

The Times-Tribune

Scranton, Pa

News Cars Jobs Homes Classifieds Yellow Pages Today's Print Ads Place An Ad Special Sections

[Go to Advanced Search/Archives](#)

Free! EMAIL NEWSLETTER

[Sign up or Login!](#)



Partly cloudy 74°

Affordable Financing
 570.346.7741
 800.327.0394
www.pennsecurity.com

Penn Security
 Bank & Trust Company
 Member FDIC

CLICK

Buy Build Remodel

Marian Commu Hospital
 100 Lincoln A
 Carbondale,

SALE
O'BOY

PENNSTATE
 1855
 Penn State Info.
 March 14th, 6:00-
 in the Sherbine L
 963-2500

METALLO
 KNOWS TUXED

Tuxedos by Me
 Over 50 Y
 of Memo

Dunmore Con
 Dunmore, P
 346-3937
 www.metallos.

All Banks Are Not Cre

Old Fo Bank
 Small Bank S
 Big Bank R

You're not just a numb
 You'll get friendly, personal

3 Convenient Locations To
 Old Forge 457-8
 Duryea 457-11
 Peckville 383-2

Inne of Abingto

Elegant Cateri
 Affordable P
 On/And Off Pr

Comple
 Wedding Pac
 \$25.99 per p
 (tax and tip inc

(570) 563-10
 I-81 Scott Exit
 www.theinne.c

Monday, March 13, 2006

[home](#) : [news](#) : [news](#) : [top stories](#)

- News
- Top Stories
- Local
- Obituaries
- Weather
- Births
- Courthouse News
- Strange News
- Special reports
- John Cole Cartoons
- Lottery Results
- Archives
- Past 7 Days
- Most Read Stories
- Help/Contacts
- AP News
- Sports
- Opinion
- Business & Finance
- Lifestyles
- Premiere Businesses
- Yellow Pages
- Community
- Travel
- Fun and Games
- About us
- Customer Service
- Advertise Online
- NEPA Resources
- RSS Feeds
- Photo Galleries
- Video/Multi-Media

If evidence rules in court; only one way case can go

By: By Alan I. Leshner/Guest Columnist

10/13/2005

[Email to a friend](#) [Printer-friendly](#)

A federal court in Pennsylvania is considering whether it is legal to teach "intelligent design" theory as an alternative to evolution in public school science classes. It is a question of increasing urgency in states and school districts nationwide - even in nearby Charles County, Maryland, where some School Board members want to eliminate science books that are "biased toward evolution."

Though some people have compared the Pennsylvania case to the famous 1925 trial of Tennessee biology teacher John Scopes, it would be a mistake to cast it as the science versus religion Super Bowl. This spin heightens the drama, but it is a misrepresentation, obscuring the real conflict.

To understand the deeper nature of this controversy, consider the nature of science. Scientists seek natural explanations for natural events. Systematic observations lead to hypotheses, more observation and experimentation. Findings are not accepted as fact unless other scientists can reproduce them.

Religion, by comparison, is based on faith, not fact in the scientific sense. Many scientists are spiritual and guided in life by their faith. But their religious beliefs should never distort their scientific work.

The leaders of the ID movement reverse the scientific process: They begin with their conclusion and manipulate science to suit their purpose. Their 1999 "Wedge Document" makes the true goal clear: "Design theory promises to reverse the stifling dominance of the materialist world view, and to replace it with a science consonant with Christian and theistic convictions."

Leaders of the intelligent design movement rightly point to gaps in our scientific understanding of evolution. Our understanding of disease, the climate and distant galaxies is incomplete, too. That's the nature of current human knowledge, and it is the job of science to close the gaps ID advocates claim there are life systems that are "irreducibly complex," and therefore must be evidence of an intelligent designer.

What does this really mean? Not so long ago, our ancestors were certain that the Earth was flat, motor-powered flight was a fantasy and cancer was untreatable.

The way the immune system works was seen as an unsolvable mystery. Science has helped close those gaps and expand knowledge. Today's irreducible complexity is tomorrow's clear scientific explanation.

Despite their professed devotion to science, ID advocates have published nothing in mainstream, peer-reviewed journals. Their allies in the sciences are few, and mostly fringe players.

When their arguments were submitted for scientific review in Kansas, they were rejected outright. Finding a few scientists who endorse a belief does not make it science.

Even the movement's promise to seek a more theocratic science is misleading. The movement represents only one radical faction of Christianity, and a small segment of Jews, Muslims, Buddhists and Hindu.

Many religious people from a broad spectrum of religions and denominations accept evolution, seeing no conflict with their faith. Pope John Paul II told the Pontifical Academy of Sciences in 1996 that evidence supports evolution.

Last year, when a school board in Grantsburg, Wis., tried to undermine evolution by ordering

Advertisement

Serving Customers for over 75 Years!

**Shop for Her
 Shop for Him
 Shop for Home**

Shop Boscov's

The Country's Largest Family Owned
 Department Store

Bit O' Blarney

Be a Lucky Leprechaun!

ALLIED SERVICES

Click Here for our latest employment opportunities

IT'S FREE!
CLICK NOW

Subscribe To The Paper

Credit Cards Only!

PLACE YOUR CLASSIFIED AD ONLINE!

CLICK HERE!

Top Jobs

- ▶ [DELIVERY PERSON/ SHOP WORKER](#)
- ▶ [DRIVER](#)
- ▶ [Full Time Machine Operator](#)
- ▶ [Overnight Monitor Specialist](#)
- ▶ [ROUTEPERSON](#)

[More Top Jobs](#)

Top Autos

- ▶ [CADILLAC '92 DEVILLE](#)
- ▶ [CHEVY '95 SILVERADO 1500 SERIES](#)
- ▶ [EXTENDED CAB](#)
- ▶ [FORD '88 RANGER](#)
- ▶ [FORD '98 EXPLORER](#)

READER POLL

Would you ever reprimand someone else's child for misbehaving?

Yes

No

I haven't but could

[Submit Vote](#)

[view results](#)

that all students be able to "explain the strengths and weaknesses of evolutionary theory," nearly 200 of the state's religious leaders signed a letter of protest. Their campaign has since gone national. More than 7,500 U.S. ministers, rabbis, priests, nuns and other clerics have signed a letter affirming the belief "that the timeless truths of the Bible and the discoveries of modern science may comfortably coexist."

Leaders of the ID movement have neither science nor mainstream religion on their side. They have manufactured a controversy in hopes of subverting science to the rule of their sect. The controversy is social, not scientific, and as such it is more appropriate for discussion in social studies or philosophy classes.

If the ID campaign is successful in court, it will lead the nation down a slippery slope. If science classrooms are opened to their teaching, fairness requires that the views of countless other religions and denominations be taught as well.

This would make a hash of science education, confusing our students and undermining the process of objective scientific research that has brought so much benefit to so many people. The ID movement is not science and it has no place in science classrooms. We are confident that as this matter is evaluated in Pennsylvania, evidence - and the lack of evidence - will decide the case.

ALAN I. LESHNER, Ph.D., is the chief executive officer for the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the world's largest general science society, and executive publisher of the journal Science.

©The Times-Tribune 2006

[✉ Email to a friend](#) [🖨 Printer-friendly](#) [↑ Top](#)

Creation Or Evolution?

Is evolution just a theory? You can prove creation. Order free booklet.

Testing God - on DVD

Science vs. Religion. Is science's claim to victory premature?

[News](#) [Cars](#) [Jobs](#) [Homes](#) [Classifieds](#) [Yellow Pages](#) [Today's Print Ads](#) [Place An Ad](#) [Special Sections](#)

Read our [Privacy Policy](#) | [Questions or comments? Contact Us](#)
Click here for home delivery of The Times-Tribune
[News](#) | [Sports](#) | [Obits](#) | [Opinion](#) | [Business](#)
[Delivery problems](#) | [Place an ad](#) | [Letters to the editor](#)



Copyright © 1995 - 2006 PowerOne Media, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

[SPORT](#)

Top Vehicles

- ▶ [SMITH MOUNTAIN LAKE, VA](#)

Top Properties

- ▶ [ARCHBALD](#)
- ▶ [Business Available](#)
- ▶ [HAMLIN AREA](#)
- ▶ [SCRANTON](#)
- ▶ [Springville Twp](#)

[More Top Properties](#)

Regal
For Your Royal C
Friday March 17
St. Patrick's Day
featuring:
THE MICHAEL &
MINOR VARIETY
opening act: SH
6:30 p.m.
For reservatic
call (570) 489-
www.regalroom