

Should creationism be considered in science?

The state Board of Education has been holding hearings on evolution, much to the glee of those who think us a backward and uneducated place.

It's unfortunate, though, that the liberals who laugh at any mention of creationism don't see the intolerance that they foster. In reality, this is a debate we shouldn't be having.

While the scientific evidence for evolution is strong, there is plenty of room to believe that God created this world. Since there is no way of proving that, however, it's not really in the realm of science.

Our schools need to be both rigorous and tolerant of all views. That means they should teach evolution as science, and explain to students that not everyone accepts it as fact.

Evolution is a scientific theory. So is gravity. And like gravity, it rests on plenty of evidence.

Yet science has a way of changing as we learn more about any field. Religion tends to lag behind. Remember that once, everyone believed that the world was flat, and that the sun and stars revolved around us.

The church accepted that as God-given fact, and punished Galileo for challenging it with his theories.

There may still be a few who believe that the universe revolves around this place, and that is their right. Science, though, has left them behind.

There is no science behind the idea of creationism or of "intelligent design," rather philosophy and religious faith. But you can't prove either with research, and those who claim that you can almost always argue from a religious, and not a scientific, background.

One thing is certain: our understanding of all these things will change over the next century, and schools need to keep up.

Our schools need to teach the latest science, but they need to temper that with a healthy respect for other views. Creationism and intelligent design ought to be considered, but not as science. They rightly belong in the realm of religion and philosophy. These are the intellectual underpinnings of our society. An education which ignores them would be poor indeed.

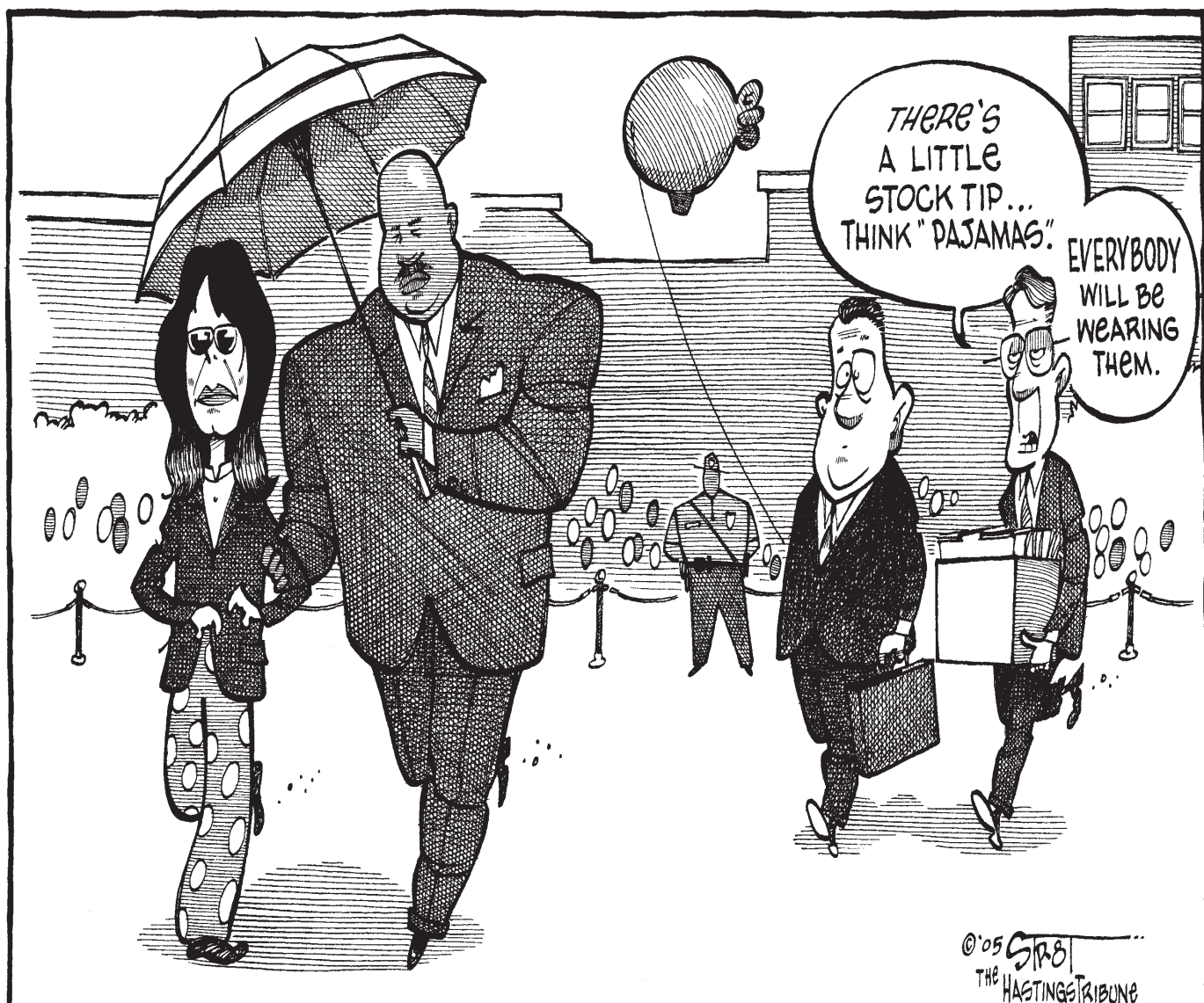
That said, it would be wrong to flog anyone's religious beliefs off as science.

Most Americans probably accept the idea that a greater power created this universe and the wondrous life it contains. Most also would accept the idea that we know a lot less about life's origins than we think, and most would agree we should respect each other's views.

That's what Kansas schools should teach kids, but defining how is not easy. Humans tend to be low on tolerance, short on science and blind to the weakness of our knowledge.

Let the debate continue, but look with a jaundiced eye on those who claim they have all the answers. History shows they do not.

— Steve Haynes



Slow goin' can save on gas money

Here's a little free advice: don't get behind me on the highway if you're expecting to drive over 45 miles per hour.

Granted, in the past I had a reputation for conducting low-level flights on Highway 36 in my cute little teal green Geo Storm. But that was before gas prices hit \$2.19 per gallon.

Now, I drive a conservative (matronly even) older-model white Cadillac. I hate to say I drive a Cadillac. It sounds so pretentious.

But, like Jim says, "A \$6,000 Cadillac costs the same as a \$6,000 Chevy." And, I do hate car payments.

My car has a display that tells you how many miles per gallon you are getting. Once, after forgetting to re-set my cruise control after several miles in a 55 mph construction zone, I realized my miles per gallon rate was considerably higher than it had been at 65. Since I log quite a few highway miles going to and from work, I decided to conduct a little experiment and slowed down even more. The results are in: Your best gas mileage is between 40-45 miles per hour.

Don't get excited. I only drive 45 when there is no one on the road behind me. I ease it up to 60 when I see someone coming. A car traveling too slow is as much of a hazard as a car traveling too fast. Bottom line is, I'm trying to squeeze as many miles out of every gallon as I can.

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



From Sunday School classes to coffee breaks at work, people, everywhere, are discussing the Terri Schiavo case. And, even in Sunday School, emotions can run hot about what is the difference between someone's right to die and the medical profession's obligation to keep them alive and "do no harm".

Giving someone food and water has never been considered "heroic means" of keeping them alive. Artificial breathing and heart machines and drugs are. That has never been the case with Ms. Schiavo. She can breathe fine on her own. But, like a newborn baby, she just can't feed herself. I say, "Ms. Schiavo," because her so-called husband has broken his marriage vows, has been living with and making babies with another woman. He has made money from Terri's condition and, seemingly, has only selfish rea-

sons for wanting to see his "wife" dead. The issue hinges on his "rights" as her husband to make the decision to end her life. No one disputes how agonizing a decision it is for a spouse or family to decide to turn off life support when there is no sign of brain activity and their loved ones body cannot sustain life on its own.

That is not the case here. Terri Schiavo's body functions and so does her brain. She can smile at her parents, her eyes follow objects and some have said that with proper therapy, she might even be able to talk.

If someone were to put a puppy in the town square and tell the world, "I am not going to feed and water it, and you can't either. We are going to watch it die," there would be such an outcry you wouldn't believe. It would not be tolerated. Starving to death and dehydration is a slow, agonizing way to die. It is not humane.

The honorable thing for Mr. Schiavo to do would be to get a divorce and let her parents take care of her, like they have always wanted to. Then he can go crawl back under the rock he came from.

As a Christian nation, it seems ludicrous that this discussion is even taking place. Turning off machines is letting someone die; not feeding them is murder.

I think I read, somewhere, that we're not supposed to do that.

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Some things shouldn't be governed

Isn't it strange how we profess one thing and our actions indicate another. As an example the recent events in the Terri Schiavo case. This young woman has been hospitalized for over 15 years as family members have grieved, argued and waged legal battles over her wishes to live or die.

Now our Congress has decided to become involved.

Never mind that they represent the party of "less government" or that our President himself has championed his record number of executions in his term as governor of Texas.

Some members of Congress have labeled removal of the feeding tube "barbarian". And executions, now what would that fall under? "Revenge is mine saith the Lord". The only question remains, "Who is the Lord?"

And then the issue of a woman's life and who is responsible. If we are to believe the Bible, a woman leaves her family and clings to her husband, but the parents of this woman and the right-to-life wing have determined that only the parents should make the determination.

The husband says she wouldn't want to

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



live this way and who would. Have we become so convinced of the hopelessness of death that we believe its occurrence is a failure and if so a failure of the medical profession, the family or the individual.

Once again in a nation that lauds its supposedly Christian value structure, we fight a death of one who had confided to her husband she wouldn't want to live like that. I've heard very few, if any, say, keep me alive at all costs, even if I'm just a vegetable, let me stay alive.

The problem of a political wing, regardless of its party affiliation, becoming involved in the private lives of individuals is just that — private individuals. At a time when we are teaching diversity we are remarkably intolerant of individualism, something our country was founded on.

There is no place for politics in family affairs.

We will never know whether Terri Schiavo told her husband she didn't want to live like that or not, but respect of the role of husband versus parent, the role of individual versus government is paramount and the precedent set with government intervention is frightening.

Barry Goldwater said it better than I can when addressing the issue of gays in the military.

"It's time to get on with more important business," he said. "The conservative movement, to which I subscribe, has as one of its basic tenets the belief that government should stay out of people's private lives. Government governs best when it governs least."

(Arizona Republican Barry M. Goldwater retired from the Senate in 1987. This commentary on the military gay ban appeared in the Washington Post and the Los Angeles Times.)

This commentary can be found in its entirety at the following web-site: www.sldn.org/templates/1aw/record.html?section=33&record=289.

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