

The Hoax That Was Too Close for Comfort

The article's headline was absolutely shocking—"Maryland Middle School Requires Children to Cross Dress For 'LGBTQ Appreciation Day'"—and not surprisingly, the article quickly went viral.

The good news is that it was a hoax.

The bad news is that it was so close to reality, most readers took it seriously, and it was only after I read a few paragraphs into the article that I realized it wasn't true. This is a case of fiction being frighteningly close to the truth.

According to the article, posted last week on , "Parents in the town of St. Leonard, Md., were aghast after learning what the staff at Heritage Middle School required children to do for a passing grade. The outrage stems from an event held this past Monday, a day which the school had dubbed 'LGBTQ Appreciation Day' instructing children to experience the homosexual lifestyle for a single school day or receive a failing grade.

"Students were assigned the different roles throughout LGBTQ culture. Boys were given the task of being masculine homosexuals, feminine homosexuals, cross dressers and a wide variety of other gay archetypes. The young ladies were selected to be lip stick lesbians, or butch lesbians."

The article states that this was the brainchild of school principal Caren Shandel, described as "a longtime activist for gay rights" who "also holds the title of first openly transgendered school principal in the nation."

Shandel is quoted as saying, "For decades the conservative

majority has expressed nothing but hatred and disdain towards homosexuals and gay culture. Fortunately, progressive liberal reasoning has gained predominance which has enabled those of us within educational systems to re-educate and replace many of the antiquated ways in which people perceive homosexuals and their allies. ... I won't rest until there's an out-of-the-closet homosexual in every family!"

Unfortunately, there was enough in the article that sounded plausible for many people to believe every word of it, even though it got progressively outrageous.

A concerned mother sent me the link, asking if I had seen it, and when I replied that I believed it to be a hoax, she said she had initially believed it because of what she had already seen in her children's schools. It hardly seemed over the top to her.

After all, back in May, it was reported, "Parents of students at a Wisconsin elementary school are up in arms over the theme 'Gender Bender Day.'" Yes, "Tippecanoe School for the Arts and Humanities in Milwaukee recently celebrated School Spirit Week with a series of events for students in kindergarten through eighth grades. ... Members of the student council chose Friday as 'Gender Bender Day,' a voluntary event that called for boys to dress like girls and girls to dress like boys."

This time, the story was not a hoax.

Nor was it a hoax when the Pacific Justice Institute reported last month that parents at Florence High School, "located near Colorado Springs, became irate when they learned that a teenage boy was entering girls' bathrooms and, according to some students, even making sexually harassing comments toward girls he was encountering. When the parents confronted school officials, they were stunned to be told the boy's rights as a self-proclaimed transgender trumped their daughters' privacy rights. As the controversy grew, some students were threatened

by school authorities with being kicked off school athletic teams or charged with hate crimes if they continued to voice concerns.”

To repeat: This story was also not a hoax, nor was it a hoax when California Gov. Jerry Brown signed a bill into law this summer stating, “A pupil shall be permitted to participate in sex-segregated school programs and activities, including athletic teams and competitions, and use facilities consistent with his or her gender identity, irrespective of the gender listed on the pupil’s records.”

In other words, based entirely on the student’s self-perception, a 6’10” 18-year-old male senior could be convinced he is actually a woman and self-identify as such. He would then have the right to play on the girls’ basketball team and use the girls’ locker room, along with, of course, having use of the girls’ bathroom.

Did I say already this was not a hoax? And back in Maryland—the scene of the too-close-for-comfort hoax article—an LGBT-activist curriculum was introduced to the Montgomery county school system back in 2007, prompting John Garza to note in an editorial, “The curriculum presents the story of ‘Portia’ the boy who becomes a girl. When Portia finally becomes a girl, ‘she’ gets a key to the teachers’ unisex bathroom,” based on which he asks, “When our children follow the curriculum and chop off body parts, take hormones and ‘reassign their gender,’ won’t they expect the key to the bathroom like Portia?”

In light of stories like this, which could easily be multiplied (including the increasingly common stories of male homecoming queens and female homecoming kings), is it any wonder that so many readers were fooled by the hoax?

These days, the truth is almost as scary as the fiction.

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