

## God bless us, everyone

### Devil's Advocate

**Brian Burgess**  
Managing Editor

Finding something to complain about is the closest thing to a tradition atheists have. Whether it is about someone praying in public, post-sneeze blessings, or simply talking about religion in any capacity, atheists seem to jump at any opportunity they can to be victimized, oppressed, or generally distraught.

Unfortunately, atheists have given themselves quite a notorious reputation for being an overly sensitive mob of contrarians and the stereotype isn't exactly far off. We (myself included) seem to have a knee-jerk reaction to anything remotely religious. I have come to ask myself a question, however, that puts an end to this: who really gives a shit?

Considering our position as atheists, what difference does it make when a Christian blesses me after sneezing so as to ward off evil spirits as the tradition goes? (Yes, that is the purpose of saying bless you after a sneeze.) I don't believe in that. Why should I be offended that someone does something based on a religion I think is dead wrong in the first place?

Kids often play a game where they run around in makeshift capes casting spells on anyone they find. The children obviously have no true magical powers, therefore we simply smile and appreciate that they are blissfully happy in their play. How, then, should it be any different when a religious person "casts" their blessings on us? Are we of

little faith afraid it might just be effective?

Of course this is not to be condescending to the religious; I hold the ever constant position that I may be just as wrong as the next guy. I don't think that we should look at the religious as "those silly kids with their spells", but rather as people who simply truly believe in what they are doing in a way that we don't.

For example, our SGA president, Lucy Matthews' email signature is "Blessings". It would be ridiculous of me to assume that by her sending this email signature to me she is going to burn my flesh with holy blessings; as an atheist I believe the only thing she can burn my flesh with is fire (or acid, I guess). Beyond that though, I know Lucy is not trying to shove her religion down my throat. She genuinely believes in the benefit of God's blessing, and wants to share that with the people she works with. This isn't malicious, it's sweet. Perhaps misguided, in my opinion, but hey, what do I know?

Finding things to complain about is easy. Atheists shouldn't settle for easy though. We often blame "God" for the world's problems, but what do we do to fix them? We search for martyrdom. In the effort to be the best people we can, without religion telling us to do so, I posit that atheists take up a bit more responsibility and a much thicker skin. If we believe the religious truly counterproductive, then the burden lies on us to do our part to make the changes we wish to see. Rather than being the defeated minorities, we as atheists should strive to be the small band of revolutionaries.

## How not to end up in the 'friend zone'

**By Jermichael Tanner**  
Staff Writer

The friend zone is a place that haunts men and women worldwide, but thankfully there are ways of avoiding that third wheel's paradise.

The friend zone is when you become so good of friends with someone you considered a potential partner, that they begin only to look at you as a friend and nothing more. Men and women have found their way to this desolate island, but here are tips to missing that plane altogether.

- State clear and early in the courtship what exactly your intentions are.
- When the subject of "Hanging out" comes up, suggest doing things that individuals in an intimate relationship would do.
- Avoid talks about anyone else that person could be interested in.
- Talk yourself up so that this person knows you're a great catch.
- Make a move before it gets stale. Most people play the friend with intentions of getting closer for so long that the person loses sight of them.

If these steps are followed carefully, you can avoid becoming the person out gift shopping with the friend for the significant other, that you would like to be the significant other of.



Cartoon by Karam Boeshaar

*Editors' note: Dan is rarely late to class, though he does sweat an awful lot. Brian's panel seems pretty accurate. Karam seems to have embellished Dr. Padgett's beard quite a bit, don't get us wrong, it's an excellent beard. Facial hair on the rest of the senior staff pales in comparison, but still, Padgett is no Grizzly Adams. Dave is still wondering where his panel is.*

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