

Creationists start fight to put theory in school

■ OUR OPINION: Both evolution and creationism are only theories, and each should be taught

Scientists made a fascinating discovery during an archeological dig a few years ago.

Paleontologists found the fossilized remains of three large fish that showed signs of intensely hunting for something. The fish were wearing baseball caps and gloves, and one of them held a bat. Only a few feet in front of them, entombed in the earth just out of their reach, lay the distinct object of their hunt: a baseball.

OK, OK, maybe Gary Larson's *Far Side* rendition of "Great Moments in Evolution" shouldn't be accepted as scientific evidence for the theory, but it is a great introduction for discussion on an otherwise serious issue: evolution and creationism in public education.

The two theories are once again being debated in public schools and courtrooms from Tennessee (home of the original Scopes Monkey Trial of the '20s), to California. Educators, scientists and parents on both sides are lobbing verbal bombs and accusations at each other in this renewed and emotional battle.

Creationists argue that educators fail to provide students with a well-rounded education when evolution is the sole theory offered up in explanation of the origins of life.

They do have a point.

Scientific creationists argue that creationism has just as much physical evidence to support it (and therefore give it legitimacy)

as the theory of evolution does. To reject creationism merely because it may be partially based on the Bible or appears to approach that gray area of the separation between church and state, is to unfairly discriminate against the theory and its proponents.

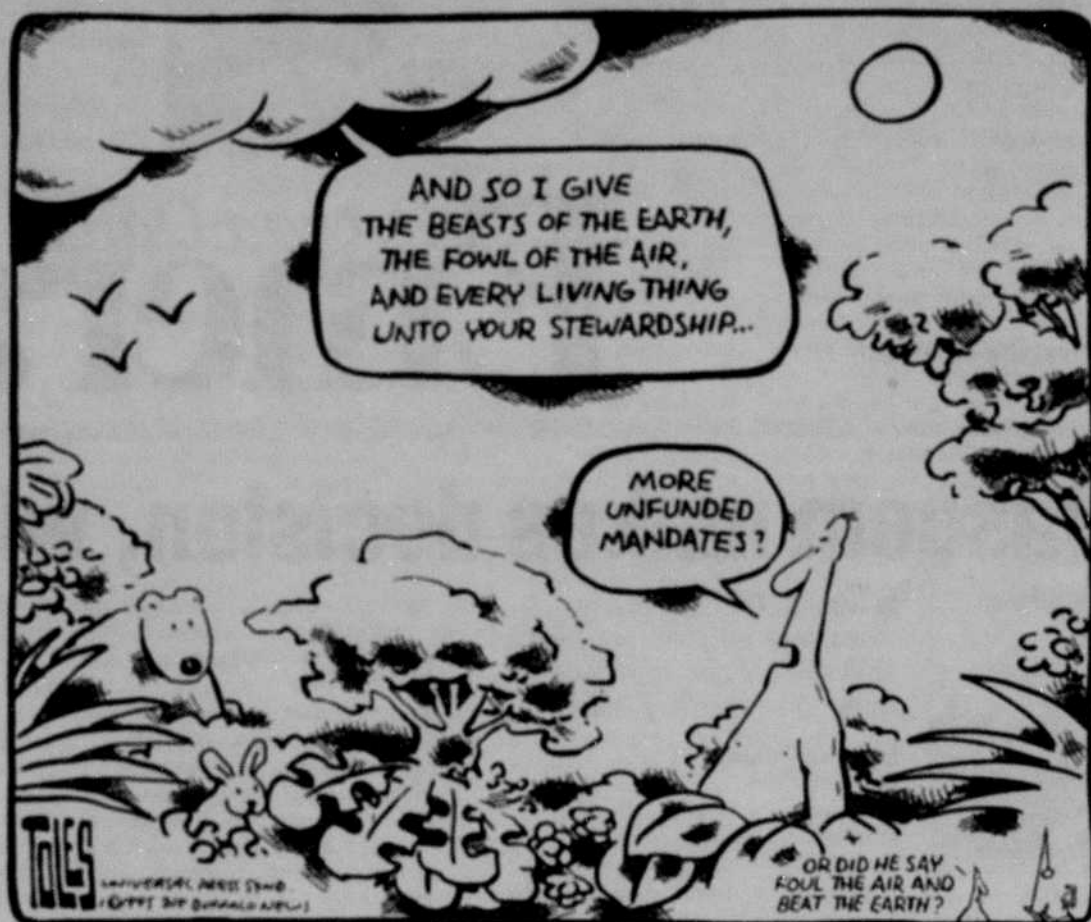
After all, these are theories. As one Alabama textbook disclaimer says, no one was around to record the facts when life first appeared on earth — so neither evolution nor creationism can be presented as fact. Doing so is tantamount to educational tyranny and brainwashing.

The unacceptable alternative (to teaching both) is that educators skip the subject altogether. A perfect solution really, if that's what people want, because everyone comes out the loser.

Creationists, most often found in the conservative and religious right, have had their fair share of losses over the evolution vs. creationism debate. Long labeled intolerant and close-minded over evolution and most other social issues, creationists got a recent lesson in intolerance and classism from Wayne Carley of the National Association of Biology Teachers.

Speaking from Fairfax County in Virginia, Carley said, "Even here... [in] one of the richest counties in the country, over half the candidates for the school board were creationist fundamentalists." Apparently, only the wealthy are intelligent enough to accept evolution.

Let's stop being intolerant of each other, and start teaching our children both theories.



Bible-thumpers, Jesus freaks misguided

"What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet"
— William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*

A couple of weeks ago I was perusing through this esteemed campus newspaper of ours when I stumbled across a little tidbit from the AP wire. It appears that a group of students at East High School in Salt Lake City tried to form a school club called the Gay-Straight Alliance. It was a support group for students who were struggling with their sexual identity. The Salt Lake City School Board got wind of this, then proceeded to get their high-and-mighty panties all in a snit and squashed it. In the process they also ended up banning all other clubs within the school district that were not academic due to a federal law and U.S. Supreme Court decision which would allow the district to either allow all extracurricular clubs or simply none at all. So rather than let a couple of concerned kids form a support group, the school board axed everything.

Great. Now not only will these kids have gay-bashers after them, all of the other students will use them as scapegoats as well — for terminating all the district's social clubs. It's rather funny, however, if you consider that the district will allow the formation of a "Beef Club" where members sit around eating steaks and burgers and go to monster truck rallies, but not a support group for a bunch of kids who probably need one. Ah yes, Salt Lake City, home of the Mormon Tabernacle and Beavis and Butthead. I do believe that it was Samuel Clemens who once said that when God created the idiot, he made the school board as practice.

But perhaps we should examine this a wee bit closer. Where does this anti-gay sentiment come from? Not enough iron in the diet? Too much carbon monoxide from the monster truck rallies? Bad interpretations of the Bible. Oops, now I've done it. I'll probably get spew from every Jesus freak on campus for what I blunder into next.

If you ever take the time to listen to someone condemn homosexuality, they will invariably start off with the Bible. So I swiped my roommate's copy and went a-perusing. I came across the Book of Leviticus, which details, among other things, the proper procedures for various types of sacrificial offerings, purification after childbirth, what and what not to eat, rituals to get rid of disease and mildew, and a detailed account of what are acceptable sexual relations and practices. And the Bible-thumpers are quite right: Leviticus 18:22 clearly states "Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable." The rest of that particular section then goes on to deal with incest and adultery, but just about every other human culture also

has taboos against incest.

Yet there are those who would say that it would be unfair and improper of me to take that particular passage out of context. And they would be absolutely right, so here's some other little goodies I dug up out of the Book of Leviticus. It is a sin to do the following things: to plant your field with two kinds of seed (Lev 19:19), to wear clothing woven of two different materials (Lev 19:19), cutting the hair at the sides of your head or trimming your beard (Lev 19:27), to get a tattoo (Lev 19:28), or to have sex with a woman during her period (Lev 18:19) along with many other little interesting tidbits. Damn, it looks like we're all gonna burn.

It fascinates me how the moral majority is able to pick and choose just what sins they would like to enforce. Perhaps the next OCA initiative will not only condemn homosexuality, but those damn cotton-polyester leisure suits as well. But then they'll spout out that all of those other sins are all out-dated and aren't really applicable. Oh really? Well, I feel so much better already knowing that someone else has the best interests of my morality in mind.

When you really get down to brass tacks, there's two things that just piss me off about this whole situation. The first is that there are so many more things that "good God-fearin' folk" should be worrying about. Such as going out of our way to help our fellow man. And I'm not talking about the Mormon missionaries who go out of their way to give out stacks of the Book of Mormon. I'm talking about the nuns from the jungles of Africa to the American inner cities who care for the sick and the dying. People who actually try to do some good in the name of God.

What really gnaws at me is the fact that someone would have the *audacity* to tell me who I can and can't love. Being gay isn't about just preferring someone of the same sex. It's about love, just like it is for everyone else. We are all human and we all have the same emotions. We all have the same capacities for joy, sadness, and love. The Bible-thumpers then try to get all warm and fuzzy by saying love the sinner but hate the sin. But what they just don't get is that being in love is not a sin, nor is the expression of it.

Christian morality be damned, love is the greatest power of all, history will prove that. Love is the highest moral choice of all.

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