

# Curiouser and curiouser'

October 2, 2010

My all time favorite television series is the "Andy Griffith Show." One of the most memorable lines in the series is when Andy says to Barney, "Things just keep getting curiouser and curiouser." I'm not sure "curiouser" is even a real word, but that Andyism sure sums up what's going on in the world around us today.

For example, the new U.S. Religious Knowledge Survey released this week by the Pew Foundation on Religion and Public Life finds that although 86 percent of us believe in God, "we don't know our own traditions or those of neighbors across the street or across the globe." Heck, the survey found that only 55 percent know the Golden Rule isn't one of the Ten Commandments.

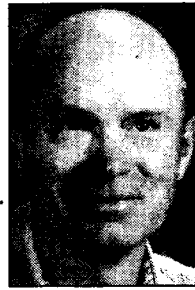
The strangest thing about the survey is that the highest scoring group was the atheist/agnostic contingent. They averaged 21 correct answers out of 32 questions while white evangelical Protestants scored 18 and white Catholics and white mainline Protestants got 16.

You can take a shorter version of the survey at <http://features.pewforum.org/quiz/us-religious-knowledge/> and compare your score to others in several different categories.

On the political front, there's an odd circumstance happening right now at Fox News. It faces a dilemma because the network has four potential Republican presidential candidates on its payroll (Sarah Palin,

Newt Gingrich, Mike Huckabee and Rick Santorum). That's every major contender except Mitt Romney. The politicians' paid contributor deals have caused a rift within Fox News because the candidates are contractually forbidden from appearing on another news channel. Politico observes that while "Fox offers an unparalleled platform to spout an unfiltered message to conservatives...some Fox employees are uneasy with the arrangement." Of course, if any of these candidates officially declares a run for the White House, they'd have to resign from Fox, but until then it looks like Romney has all the other news networks to himself.

Speaking of presidential politics, it's no secret that Bobby Jindal, the Republican Governor of Louisiana, has his eyes on a future try at the White House. It will be interesting how he'll explain why his state is recruiting hundreds of Filipino teachers through a placement service, which then charges "exorbitant application fees, transportation and housing costs and up to 30 percent of their salaries for their first two years." A lawsuit in federal court charges racketeering, human trafficking, extortion, and wire fraud. "It's close to slavery," says the lead attorney



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ney (USA Today).

Also on the education front, the Aquinas Academy girl's field hockey team (in Hampton, Pa.) decided to forfeit its game with Greensburg Catholic Central last week. Why? Because Greensburg CC has five boys on its girl's team. Aquinas said they'd play the game if Greensburg agreed to only have two boys on the field at a time, but Greensburg would not agree to that.

In case you wonder if boys playing on high school girls' teams is a random thing, according to the National Federation of State High School Associations, it's a growing trend. In 2008-2009 there were 174 boys on girls' teams and in 2009-2010 there were 308.

If those boys playing on girls' teams want a real challenge, maybe they should head to Spain and look into the sport of *correous*. Basically, this involves attaching burning sticks or fireworks to the horns of bulls and then letting the animals loose to chase people by seaside marinas and plunge them into the water. If you want to take part in this "sport" you'll have to hurry because Spanish officials are seeking to ban the activity.

Of course, if the boys decide to stay on girls' teams that means there will be fewer spots for the girls on

those squads. The good news is that this will give the girls time for an after-school job. According to USA Today, KFC is recruiting females to hand out coupons on college campuses while wearing sweatpants with "Double Down" in large letters across their rear ends. This is to promote the Double Down sandwich, a 540-calorie item. I have a question: If a worker eats enough of these to eventually qualify as a billboard, will she get paid more?

Finally, something from our buddies in China. On the one hand, the Chinese government is pursuing a plan that "would require foreign automakers to turn over new electric-vehicle technology as a condition of doing business in China" (Detroit Free Press).

On the other hand, China classifies itself as "developing" country and is collecting \$2.6 billion a year in aid from "donor" countries like Germany, France and Britain. This is in spite of the fact that it spent tens of billions of dollars hosting the 2008 Olympics (Associated Press).

So here you have a country collecting money from donors while spending money on frivolities and all the while trying to run an extortion scam. I tell you, Andy, it just keeps getting curiouser and curiouser.

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