, he called out, "Do me a favor and tell me the day you're going to die." I immediately replied, "I like my hair the way it is," which blocked any answer from him.

**James Heermance
Eugene**

Story lacks merit

D. Lee Williams has the right to free speech as much as anyone else. If Williams chooses to glorify strip clubs, that is Williams' prerogative. However, it is ridiculous and offensive that

the *Emerald* chooses to serve as a medium for Williams' writing.

The *Emerald* is funded in part by students' incidental fees and so it has a responsibility to utilize its entertainment section pages for stories or reviews that will appeal to at least a significant portion of the student body. Instead, its intent seems to be to provoke the ire of those who don't think stories glorifying strip clubs belong in the campus paper.

The lack of good judgment demonstrated in choosing to publish this story is disappointing. There have been frivolous and pointless stories in the *Emerald's* past, but this is the first time (that I know of) that the publication has stepped beyond the bounds of good taste. Censorship is the last thing I want to see in a campus paper, but this story about some buffoon whooping it up at a strip club should have been left out due to lack of merit.

**Jason Jones
Pre-Journalism**

Thanks Bob

I say "thank you" to Bob Weigel for his commentary on his celibacy (*ODE*, May 18).

In this day and age, it is rare to see someone who is willing to talk about it proudly. Today's society has a focus on sex, especially the media. Even our commercials are sensual.

It is hard for someone to remain celibate in this day and age; there is pressure no matter what anyone says. And while we don't want medals or to say that we are better than anyone else, we don't want to be looked down upon because this is the life we have chosen — just as people who aren't celibate do not wish to be looked down upon.

**Kristen Kessler
Psychology**

Start without us

Yo, chumps! Recently we read about the exploits of the undefeated *Emerald* softball team. We laughed. We've seen better play from a tee ball game. But then again, what do you expect from a group of people where everyone's nickname is "scoop."

Look at the teams you played. Those teams couldn't even shellac Charlie Brown. The administration - oh, come on. So you beat a bunch of Docker-wearing fools. And we all know that if you aren't wearing Dockers, you're just wearing pants. Everyone knows how hard it is to round the bases with an aluminum walker.

About the mighty rout over

Oregon Daily Emerald

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Letters to the editor must be limited to no more than 250 words, legible, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is submitted.

The *Emerald* reserves the right to edit any letter for length or style.