

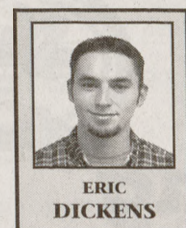
Should Ron Harris' new Website attempt to sell infertile parents

MODEL CHILDREN?



ERIC ANDRAOS/THE BATTALION

NO Harris' auction for eggs exploits infertility for personal financial gain



ERIC DICKENS

Ron Harris is, first and foremost, a businessman. But as businessmen go, he is one of the most tasteless, money-hungry and amoral of the bunch.

He seems to live by that tried-and-true motto of many used-salesmen and shameless self-promoting entrepreneurs: "Anything for a buck."

The longtime fashion and Playboy photographer has started a Website which acts as a middleman for infertile women and prospective egg donors.

However, these are not your everyday egg donors.

The women whose eggs are auctioned off are models looking for a new source of income.

With a high enough bid, an infertile woman can theoretically increase the possibility of having an exceptionally beautiful child.

The problem with the site is not its support of in-vitro fertilization or Harris' promotion of the beauty of his egg donors.

What is wrong about Harris' practice is his use of the physical attractiveness of his models, coupled with society's preference of beautiful people, to fill his own wallet.

With egg bids ranging from \$15,000 to a possible maximum of \$150,000, Harris is trying to conduct his operation at a level where money is not a factor.

This leads to a lot of easy money being thrown around by wealthy people in need of an egg donor, a possibility he is counting on.

Even though all the money paid for the egg goes to the donor, Harris adds his own 20-percent finder's fee on top of the final price.

In another shrewd business move, Harris did not make his site a simple meeting place for potential donors and receivers. His Website is an auction house where bidders fight it out. And as their bids increase, so does Harris' 20-percent fee.

This money-making scheme removes the last bit of credibility Harris might have as an objective assistant to infertile couples.

Anyone still doubting the greedy motives behind Harris' site need look no further than the site itself.

To make even more money off of his

online egg auction, Harris is posting advertisements which can generate income for him, even if he never sells a single egg.

The Website currently has two advertising banners, but all signs point to him adding more and trying to make a buck off of advertising everything from Viagra to Bloomingdale's.

The fact that his site received more than 1 million visitors in a single day makes it attractive to potential advertisers, and one of the banners currently on Harris' site is for a video-exercise program he started in the 1980s.

Like the shady businessman he is, Harris generates all these advertising dollars under the guise of helping infertile women have children.

Finder's fees and advertising revenues aside, Harris may hit the jackpot with another money-making function of the site. Besides being a fashion photographer and producer of several Playboy videos, Harris is working on a book called *Naked Power*. Harris said the book is "about why beauty exists and how knowing this might help you achieve happiness."

Harris himself understands why people primarily would be visiting his site — namely to find an egg donor — and how to use that to help him build his personal income.

Recent news reports have questioned the authenticity of Harris' egg-auctioning service.

Citing the crudeness of the site's design and the fact he has received only one serious bid, many wonder if Harris really plans to continue with the ova auctioning.

Nevertheless, Harris has found the model that lays the golden egg.

By hosting such a highly visited site and getting his face in all the papers, Harris has created a peerless platform for hawking his new book, sure to hit stores just in time for Christmas shopping.

Once again, Harris is undermining the good intentions of his Website.

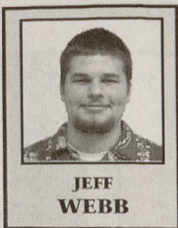
He is selfishly looking to increase book sales and fatten his own pocket-book off infertile women and curious visitors to his site.

For Harris, the blurred line between justified infertility assistance and unethical greed-based beauty auctions is a dotted one he is more than happy to sign on.

"Anything for a buck."

Eric Dickens is a junior English major.

YES Models can sell eggs if they choose; Harris not guilty of wrong



JEFF WEBB

A fashion photographer who has made a career out of taking pictures of beautiful women is looking into a career change. Ron Harris' Website, which debuted last Monday, is a virtual bar where the only things on tap are eggs from models that Harris has hand-picked.

Couples can bid on these eggs, which have the genes of current models. But despite how shallow and overpaid these prospective parents may seem, Harris and his bidders should have the right to continue this novelty.

The same American culture which has placed such a high priority on physical beauty has mandated those with money can have or do what they want — if they pay for it.

Called "Darwin's natural selection at its very best" by Harris' Website, bids for

eggs begin at \$15,000, but Harris already has been given a bid \$42,000 for one of the eggs. The models who participate in the auction receive the fee.

Beauty is their asset, and they have the right to profit from it. Federal law prohibits the sale of human organs but not sperm or eggs.

Some critics of the auction, including American Society of Reproductive Medicine spokesperson Sean Tipton, have said society has reached the point of accepting the idea of compensation for eggs or sperm but not a sliding scale on the basis of what attributes donors bring to the table.

Current sperm and egg donors have profiles available which include pictures, SAT scores, the donor's athletic ability and other traits prospective parents may consider important.

There is no harm in making couples pay more for superior merchandise.

The parents who invest in this scheme are making a loving gesture — a substantial pre-emptive monetary contribution to their

child's future before birth. Not many parents can display that kind of tangible love. There is nothing wrong with loving parents wanting to give their future little boy or girl a head start on their looks. These future children obviously are valued by their parents.

The only dangers presented to these trophy children are those of overbearing parents. How would the parents of a little girl feel if they paid the equivalent of an Ivy League college education for Heidi Klum's ova, but their daughter suffered from a weight problem?

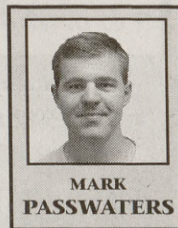
However, parents who resent their children not meeting expectations are not limited to ova customers. Any children of successful parents are subject to the same scrutiny. Of course, as Nancy Etcoff, an author on the subject of beauty, points out, paying for the genes of beautiful people is not a sure thing.

There is no guarantee these children will have the desirable traits of their biological predecessors. Parents must be aware of this before they pay.

The sperm of male models will soon appear for sale on the site, subject to the same conditions as the eggs currently for sale. So bargain-hunting parents, saddle up to the bar — this babe's for you!

Jeff Webb is a senior journalism major.

'Nazi' not term to be used nonchalantly



MARK PASSWATERS

In 1933, the National Socialist Workers Party came to power in Germany. Over the next 12 years this group of people committed possibly the greatest acts of genocide the world had ever witnessed.

Following the orders of their leader, Adolf Hitler, followers of his party's doctrine slaughtered tens of millions of people in the name of Aryan supremacy. In their minds, the "master race" was justified in eliminating anyone who stood in the way of their aims.

Sixty-six years later, the word "Nazi" is used casually. People attach it to those whom they do not agree with or are opposed to them.

When someone calls the Parking Traffic and Transportation services "parking Nazis," or Jerryinfeld refers to the "Soup Nazi," it can almost be excused as ignorance posing as humor. When educators refer to parts of the current governmental system they do not like as "Nazism," no excuses can be made.

As astounding as it sounds, more liberal members of society — including some teachers — have adapted this practice to describe those who they do not

agree with. Anyone who considers him or herself an educator should have a far better grasp of history.

Throwing the term "Nazi" around loosely not only is self-serving; it is unacceptable. Nazism is one of the most insidious concepts ever thought of, and people should respect the force such a word holds. Using "Nazi" to defame people of a different political viewpoint weakens society's memory of the lives lost at the hands of the real Nazis.

The basic premise of the National Socialism philosophy was found in the superiority of the German citizen.

As Hitler himself stated in his twisted testament *Mein Kampf*, Germans were the example of pure Aryanism and were superior to all other races of humanity. As a result, millions of "inferior" people were slaughtered.

Hitler's desires were stated plainly in his book, and his Nazi underlings carried them out with ruthless efficiency.

As a result, names like Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen are etched into our memories. Six million Jews and at least 15 million Slavs (most of them Russians) died at the hands of the Nazis less than 70 years ago.

What the Nazis did should still be firmly etched in our collective psyche, and the word "Nazi" should be used only in

the strongest of cases. Instead, some Americans use it as a label to condemn more conservative members of our society.

Anyone who uses such a word in this fashion should be given a history book to read.

Neo-Nazis and members of the Ku Klux Klan are deserving of this black mark; someone who has an "R" behind his or her name on C-SPAN does not.

What the Nazis did should be firmly etched in our memory.

Is there racism in this country? Without question. Could some still exist in the highest levels of government? Perhaps.

But saying those who do not like people of different skin colors are as evil as the people who rounded up millions and executed them is disgusting.

Individuals who refer to people who do not think like them as "Nazis" are in the business of self-inflation. Those who support programs many Republicans oppose have no business comparing the GOP members of the 105th Con-

gress to Heinrich Himmler, Rudolph Hess and Hermann Goering. While Republican views may be offensive to some, they do not deserve to be condemned in such a fashion. Neither does the guy at the corner store who says, "No soup for you!"

The horrors Nazi Germany inflicted should be taught to all students so it is not forgotten. Comparing Nazi crimes with such matters as not putting "mixed race" boxes on a birth certificate is not completing this task.

In fact, it actually helps to minimize their crimes. Disliking people for their skin color may not be acceptable, but neither is comparing them to people who slaughtered people because of their skin color.

This is still the United States, and people are still entitled to express their opinions, no matter how unsavory. The Nazis not only expressed their beliefs; they put them into practice. This crucial difference separates the Nazis from common society.

Minimizing the message and actions of the Nazis by comparing them to today's problems is horribly wrong and sets a frightening precedent. Eventually, what the word "Nazi" stood for will be garbled, increasing the chances someone will be allowed to repeat the Nazis' actions.

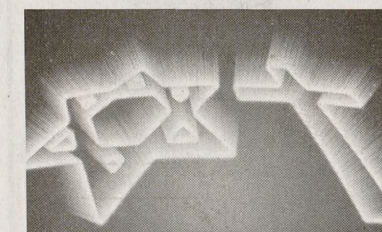
Mark Passwaters is an electrical engineering major.

MAIL CALL

Trying to convert others intolerant

In response to Chris Huffines Nov. 1 column.

Huffines' defense of the Southern Baptist Convention's resolution to increase efforts to convert other religions, namely the Jewish religion, is deplorable. As Abraham Foxman said, it is arrogant for any religion to believe itself the "correct" belief system.



ROBERT HYNCEK/THE BATTALION

It is even more arrogant for religions to impose their beliefs on anyone else.

The Southern Baptists' belief that Jewish beliefs are any less correct than Southern Baptists' own is the same kind of thinking which leads to, as Foxman put it, "the backdrop of intolerance towards Jews in Europe."

It is ridiculous for the Southern Baptists to think they help Jewish people by attempting to convert them. Jewish beliefs have been around for more than 2,000 years

and need no assistance from Southern Baptists. Huffines' statement that the Southern Baptist attempts at conversion are signs of respect is outrageous.

The attempt to change someone's beliefs, especially on their holy days, is like spitting in their face, not a sign of "love and respect" as Huffines puts it.

It is equally ignorant of Huffines to attack Foxman's support of Jewish solidarity an affront to Jewish people. Not supporting any group's solidarity is an attack on that group.

The Southern Baptists and every other denomination that actively converts must realize that if there is such a thing as the one correct belief system, be it religious in nature or not, everyone will come to it.

This will happen not because it has the best marketing division of all belief systems, but by its own virtue of being the one.

Terrell Rabb Class of '02

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