



# Princeton Alumni Weekly

LETTER TO THE EDITORS –  
THE NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE

## PROFESSIONAL FAILURE

Re: "Journey to the Center of the World",  
NY Times Magazine, 23 February 2014.

Dear Editors:

In my opinion, despite a well written article, you failed professionally.

Let me explain:

Quietly, over a quarter century, the Museum of History in Granite evolved. It is the only one on this planet. It does not advertise. Comments from notables include "*Worthy of the Pharaohs*" and "*...an extraordinary monument to all humankind... done so with class and thoroughness.*"

The States of Arizona and of New Hampshire apparently agree since both officially requested that the Museum of History in Granite become a World Heritage Site.

Granite monuments tell the history of Humanity, of the United States and of other subjects. There is still an untold story here.

Since scholarship apparently did not suffice, you opted wrong-headedly for the sensational.

You unearthed a whimsical thirty year old idea "Center of the World" and used it inaccurately to describe the Museum of History in Granite. In the process, you relegated a fine museum to a roadside attraction.

A pyramid built 28 years ago to illustrate a children's fable is not part of the museum, whose aim is education. The museum carefully separates whimsy and scholarship. Harping on whimsy, you did not.

As for describing me as "weird, wonderful and old", weird is insulting and damages by implication our educational efforts; wonderful is condescending, particularly when following weird, and old, as you see here, is not applicable to my frame of mind.

Trusting you will consider running a tabloid, I am,

Yours sincerely,  
Jacques-Andre Istel  
7 March 2014