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Time to Abandon Darwin?

Evolution and the Battle for America's Soul

Wednesday, May 27

7:30 P.M.

150 Columbia Hall

1215 E. 13TH Ave., UO campus



This event is free and open to the public.
Book sale and signing to follow lecture.
For more information, or for disability
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Living OUT BY SALLY SHEKLOW

Be Very Afraid

Fabulous parodies spin off ad campaign

If you're a fan of the camp classic *Reefer Madness*, you'll love *Gathering Storm*. This new TV ad alerts Americans to one ominous and terrible peril, even more menacing than marijuana.

Yes, folks, scarier than *Reefer Madness's* warning of societal destruction by wacky tobacky, *Gathering Storm* prophesies impending doom to Our Way of Life if we don't stop the grotesque monstrosity of which *Gathering Storm* warns.
(SPOILER ALERT!)

Beware the unimaginable terror threatening to destroy the world as we know it, known as none other than — wait for it — gay people getting married.

It's laughable, I know, and thank God(dess) it is. *Gathering Storm's* attempt at shock and awe is inspiring a spate of spoofs, relentlessly popping up all over YouTube.

So far I've watched *Gathering Storm of BS*, *Gathering Storm of Lies*, *GAYthering Storm* and *Gathering Storm Chasers* — the original ad intercut with scenes from the Discovery Channel's *Storm Chasers* ("OMG! OMG!").

These creative clips include high production value exact look-alike parodies with real actors, home-puppet shows, crude animation and a few solo acts of someone talking into a webcam. All great fun.

The original *Gathering Storm*, with its dark clouds swirling in the background, features a crop of overly sincere actors pretending they're doctors and mothers and church personnel, all scared out of their wits over gay people getting married (now that's acting!). In carefully delivered dialog they recite why they're afraid of the so-called storm.

"I'm a California doctor who must choose between my faith and my job."

"I am a Massachusetts parent, helplessly watching public schools teach my son that gay marriage is OK."

"I'm part of a New Jersey church group punished by the federal government because we can't support same-sex marriage."

What they mean is federal laws might soon — gasp — equally protect everyone. Doctors would have to apply their *do no harm* oath to — God help us — GAY people. School kids might learn about — gulp — two-mom and two-dad families. Churches will face fines when they don't observe — horror of horrors — non-discrimination laws in renting their public facilities to the public.

Shaking in your boots yet?

Gathering Storm says you should be. You should haul out your credit card and join their new "rainbow coalition" — their exact words (WTF, right?). Defend the institution of marriage from, er, people who want to get married.

Meanwhile, fair-minded Americans celebrate marriage equality victories in Iowa, Maine and Vermont —and probably pretty soon New Hampshire, New York, New Jersey and Maryland, if recent polls hold true. That's why *Gathering Storm* is mobilizing their trepidatious troops, and why creative YouTube responses are coming so fast and hilarious.

Gathering Storm entertains us because, like the marijuana scare of the 1930s, it's such heavy-handed over-the-top transparent propaganda. It's funny in its own right. But the parodies are utterly faaaaab-ulous.

Go ahead, Google "YouTube Gathering Storm." Watch the original and all the spoofs. You'll smile, you'll giggle, you'll ROTFL. Be careful about laughing too wildly, though. Someone might think you're suffering from the scourge of *Reefer Madness*.

Award-winning writer Sally Sheklow lives and laughs in Eugene. She welcomes kudos, kvetches and *Gathering Storm* parodies at sally@wymprov.com



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