

REJOYCED

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Nuns or Nones?

I grew up in a household that did not consist of Sunday mornings at church, but at a temple. As I grew up, my knowledge of religion expanded and I realized my parents' religion was just that; it was their religion and not mine. While I believe the deity they believe in exists, I don't adhere to their beliefs and practices as there is no one God I look up to.

It seems nowadays that the biggest religious preference is no preference at all. Recent studies have shown that about twenty percent of the American population are checking the "None" box when it comes to identifying their religious preference—the "None" category including the Agnostics, Atheists, freethinkers, skeptics and humanists. While I do believe in a higher being, spiritually, I don't partake in a particular religion. Now, why is that percentage growing?

Today, it seems that all people really talk about when it comes to religious topics in politics is abortion and same-sex marriage. Granted, in the past presidential election, these were some of the main issues that were argued about; however, is that really the extent of people's knowledge when it comes to subjects regarding spirituality? These issues have become so prevalent, and because both are affiliated with religious beliefs, it seems that most are straying away from faith because of certain controversial ideals, such as keeping marriage between a man and a woman or taking a life post-conception, be it a fetus or a fully grown human being.

The "Nones" may be a growing trend for young adults, but for the most part, it is not because they are not spiritual; they simply do not affiliate themselves with an organized religion. Ultimately, it is one's own choice to be a part of a specific religion or not to believe in spirituality, at all. To keep the church alive, maybe the generations to come just need to be more informed, otherwise, soon the only religion left will be "None."

Every Saint has a Past and every Sinner has a Future

MICHELLE PAULINO
Opinions Editor

Think of the children. Stacie Halas, an elementary school science teacher from Oxnard, California, used to work in pornography. What nerve! Halas was attempting to make ends meet after being abandoned by her boyfriend and falling into debt. Three years later, she decided to turn her life around and became a teacher.

Out of shame, she never disclosed her naughty past. After teaching for a few years, students and teachers began to stumble onto bits of her past, consequently resulting in her job termination in April 2012. How dare this education system allow her to teach the youth of America about photosynthesis when just three years ago she was-insert sex

Dare Say Nothing but the Truth

SEAN NGUYEN
Staff Writer

It can be easy for people—journalists included—to relegate journalism to be nothing more than words on paper. However, the profound influence of media extends its reach across the perceptions and decisions of countless families and individuals. Good journalism enables people to make informed decisions and the journalists involved are entirely responsible for ensuring that this process continues to provide the truth and nothing but the truth.

Yet, what happens when journalism goes awry? What happens when the writers and reporters that we rely on fail to report only the most accurate of news? For all the merits and benefits journalism provides to the masses, careless or sloppy journalism can just as easily become the ruin of individual figures and families. Take the recent controversy behind football player Manti Te'o for example. Media outlets across the nation lauded Te'o's perseverance and will to continue playing football for Notre Dame even though his grandmother and girlfriend had recently passed away. Nevertheless, why do we no longer consider Te'o to be an enduring football star to be proud of? Because the journalists originally behind the story failed to dig deep and accurately represent the reality of the story and because it turns out, in truth, Te'o's

girlfriend was nothing more than a sham.

That's right. The center of national news, a star football player's deceased girlfriend, never existed in the first place. It had been reported that Te'o maintained the fabricated relationship with his supposedly Stanford educated girlfriend exclusively through the Internet and that Te'o had, in fact, lied to his own parents about



meeting her in person.

The reality, however, is nowhere close. After someone finally went through the process of actually investigating this said girlfriend, it turns out that the pictures Te'o had thought to belong to his deceased love belonged to another woman who is still very much alive. Now, the question is whether Te'o himself had known that

this girlfriend was fake. Now, the center of the nation's attention is on Te'o's fake girlfriend, and how this debacle came to be. Sure, it was Te'o himself who told the press about the loss of his grandmother and his girlfriend. However, a journalist's job is not about regurgitating the words of others and presenting them as fact. A journalist's job is to investigate and pick apart the truth piece by piece through research and careful observation. In the rush to capitalize on this sensational story, the journalists involved limited their perspective to only Te'o himself.

As a consequence, the reputations of Te'o, his family and even the reputation of Notre Dame itself are at stake. If the facts had been investigated thoroughly before publishing the story, the whole debacle could have been avoided and Te'o could simply have remained an untarnished star in the world of college football rather than a pitiful victim of a laughable Internet hoax.

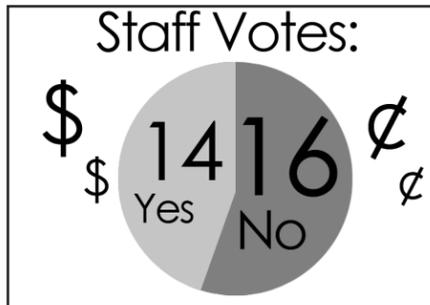
In the end, it does no good to simply criticize the mistakes of others. However, it is important to recognize the effect that sloppy journalism can have on the lives of others. Although the efforts of journalists can sometimes be taken for granted, the writers and reporters of news cannot afford to ignore the consequences of the information they portray as genuine when so many people rely on them to make their everyday decisions.

STAFF EDITORIAL: Should anything be done about the large fee discrepancy between middle-income students and low-income students?

As the economy worsens every year and the middle and lower income classes start to suffer financially alike, questions arise about whether the financial aid system is considerate of all students as it should be. Currently, middle-income students pay full fees while low-income students qualify for fee reductions and waivers, whether they are for the AP tests, college preparatory standardized tests, college applications or even school lunches. As a result, low-income students experience exponentially lower fees than that of their middle-income peers. Yes, this system technically performs its obligations: helping those in need by allowing them to have the same opportunities as their low-income peers. However, it coddles those students in a way that those who qualify for financial aid, but don't necessarily need it, are encouraged to take advantage of the "free money."

By allowing low-income students such easy access to standardized tests, lunch and applications, this places an unfair balance of stress on middle-income students. Middle-income students must face the situation in which they consider the cost of heavy fees every time they take a test, submit an application or fork over \$2.75 for lunch. Low-income students can take seventeen AP tests for the price of one full price student's AP test, and they'd still have four dol-

lars left over. For low-income students, these concerns may be dismissed as most of their own bills are dismissed for them by the government. The funds that support the government's financial aid system are gained through taxes, which middle-income families pay a higher percentage of. Thus, middle-income families not only pay for themselves but also indirectly pay to allow low-income students to have such low fees.



The financial system's requirements that decide whether student qualifies for financial aid are inefficient in determining whether the student truly needs financial aid. A paycheck does not include an invoice on the back that reports what bills the money will be used for. Families may experience a wide range of living expenses that can stretch any paycheck—no matter how large or how small—too thinly over the week. However, the

system only has two categories determined by criteria: qualified and not qualified. A student, who receives financial aid but still struggles to make ends meet, has to compete with other students whose families make just low enough an income to receive fee reductions and cuts but doesn't have as much living expenses. Middle-income students whose families earn too much to receive aid but have a large amount of living expenses may struggle unfairly as well. Not every student is guaranteed to experience these scenarios, but they show just how the nation's financial aid system could possibly be less of a godsend as it seems.

A solution would be to create a median range of income in which students would receive an amount of financial aid that more thoroughly considers living expenses, as well as to conduct through investigations on whether the student really needs financial aid in order to succeed in their studies. Additionally, waivers and fee reductions should be given with more consideration of the student's merit as well, guaranteeing that the student will really take advantage of such a blessing to its full potential. Such a change in criteria would allow funds to be directed more towards helping truly qualified students whilst avoiding giving opportunistic students an unfair advantage.

euphemism because it's vulgar on camera. The audacity! Get that woman away from our teenagers before she perverts the minds of our innocent darlings.

In all seriousness, porn is no joke. It objectifies women, perverts the mind and can ruin relationships. However, teachers are people whose lives have not always been concerned with the classroom. Teachers make mistakes, and, unless those mistakes impede their effectiveness of a child's learning, include illegal activity or are harmful to others, they should be forgiven. In fact, a teacher's effectiveness should be the primary guiding factor to dictate their employment, not how their dirty laundry may become the brunt of every thirteen-year-old's joke.

After a failed appeal, Halas has until Feb. 13 to once again appeal for her job back in the classroom. Is such redemption possible? Does this sinner have a future?

