

# OPINION PACES

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*Our*  
**VIEW**

## To sell or not to sell?

*Barnes and Noble stands by the First*

You may know it as the place where you buy your Sunday newspaper. Or the place where you buy a cup of coffee and occasionally study. Or, who knows, it may be the place where you actually buy books.

But, over the last few months, Barnes and Noble Booksellers has been earning a name for itself not only as a national retail bookstore chain but also as a champion of First Amendment rights.

This unexpected thrust into the spotlight has been the result of two photography books, a nationwide campaign and a refusal to submit to that campaign's demands:

The books are "The Age of Innocence" by David Hamilton and "Radiant Identities" by Jock Sturges. The campaign is being led by a group of conservatives who want to stop the sale of those books. And Barnes and Noble's resolve to continue selling those books have made headlines nationwide.

The flap over these books has come because they contain nude photos of children that many have called pornographic, and the sale of these books has resulted in the filing of obscenity charges against the chain in several states, most recently on Feb. 6 in Alabama.

And whether those books are deemed obscene in any or all of these places, Barnes and Noble should remain — in the eyes of anyone who supports the Bill of Rights — as an organization to be commended.

In the face of widespread criticism and protest, Barnes and Noble has refused to bow. In the face of potentially crippling press, Barnes and Noble has refused to change. Even in the face of criminal charges, Barnes and Noble has refused to tuck its tail and run.

Unlike countless other fixtures of corporate America, the owners of Barnes and Noble have stood by their beliefs and fought back against the scare tactics of protesters who would prefer to censor words, music and images that they find offensive.

Many of these protesters have claimed that in selling art that could offend some people, businesses are shirking their responsibilities to consumers. But Barnes and Noble has decided to practice another responsibility: Instead of protecting people from exposure to art, they have protected people's rights to choose which art they want to be exposed to.

In doing so, they have risked losing business and their reputation as purveyors of a family bookstore.

But they have earned a reputation as defenders of freedom of expression. And in an age where corporate America has tended to embrace financial gain over moral and ideological fortitude, that's a reputation that Barnes and Noble should be glad to have.

*Haney's*  
**VIEW**



## End of the world

*American culture full of pathetic trends*



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The end of the world is near. I'm serious. If some of the recent and pathetic trends in American culture aren't proof of this, I don't know what is.

To prove my point, let me compile a "top 10" list of American cultural anomalies that prove, without a doubt, the end of the world is near.

This won't be real a top 10 list, since the things I'll mention won't be in any specific order. There's also more than 10 of them.

However, this list will still prove my point:

1. Jenny McCarthy — True, she's a person, not a trend. Still, why is she so famous? She's the quintessential bimbo and is completely devoid of talent. Her inexplicable popularity is proof positive that the world will end soon.
2. Body piercing — Who decided that sticking pieces of metal through one's body was a good idea? Even more disturbing is the fact that this ridiculous trend has become so popular. What are people thinking? This trend is so infectious that even I must admit that I get turned on by pierced tongues (on women, that is).
3. Aaron Spelling — This man, without a doubt, is the Antichrist.

Anybody responsible for the twin terrors of "Beverly Hills 90210" and "Melrose Place" could be none other than a servant of the Dark One himself.

4. Sport-utility vehicles — Why such crappy-handling, inefficient and slow vehicles are so popular in a country with a good system of roads is beyond me. Lexus and Mercedes-Benz even make them. What the hell?

The world's supply of fossil fuels is rapidly disappearing, and people are lining up to buy vehicles that get about 10 miles to the gallon. The end, it seems, is near.

5. Disco — Didn't this music suck bad enough the first time around? Why has it made a comeback? Even worse are the unforgivably cheesy remix versions of some of these disco "classics."

I wonder when '80s hair-rock (like Poison and Dokken) will make a comeback? Mark my words, it will.

6. "The Jerry Springer Show" — The show itself is moderately sad, but the fact that people like the ones who appear on this show actually exist is frightening. They are proof that the world is, without a doubt, on its way to hell.

7. Gourmet coffee — Did you ever think you'd be able to pay \$9 for a pound of coffee? Well, now you can. I must agree with Dennis Leary, who said, "Whatever happened to coffee-flavored coffee?"

8. "Boogie Nights" — A movie about the ups and downs of being a porn star? That's a first. Marky Mark (I don't care if his name is Mark Wahlberg, he'll always be Marky Mark to me.) must have been really desperate to make this one.

Will this movie spawn a "movies about porno movies" craze? What's next, "The John Holmes Story?"

9. MTV's "The Real World" — If

this show's existence doesn't convince you that the world is at an end, nothing will. I once thought that this was the worst show on earth; no other show could possibly ever be worse. Then came "Road Rules."

10. Overpaid Pro Athletes — This bunch of narcissistic, problem-causing prima donnas makes having any interest in professional sports impossible. I'd rather watch a bunch of high-school kids playing for fun than these bums.

11. Garth Brooks — How this man came to sell as many albums as the Beatles is, quite frankly, beyond me. Oh well, at least he seems like a nice guy.

12. Tommy Hilfiger clothes — What are people thinking? This gaudy crap's popularity makes the Izod/Lacoste (remember the alligator?) craze of the '80s look like a minor fad.

13. 311 — We Nebraskans should be ashamed that these purveyors of such awful music come from within our borders. The American music-buying public must be really desperate for heroes.

14. Cellular phones — That people will spend tons of money to make routine local calls shows how pathetic this new status symbol is.

15. "South Park" — This show certainly displays that the apocalypse is just around the corner; that's all that needs to be said. Still, I love it.

Well, there you have it. I'm sure there are many other examples I could think of to prove my point; these are just the first ones that came to mind.

When will the end come? I don't know, but I'm sure it'll be very soon. Maybe I'm just overreacting. Maybe people's interest in and love of the stupid and mediocre doesn't signal the end of the world.

I doubt it, though.

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