

The Union-Recorder **Teenz!**

f.y.i.
In case you slept through your Biology class... evolution, or more specifically, the Theory of Natural Selection, a theory which contradicts Creationism proposed by English biologist Charles Darwin, states that only the strongest and fittest will survive. The theory also says that those which survived Natural Selection will continue evolving to remain a dominant species.



What's HOT

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'American Dreamz'

By **CHRISTY LEMIRE**
AP Movie Critic

Like the catchiest pop song, "American Dreamz" can bring a smile to your face and even leave you feeling giddy after it's over.

And it provides zero in terms of actual substance.

Writer-director Paul Weitz's parody of "American Idol" and America's president is dead-on, filled with perfect details and many reasons to laugh out loud.

Dennis Quaid is a wholly inspired choice to play the commander in chief, who only understands why the country is at war in Iraq

when it's explained to him in terms of comic book characters. And Hugh Grant functions beautifully as a mix of Ryan Seacrest, Simon Cowell and "American Idol" creator Simon Fuller.

Weitz's portrayal of both the presidency and the wildly popular talent competition doesn't feel too far off from the real thing.

But even as the film expertly re-enacts these phenomena, it has absolutely nothing insightful or refreshing to say about them.

Weitz does start out strong with Grant's Martin Tweed savoring the typically stellar ratings of his TV singing contest, "American

Dreamz," while breaking up with his latest adoring, blond girlfriend.

The next morning, Quaid's President Staton wakes up after a close election to find he still has a job.

Their paths ultimately will collide when the president's chief of staff (Willem Dafoe) suggests that he could get a popularity boost by appearing as a guest judge during the finals on "American Dreamz."

Among the top contestants are Sally (Mandy Moore), a small-town Midwestern girl with diva-like, big-city aspirations who

grudgingly reunites with her ex-boyfriend (Chris Klein) after he's shot in Iraq; and Omer (Sam Golzari), who has left Baghdad to meet up with his sleeper cell in Orange County, and whose love of show tunes lands him on "American Dreamz" completely by accident.

If you faithfully watch "Idol," you will be thrilled with the attention to detail. Martin Tweed describes one singer's performance as "a musical Ebola virus."

There's a Bo Bice figure, a Fantasia Barrino figure. By the time the president

gets there, he's begun reading the newspaper for the first time in his life and is actually trying to think seriously about what's going in the world. And so when someone shows up with a bomb during the much-anticipated "American Dreamz" finale, he knows how to handle it. Sort of.

It's all joyfully cynical, if that's possible. And it makes you wish that Weitz, to borrow a phrase from "Idol" judge Paula Abdul, had taken the material and really made it his own.

"American Dreamz" is rated PG-13 for brief strong language and some sexual references. Two and a half stars out of four.

REAL LIFE, REAL STORIES: Happy ending for a high school dropout

By **ERICA MACKLIN**
Teenz! staff writer

Editor's Note: This is part two in a two-part series, "A Da in the Life of a High School Dropout."

This is part two of 'A High School Dropout.' But, this story has a slight twist to last week's story where we followed *David Smith's story on life after dropping out of high school. As *Gregory Baker looks back on his past choices regarding school, he would have changed it if he could, but is happy with where he's going now in his life.

"At the age of 14, I decided school was the last place I wanted to be," *Gregory stated.

*Gregory would often leave the house with his mother believing he was on his way to school. Instead, he would hide in the bushes and wait for his mother to leave to go to work. After she would leave, *Gregory admits to stealing her car and taking joyrides until school let out.

"I skipped school at least three times a week. My teacher would send notes home for my mother to see and instead I would sign them and hide them from her."

So, at the age of sixteen, *Gregory decided to quit school, despite his mother's wishes. Gregory then started work at a fast food restaurant cooking hamburgers, which at the

time he believed was a good job.

"I thought I had it going on - \$5.50 an hour was good money to me at that time. As I got older I realized I was never going anywhere without an education. All the jobs that I'd applied for required a high school diploma."

*Gregory later started work at a hospital which he could only obtain a job as a Health Service Technician. "I had the experience to be head cook, but lacked the education."

Then one day, Gregory received a phone call that would help him to come to a decision. "My great-aunt who was a fifth grade teacher called me and asked if I was ever going back to school. I was tired of being turned down for jobs that I was more than qualified for. I started going to GED school and took the practice test."

On the practice test, *Gregory passed the math and science sections of the test, but failed English. Over the next three months, *Gregory worked hard to reach his goal and on Dec. 12, 1998, *Gregory passed his GED test and applied for a grant to further his education. After re-applying for jobs he was now qualified for, he began work at one of the local prisons. "I was making more money than my other jobs combined."

While working for the prison system, *Gregory received certification from various schools and the U.S. Army. *Gregory is now at-



"As I got older, I realized I was never going anywhere without an education. All the jobs that I'd applied for required a high school diploma."

tending a technical college and currently works in law enforcement. "Without an education, I was headed nowhere, now there is no limit to where I can go."

** Names have been changed for anonymity.*

The world, according to ...



DAVID SOUTER

Evolution vs. Creationism

Okay, so what I'm going to be doing today is a subject that I'm about 99 percent certain everyone has at least heard about.

It's a subject that has been argued for decades. The case of evolutionism vs. creationism. That's right, the age-old fight of whether or not we evolved from monkeys.

In the '20s, John Scopes was tried for teaching evolution in a staunchly religious small Tennessee town. While the scientists believe that apes are our closest relatives, the church (which is the side I happen to be on), fights against this, stating that the human race was created by the One True God.

I strongly believe this, despite all of the "evidence" that scientists have presented. I disagree with the scientists - I find it very hard to believe that we could have evolved from monkeys. Since everyone is so different unique, I believe that only God could have done something that complicated.

Anyways, I find it very stupid that people believe in evolution. Let's see, if humans evolved from apes, then why in the world are there still monkeys in the world? Wouldn't they all have evolved with the rest of us? That really doesn't make any sense to me.

I believe that the only explanation of our coming into existence is the pure genius of God's design.

If you have any comments or questions on this subject, please e-mail them to entertainment_reviews@yahoo.com.

Snaps...

... poetry corner

Why do you?

by **Brittany Rae McCoy**

Why do you laugh at me?
Is it my looks?
It shouldn't be,
looks aren't written in any books.
Is it my shoes?
It shouldn't be,
then even maybe you could lose.
Is it my hair?
It shouldn't be,
look at yours.
Why would you care?
If you must laugh at me,
Let it be at my heart.
That could be a great big start.

And Into Heaven

Blind leading the blind.
All I need is peace of mind
To turn and follow.

by **Dillon Earick**

My Brother

Will is like no pill,
Always making me so ill.
Chill! Before I kill!

by **Erica Binion**

The Sky

The sky is so blue;
It is far away from you.
So what should I do?

by **Kenya Benjamin**

Sitting Alone

by **Eddie Sanders**

Sitting here all alone
in my home,
wishing that I was
holding you.
Sometimes at night
when I dream,
I dream of holding you.
But it is sad to awake
and realize that it was
only a dream of holding
someone as beautiful as you.

Send your poetry to
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This page is written and created by Teenz! Board members from Baldwin High School, John Milledge Academy, Putnam County High School, Wilkinson County High School and Georgia Military College. Comments and suggestions should be sent to agable@cni.com.

