

Grapevine

A BAMBOO SCHOOL BUS BIKE?



You've probably noticed thousands of dollars of bike powered by lycra lads on your local roads lately, but not the next big thing, yet. Elite bike builder Craig Calfee from the United States is now making a bamboo bike – well, the frame is bamboo. The bamboo, explains Calfee, undergoes a four-month smoking and tempering process. Calfee uses hemp soaked in epoxy resin for the joints. The Californian bike builder says his bamboo bikes have the lowest carbon footprint of any bike. Testing at the EFBe Prüftechnik bicycle testing laboratory in Germany shows that the bamboo frame provides better vibration absorption than is found in a carbon fibre frame, and is tougher than carbon fibre and less prone to fracturing, but with a price of \$2,695 for the mountain bike, that's US dollars and that's just for the frame, you're not likely to see many outside California – unless you're in Ghana. Calfee has founded Bamboosera, with the support of the Earth Institute of Columbia University, to develop a self-sustaining bamboo bike industry in the developing world. The innovation doesn't stop there. Calfee's next idea is a bamboo school bus bike with an adult at the front, and six or seven students pedalling behind – aka a peloton?

TEACHERS ON FACEBOOK

Facebook is back in the news after the *Warwick Daily News* reported in March that 'a series of raunchy photos were broadcast' on Facebook by two teachers from Warwick State High School in Queensland. Although access to the site had been restricted to 'friends,' according to ABC's *Media Watch*, those 'friends' included *Daily News* journalists Eloise Handley and Casandra Garvey. In a statement, Greg Dickman, Regional Director for the Queensland Department of Education's Darling Downs and South West regions, confirmed that a departmental investigation had found that neither teacher had breached departmental guidelines relating to the private use of social networking sites, but both teachers were reminded of the ongoing need to ensure all conduct in relation to the use of social networking sites was beyond reproach. Neither teacher had been suspended. The teachers have launched a defamation action against the *Daily News*. In Western Australia, meanwhile, 11 students from Leeming Senior High School (LSHS) in Perth's south were suspended after posting comments on a Facebook page that targeted Robyn Hodgkin, a female maths teacher at the school. Around 600 people signed up to the page. LSHS Principal Judy Semple told Perth radio station 6PR the page was shut down as soon as the identity of its creator was discovered and letters were sent to the parents of students whose names appeared on it.

CREATIONISM AND INTELLIGENT DESIGN

The South Australian Non-Government Schools Registration Board in December ruled that intelligent design and creationism are not suitable bases for a science curriculum in a SA non-government school. The board approved policy B4 in December last year: 'B4. *The teaching of science in relation to creationism and intelligent design*: The Board requires the teaching of science as an empirical discipline, focusing on inquiry, hypothesis, investigation, experimentation, observation and evidential analysis. The Board does not accept as

satisfactory a science curriculum in a non-government school which is based upon, espouses or reflects the literal interpretation of a religious text in its treatment of either creationism or intelligent design.' Christian Schools Australia Chief Executive Stephen O'Doherty told the *Sydney Morning Herald's* Malcolm Brown that Christian schools will campaign against the policy. Creationism and intelligent design were the only subjects specifically banned by the board, O'Doherty observed.

FINANCIAL LITERACY IN SCHOOLS?

'I feel the work is shallow; the thinking and execution of it is lazy and, most damn-ingly, it is not based on, or executed to, a campaignable idea.' That's the view of Graham Ford, who was the marketing boss of the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (CBA) until his abrupt departure in 2003, commenting on CBA's ongoing ad campaign. Ford dumped on CBA's campaign in an article in the *Australian*. The ads show shallow and lazy ad men from a United States agency spruiking dumb ads to a senior fictional CBA marketer. In the latest instalment, the US agency spruiks the bank in front of a classroom of bemused students, with no mention of CBA's StartSmart financial literacy program or even Dollarmites money boxes. Ford's problem? 'When I was discussing this with a fellow marketer recently, she said her problem with the ads was that she was just waiting for the senior fictional CBA marketer portrayed in the ads to wise up and fire the US agency for serial incompetence. I had to admit I had the same idea for the non-fictional one.' Then again, the ads of every other bank just show happy, smiling people with the ubiquitous we're-a-bank-but-we're-different-and-we-care tag line. Maybe CBA's parody of shallow and lazy ad men has a deep and, um, hard-working message.

The Grapevine is written by Steve Holden, Editor of Teacher.