

In those wretched countries where a man cannot call his tongue his own, he can scarce call anything his own. Whoever would overthrow the liberty of a nation must begin by subduing the freeness of speech.

Benjamin Franklin
(1706 - 1790)

Phactum

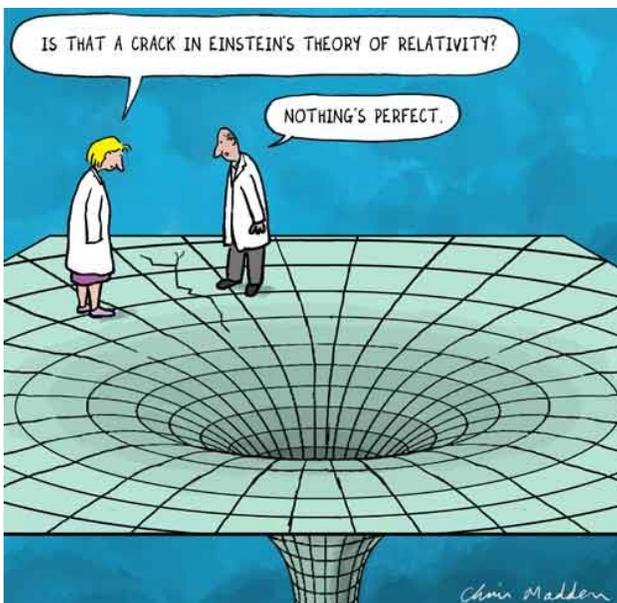
The Newsletter and Propaganda Organ of the
Philadelphia Association for Critical Thinking
November /December 2010

editor: Ray Haupt email: phactpublicity@aol.com
Webmaster: Wes Powers <http://phact.org/>

PhACT Meeting - Saturday, November 20, 2010 at 2:00 PM

Dr. David Cattell, Chairman of the Physics Department of Community College of Philadelphia, will host Prof. Dave Goldberg, Drexel University Department of Physics for a discussion of

COSMOLOGY AND CRACKPOTS



Cartoon by Chris Madden
<http://www.chrismadden.co.uk>
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At Community College of Philadelphia in the Small Auditorium in the Bonnell Building. Enter on 17th street about 300 feet south of Spring Garden Street. This meeting is free and open to the public.

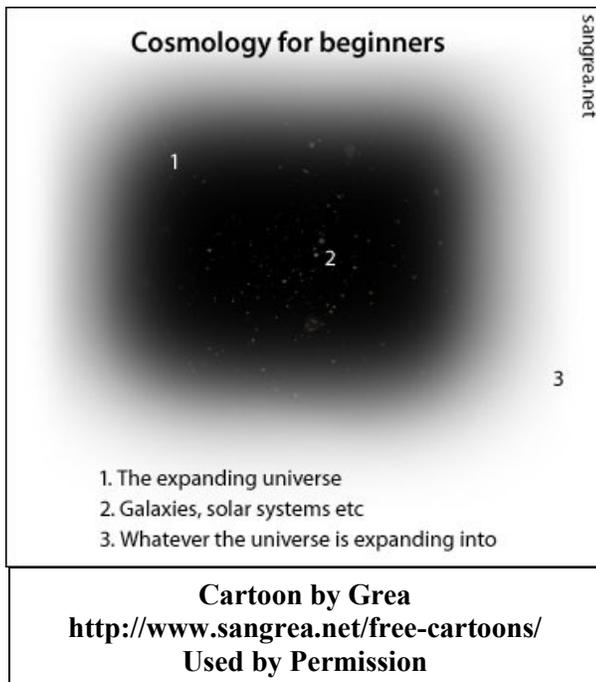
The standard model of cosmology has converged with tremendous precision over the last several decades. Experiment after experiment confirms that we live in a very strange universe; one filled with dark matter and dark energy. Because we don't actually know what either of these two substances fundamentally are, any and all claims about the universe are often met with abject dismissal by members of the public, usually based on the assumption that the "dark" means that we know nothing at all. In this talk, Prof. Goldberg will discuss how and why we believe that dark matter and dark energy is real, describe some interactions from his "Ask a Physicist" column, and (perhaps most importantly to this group) talk about the real problems that cosmological physics has yet to answer.

(Continued on page 2)

"Nothing does reason more right, than the coolness of those that offer it: For Truth often suffers more by the heat of its defenders, than from the arguments of its opposers. "

~ William Penn (1644 - 1718)

Dave Goldberg is the author, with Jeff Blomquist, of *A User's Guide to the Universe: Surviving the Perils of Black Holes, Time Paradoxes, and Quantum Uncertainty*, and author of io9.com's "Ask a Physicist" column. He is an Associate Professor of Physics at Drexel University, working on issues in theoretical and observational cosmology.

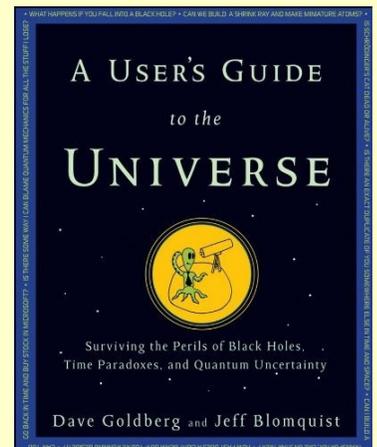


A User's Guide to the Universe: Surviving the Perils of Black Holes, Time Paradoxes, and Quantum Uncertainty

By Dave Goldberg and Jeff Blomquist

Hardcover: 304 pages \$24.95
Publisher: Wiley (February 22, 2010)
ISBN-10: 0470496517 ISBN-13: 978-0470496510

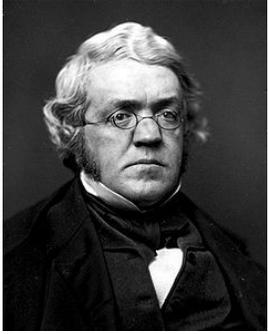
With a large measure of humor and a minimum of math (one equation), physics professor Goldberg and engineer Blomquist delve into the fascinating physics topics that rarely make it into introductory classes, including time travel, extraterrestrials, and "quantum weirdness" to prove that physics' "reputation for being hard, impractical, and boring" is wrong by at least two-thirds: "Hard? Perhaps. Impractical? Definitely not... But boring? That's where we really take issue." Breaking up each topic into common sense questions ("How many habitable planets are there?" "What is Dark Matter?" "If the universe is expanding, what's it expanding into?"), the duo provides explanations in everyday language with helpful examples, analogies, and Blomquist's charmingly unpolished cartoons. Among other lessons, readers will learn about randomness through gambling; how a Star Trek-style transporter might function in the real world; and what may have existed before the Big Bang. Despite the absence of math, this nearly-painless guide is still involved and scientific, aimed at science hobbyists rather than science-phobes; it should also prove an ideal reference companion for more technical classroom texts. 100 b&w photos.



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I think that in the discussion of natural problems we ought to begin not with the Scriptures, but with experiments, and demonstrations.
~ Galileo Galilei (1564 - 1642)



There are thousands of thoughts lying within a man that he does not know till he takes up the pen and writes.

~ **William Makepeace Thackeray**

William Makepeace Thackeray (1811 - 1863) was born in Calcutta, India where his father was an official in the British East India Company. Thackeray was an English novelist and satirist highly regarded in Victorian England ranking second only to Charles Dickens. Unfortunately, during the last decade of his life, Thackeray suffered poor health possibly induced by his dislike of exercise and an addiction to hot peppers and alcohol. Nonetheless, Thackeray is right that there are thousand of thoughts lying

with a man. We encourage you to take pen in hand to put thoughts on paper and achieve eupathy through creativity and contemplation rather than red peppers.

You are invited to participate in Phactum. Constructive letters and articles are always desired and the possibility of topics is endless and includes recipes for great chili. Consider investigating a topic that interests or bugs you, write it up, and send it in. Castigation of the editor is encouraged, as are suggested improvements to Phactum, letters of opinion, and original poetry.

Letters to the Editor

Editor: In the "Various Ruminations" of the Sept. 2010 issue, you address Stephen's Ark. I'd like to respond, by way of moderating. That "the long-term future of the human race must be in space" is a rather vague proposition, but it is inarguable that "space" is the sale alternative to humanity having "all its eggs in one basket."

I propose that we need not jump straight to extremes. "In space" might well mean NEAR space, such as in space stations just far enough away to preserve "human life" from impending catastrophe. We don't necessarily need "to transport a significant civilization to a new location," but merely to set up an emergency retreat for short-term use by a relatively small population. Sure, there would be major issues to contend with, but if faced with extinction, couldn't we muster the support to save "just enough" of life here on Earth to give it a new start again (also here on Earth), after things settle? To "re-seed" our planet, so to speak?

Sure, it's Sci-Fi, but why couldn't we spend some time studying and planning and running supercomputer analyses, just to see what such an effort would require, what sort of self-sustaining temporary retreats we could possibly build, and thrash out the arguments now, while we (apparently) have a little time to spare? Many of Jules Verne's ideas were pure Sci-Fi when he wrote them down, yet there are a few that we've managed to bring to fruition in the generations since.

Hawkings is one of our modern Vernes, offering just enough of an idea for the rest of us to debate, develop, and maybe even solve, after untold cycles of thought and revision. I think that his premise is worth taking seriously, even if

we can't yet see an immediate practical application.

Paul Schlueter III
Dallas, PA

Editor: Re: "Casino Stats - Why Gamblers Rarely Win" (Phactum, October 2010, page 6): Casino gamblers rarely win? I don't know that that's true and I am willing to bet that it's not. Casinos take in more than they give out, but that's not the same thing. If by "rarely" you mean, say, fewer than one in twenty, I am willing to bet that more than one in twenty gamblers walks out of the casino a winner.

The referenced website article makes the claim in its title but offers no evidence for that specific claim and doesn't repeat it in the body of the article. Dollars to donuts--or vice versa--the title is just Investopedia.com's sloppy way of saying that gambling is not a good investment (though maybe casinos are!). Please offer any evidence for the claim if you have it.

I'm hoping against hope that you stop publishing so much gambling material. I reckon the odds are not in my favor.
Howard J. Wilk
Philadelphia

Editor: I read something in Skeptic, Vol 15, No 4, titled "Truth vs. Truths." William Gardner made some very interesting distinctions in four different modes of seeking/proving "truth." He coins the domain names "Rhetorica," "Mystica," "Logica," and "Empirica," and then goes on to show how each represents a different part of human heritage. Rhetorica includes debate, Law, Politics, etc. Mystica is both religion and mythology. Logica includes the Greek/Roman philosophical logic, as well as the mathematical sciences. Empirica involves experimental sciences, technological R&D, etc. As

Gardner states it, each has its unique set of protocols, and its own standards of judgement, which he feels goes a long way toward explaining why ideas from one domain can be totally incompatible with their counterparts from another.

I had previously thought primarily of two domains; the Spiritual/Supernatural, and the Rational/Scientific. I can appreciate the distinction Gardner adds between Logica and Empirica. More interesting, from my philosophical perspective, is that he sets Rhetorica (esp. Law) apart from the others as he does. I've long felt that Law needs to be "addressed" from a skeptical viewpoint (having acted as my own counsel in my civil case, perforce of financial limitations, I've had a taste of "performing" that particular art- and though I've been told that I have a talent for it, I find it supremely distasteful!) I could go on for pages and pages (as I am sometimes known to do), but let's just say that it helps me cope with my distaste for Law (in general practice thereof) to think of it as its own domain, separate from Logica and Empirica. I'd like to read what Phactum Readers think of Gardner's ideas, esp. those with more formal training in Philosophy than I muddle by with. Is his idea original, or derivative? Are his domains sufficient, or should they include a few more that he (and I) don't happen to be thinking of just now?

Paul Schlueter III
Dallas, PA

Editor: In my "Developments in Paleontology" piece, (Phactum, September 2010, page 19), it says, "*We appeared in Europe about 4.4Kya;*" the decimal point is a mistake, probably an ink flake from my typewriter ribbon, that was accidentally scanned into that location.

I'd hate to provide fodder for the Young Earthers! It should have read 44Kya. To bring things even further up to date, Svante Pääbo, of the Max Planck Institute of Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig, Germany, has been reported to have sequenced 60% of the Neanderthal genome. According to Archaeology magazine-(Jul/Aug-2010, "Neanderthal-Genome Decoded; 'by Zach Zorich), preliminary studies show that all non-African modern humans share a small percentage of Neanderthal genes, This is extrapolated to indicate that homo sapiens who left Africa around 100Kya to 80Kya

The Paleolithic hunters who painted the unsurpassed animal murals on the ceiling of the cave at Altamira had only rudimentary tools. Art is older than production for use, and play older than work. Man was shaped less by what he had to do than by what he did in playful moments. It is the child in man that is the source of his uniqueness and creativeness, and the playground is the optimal milieu for the unfolding of his capacities.

~ Eric Hoffer (1902 - 1983)

"encountered Neanderthals in the Middle East, where the two populations interbred before homo sapiens moved into the rest of Eurasia." Though only five population groups were actually compared in this study, neither of the two African groups showed Neanderthal DNA, because "either people did not move back into Africa once they left, or the DNA of those who did come back was diluted in [Africa's] large human gene pool."

Homo species may well have flowed from Africa in something more like a stream than isolated migratory pulses. Current evidence suggests that the Neanderthals actually evolved in Europe and the Near East, while Sapiens first appear in the fossil record as an Eastern African species, before gradually migrating throughout the modern world, and there is now some DNA evidence that those of us who left Africa interbred with Neanderthals as we dispersed. Many further details are expected as researchers adopt better, faster methods of analyzing ancient DNA, and more precisely trace the unique genetic heritages of distinct modern regional populations.

Paul Schlueter III
Dallas, PA

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Various Ruminations

Collected/Written by Ray Haupt
(with help from others)

Vaccine critic "Dr. Bob" Sears blasted again.

The following is from Dr. Stephen Barrett's Consumer Health Digest of October 14, 2010.

Rahul K. Parikh, M.D., has looked closely the irresponsible advice given by "Dr. Bob" Sears in his book, *The Vaccine Book*. The book's centerpiece is "Dr. Bob's Alternative Schedule," which spreads vaccines over 21 visits instead of the standard 13. Parikh notes that Sears repeatedly uses "soft science, circular logic, rumors, and outright falsehoods" and that his book is "nothing more than an anti-vaccine book blanketed in a soft, sympathetic and homespun style."

[Parikh RK. Face-off with the bestselling vaccine guru. Salon.com, Oct 13, 2010]

http://www.salon.com/news/autism/?story=/mwt/feature/2010/10/13/vaccine_book_sears

Last year, in a stinging editorial, Paul Offit, M.D. and a colleague pointed out that Sears's schedule is dangerous because it significantly increases the time during which children are susceptible to vaccine-preventable diseases. [Offit P, Moser CA. The problem with Dr Bob's alternative vaccine schedule. Pediatrics,

Jan 2009]

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/123/1/e164>

Phactum readers and members might recall that Dr. Paul Offit was PhACT's speaker at the meeting of February 16, 2008. Dr. Offit is a researcher at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

To be fair, Dr. Bob Sears is a well credentialed pediatrician and comes from a family of physicians and nurses currently in practice. Their website is :

<http://www.askdrsears.com/>

Quackwatch and Dr. Barrett need your help. If you haven't already done so, please read <http://www.ncahf.org/digest07/07-48.html> and send a contribution to support his

More about Vaccines - Science Solving Problems

On Wednesday, November 3, 2010 I had the good fortune to attend a lecture at the historic Philadelphia College of Physicians. The lecturer, Dr. Stanley Plotkin, is well known in the world of vaccine researchers and virology, and may aptly be described as a pioneer in that field. Doctor Plotkin was Professor of Pediatrics and Microbiology at University of Pennsylvania, Professor of Virology at Wistar Institute in Philadelphia, and was Director of Infectious Diseases at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. He has held many other positions in the United States, Europe, and Africa and is recipient of many prestigious awards.

Dr. Plotkin developed the rubella vaccine (German measles) now in standard use throughout the world, is codeveloper of a new pentavalent rotavirus vaccine (rotavirus cause severe and possibly fatal diarrhea in infants) , and has worked extensively on other vaccines including anthrax, oral polio, rabies, varicella (chicken pox), and cytomegalovirus (a herpes virus that cause cell enlargement).

Dr. Plotkin discussed the history of vaccines from the end of the 18th Century to the present, weaving a fascinating story of major and minor discoveries that have improved much of the world causing many deadly diseases to now be rare or even eradicated in countries where modern medicine is in common use.

He said that he had worked during what might be called the "Golden Age" of vaccine development. That could be

"NAME ANY WORLD PROBLEM AND I CAN TELL YOU THAT, ALTHOUGH SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY *MAY NOT* SOLVE IT, ANYTHING ELSE *CANNOT* SOLVE IT."

~ ISAAC ASIMOV, 1975

very true in that a host of communicable diseases have been largely controlled in the last half century, but many diseases do remain to be conquered, and they shall be, one by one. Perhaps we shall even be hearing of vaccines against cancer in the near future.

Interestingly, Philadelphia is a hotbed of vaccine research at University of Pennsylvania, Wistar Institute, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, and at many of the major pharmaceutical companies in the Philadelphia area. Dr. Paul Offit, a vaccine pioneer in his own right, was in attendance at this lecture as well as many other vaccinologists in the Philadelphia area.

In his presentation Dr. Plotkin dwelt mainly upon the successes of vaccines as they have developed, but he did also briefly discuss the Cutter Incident, a disaster in 1955 where live polio virus was mistakenly included in a batch of Salk Polio Vaccine. Of the children who received the contaminated vaccine, 40,000 developed abortive poliomyelitis (a form of the disease that does not involve the central nervous system), 56 developed paralytic poliomyelitis and of these 5 children died as a result of polio infection.

This lecture, informative in its own right, was meant to introduce an ambitious project of the Philadelphia College of Physicians to establish a website dedicated to dissemination of accurate information about the history of vaccines, about availability, benefits, dangers, and about misinformation and mythology inciting fear of vaccination which is by no means a new controversy, and to give updates of new developments.

The website at <http://www.historyofvaccines.org> is well worth visiting and bookmarking.

MCHUMOR.com by T. McCracken



"This doesn't look good. I'm afraid you've developed an immunity to placebos."

Cartoon by T. McCracken
<http://www.mchumor.com/>
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Airport Body Scans

On a recent trip I went through the usual security procedure at the air terminal in El Paso, Texas. It was slightly different this time in that I was then selected to have a full body scan. I was no more disreputable looking than usual on that day so I presume I was tagged as “it” in a random selec-

MCHUMOR.COM by T. McCracken



“You know this is going to be the fifth flight this month you’ve made me miss my flight.”

Cartoon by T. McCracken
<http://www.mchumor.com/>
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tion process. It was painless and took about 20 seconds plus a somewhat longer wait to be informed that I was clear to proceed about my business.

As I was putting on my shoes I did notice that a well dressed woman, not at all sinister in appearance, had also been selected, but in her case the electronic body scan was deemed not enough and she was subjected to a “pat down” process by a female TSA officer. She did not seem unduly perturbed but it is easy to project that some people might be highly offended by this, as the process was quite intimate in full public view. Would it be so big a deal for TSA to provide some portable modesty screens for more timid passengers?

Two days later at a physics class sponsored by the Wagner Free Institute of Science, Dr. Paul Angillilo happened to explain that form of imaging. The process is safe as the portion of the electromagnetic spectrum employed cannot cook or otherwise modify the cells in your body. No doubt, however, that books will be written to propagate fear of mutated cells and vaporization of dental fillings.

On that same day a New York Times journalist, Joe

Sharkey, related his experience with the same kind of apparatus at O’Hare International Airport in Chicago.

<http://finance.yahoo.com/news/Opt-Out-of-a-Body-Scan-Then-nytimes-3016411705.html?x=0>

And Speaking of the Electromagnetic Spectrum - Have You Heard of “iRenew”?

Do you have a problem with strength and balance? Do you fatigue easily? Then perhaps you might consider the iRenew Energy Balance System. Or perhaps not.



iRenew is a plastic bracelet selling for the sum of only \$19.95 plus shipping and handling at \$7.95. But WAIT!!! Order now and you get one FREE. Just add an additional \$7.95 for shipping handling. This product can be purchased at the iRenew official website: <https://www.buyirenew.com>

iRenew advertises that its product **MAY** promote strength, balance, and endurance and that iRenew products are infused with BioField Technology designed to balance your personal energy system and improve your quality of life. iRenew works by manipulating the human biofield which is a portion of the electromagnetic spectrum so subtle as to be undetectable by any known technology. Astounding!!



iRenew bracelets

iRenew bracelets are hardly unique products. Q-Ray bracelets are similar in claimed intent and function, varying only that they are more expensive and a bit more attractive as jewelry. Dr. Stephen Barrett, founder of the Quackwatch website, has

thoroughly investigated the claims of Q-Ray. Q-Rays also occupy an undetectable band in the electromagnetic spectrum.

<http://www.quackwatch.com/01QuackeryRelatedTopics/phonyAds/qray.html>

Do you remember some years ago when copper bracelets were believed by some to endow the wearer with relief of arthritic conditions? That claim has long been disproved although it is true that while copper does have various medical uses the wearing of a copper bracelet to lessen arthritic pain is not one of them.

And then there were the “healing cards” that were sold by the Gentle Wind Project, a rather mean spirited mind control cult. Healing cards are meant to be held between the hands as if praying and employ a proprietary “technology” designed to correct energy flow and balance. This is bunk, of course, and the Maine Supreme Court agreed when Gentle Wind Project was sued by the state attorney general. For more on this topic see page 10 of Phactum, March 2007.

<http://phact.org/data/phactums/Phactum%202007-03.pdf>

Soundbites

Compiled by Becky Strickland

► "The most notorious Tea Party candidate, Delaware's Christine O'Donnell, rejects evolution and opposes stem cell research and, more creatively, chimera research - which with typical cluelessness she thinks means growing human brains in mice." New Scientist, October 19, 2010, in an opinion column titled 'Irrationality Strikes Back', written by staff writer Chris Mooney.

► "I did get a kind note from a Cheyenne-Arapaho friend of mine, saying that everyone she knew who had resorted to tribal remedies had died almost immediately, and suggesting that if I was offered any Native American medicines I should move as fast as possible in the opposite direction. Some advice can actually be taken." Christopher Hitchens, currently being treated for throat cancer, discussed the unsolicited advice he's received since being diagnosed. Granulated essence of peach pit, testosterone supplements, and macrobiotic diet have been suggested as remedies, along with the idea that he have himself cryogenically frozen until a magic bullet has been found. Hitchens asks that we join the fight against religious maniacs who are against using already existing embryos for stem cell research. Vanity Fair, November, 2010, Tumortown, pg 120.

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SCIENCE : 1907



SCIENCE : 2007



Cartoon by TFD.
<http://toothpastefordinner.com>

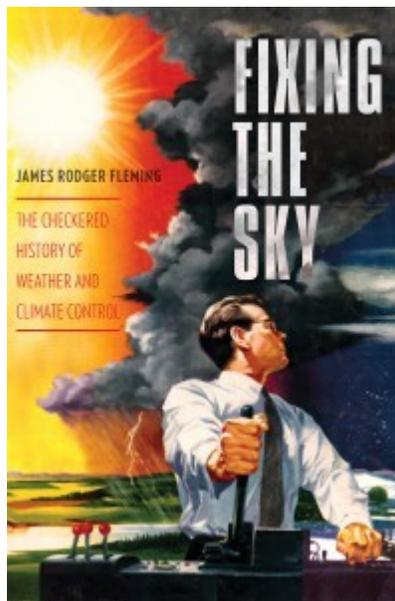
Fixing the Sky: The Checkered History of Weather and Climate Control

By James Rodger Fleming

Publisher: Columbia University Press (September 14, 2010)

Hardcover: 344 pages \$27.95

ISBN-10: 0231144121 ISBN-13: 978-0231144124



As alarm over global warming spreads, a radical idea is gaining momentum. Forget cuts in greenhouse gas emissions, some scientists argue. Instead, bounce sunlight back into space by pumping reflective nanoparticles into the atmosphere. Launch mirrors into orbit around the Earth. Make clouds thicker and brighter to create a "planetary thermostat."

These ideas might sound like science fiction, but in fact they are part of a very old story. For more than a century, scientists, soldiers, and charlatans have tried to manipulate weather and climate, and like them, today's climate engineers wildly exaggerate what is possible. Scarcely considering the political, military, and ethical implications of managing the world's climate, these individuals hatch schemes with potential consequences that far outweigh anything their predecessors might have faced.

Showing what can happen when fixing the sky becomes a dangerous experiment in pseudoscience, James Rodger Fleming traces the tragicomic history of the rainmakers, rain fakers, weather warriors, and climate engineers who have been both full of ideas and full of themselves. Weaving together stories from elite science, cutting-edge technology, and popular culture, Fleming examines issues of health and navigation in the 1830s, drought in the 1890s, aircraft safety in the 1930s, and world conflict since the 1940s. Killer hurricanes, ozone depletion, and global warming fuel the fantasies of today. Based on archival and primary research, Fleming's original story speaks to anyone who has a stake in sustaining the planet.



Mark your calendar for the 2011 Philadelphia Science Festival!

April 15 - April 28, 2011

Programs and exhibitions will take place throughout the city's many neighborhoods, fueled by the best scientific and educational resources the region has to offer--all geared towards making science interesting, relevant, and fun.

Science Carnival

The Festival will open with an outdoor carnival on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway on April 16, 2011. This celebration of sciences will be highlighted by hands-on exhibits, science-themed performances and demonstrations, and family-oriented science entertainment. The Free Library of Philadelphia—a Science Festival partner organization—will host its annual Book Festival on the same day, making the Benjamin Franklin Parkway an unrivaled destination for family-friendly informal learning opportunities.

Neighborhood Science

Science outreach programs will take place in every neighborhood in Philadelphia over the course of the first week of the Science Festival. Through partnerships with each of the large science centers in the city and all partnering colleges and universities, programming will take place throughout Philadelphia so that every city resident has an opportunity in his or her neighborhood to engage directly in a Philadelphia Science Festival event or activity.

Science Conversations

Focusing on direct interactions between scientists and other residents, Science Conversations will feature lecture events, panel discussion, etc. from the city's finest scientists, as well as science discussions from award-winning scientists in untraditional settings such as bars and restaurants.

Stay tuned into the official website at: <http://www.philsciencefestival.org/>

This event is organized by The Franklin Institute in cooperation with many major science, education, cultural, business, and governmental organizations.

Major sponsors are: Dow Chemical Company, University of Pennsylvania, Drexel University, LaSalle University, and University of the Sciences

Core collaborators for this event are:

The City of Philadelphia
The Franklin Institute
The Academy of Natural Sciences
American Philosophical Society
Chemical Heritage Foundation
The College of Physicians
of Philadelphia
Drexel University
The Free Library of Philadelphia
Independence Seaport Museum

La Salle University
Monell Chemical Senses Center
The College of Physicians of
Philadelphia - Mutter Museum
New Jersey Academy for
Aquatic Sciences
Philadelphia Zoo
Pennsylvania Horticultural Society
Philadelphia University
Please Touch Museum

The School District of Philadelphia
Temple University
University of Pennsylvania
University of Pennsylvania Museum
of Archaeology and
Anthropology
University of the Sciences
The Wagner Free Institute of
Science
The Wistar Institute

October 2010 Meeting Report

By Said Elmenyawy

"Myths of Psychology and Child Rearing"

People who have children or work with children should have attended a lecture given by Dr. Catherine Fiorello in October. Dr. Fiorello is an Assistant Professor and Director of the Psychological Studies in Education Program at Temple University. Using her experience as a researcher, she addressed issues that have been asked by many parents.

She started with the question "Will boosting a child's self-esteem lead to a better life?" Her negative answer puzzled many at first but understanding followed as she continued with the explanation that success comes first and that leads to high self-esteem. Kids should be supported to succeed and high self-esteem should follow as a result.

She then moved to: "Will cutting out sugar cure my child's hyperactivity?" And the answer surprisingly enough was "No"! Children's hyperactivity is often observed in situations that are chaotic and irregular - parties and celebrations where sugary treats are accompanied by caffeine in sodas along with games, noise and lots of stimulation. Dr. Fiorello stated double-blind studies showed parents were not able to identify when their children had sugar based on their behavior. She noted that although there are other sound reasons to cut down on sugar, its influence on behavior is just a persistent myth. [This issue was also addressed by Dr. Marie Savard, medical contributor, on ABC news Halloween morning.]

Questions about children's success in school were then reviewed: "Will holding children back in the first grade (or any other grade where they appear to be struggling academically) benefit them?" Dr. Fiorello explained that any slight boost that was gained by repeating the same material would be washed away by the following year but children who have been retained in the same grade often suffer emotionally later. They are older, often taller and mature sexually before the other students in their classes, and tend to feel out of place. Studies have shown that children who are struggling, but are promoted anyway, do well if given a little extra support.

Many parents obsessed with finding ways to make their

children smarter think that their children will have a higher IQ if they are breastfed. There are plenty good reasons to breastfeed children but boosting IQ is not one of them. Although children who were breastfed tend to have higher IQ's than bottle fed babies, research shows that mothers with higher IQ's and education levels are far more likely to breast feed than mothers with high school educations.

Fiorello then reviewed the correlation between spanking and obedience and explained that spanking can temporarily suppress bad behavior but can encourage lying to get out of punishment. Also, when children are spanked for behaving badly, acceptable alternative behavior is not being taught. Catherine suggested an effective method instead of spanking: place the child somewhere boring for a 'time out'. (One minute for each year of the child's age is recommended.)

The next issue she addressed was matching instruction to each child's learning style, a very hot idea in many schools currently. This philosophy assumes that each of us has one learning style that we favor – visual, auditory, etc. Research has shown that instructional modality should match the concepts being taught, not the learning styles of the

students. Some concepts should be taught visually, for example. Multisensory instruction helps everyone.

Parents often wonder if teaching children about sex makes them promiscuous. Dr. Fiorello clarified this issue for her listeners explaining that kids who receive comprehensive sex education are no more likely to have sex than those who do not receive such education; the difference is that children who received sex education are more likely to use contraception.

After this discussion, she moved on to teaching children about homosexuality. People have wondered in the past if teaching about homosexuality makes children gay and Catherine busted this myth. Homosexuality is not a choice and teaching about it provides children with much needed support. Although it often appears that some children 'decide' they are gay after such instruction, they are actually responding to the information and support that's been offered. Such support may prevent suicides. She pointed out gay teens are one of only a few minority groups that may not share their minority status with their families, a very lonely



Cartoon by Chris Madden
<http://www.chrismadden.co.uk/moon/jigsaw.html>

place to be.

The lecture reviewed the issue of whether DARE programs cut down on alcohol and drug use by students. Quite often schools do things because the community thinks those things are important and not because they work. DARE actually increases drug experimentation in schools.

From clear “yes” and “no” answers to her questions Fiorello moved to more complex issues. She took time to explain that teaching to the test can be a waste of time if the preparation is to take a standardized test of low level skills. If the test is an authentic assessment of real learning then teaching to the test is really good and useful.

Dr. Fiorello finished her lecture by examining the so called ‘epidemic of autism’, possibly the most controversial topic in child development today. In the early 1940’s when the first child was diagnosed, the diagnostic criteria was very narrow and required a significant degree of impairment. Currently the criteria is very broad - autism spectrum disorder -and includes milder types such as Asperger’s syndrome, a condition that was not diagnosed as anything decades ago. ***

Dr. Fiorello tackled important issues during her lecture and while some of them have been identified as clear-cut questions, others appear to have no definite response. Catherine did a wonderful job explaining and clarifying findings from psychology and education fields related to raising children and her lecture was greatly appreciated.

*** For a story on the first child diagnosed with autism, see “Autism’s First Child”, *Brain in the News*, a free publication of The Dana Foundation, October 2010. (www.dana.org) The article describes the life of Donald Gray Triplett, 77, of Forest, Mississippi.

Said Elmenyawy is a Physics student of Dr. David Cattell at Philadelphia Community College.

Addendum to Said Elmenyawy’s report by Becky Strickland

Failing to think critically can hurt people, it’s especially important to think critically when children are involved. Dr Fiorello’s lecture, with up to date research based information, was invaluable.

As the question & answer session showed, people can be reluctant to give up cherished views, especially if they know of an example to the contrary. (And there are always those) We all want to think we can depend on our intuition and direct experience but when multiple research studies tell us differently, we should rethink our beliefs.

In the Philadelphia Inquirer, October 17th, the day after Fiorello’s talk, Michael Smerconish applied critical thinking to the current ‘epidemic of bullying.’ He pointed out when shark attacks were dominating the news in the summer of 2001, actual attacks were declining, and fell again in

2002. He quotes Dr. Joseph Wright, senior vice president of the Children’s National Medical Center and past chair of the American Academy of Pediatrics’ violence protection committee, who reported a recent review found “no dramatic shifts in the overall epidemiologic prevalence of bullying in the US over the last decade.” Both Smerconish and Wright suggest the usual critical thinking errors are behind the apparent increase. One of them is, much like autism, that the definition of bullying may have been broadened and cases may be reported as bullying that would not have been noticed in the past. Wright and Smerconish whole heartedly agree bullying should be addressed, but it may not be on the rise as some media are reporting.

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Cartoon by Gruhn
gruhn@webdonuts.com
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“I was the naughty kid that the teachers liked. I bullied a kid in the 1st year when I was in the 2nd, who then hit puberty like a plane crash and grew into a gorilla who bullied me when he was in the 4th year and I was in the 5th. That's Karma.”

Simon Pegg (born Simon John Beckingham; 14 February 1970), English actor, comedian, writer, film producer and director.



The Grammar School Ghost

by Tom Napier

I received my primary and secondary education at the Aberdeen Grammar School in Scotland, an institution whose founding has been plausibly dated to 1257. In my day it was a rambling granite building in Scottish baronial style that had opened in 1863. The photo shows it as it was in 1985, a year



The author visited the Grammar School in 1985. The statue is of Lord Byron, a somewhat better known former pupil.

before it was severely damaged by fire.

The highest point of the building is a round turret tacked onto the side of the clock-tower. This turret has a conical roof and three small windows. For two years in the late 1950s the Grammar School had a ghost. A white face looked out on the world from the middle window.

It all started when a friend found that the key of his parents' garden shed would open some of the doors in the school that were normally kept locked. These included the door that led into the clock tower. The lower stories of the tower were used for storage, principally by the school dramatic society whose members had once replaced the white bulbs illuminating the clock face with red ones. This opened our minds to the opportunities for pranks that the key offered, particularly as a hatch gave access to the turret.

Among the items in storage were several Victorian plaster busts of notable poets and composers. We manhandled one of these eminent Victorians through the hatch and positioned him next to the tiny window. As practical jokes go it, it had the virtues of being both subtle

and harmless. It may even have been too subtle. I don't know if many people noticed the ghostly face at the tower window but for a handful of pupils and former pupils it was a source of quiet amusement every time we walked past the school. Unfortunately, I didn't then have a camera suitable for recording such a distant phenomenon.

A year after I left school the pupils were gathered outside during a fire drill. Someone noticed the "ghost" and started pointing it out to the others. This attracted the attention of a teacher and the bust was ultimately restored to its normal location. Still it did demonstrate that not all ghosts have a paranormal origin.

Tom Napier has been a stalwart skeptic and member of PhACT for many years and delights in exposing the outlandish claims of pseudo-scientists and charlatans. Tom made his living as a physicist, writer, and scientific consultant. After coming to Pennsylvania he worked mainly in electronic design and management. He is now retired although still doing occasional consulting jobs.

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: The clock tower and turret shown after the fire. The "ghost window" is to the lower right of the clock-face.



Is It Time To Legalize Pot?

by Paul Schlueter III

Many of the arguments in regard to whether marijuana should carry criminal penalties are old and familiar. There is little that is new about the idea that a prohibition enhances the profit margin for illicit substances, attracting the attention of those who don't care about laws when it comes to making money. It follows that, given the risks of dabbling in illicit substances, those who handle large amounts of drugs or cash also tend to carry firearms, and to be willing to use them in a less-than-responsible manner. Police who pursue their duty to uphold those prohibitions face dealers and users who are desperate to avoid arrest, and thus face greater personal threat to themselves and by-standers.

Once caught, offenders face interrogation by authorities. In order to ensure a maximum conviction rate, the prosecution wants to obtain plea bargains (which also reduce trial time and costs); in order to have the greatest possible bargaining power, authorities charge every captured suspect with the harshest possible list of charges suggested by the evidence, threatening suspects with the prospect of huge sentences and fines unless they offer up both a guilty plea AND information about who else is using/selling drugs (and any other crimes they can get suspects to talk about). In order to reduce their charges to the minimum possible number, severity, and sentence, suspects not only turn in their fellow outlaws, but they also "cold read" their interrogators, looking for clues they can exploit to gain greater bargaining power. "Jailhouse snitches" pour out of the woodwork every time a serious crime or arrest occurs, offering information (often falsified or exaggerated), and even claims of "cell block confessions," hoping to get a year or two cut off their own sentences.

The facts of life in the drug culture are dirty, but real. Cops like to have low-level drug offenders available for

snitch purposes. Prosecutors like to use questionable jailhouse testimony to build up the effectiveness of prosecutions in more serious cases, where other evidence may be weak. Last, but not least by far, the Correctional Officers' union likes having prisons and jails overflowing with a constant supply of repeat offenders (and, drug offenders are THE group most likely to re-offend, of any convict breakdown), because that means they can keep prison

employment rosters full, demand superior job benefits, and of course bring in lots more union dues.

An immense and thriving industrial base of manufacturers, catalogs, wholesalers, and consultants feed the swollen prison industry goods ranging from orange jumpsuits to handcuffs to restraint chairs, from pepper spray to security systems to pre-fab prison cells. Private prison corporations house offenders for profit, undercutting the States' prison costs while striving at every opportunity to reduce the overhead expenditures of keeping human beings in cages. Somehow, drugs find their way into prisons all over the country, despite the best "security" efforts to keep them out. Enter yet another trade to exploit the incarcerated addicts; labs which perform urinalysis testing to determine which inmates have been getting high.

There happens to be an excellent example of how prohibition creates a black market, right within the prison system. Many prisons have found

that lawsuits over "second-hand smoke" can be so annoying and costly that they have outright banned tobacco inside the prisons (PA officially prohibits smoking inside any prison building, but still permits commissaries to sell tobacco products "for outdoor use only.") In prisons which bar tobacco entirely, black markets spring up immediately. I had occasion to spend a few months in a county jail where there was such a prohibition, and a pack of ordinary cigarettes (then worth about \$2 on the outside) was selling for \$45! A single "tailor-made" filter cigarette cost \$5, the same as a

MCHUMOR.COM by T. McCracken



"With all due respect for your horoscope,
Sir, you're still going to jail today."

Cartoon by T. McCracken
<http://www.mchumor.com/>
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contraband sandwich or a marijuana joint. Also known as "Cadillacs," commercially-made cigarettes would often be broken down into 3 or more "buckhorns," rolled in papers torn from toilet paper wrappers. They were ignited with a haphazard contraption involving an extension cord, a bit of pencil graphite, and a bit of toilet paper; shorting wall outlet AC through tissue-wrapped graphite caused a smoky, noisy "SNAP" of sparks that ignited the paper, and several waiting smokes were lit off the one flame. Because prison staff were then allowed to bring their own personal tobacco into the jail (for use during break time, etc.), there was a steady supply of Cadillacs, and even whole packs, which could be sold to inmates (whose outside supporters would pay the prison staff in some secret meeting place). Staff could also provide inmates with tobacco in exchange for snitching, or for other "services rendered." Handballs (a permitted item available in the commissary) could be stuffed with tobacco or pot (the former being the most popular), and thrown over the wall into the exercise yard, to be picked up by an inside conspirator first thing in the morning. In short, those who REALLY wanted to smoke always found a way to do so, and there was invariably someone willing to provide him with the goods, in exchange for a hefty bit of scratch. If it meant breaking prison rules, violating "contraband" laws, corrupting officials, and even risking severe personal injury, so be it. All that was just for tobacco, a legal addictive substance!

Since that point in time, the government has raised taxes on cigarettes so high that a \$5 pack is commonplace today, and I've even read of places in New York City that get over \$10 a pack. Smokers grumble, but the vast majority simply pay whatever their vice costs. Despite specific bans on tobacco smoking in public buildings, etc., tobacco remains just as popular as it is lethal, and it is sold throughout the world, to the benefit of the governments which tax its sale.

Pot, on the other hand, is NOT addictive in any physical sense (though some continue to assert that it is

"psychologically addictive," essentially meaning that people enjoy using it, so they continue to do so.) It inspires lethargy and laughter in its users, and perhaps a bit of lechery, but certainly not the aggression and boisterousness that legal alcohol produces. Pot grows wild (if allowed to do so) throughout much of this country; like any cash crop, it can be commercially bred to enhance its usefulness as either a fiber (hemp), or as a drug (actually opposing characteristics - good hemp won't get you very high, and good dope makes raunchy rope). SIMPLY BECAUSE IT IS ILLEGAL, pot's street value reaches \$200/ounce, sometimes higher; This price doesn't reflect the intrinsic costs of producing this weed (speculatively as low as a few dollars an ounce), but rather the risk and subterfuge necessary to bring the product from grower to user.

When I was a teen user (in the late '70s), the typical ounce cost around \$40, and one could find three or four low-level "sellers" (also teens, often trying to raise money for a stereo or a car) on every small-town block, each with a different variety. If caught by police with anything up to a couple ounces or so, the cop would usually make us dump out our stash on the ground and grind it into the dirt, threatening to inform our parents "the next time." It wasn't really even worthwhile to try to evade the Police for such a "bust."

Today, the price isn't 5 times higher because you can GET 5 times higher. In fact, a smoker reaches a "plateau" of effect after smoking a certain amount (better pot just means that it takes less to get high), after which it's pointless and wasteful to smoke more. Pot cost so much more today because cops throw people in jail for possessing even tiny amounts, even as little as a single seed, and then officials confiscate as much of the user's property as they can get away with (claiming that it "must have been" purchased with drug profits) for public auction.

If you have two rolled "joints" in your possession now, the cops charge you with "intent to distribute," and one can now be convicted of drug dealing simply for engaging in the

Illicit Drug Use

- Marijuana is the most commonly used illicit drug among youth in the United States.
- Current marijuana use decreased from 27% in 1999 to 21% in 2009.
- Current cocaine use increased from 2% in 1991 to 4% in 2001 and then decreased from 2001 (4%) to 2009 (3%).
- Lifetime inhalant use decreased from 20% in 1995 to 12% in 2003 and then remained steady from 2003 (12%) to 2009 (12%).
- Lifetime use of ecstasy among high school students decreased from 11% in 2003 to 7% in 2009.
- Lifetime use of methamphetamines was steady from 1999 (9%) to 2001 (10%) and then decreased to 4% in 2009.
- Lifetime heroin use did not change from 1999 (2%) to 2009 (2%).
- Hallucinogenic drug use decreased from 13% in 2001 to 8% in 2007 and then remained steady from 2007 (8%) to 2009 (8%).

old practice of buying a quantity that you later split with friends (for commensurate share of the cost). Police are legally entitled to confiscate personal property and cash from anyone they even "suspect" of being a dealer, with no "due process" required. Appliances, cars, even homes have been confiscated, entirely without warrant or Court judgment, and confiscations are now a major source of funding for municipal police forces. Cops can use the property (it's handy in under-cover work, for example), or sell it for cash at auction. You hear of huge quantities of cash or drugs used as "bait" in sting operations? That's all confiscated goods. None of this is news; it's all regularly reported on TV news shows, in newspapers and magazine articles, even in books dedicated to the War on Drugs. Still officials ignore their critics, and turn around the subject by pointing to the worst-case crack-head offenders, to a rising rate in heroine addiction, and to the latest shootout with inner city drug gang hotheads, lumping pot into the same category by labeling it a "gateway drug."

Authorities call pot a "gateway drug" because they see it being regularly used by those who frequently offend, and also by those who abuse other, much harder drugs. Yes, heroin addicts probably smoke pot too, but they also drink alcohol, and smoke tobacco, and fornicate... yet our society doesn't incarcerate people for getting drunk, getting laid, and having a smoke, do we? The fact is, millions of citizens who lead productive, responsible lives, and who never get into trouble with the law, occasionally smoke pot for a

recreational "buzz." Only idiots and the hopelessly hidebound continue to subscribe to belief in the "Reefer Madness" mythology, that merely one toke of pot will inevitably lead down some slippery slope of personal ruin.

Most of the general public now know better than to accept the government's assessment of pot's threat to society. Where conservatives cling to the idea of prohibition, it is usually for political or religious reasons, not because of any rational risk assessment. Even the best TV ads can do today is to say, "You don't think pot can hurt you? Well, we can arrest you for smoking it, and that would hurt, wouldn't it?"

Medical marijuana laws have begun springing up in states around the country, where there is a certain degree of political tolerance. One has even recently been submitted for consideration (though it didn't get past committee) here in PA. Under the younger Bush, the Federal government routinely threatened, and even raided, state-approved medical marijuana retailers. Obama, by contrast, has instructed the Feds to focus their attention and efforts on more crucial issues (such as cocaine/crack trafficking). An example of greater risk is opium and its derivative products, which supports the Taliban rather nicely in their terrorist activities.

Many states (though notably, not PA) have revised their antagonistic attitudes toward low-level drug offenders, allowing those with non-violent cases and compliant prison records to get out at their earliest parole opportunity, thus reducing the expensive prison population that swelled so

Marijuana is the most frequently encountered illicit drug worldwide. In the United States, according to the 2003 Monitoring the Future Study, 57 percent of adults aged 19 to 28 reported having used marijuana in their lifetime. Among younger Americans, 17.5 percent of 8th graders and 46.1 percent of 12th graders had used marijuana in their lifetime. The term "marijuana," as commonly used, refers to the leaves and flowering tops of the cannabis plant that are dried to produce a tobacco-like substance. Marijuana varies significantly in its potency, depending on the source and selection of plant materials used. The form of marijuana known as sinsemilla (Spanish, sin semilla: without seed), derived from the unpollinated female cannabis plant, is preferred for its high THC content. Marijuana is usually smoked in the form of loosely rolled cigarettes called joints, bongs, or hollowed out commercial cigars called blunts. Joints and blunts may be laced with a number of adulterants including phencyclidine (PCP), substantially altering the effects and toxicity of these products. Street names for marijuana include pot, grass, weed, Mary Jane, and reefer. Although marijuana grown in the United States was once considered inferior because of a low concentration of THC, advancements in plant selection and cultivation have resulted in higher THC-containing domestic marijuana. In 1974, the average THC content of illicit marijuana was less than one percent. Today most commercial grade marijuana from Mexico/Columbia and domestic outdoor cultivated marijuana has an average THC content of about 4 to 6 percent. Between 1998 and 2002, NIDA-sponsored Marijuana Potency Monitoring System (MPMP) analyzed 4,603 domestic samples. Of those samples, 379 tested over 15 percent THC, 69 samples tested between 20 and 25 percent THC and four samples tested over 25 percent THC.



Marijuana contains known toxins and cancer-causing chemicals. Marijuana users experience the same health problems as tobacco smokers, such as bronchitis, emphysema, and bronchial asthma. Some of the effects of marijuana use also include increased heart rate, dryness of the mouth, reddening of the eyes, impaired motor skills and concentration, and hunger with an increased desire for sweets. Extended use increases risk to the lungs and reproductive system, as well as suppression of the immune system. Occasionally, hallucinations, fantasies, and paranoia are reported. Long-term chronic marijuana use is associated with an Amotivational Syndrome characterized by: apathy; impairment of judgment, memory and concentration; and loss of interest in personal appearance and pursuit of goals.

Source: U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration

high due to "zero tolerance" drug policies (some estimates claim that non-violent, low-level drug offenders make up around 60% of the current prison population). "Mandatory minimum" sentences (periods below which Judges may not sentence convicts for certain offenses) for personal possession of reasonable amounts of such drugs as pot and hashish have, in some states, been relaxed, or even repealed. Taxpayers screaming for a break in a country with a gluttonous tax burden during an economic recession are now starting to recognize that it's too expensive to incarcerate people just for catching a bit of a buzz.

The rational next step is to begin gradually relaxing the control of marijuana to a status similar to those of alcohol and tobacco; continue prohibiting its sale to minors, and force suppliers to obtain state licensing and pay taxes on their product. Tax the bejesus out of the whole supply chain, from (registered) growers to wholesalers to shippers to retailers and end buyers, yet also allow responsible business-people to reap a reasonable profit from their commodity. Repeal prohibitions against personal possession (while retaining restrictions regarding such issues as public intoxication, driving under the influence, etc.)

The result of such changes would be immediate. Growers and packagers would spring up overnight. Many users would seek employment in legal pot industries. No longer facing competition from outlaw gangs (and having the protection, not the harassment, of law enforcement), pot retailers would no longer need to risk personal injury or liability by carrying firearms in illegal circumstances. Without the huge profit incentive of providing a prohibited substance, pot (which accounts for 90% of drug smuggling) would be dropped by drug traffickers, dramatically reducing their income, and thus their numbers. With fewer drug cartels, there would be dramatically much less blood shed over drugs in countries such as Mexico, Columbia, and Panama.

But something else would also happen. Having legal access to pot, many people who currently find it justifiable to flaunt all drug laws would self restrict their consumption to pot (I, and many others, actually prefer pot to alcohol so much that we'd rather smoke than drink!) What many conservatives conveniently ignore is the simple fact that many people restrain themselves to using only those mind-altering substances permitted by their culture. Once pot

became legal (or even just non-criminal), a huge percentage of recreational users would refrain from using other drugs. Why risk even the addiction potential of alcohol, let alone harder drugs, when the most likely side-effect of pot use is a bit of weight gain? And on that topic, could you just IMAGINE the boost the fast food and packaged food industries would get if more people had reefer munchies?

In PA alone, legalizing pot would quickly allow several prisons to empty (even if, as D.A.s would most likely insist, current offenders were still required to serve out their sentences), rather than maintain the current growth that has taxpayers bracing to build several NEW prisons, all of which are forecast to be filled to capacity by the time they can be opened. Taxing pot would further fill state coffers, relaxing the tax burden on those who chose not to indulge. Like the 1/3 of other states that are reducing their punitive stance against pot, specifically, PA's prison beds would empty, and prison workers would begin to seek work in rehab or treatment facilities, or perhaps in the pot regulation branches of government.

In the end, the biggest drawback of legalizing pot is that the government would have to give up one small measure of its punitive power and control over its citizenry. The addiction to Power

being what it is, we can most likely count on government resisting this eventuality to the bitter end, in every devious and underhanded manner available. However, the legalization of pot is no longer a question of "if," merely one of "when?" Why not use this particular period of economic crisis to achieve a foregone eventuality at a propitious point in time? Why not cut the very life-blood off from the criminal enterprises in this, and other countries, which depends on marijuana's very prohibition to sustain its violent activities?

Voters will make their will known, and our elected officials WILL comply.

Paul Schlueter III is serving Life in Prison in NE Pennsylvania. Rather than advocating the violation of current laws, he offers this opinion essay as argument in support of the reform of marijuana prohibition through legal means. His supporters maintain a website about him. www.jaylbird.org

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"I want a change from sniffing for drugs.
I want to get into rooting out white collar crime."

Cartoon by T. McCracken
<http://www.mchumor.com/>
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The Fortunate Ones

18th Century Philadelphia As Seen Without Sight

By Frederick Noesner

Introduction to Frederick Noesner's historical novel, The Fortunate Ones

AS I sit here at my desk, writing this book, my new computer speaks to me. Yes, I mean in a good clear intelligible voice. The new flat screen is not of much use to me, but it does take up a lot less room than the old beastly monitor that it replaced.

I am totally blind and have been since early childhood. Although talking computer systems have been available for a number of years now, they have only been here for a moment of time on the stage of history.

People often ask me if it is hard not being able to drive. They act as if driving is the most important thing in the world. It has never seemed so to me. Not being able to have immediate access to the printed word, that is to say, not being able to read print in a timely fashion has always been the most significant and difficult issue about blindness for me. Growing up in a home that had many printed books, magazines, and newspapers, and not being able to read print always seemed to me to be the most troublesome bar.

From early childhood Mom would read to me for hours. In her loving voice, she made books such as Peter Cottontail come alive. Well over a half century later as I write this, vivid pictures flash into my memory of

Peter in his little blue jacket with its brass buttons being chased around the garden by Mr. Macgregor. Thank you Mom! Still, I longed to read print. Around age five I came down with chickenpox. I was lying in bed being miserable.

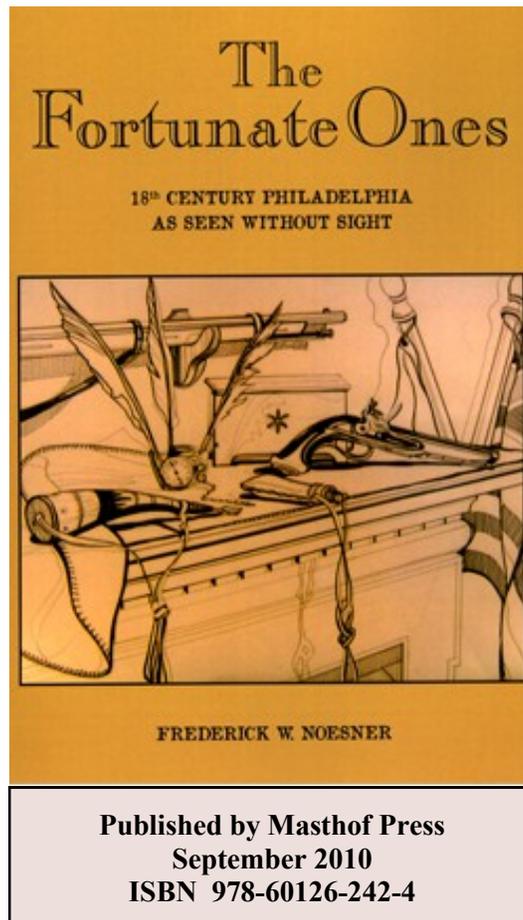
My grandmother came over to sit with me and read to me while Mom took several buses and spent all day traveling to the state office building in Newark, New Jersey, where she was issued a "talking book machine" for me.

In those days in the early 1950's the talking book machines were very large and quite heavy. The books that they played were long playing recorded records which turned at 33-1/3 revolutions per minute. Late in the afternoon, my exhausted mom returned home with both the machine and a recorded copy of the book Pinocchio. It was wonderful. Later I had large cumbersome volumes of Braille, but not everything was in Braille.

Dad read things onto a new device we obtained called a tape recorder. When this device was in recording mode, he would read or speak into a microphone and somehow his voice was magically and magnetically imprinted onto a very thin tape that would turn from spool to spool on the

top of the machine.

The machine itself was the size of a small suitcase and



was quite heavy and awkward to move about. He would drag this monster back and forth to his work, and, during his lunch time, or in the evenings at home, he would read either my school books or interesting articles from magazines that he thought I would enjoy. Often these would be articles from publications such as the National Geographic magazine. One that jumps out from memory described how they had



Frederick Noesner sculpting a miniature blacksmith's forge of the 18th century style.

discovered and raised a 16th Century ship called the "Vasa" from a harbor in Sweden. Another was about a family who were traveling across the country while living out of a trailer that their car was pulling. Later, when I was in college we obtained a small tape recorder for me to use in school. It was very compact for its time during the 1960's. It was about the size of a briefcase, but needed to use much smaller reels of tape.

In the early 1950's, our parents purchased a beautifully bound set of encyclopedias for my brother and me. They came in their own furniture-like bookcase, which further suggested the seriousness of the knowledge they held. I have many memories of sitting on the floor in front of this bookcase, with one of the volumes open in my lap. Running my young fingers over the smooth printed pages I yearned to be able to read them.

The wonderful parents that I was blessed with never said, "Oh, you can't read that because you are blind." The approach was that I should be able to do whatever sighted people could do although I might have to do it in a different way. There always had to be a way. During the 1950's it did not appear that there was a way for me to read print, but technology, like Mighty Mouse, saved the day. It took many more years, but today Computer scanners using special software programs have made it possible for blind people to read most printed books and magazines, as well as a wide

variety of other documents. The same computers with speech translation software have opened the door making it possible for blind people to write as I am doing now.

This technology did not come fast enough to help me in school. In those days a typewriter was the best answer for a blind person to use as a writing tool. In fact, in 1847 a patent application was filed for a then new device called a typewriter. One of the claims made for this new device was that it could be used by blind people as a tool to write with. Today, typewriters can only be found for the most part in attics or museums. However, when I was in school typewriters were still an everyday tool in every school or office.

As I typed papers in college, I fantasized about having some lovely young thing that would sit in my lap while correcting all of my spelling mistakes, or possibly even just retyping everything for me when not occupied fulfilling more pleasurable fantasies. All of these wonderful things have come to pass within the window of my lifetime. Well, not exactly. The lovely young thing never appeared, but still, things are so much better than they ever were.

How very different and difficult it truly must have been for Andrew and Will and the other blind characters in this book over two-hundred years ago.



They lived in a time before computers, before sound recording, before the development of Braille, before schools for the education of the blind, and before society placed any genuine value on a blind person. We tend to glorify, simplify, and overlook the shortcomings of the eighteenth Century.

However, for a person with a disability, it was for the most part a harsh and unrelenting time. The first schools for the blind in this country were not established until the early 1830's. Although historic evidence exists documenting that blind people did use dogs as travel guides as early as seventy-nine A.D. These dogs were in a limited fashion trained by the blind person himself. The Seeing Eye, (a school to train dog-guides to help blind people travel independently) not established in this country until 1929. Braille was developed by Louis Braille in France until the 1840's. Consider that before the last half of the 19th Century, people communicated in one of two ways. Either a person

spoke to face to face or wrote out their words by hand on a paper, which then had to be physically transported to another person.

During 1861, the Pony Express was still transporting letters across the country as the fastest manner of long distance communication.

Today, we pick up the phone and are almost instantly connected with someone all of the way round the globe. Have a question concerning your computer, or phone service? Someone from India will be on the line to either answer or confuse you in a microsecond. Need the answer to an obscure question? A few keystrokes on your computer keyboard will connect you to something called the internet, wherever that might be. These things are advancements for the general public, but of even greater significance for those of us who cannot see is that we also have access to this information through the use of computers that speak, and scanners that will unlock the printed word from those smooth paper pages.

All of this has happened in less than one hundred and fifty years. In fact, I frequently tell people that more has happened to improve the lives of blind people in the last fifty years than has taken place during all history combined. Yes, it is true.

Join me now as we explore the world of blindness during the 18th Century.

For a very different world it was.

Frederick W. Noesner was born with malignant tumors of the retina which totally destroyed his sight during the first two years of his life. Never coddled by his parents because of his disability, he frequently reflects that his parents would tell him he should be able to do most of the things they could do, but that he might have to find a different way to do them.

During his lifetime he has found ways to climb mountains, explore caves, and climb down the Grand Canyon.

Climbing 14,410 foot Mt. Rainier, Washington in July of

1981, as a member of Project Pelion, the eleven person team of people having a variety of disabilities, he says was one of the most exhilarating experiences of his life. This climb was featured in an HBO film titled "To Climb a Mountain". This was followed by two parachute jumps made over Lakewood, New Jersey. These were filmed for the TV show "Prime Time".

Frederick has a lifelong interest in antique weapons and colonial history. His thirty plus years of work in the field of blindness as well as the last five years working as a colonial guide in Independence National Park, for Historic Philadelphia, Inc., has given him much insight into the subject covered in this inspirational fictional depiction of blind people living in 18th century Philadelphia.

When not jumping out of airplanes, climbing mountains,



descending into caves, or guiding tourists around Independence National Park, Frederick occupies his time making colonial style powder horns which are quite popular with Black Powder enthusiasts. Frederick has a wood working studio and is an accomplished cabinet maker, and currently is a fledgling sculptor participating in the Vision Thru Art program at Allens Lane Art Center in Philadelphia, where he may be found every Wednesday morning with instructor Bob Fluhr and his sweet companion, Juniper.

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“Patience and diligence, like faith, remove mountains.”

~ William Penn (October 14, 1644 – July 30, 1718) was an English real estate entrepreneur, philosopher, and founder and "absolute proprietor" of the Province of Pennsylvania

SPECIAL PRIVILEGES FOR SPECIAL RELIGIONS

by Paul Schlueter III

If you're anything like me, then you probably thought that there was a "Separation of Church and State" in effect in the US. Then I read something called the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA) and I realized that the reality wasn't quite so cleanly cut.

RLUIPA is Federal legislation which has a storied history of passage, challenge, being repealed, revision, re-passage, and so on. It is one of the laws that Congress seems intent on imposing, yet its opponents keep finding ways to challenge it in Court, where they occasionally win. Doesn't matter... Congress just passes it again, in a slightly altered form.

I see two main points in RLUIPA. The first is that "churches" (which can be rather tricky to define, when it comes right down to it) and "religions" (ditto) are given a special status exempt from taxation. Ignoring technicalities, churches don't have to pay property taxes, income taxes, or most other taxes. Simply by holding their unique distinction as "religious institutions," they are relieved of the responsibility of citizens and corporations to help support the government. In one sense, this can be justified by saying that religious institutions are kept out of the loop in American civil law, being denied their say in how things are to be run. On the other hand, go tell your local school board that they may not consider the wishes of religious groups when setting school curricula, and see how quickly you get tossed from Town Hall. You begin to see the complexity of the issue.

The second major point of RLUIPA is the "special protection" it offers for the practice of religion within prisons across America. Here, there seems to be a strong bias in protection of Native American ("Indian") religious rights in particular; though RLUIPA specifically states that protection is to be extended to all religions, in actual practice some religions have a much tougher time getting recognized than others. Wicca, just to name one, has yet to be recognized as a protected religion in the prison where I serve time.

Prisons, as a group, are not exactly known for their liberal policies. Rather, the mere utterance of the phrase "this is a Security Issue" seems to make Courts kowtow to the whims of prison officials who, as often as not are simply protecting

some exercise of pure authoritarianism. What religious issues need the protection of law, you might ask?

It seems that the main one is the length of hair a male inmate may grow upon his own sovereign head. Prisons establish "grooming regulations," ostensibly to maintain cleanliness and (of course) Security. Some inmates, on the other hand, want to grow their hair long. Much of this dates exactly to the 1960s, when "hippies" and other countercultural revolutionaries grew their hair long as a symbol identifying their difference from conservative authorities, who in turn objected strenuously to such "freak flags" and made every effort, at home, on the job, and sometimes in the arena of mob justice, to force the offending longhairs to trim their locks. To this day, prison officials and officers consider the shearing of felons to be not just their right, but even part of their sworn duty in protection of civilized society.

Enter the hapless Native American (NA); from time immemorial, it has been a part of NA culture (even across most of the hundreds of regional tribes and subtribes of this continent) to allow head hair to grow as long as nature provides, to pluck facial hair below the eyes, and to only cut head hair in recognition of some severe grief or loss. NA children, forced from reservation homes into white-run schools during the late 1800s and early 1900s, were forced to both wear short haircuts and speak only white English, as part of an organized program of trying to wipe the "Red" out of their race. To this day, NA defendants are subject to racism and hatred second only to that shown African Americans in the courts and prisons of certain American jurisdictions. In an effort to provide for the civil rights (specifically, the RELIGIOUS freedoms) of those downtrodden NAs, RLUIPA carries an implied special favoritism in favor of NAs within American prisons.

There happen to still be a large number of "white boys" in prison who prefer to wear their hair long, many of them in direct relation to their preference for the "sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll" lifestyle. For others, it's perhaps simply a "laziness," or a distaste for the experience of going to a barber to be shorn to conformity with the standards of the



day. Many of these white convicts have discovered RLUIPA, and realized that it can be used to wrangle a "religious hair length exemption" from the prison administrations, so they can do their time flaunting their long hair in front of guards who (sometimes visibly) bristle with frustration that they cannot force those convicts to cut their hair. These white males "proclaim NA heritage" in order to join NA religious groups which are often dominated by an unlikely looking gaggle of blond-haired, blue-eyed, pale-faced "Indians." In an amusing scenario reminiscent of the Cold War arms race, prison administrators demand ever-increasing standards of rigor in demonstrating that an applicant for religious exemption has NA heritage, while the applicants themselves find support from outside family members and friends in using modern digital technology to create "proof" of NA background.

At one point in time, the US government arbitrarily established a rule that excluded those NA descendants with "less than 1/8 Indian blood" from the protection/privilege of living on an Indian Reservation (and/or various other government-sponsored "rights" for NAs). One-eighth blood is equivalent to a great-grandparent having been "full-blooded." This can be contrasted with old Southern practices that declared that "one single drop" of African blood made an individual "negro." Somehow, the 1/8 standard carried over into the state prisons, so white boys who wanted to grow their hair rushed to obtain "documentation" proving that Great-Grandmother Running Deer was a full-blooded Sioux (or Comanche, or Cherokee...) Oddly enough, white-Indian heritage almost invariably tracks back to one of the famous tribes of the period of the Indian Wars, rather than to the less-well-known tribes of the areas where those inmates grew up. Since birth certificates were a notoriously iffy proposition three or four generations before most current convicts were born, it initially was accepted that a letter from Grandma stating her parents' racial heritage was sufficient proof to join the Red Circle and gain a religious hair exemption in prison.

Naturally, actual NAs among the prison population were often offended by the whites who clearly only wanted rock 'n' roll hair, trying to horn in on their sincere religious ritual. NA tribes actually followed many different beliefs, distinctive to separate tribes and tribal groups, and what is today called "the NA religion" is actually a rather homogenized form that adopts various parts of popular oral tradition, in a struggling effort to maintain a dwindling racial common heritage. It's sadly ironic to see white-Indians go around bragging up their "sincere traditional beliefs," entirely ignorant that maybe one story in ten actually originates from the tribe from which they claim to descend.

Others, noticing that "membership" in the NA groups seemed to depend on a proclamation of RACIAL heritage, rather than religious belief, objected to being left out of the exemption parade. Prisons wised up a bit, and began demanding that applicants demonstrate a "sustained, sincere involvement" in religious organizations PRIOR TO their incarceration (a much higher hurdle to clear, because now a

"religious advisor" had to lend support to one's bid for acceptance in the "Hair Club for White Boys.") Prisons even began to question the validity of outsiders' claims to be "NA religious advisors," since it momentarily became popular for some aging hippie to simply start coming into prisons to lead NA services, having little more than the equivalent of a mail-order diploma to establish his authenticity.

I personally knew of certain individuals who belonged to "outlaw organizations" (not to identify them TOO precisely) who knew well in advance of prison restrictions, and how to prepare all the necessary documentation and "authenticity" even before committing their felonies, just so they could keep their long hair should their activities lead to arrest and confinement. There was a certain informal recognition granted to inmates who came into state prison with "street hair," as opposed to those who only began growing it out after getting established in a prison religious group (and ironically, who often cut their hair off again as soon as they found themselves in a halfway house, looking for a street job - we'd see their hypocrisy when they'd occasionally violate some condition of parole, and be sent back inside!)

Back to RLUIPA... The law specifically states that sincerely held religious beliefs and practices shall be protected, even if those beliefs are not mandated by the religion, and even if the particular religion is not recognized by state officials. Enter another neo-religion, Osatru, a.k.a. Odinism, or a modern version of the old Norse-Germanic religion (Odin, Thor, Frey, Loki, Valhalla and the Valkyries, etc.) Coming (in part) from this particular cultural heritage, I've found hours of enjoyment in researching what is known of those particular old beliefs (the Vikings, from around the year 1000 A.D., were largely on the verge of conversion to Catholicism during their infamous raiding period).

Osatru has been "reclaimed" by a group of folks primarily known for their racial pride and inflated sense of self-superiority, the Neo-Nazi movement. Since even less is actually preserved of the ancient Norse philosophies than of NA religion, modern proponents are largely free to write their own faith. Several have fought in the Courts to seek recognition of their home-grown faith. So, here comes the concept of white supremacy, emboldened by RLUIPA protections, and a whole slew of internet connected ultra-right kooks are building up surprisingly large written "heritage" all their own. Included therein are specific requirements to wear hair either at full natural length. or clean-shaven (handily serving the wishes of both heavy-metal supremacists and "skinheads" who may become incarcerated). Included is specific privilege for white males, over every other variety of human person.

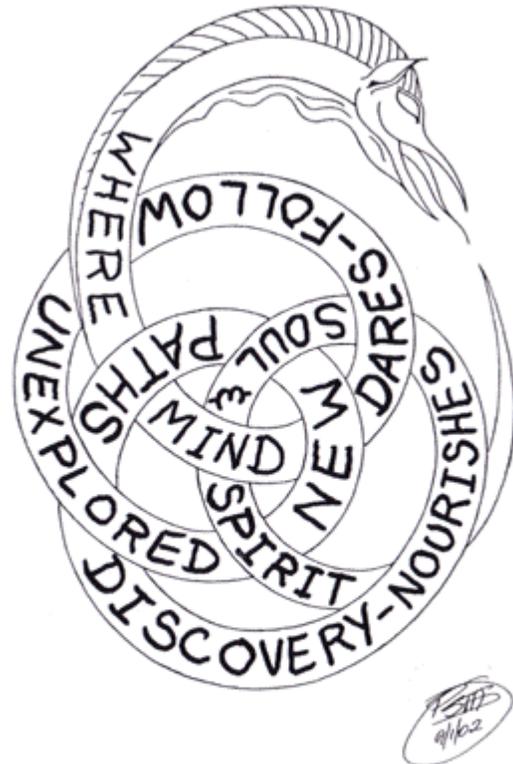
Also included is Runic writing, historically believed to be semi-literate adaptations of Roman letters, as seen by the barbarian northern tribes and adopted for their own use. The modern forms of runic letters (from an alphabet called "the Futhark") can be so closely matched to the modern English alphabet that it can be used as a relatively crude "substitution code," which prison staff want to prohibit because they

cannot easily read it. In a rare actual conformity to known historic fact, Runes were once considered to have magical power and religious significance, in and of themselves; Osatru followers therefore may claim religious significance for the code they use in their tattoos, their art, and their secret scribblings among their pals inside prison. RLUIPA protects it all, technically.

I say "technically," because there is a difference between legislation and practical enforcement. Prisons, which presumably exist for the explicit purpose of forcing compliance with the law upon citizens convicted of crimes,

claims, responses, and appeals that are meant to provide prison officials the opportunity to recognize a non-compliance with specific legal issues, and make corrections if they so wish (in reality, it's more of an attrition process of almost invariably supporting the actions of low-level authorities, and rejecting/distorting the claims of the inmate). Only after completing all stages available in the Grievance process, an inmate may finally file suit in the Federal Court, alleging that his RLUIPA rights are being violated by prison policies or practices.

It is at this stage when most inmates quit the process; it's



Using Nordic Runes (from a modern version of the Futhark) to encode a message written in English with simple letter substitutions. The final runic word is "mind". Both text and artwork are by the author.

only follow the Law when it suits their purposes (if that sounds like a familiar phrase, just listen to any District Attorney making his case in Court). An inmate who desires to grow his hair beyond the length permitted by arbitrary prison rules must jump through specific hoops erected by prison officials; if his "qualifications" for exemption don't reach the mark set by prison administrators, his request is denied. Following that, the inmate must use the Department of Corrections' own internal Grievance system, a series of

not only difficult to file a Federal lawsuit, but it carries a financial burden (currently \$350) which is rather prohibitive (this burden was imposed by the Clinton Administration's efforts, as a means of stopping inmates from filing what the government felt were too many "frivolous" lawsuits.) However, IF an inmate makes a formal filing, and that filing is accepted by the Court and carries far enough to appear that it will be litigated, the prison system will often back down, and reach a settlement with the plaintiff inmate. Prisons

know quite well that a loss in Court could establish a binding precedent, which would effectively give inmates across the country a "new right" limiting prison administrative authority, and that's something that they understandably hope to avoid.

It's more practical, in the big picture, to pay the inmate's filing fees and "legal fees," and to concede the specific issue, granting the inmate whatever religious accommodation he has fought over for (by this time) several years. Once the issue is cleared from the court docket, the prison can impose whatever limitations it wishes, "grind up" (punish, without official formality or acknowledgement) the inmate litigant, and generally lick their wounded pride back inside the barriers of their own institution, where their autonomy is all but absolute. The individual inmate may have to be given his desired exemption, but at least it won't be extended to anyone else (the next inmate will have to go through the same process, all over again.)

Rather than simply conform with the law set down in RLUIPA, prisons make it a continual struggle for inmates to

follow non-standard (read, "other than Islamic, Judean, or Christian") religious beliefs and practices. They do so not because something like growing one's hair is especially hazardous to prison security, but because there is a natural inclination for those in authority to exercise that authority to the maximum degree practical. As inmates say it, "The Man likes to put his thing down."

Curiously, the prison system holds some advantages for African Americans, primarily due to their 2:1 majority over whites in here. Religiously, a large number of African Americans are drawn towards the practice of Islam inside American prisons. There are Sunni and Shiite Black Muslims, but there are also FOI (Fraternity of Islam) and NOI (Nation of Islam) groups, which tend to resemble a blend of congregation, social institution, paramilitary unit, and street gang. These groups include relatively few "strict" fundamentalists, but those who are intensely dogmatic are visibly recognizable due to their manner of dressing (clean, pressed, and buttoned all the way to the top) and their general demeanor (stern and aloof), as well as their drill-like group exercise regimens.

Quite a few Black Muslims find real religious discipline, education (not only GEDs, but Arabic language studies as well) and self-improvement in this prison-based faith. Having been very popular among African Americans since the '60s, Islam has actually been carried back out of the prisons, and into the communities to which converts paroled. Many blacks give their children Arabic names, and lead their families into Islam on the outside (including, in some cases, the wearing of Muslim clothing by women.) Especially in large urban areas, mosques are well-established, and the African-American community in general is widely familiar with much of Islam, as a cultural force. When black men find themselves incarcerated, Islam is there for them, providing an almost-entirely black group where they can immediately feel part of a powerful and influential organization.

Because Islam recognizes the growth of beards to full natural length, Black Muslims are entitled to hair exemptions for beard length, as long as they meet prison requirements for demonstrating piety by participating in the considerable official Islamic programming. There is a full-time Imam (religious leader) in many prisons, and regular classes in basic thru advanced Muslim studies. Primarily due to Muslim insistence, prisons offer "alternate protein" portions when the cafeteria is serving any pork product. Kufiahs, skull caps that resemble the Jewish Yarmulkes, are generally approved special items for Muslims (as are Yarmulkes for Jews), and Muslims may also own a special "prayer rug," which they orient towards Mecca for five times-daily prayer. Prison jobs permit Muslims to break for prayer time, and also for weekly services (in this prison, they are held every Friday afternoon).

Islam recognizes a lunar month of daytime fasting each year, called Ramadan. As long as the prison recognizes an inmate as a compliant participant in official services, he is permitted to fast for Ramadan, and this prison provides a special space to gather at sunset for group prayers, just before

The Federal Bureau of Prisons has statistics on religious affiliations of inmates in Federal facilities. The following are total number of inmates per religion category from a 1997 study.

Response	Number	%
Catholic	29267	39.164%
Protestant	26162	35.008%
Muslim	5435	7.273%
American Indian Nation	2408	3.222%
Rasta	1734	2.320%
Jewish	1485	1.987%
Church of Christ	1325	1.773%
Pentecostal	1303	1.744%
Moorish	1093	1.463%
Buddhist	1066	1.426%
Jehovah Witness	882	1.180%
Adventist	665	0.890%
Orthodox	621	0.831%
Mormon	375	0.502%
Scientology	298	0.399%
Atheist	190	0.254%
Hindu	156	0.209%
Santeria	119	0.159%
Sikh	117	0.157%
Bahai	14	0.019%
Krishna	9	0.012%
	7	0.009%
Total Known Responses	74731	100.001%
Unknown/No Answer	18381	

feeding the Islamic population a special evening meal to break their fast, as well as a bag of food to take back to the cells, to eat during the night. To ensure compliance with religious doctrines on food preparation, this prison allows Muslim "Ramadan bag workers" to prepare the Ramadan-period food; it is largely the same as everyone else's food, except that it's pork-free, and the portions tend to be especially liberal for fasters.

After Ramadan ends, there is a special "feast" for the participants. Native Americans also enjoy an annual feast, "Green Corn Day," for their congregation. The Muslims once had an annual picnic (which family could attend, as well), but that was discontinued by administrative decree several years ago (annual picnics for the Lifers, for the Jaycees, and for the Latinos were gradually brought indoors, to the prison gym, ostensibly to protect inmates and their guests from surprise thunderstorms, in recent years). The organizational banquets (née picnics) and religious feasts are paid for by attending members.

The prison goes pretty far to accommodate Muslim religious issues and needs (even if some individual staff members may discretely disapprove). This is not due to any particular administrative affection for Allah; rather, it is an acknowledgement of the roles (organizational and front line) played by some Black Muslims during the more infamous prison riots of the '60s and early '70s. The administrations certainly won't admit to holding any fear for any group of inmates, but the numbers and dedication of African American Muslims, backed by religious protections under the Law, demand (and receive) special consideration and deference.

Less formally, the Muslims in prison have a direct influence on the behavior of (nearly) all inmates. One example is personal "modesty," particularly in dress. Prison rules, a couple decades back, specifically forbade "doing laundry" in the showers. However, Muslims have succeeded in applying peer pressure to force nearly all inmates to shower in their underwear. It is now considered a "right" by some younger, more eager individuals to challenge anyone trying to shower without underwear. More severe is their response to homosexual activities; Muslims are the only prison religious group to rigidly enforce the eviction of any congregant discovered to have engaged in sex with another

man.

By comparison, the other religious groups will vocally disapprove, but for the most part the person dominating the encounter (the "pitcher," or penetrator) is tolerated with more or less ambivalence. The "catcher," generally viewed as both submissive and feminine, is more surely to be cast out of religious participation, as well as being subject to more scorn and bullying from the general population. Muslims will not only disavow anyone involved, but they may even (strictly unofficially, and as secretly as practical) violently punish such "offense."

In day-to-day life within the prison, Muslims receive general accommodation noticeably greater than any other religious (or non-religious) group of inmates. Non-religious inmates are accorded no comparable "rights," because RLUIPA is specifically for religious protections. Agnostics and atheists are essentially viewed as one step "above" homosexuals and sexual offenders, all of which allegedly lack any morality whatsoever. Staff (almost entirely Christian, with a remarkably high proportion of evangelical fundamentalists among their number) are generally cautious to avoid blatant religious proselitization or discrimination (both of

which could expose them, and the prison, to civil lawsuits), but they feel relatively confident about being able to safely challenge any LACK of religiosity in inmates they encounter. Many obviously hold attitudes supported by their belief that their job (watching over convicts) places them in a position of moral superiority, in general.

For most inmates, protection of religious rights under RLUIPA is dependent upon ongoing participation in an "approved" religious program, run by an officially-sanctioned "Religious Advisor." There does seem to be one exception to this rule: Rastafarians. The visible trademark of the Rasta Man is his Dreadlocks, long ropes of matted hair. Part of the Rasta belief is that the White Man (distinct from "white boys" in that the White Man holds the reins of power and authority) embodies Evil, and that he is to be opposed at every opportunity simply for the Whiteness of his Authoritarianism. One part of that oppositional defiance is the practice of smoking Ganga (marijuana), a drug "provided by God" but despised by governmental authorities. RLUIPA doesn't go so far as to protect Ganga smoking by Rastafarians (nor the ingestion of Peyote by Native Americans), but it



HEY WARDEN, I'M IN CHARGE OF THE PRISON BIBLE STUDY THIS WEEK AND MY TOPIC IS "YOU REAP WHAT YOU SOW" ... I'M GOING TO NEED A FEW SHOVELS FOR THIS OF COURSE, AND MAYBE A HOE ... AND PROBABLY A LADDER

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seems to be nearly automatic for any black inmate to be granted an exemption to grow out his Dreadlocks, even though I've never seen a Rasta "Religious Advisor" or service in any prison or jail.

For the most part, RLUIPA protection, particularly hair length exemptions, must be requested by the inmate on a case-by-case basis. The request, per Dept. of Corrections policy, must state the name of the religion and identify the DOC-approved "Religious Advisor." I have unsuccessfully argued that the sole purpose for requiring that a religion be named is to compare that religion against a list of DOC-approved religions, with the implied possibility that the State may disapprove religions not on their list. Ditto, the religious advisor; since when does the State have a right to approve or disapprove the party from whom an inmate receives religious advice, let alone the right to demand that such advice must come from someone other than the inmate's own conscience and reasoning? The DOC rejected my application for hair length exemption because I refused to indicate either bit of information, saying that I had failed to comply with application protocol (which I argued left me open for religious discrimination). Though RLUIPA only requires that an inmate hold some "sincerely held religious belief" which he wishes to recognize by growing his hair, and I clearly indicated that I wished to recognize the natural condition of hair growth for which the Creator allowed my body to

evolve, the DOC rejected my claim. I appealed through all the provided DOC channels, but did not actually file a Federal Civil suit under RLUIPA to seek my rights. The DOC, in my opinion, ignored my civil rights under RLUIPA law. Only by taking it before a Court would we have discovered if the Courts would, or would not, agree. It's a shame that an entire Department of State government will ignore the Law until forced to comply with it by a Judge.

The lesson I take from this is that much of Law only works if you stick to your guns and take the matter to Court. If you permit it, the Authorities will presume they may do as they wish, and get away with it. Is such legal action "frivolous," or is it a civic responsibility?

Where it involves the education of our children in Public Schools, versus the "entitlement" of School Board elected officials to determine the content of textbooks in Science classes (yes, I mean the Evolution vs. Creation conflict), your answer most likely depends on which side of the issue you have chosen in advance. Where it involves the length of the hair on inmates' heads (mine in particular), I simply decided that I had better things to do with my time than sue the State. By all appearances, quite a few of my fellow inmates have successfully chosen the other option.

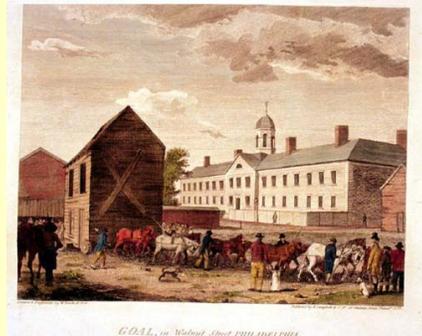
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The Walnut Street Prison was a pioneering effort in prison reform. Originally built as a conventional jail just before the American Revolution, it was expanded in 1790 and hailed as a model of enlightened thinking about criminals. The prison, in fact, was known as a "penitentiary" (from the Latin word for remorse). It was designed to provide a severe environment that left inmates much time for reflection, but it was also designed to be cleaner and safer than past prisons. The Walnut Street Prison was one of the forerunners of an entire school of thought on prison construction and reform.

The prison was built on Walnut Street, in Philadelphia, as a city jail in 1773 to alleviate overcrowding in the existing city jail. Although designed by ROBERT SMITH, Pennsylvania's most prominent architect, the building was a typical U-shaped building, designed to hold groups of prisoners in large rooms. By and large the role of prisons was to incarcerate criminals. There was little regard for their physical well-being, nor were there any attempts to rehabilitate them. Prisons were overcrowded and dirty, and inmates attacked each other regularly. Those who served their sentences came out of prison probably more inclined toward a criminal life than they were before their incarceration.

It was the Quakers of Philadelphia who came up with the concept for what they called a penitentiary—a place where prisoners could reflect on their crime and become truly sorry for what they had done. The Quakers believed that through reflection and repentance, inmates would give up crime and leave prison rehabilitated. Shortly after the American Revolution, a group of Quakers formed the Philadelphia Society for Alleviating the Miseries of Public Prisons, whose goal was made

clear in its name. (Later the group became known as the Pennsylvania Prison Society.) In the years after the Revolution this group worked to encourage prison reform, and its efforts finally paid off in 1790 when the Walnut Street Jail became the first state penitentiary in the country.



G. B. L., in Walnut Street PHILADELPHIA

The main addition to the Walnut Street complex was a new cellblock called the "Penitentiary House." Built in the courtyard of the existing structure, it included a series of small cells designed to hold individual prisoners. The cells and the corridors connecting them were designed to prevent prisoners from communicating with each other. Windows were high up (the cells had nine-foot high ceilings) and grated and louvered to prevent prisoners from looking onto the street. Each cell had a mattress, a water tap, and a privy pipe. Inmates were confined to their cells for the duration of their confinement. The only person they saw was the guard and then only briefly once a day. They were sometimes allowed to read in their cells, but for the most part they sat in solitude. The Quakers saw this solitary confinement not as a punishment but as a time for reflection and remorse. That was the reason the inmates were not put to work. Labor, said penitentiary proponents, would preoccupy the inmates and keep them from reflecting on their crimes.

PHACT CALENDAR

Dr. David Cattell, Chairman of the Physics Department of Community College of Philadelphia hosts meetings of **PhACT** - at 2:00 PM on the third Saturday of most months at Community College of Philadelphia... Parking is easily available and costs \$3.75 for all day. Enter the college parking lot on 17th Street which is one way south bound. This meeting site is handicap accessible. **PhACT Meetings are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted.**



Saturday, November 20, 2010 - "Cosmology and Crackpots". Prof. Dave Goldberg, Drexel University Department of Physics. The standard model of cosmology has converged with tremendous precision over the last several decades. Experiment after experiment confirms that we live in a very strange universe; one filled with dark matter and dark energy. Because we don't actually know what either of these two substances fundamentally are, any and all claims about the universe are often met with abject dismissal by members of the public, usually based on the assumption that the "dark" means that we know nothing at all. In this talk, Prof. Goldberg will discuss how and why we believe that dark matter and dark energy is real, describe some of my interactions from my "Ask a Physicist" column, and (perhaps most importantly to this group) talk about the real problems that cosmological physics has yet to answer.

Dave Goldberg is the author, with Jeff Blomquist, of *A User's Guide to the Universe: Surviving the Perils of Black Holes, Time Paradoxes, and Quantum Uncertainty*, and author of io9.com's "Ask a Physicist" column. He is an Associate Professor of Physics at Drexel University, working on issues in theoretical and observational cosmology. **Note: This month's meeting will be in the Bonnell Building, on 17th St. See Page 1.**

Saturday, January 15, 2011 - Prof. Massimo Pigliucci, a professor at the City University of New York. He will speak on the topic of his new book **"Nonsense on Stilts"**

Saturday, February 19, 2011 - TBA

Saturday, March 19, 2011 - "A Skeptic's Journey to the Paranormal and Back". Michael Epstein, a professor of chemistry at Mount Saint Mary University in Maryland will be our speaker.

Friday, November 12, 8:00 PM: DVM General Membership Meeting: Medics in the Air, Speaker: Colette Miller

We all have seen ambulances scurrying down the street, hurrying to a patient or to the hospital - how can you not? But at least we certainly have heard their sirens. Hopefully few if any of us have "enjoyed" a trip in one of these special crafts. Even more special are aircraft that perform this duty. Look, in the sky, it's a bird, it's a plane! NO, it's an ambulance helicopter!

Medic Colette is an EMT who has specialized in bringing emergency care to patients who are far off and in need of it in a hurry. She is affiliated with DuPont Hospital in Wilmington, DE and has been working as such for a decade. She has stories that . . . well, come and hear for yourself.

Prior to the meeting, those who can, are invited to attend the pre-General Membership Meeting Dinner at a secret location someplace in the heart of "the City with a Million Eat'ries"'s very own Chinatown or O'City. This is an excellent opportunity to have a good meal and get to speak with the evening's guest, one on one. Contact Pete Stevens to reserve your place at dinner, by NOON on Friday.

Join us at the Police Administration Building, 750 Race Street, Philadelphia, PA. Please note: During the meeting, parking is allowed behind the building (despite the "Police Officers Only" notice) and IT IS FREE! This meeting is DVM's only activity specifically open to the public. Feel free to extend invitations to friends, neighbors, relatives, colleagues, jarheads, airheads, bubbleheads, and headbangers.

PS: Don't let traffic on the Schuylkill Expressway interfere with attending. Consider taking SEPTA and exiting at Market Street East / Gallery, it is only a two block walk to the Police Administration Building. Contact Contact Pete, 215-235-pete, for additional information.

Tuesday, November 16 2010 at 06:00PM at University of Pennsylvania Museum. Evening Lecture and Book-signing. Fakes and Forgeries with Robert Wittman

Long an undercover FBI agent and founder of the FBI's Art Crime Team, Robert Wittman, author of The New York Times Best Seller Priceless: How I Went Undercover to Rescue the World's Stolen Treasures is

The **PhACT Calendar** is open to members and non-members who wish to announce meetings and events of other groups of which they are interested or affiliated. These events should be of some general interest to the Skeptical or Scientific community and should be within a reasonable radius of Philadelphia. Send submissions to the editor at phactpublicity@aol.com. Keep the announcements brief. Space is limited and insertions will be made on a first come-first served basis after the needs of PhACT are accomplished. Phactum does not accept

undercover no more--but he remains active, and passionate, about the world's art and cultural heritage. In this new talk, Mr. Wittman, now head of Robert Wittman, Inc., an art security and recovery consulting firm, looks at some of the great fakes and forgeries of recent years, including the recent, much-publicized "Antiques Roadshow" fraud caper, and offers insight into how museums and others can be on the alert for questionable "treasures."

Lecture admission: pay-what-you-want.

Priceless available for purchase. Book Signing follows talk.

Wednesday, November 17, 2010 at 7:30 P.M. The American Revolution Round Table of Philadelphia. Tom Keels on the Mischianza held in Philadelphia in 1778. Discussing his new book **Wicked Philadelphia: Sin in the City of Brotherly Love.** At Broad Axe Tavern, 901 West Butler Pike, Ambler, PA 19002 Telephone: (215) 643-6300 Free and open to the public. www.arrtop.com

Saturday, Nov 20, 2010 at 1:30 pm - National Science Foundation, Room 110, 4201 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, VA - National Capital Area Skeptics Public Lecture Series - Nobel Laureate in Physics John C. Mather will lecture. From the Big Bang to the Nobel Prize and on to the James Webb Space Telescope and the Discovery of Alien Life.

The history of the universe in a nutshell, from the Big Bang to now, and on to the future--John Mather will tell the story of how we got here, how the Universe began with a Big Bang, how it could have produced an Earth where sentient beings can live, and how those beings are discovering their history. He will explain Einstein's biggest mistake, show how Edwin Hubble discovered the expansion of the universe, how the Cosmic Background Explorer (COBE) mission was built, and how its data support the Big Bang theory. He will also show NASA's plans for the next great telescope in space, the James Webb Space Telescope. It will look even farther back in time than the Hubble Space Telescope, and will peer inside the dusty cocoons where stars and planets are being born today. Using the stellar transit technique, the JWST is capable of examining Earth-like exoplanets, where follow-on missions may find signs of life. Currently planned for launch in 2014, the JWST may lead to another Nobel Prize for some lucky observer.

Dr. John C. Mather is a Senior Astrophysicist in the Observational Cosmology Laboratory at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center. His research centers on infrared astronomy and cosmology. As a National Research Council postdoctoral fellow at the Goddard Institute for Space Studies, Mather led the proposal efforts for COBE (1974-76), and came to GSFC to be Study Scientist (1976-88), Project Scientist (1988-98), and also the Principal Investigator for COBE's Far Infrared Absolute Spectrophotometer (FIRAS). Presently he is Senior Project Scientist for the JWST. Mather earned his B.A. in Physics from Swarthmore College and his Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley. In 2006, Mather shared the Nobel Prize for Physics with George F. Smoot of the University of California, Berkeley for their discovery of the blackbody form and anisotropy of the cosmic microwave background radiation.

FREE admission - Everyone welcome, members and non-members.

More information: 301-587-3827. ncas@ncas.org www.ncas.org

SOCRATES CAFE is moderated by: Lewis Mifsud, Ph.D., P.E., a member of PhACT and of The American Academy of Forensic Sciences. At the Springfield Township Public Library (215-836-5300) at 1600 Papermill Mill Road, Wyndmoor, PA. 19038. This philosophical discussions group is free and open to the public. Join us and share your critical thinking, questions and opinions.



Tuesday, November 30, 2010 at 7:30PM - Central Library Eric Foner | The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery Free Library of Philadelphia, 1901 Vine Street, 19103

The DeWitt Clinton Professor of History at Columbia University, Eric Foner is a noted scholar of the Civil War and Reconstruction period of U.S. history. He is the author of several books including *The Story of American Freedom*, *Who Owns History?*, and *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution*, which received the Bancroft, Parkman, and Los Angeles Times Book prizes. *The Fiery Trial* tells the story of Abraham Lincoln and how he deftly navigated a divided nation to abolish slavery and usher in a new era of American politics.

Cost: \$10 General Admission, \$7 Students

Wednesday, December 01 2010 at 6:00 - 08:00 PM at University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology "Great Adventures Along the Silk Road" Lecture Series From Macedon to Ai Khanum: Alexander and Early Greek Contact with the Silk Route

Jeremy McInerney, Davidson Kennedy Professor, Department of Classics, examines the campaigns of Alexander the Great from a new perspective. What happened when the Greeks came in contact with the great trade network we call the Silk Route? It seems that Alexander and his Successors wanted to acquire vast new territories-empires, in fact-but in time the importance of trade would come to outweigh the territorial ambitions of Greek dynasties.

Lecture: \$5 with advance registration;

free for Penn Museum members with advance registration;

\$10 at the door.

Information: (215)898-4890.

Thursday, December 2, 2010 at 1PM, BOOK CLUB READS ALAN BENNETT'S THE UNCOMMON READER. At Temple University

Paley Library Lecture Hall, Ground Floor, 1210 Polett Walk.

come discuss... **The Uncommon Reader** (Picador, 2008), by Alan Bennett. A funny, satirical take on the imagined life of the Queen by British play write Alan Bennett. Join the book club to discuss this fun yet thoughtful read. Free.

Wednesday, December 8, 2010 at 7:30 PM - Rittenhouse Astronomical Society Monthly Meeting.

Join The Rittenhouse Astronomical Society on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:30PM in the Fels Planetarium. The society offers all persons an opportunity to participate in the activities of an astronomical group at the layman's level. They aim to spread knowledge, awareness, and enjoyment of astronomy and astronomical issues. It is a popular science club that keeps its members up-to-date on the latest developments. No experience is necessary to attend the FREE meetings. Come with your astronomy questions!

www.rittenhouseastronomicalsociety.org

Friday, December 10, 2010 at 8:00 PM Mensa General Membership Meeting is usually on the 2nd Friday of each month at the Police Administration Building at 750 Race Street in Philadelphia. Contact Pete Stevens at pete.stevens@phila.gov for more information or the Mensa calendar at

<http://dvm.us.mensa.org>

Wednesday, January 12, 2011 at 7:30 PM - Rittenhouse Astronomical Society Monthly Meeting. www.rittenhouseastronomicalsociety.org

Friday, January 14, 2011 at 8:00 PM Mensa General Membership Meeting is usually on the 2nd Friday of each month at the Police Administration Building at 750 Race Street in Philadelphia. Contact Pete Stevens at pete.stevens@phila.gov for more information or the Mensa calendar at

<http://dvm.us.mensa.org>



Science on Tap, A Science Café

Science on Tap is a monthly gathering in Philadelphia for anyone who is interested in getting

together with other people to discuss a range of engaging science topics.

Held at National Mechanics, a relaxed, convivial bar in Old City, *Science on Tap* features a brief, informal presentation by a scientist or other expert followed by lively conversation. The goal is to promote enthusiasm for science in a fun, spirited, and accessible way, while also meeting new people. Please come join the conversation! On the **second Monday of each month at 6:00 PM.**

What's On Tap

- ◆ **December 13, 2010 - Presented by the Academy of Natural Sciences**
- ◆ **January 10, 2011 - Presented by the Mütter Museum of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia**
- ◆ **February 14, 2011 - IYC 2011 Presented by Chemical Heritage Foundation**

For more information see :

<http://www.chemheritage.org/visit/events/science-on-tap/index.aspx>

National Mechanics

22 South Third St. Philadelphia PA 19106
215-701-4883

Free and Open to the public (age 21+) or minors accompanied by a chaperone 25+. Want to join the Science on Tap mailing list? Contact us at scienceontapphilly@gmail.com and include "subscribe to mailing list" as the subject line

Science for what ails you

The science café movement began in Leeds, England in 1998 when a local pub decided to foment a new kind of bar-room brawl—a scientific debate. The idea took off as a unique way to advance public understanding of science. Now, there are locations from Maine to California where, for the price of a beer or a glass of wine or a cup of coffee, anyone can discuss scientific ideas with leading experts in their fields and learn about developments that are changing our lives.



2010-11 Penn Science Café Schedule

The Penn Science Café, the lecture series that hauls science out of the lab and treats it to a night on the town. Free and open to the public, it's an opportunity to pitch questions to leading scientific experts.

7:00 P.M. @ the MarBar, 40th and Walnut street location, 2nd floor of the Marathon Grill, menu items available for purchase RSVP to Jordan Reese, jreese@upenn.edu or 215-573-6604.

- **Wednesday, Nov 17, 2010 - Gravitational Lensing: Einstein Rings and Dark Matter.** Bhuvnesh Jain, Professor of Physics and Astronomy
- **Wednesday, Dec 15, 2010 - Mathematics: Created or**

Discovered? Robert Ghrist, Andrea Mitchell University Professor of Math & Electrical Systems and Engineering

- **Wednesday, Jan 25, 2011 - The World Water Crisis** Stan Laskowski, President of the Philadelphia Global Water Initiative
- **Wednesday, Feb 16, 2011 - Why You Can Hardly Swing A Dead Cat Without Hitting A Dead Cat In an Animal Shelter Today. The Obvious, the Occult, and the Counterintuitive World of Animal Sheltering** Michael Moyer, VMD, Rosenthal Director of Shelter Animal Medicine
- **Wednesday, March 16, 2011 - Stealing the Past: Collectors and Museums of the 21st Century** Richard Leventhal, Curator, Penn Museum
- **Wednesday, April 20, 2011 - From Barbershops to Basketball Courts: Culturally Relevant Interventions in the African American Community** Howard Stevenson, Associate Professor of Applied Psychology, Graduate School of Education
- **Wednesday, May 18, 2011 - Neuroeconomics: Decision Making and the Brain** Joe Kable, Associate Professor of Psychology



1700 West Montgomery Avenue
, Philadelphia, PA 19121
ph 215-763-6529 www.wagnerfreeinstitute.org

Wagner courses and events are free. Tax deductible contributions are greatly appreciated.

**Thursday, November 18, 2010 4:00 PM, Thursday
RECORD, PRESERVE, DOCUMENT, SHAPE: TALK-
ING ABOUT THE PUBLIC HUMANITIES WITH STE-
VEN LUBAR OF BROWN UNIVERSITY
At Temple University's Paley Library Lecture Hall,
Ground Floor, 1210 Polett Walk**

A Conversation with Curator and Scholar Steven Lubar of the John Nicholas Brown Center for Public Humanities and Cultural Heritage at Brown University

How do museums, libraries, archives, universities and other public institutions shape the recording and presentation of artistic and cultural heritage? How does that inform our understanding of the past, present, and future? How do we disseminate humanistic research originating within the ivory tower to the world-at-large? What is the future of cultural programming and publicly funded arts and humanities initiatives? Join a conversation on the state of public culture with Seth Bruggeman of Temple's Center for Public History and Steven Lubar of Brown University's John Nicholas Brown Center for the Public Humanities and Cultural Heritage.

Lubar is one of the country's foremost public historians, and leads a graduate program and think tank at Brown University that explores these questions, and more. Prior to Brown, Lubar was a curator at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. There, he went on to chair the Division of the History of Technology and oversee several major permanent exhibitions, including the groundbreaking *America on the Move*, which examines the history of public transportation in the United States. In addition to his work at the Smithsonian, Lubar has taught at Johns Hopkins University, the University of Maryland and the University of Pennsylvania.

This program is co-sponsored by the **Center for Public History at Temple, Village of Arts and Humanities, the Wagner Free Institute of Science, the North Philadelphia Arts and Culture Alliance, and the Center for Public History at Temple.**

**Thursday, February 10, 2011 - Nasal Attraction:
the story of how your nose can help you select a suitable
partner**

Presented by DR. JOHAN LUNDSTROM
Monell Chemical Senses Center
4:00 - 7:00 PM Lecture at 5:30 PM

Children's Education

The Wagner Institute has offered educational programs for children since the turn of the last century. These programs aim to promote children's interest in science by introducing them to the natural sciences at an early age. Because the Institute's programs are available at no cost, they are a popular resource for groups throughout the city, especially those in its immediate neighborhood.



Auditorium with children 1907

Programming for children is varied and reaches more than 10,000 children each year. The Institute offers free, hands-on natural science lessons to school and community groups throughout the year. Visiting students have the unique and engaging experience of taking part in an interactive lesson in the historic lecture hall and also spend time exploring the museum collections during their field trip. The Wagner's GeoKids program is an innovative museum-school partnership that since 1992 has grown to include collaboration with four schools in its North Philadelphia neighborhood. Museum educators work with several teachers at each school and their students over the course of the school year to bring real-life natural science to the classrooms on a weekly basis.

Museum Tours

The Museum is open to visitors Tuesday through Friday 9 AM to 4 PM for self-guided tours. Reservations are required for schools and other groups. Reservations should also be made by researchers or anyone who requires special access to the collections. Children under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult.

The Academy of Natural Sciences Center for Environmental Policy "Philadelphia's Window on the Environment"

Center for Environmental Policy
The Academy of Natural Sciences
1900 Benjamin Franklin Parkway, Philadelphia, PA 19103
www.ansp.org/environmental/
215-299-1108 cep@ansp.org

Upcoming Public Events

Thursday, November 14, 2010 - 6:30-7:30 pm

An Evening with Wildlife Conservationist Jim Fowler

Jim Fowler, notable wildlife conservationist and former host of Mutual of Omaha Wild Kingdom, will share his life work on saving endangered species and preserving threatened wildlife habitat.

This program is free and open to the public. Please register at jimfowlerwildlife.eventbrite.com

This program is co-produced by the **Philadelphia Chapter of the Explorers Club** and the Academy's **Center for Environmental Policy**.

Tuesday, November 16, 2010 at 6:30-7:30 pm. A book signing will follow the talk.

Tim Flannery on Deep Time and Nature Conservation Leidy Award Presentation and Keynote

Internationally acclaimed scientist, author, and environmental activist Dr. Tim Flannery will receive the 2010 Joseph Leidy Award and present his keynote speech "**Deep Time and Nature Conservation: Lessons from Australasia.**"

Dr. Flannery has conducted groundbreaking research on living mammals and past life of Australasia (Australia, New Guinea, New Zealand, and associated Pacific Islands). His work on extinction and past climate has informed his more recent efforts regarding human influences, wildlife conservation, and climate change.

His 1994 bestseller, *The Future Eaters: An Ecological History of the Australasian Lands and People*, examined the impacts of aboriginals and European settlers on Australia's ecology. In *The Eternal Frontier: An Ecological History of North America and its Peoples* (2001), Flannery featured the idea of Pleistocene Rewilding, the introduction of large mammals such as elephants to replace the now-extinct Pleistocene megafauna. Also in 2001, together with Peter Schouten, Flannery showcased notable recent extinctions in *A Gap in Nature: Discovering the World's Extinct Animals*.

More recently, Flannery has addressed the environmental consequences of climate change and the need for action. Perhaps his most notable book, *The Weather Makers: The History and Future Impact of Climate Change* (2005), has won praise for presenting the complex issues of global warming and climate change in a way that is both readily understandable and compelling. His latest books on climate change include *Now or Never* (2009) and *Here On Earth: An Argument for Hope*

(2010).

Tim Flannery is the first Australian to receive the prestigious Joseph Leidy Award, which is given to honor publications, explorations, discoveries, or research in the natural sciences. Established in 1923, the award honors Dr. Joseph Leidy (1823–1891), anatomist, parasitologist, paleontologist, and president of the Academy of Natural Sciences, in light of his wide range of interests, tremendous productivity, and influence in scientific thinking. It is the Academy's highest honor.

This program is supported by the Raynier Institute & Foundation. It is free and open to the public. Please RSVP to 215-299-1060 or reservations@ansp.org

Thursday, November 18, 2010 6:00- 6:30 p.m.:

Reception 6:00 PM Program 6:30

Urban Sustainability Forum - The Nuclear Option

What role should nuclear energy play in the fight against climate change? For many years the Philadelphia region has had difficulties meeting federal air quality standards under the Clean Air Act. As scientists improve their understanding of how air pollution impacts public health, these standards are becoming more stringent, and thus, more challenging for the Philadelphia area to meet. Furthermore, while the federal government has been unable to pass national climate change legislation thus far, the onus falls to states and municipalities to take the lead in reducing their greenhouse gas contributions. The technological options available to help our region reduce both air pollution and greenhouse gases are limited.

One controversial solution has been offered with the blessing of some environmental groups: nuclear energy. Nuclear power offers an opportunity to maintain our energy consumption with virtually no air pollution or greenhouse gases, unlike coal, oil, or natural gas. Yet, the technology is expensive and brings up another environmental issue: long-lasting radioactive waste. Is nuclear power an environmentally acceptable answer to air pollution and global warming? Let the debate begin!

To register, visit <http://nuclearoption.eventbrite.com/>

Tuesday, November 30, 2010 at 6:00 Reception 6:30 p.m.: Program

Planetary Healing

A lecture focusing on the natural restoration process of our planet. Featuring Dr. John Todd Research Professor and Distinguished Lecturer, Univ. of Vermont President, Oceans Arks International Join us for a special lecture by one of the pioneers of ecological design and restoration. For over four decades, Dr. Todd has worked to "decode nature's operating instructions."

An applied ecologist specializing in whole systems design, Dr. Todd's interests have included food cultivation, restoration of damaged ecosystems, and ecological industrial parks. His Eco-Machine designs are exhibited and honored at the Smithsonian's Cooper-Hewitt Museum Design Triennial, and he has been named "Hero of the Planet" by Time magazine. In 2008 he was the first recipient of the Buckminster Fuller Challenge Award. Cosponsored by Philadelphia University and ecoventive, LLP. To register, visit <http://planetaryhealing.eventbrite.com>.



Laurel Hill Cemetery

3822 Ridge Avenue - Philadelphia, PA 19132.
215-228-8200 <http://www.thelaurehillcemetery.org>



Hours of Operation:

Monday-Friday 8:00am-4:30pm

Saturday-Sunday 9:30am-4:30pm

Closed Major Holidays

Admission to Laurel Hill Cemetery is always free

Saturday, November 13th at 4:00pm

1876 Centennial Exhibition: Program and Exhibit

During the Centennial year of 1876, Philadelphia was host to a celebration of 100 years of American cultural and industrial progress. Officially known as the "International Exhibition of Arts, Manufactures and Products of the Soil and Mine," the Centennial was the first major World's Fair to be held in the United States, which opened on May 10, 1876 on a 285-acre tract of Fairmount Park overlooking the Schuylkill River. The fairgrounds were host to 37 nations and countless industrial exhibits occupying over 250 individual pavilions. The Exhibition was immensely popular, drawing nearly 9 million visitors at a time when the nation's population was 46 million.

The most lasting accomplishment of the Exhibition was to introduce America as a new industrial world power, soon to eclipse the might and production of every other industrialized nation, and to showcase the City of Philadelphia as a center of American culture and industry. Since many of the high profile political, industrial and financial leaders of this time later made Laurel Hill Cemetery their final resting place, the site is a remarkable embodiment of the celebration of our nation's 100th birthday.

Join us for this twilight walking tour of Laurel Hill Cemetery on . Following the tour, guests will be invited to view an exhibit of arts and illustrations contributed by talented local artists, including those from the Philadelphia Water Color Society, whom will be presenting original works produced of Laurel Hill Cemetery. The exhibit will be set up in our historic Gatehouse, where wine, cheese and refreshments will be served. Reserve your space by calling (215) 228-8200 or by emailing tours@thelaurehillcemetery.org.



Sunday, November 14, from 1:00pm-4:30pm. - A Day of Wickedness

The Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania will host a lecture by Tom Keels, author of *Wicked Philadelphia: Sin in the City of Brotherly Love, at Laurel Hill Cemetery*. Afterwards, guests will follow Tom on his "Sinners, Scandals & Suicides" tour of South Laurel Hill Cemetery. GSP will also be celebrating the launch of its newest Member database, "Indigents, Miscreants, Madams & Madmen." Refreshments will be served.

Join us for a perfectly wicked day!

Thomas H. Keels is the author of *Wicked Philadelphia: Sin in the City of Brotherly Love*, *Forgotten Philadelphia: Lost Architecture of the Quaker City and Philadelphia Graveyards and Cemeteries*. Tom is also an *ausländer*—sociologist E. Digby Baltzell's term for an outsider who moves to Philadelphia and falls in love with its rich heritage and history. Tom's five published books, numerous magazine and newspaper articles, and radio features celebrate both the major monuments and secret corners of the City of Brotherly Love. Born in Princeton, New Jersey, Tom graduated from Princeton University in 1976 with a B.A. in European History, and then attended the Radcliffe Publishing Procedures Course. After a decade in New York City working in publishing and marketing, Tom moved to Philadelphia in 1988. Tom has been a tour guide at Laurel Hill, Philadelphia's premier Victorian cemetery, for over a decade. He has also given tours of the Woodlands, West Laurel Hill Cemetery, and other historic sites. He has conducted classes on Philadelphia cemetery history for the Bucks County Community College Historic Preservation Program, Cheltenham Township Adult School, and Mount Airy Learning Tree. Media appearances include Radio Times on WHYI-FM, PA Books on the Pennsylvania Cable Network, Action News on WPVI-TV, and Good Day Philadelphia on FOX-TV. Tom can be contacted at tom_keels@yahoo.com. Visit Tom's Amazon.com Author Page. Call 215-228-8200 to make reservations.

Friday, December 31, 12:00 noon HAPPY BIRTHDAY, GENERAL MEADE!

Every year on December 31st, Laurel Hill Cemetery offers its friends and supporters the chance to get an early start on their New Year's Eve festivities. The annual General Meade Celebration marks the birth and wedding anniversary of General George G. Meade, commander of the Union Army at the Battle of Gettysburg. The event features Civil War re-enactors, civilians in period attire, special dignitaries, speeches, and a 21-gun salute. The program is always capped off with a graveside champagne toast, the General's favorite libation, and is followed by a reception in the Gatehouse, providing an opportunity for all to eat, drink and socialize as we prepare for an exciting new year ahead. The event is FREE and open to the public.





The College of Physicians of Philadelphia
BIRTHPLACE OF AMERICAN MEDICINESM

College of Physicians of Philadelphia
19 South Twenty-Second Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103
(215) 563-3737 x304

http://www.collphyphil.org/prog_calendar.htm

College of Physician lectures and programs are **free**. There may be a fee at some receptions.

Thursday, November 11, 2010 at 6:30PM

Abraham Flexner and the Quest for Educational Excellence

Author of the most important document in the history of American medical education, the 1910 Flexner Report, fundraiser of over \$7 billion to improve physician training, and founder of one of the most outstanding institutes of higher learning in the US, Princeton's Institute for Advance Study, Abraham Flexner was a titan of American education. In this centenary year of Flexner's report, we pause to ask some basic questions about Flexner and his message. Who was Abraham Flexner, by what principles did he operate, what was his educational vision, and what course might Flexner recommend as medical education goes forward from 2010?

Speaker: Richard Gunderman, MD, PhD

To register: <http://www.eventbrite.com/event/708918394>

Friday, November 12, 2010 - 11AM - 2PM

The Affordable Care Act: Strengthening Communities Through Prevention

Speaker: Howard Koh, MD, United States Assistant Secretary for Health for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Reactors:

- Vanessa Briggs, MBA, RD, LDN, Executive Director, Health Promotion
- Natalie Levkovich, Executive Director, Health Federation of Philadelphia
- Giridhar Mallya, MD, MSHP, Director of Policy and Planning, Philadelphia Department of Health

Co-sponsored by the College's Section on Public Health and Preventive Medicine, Delaware Valley Health Council, Drexel University, School of Public Health, Jefferson School of Population Health and Jefferson Family and Community Health Dept., Center for Urban Health, Temple University, Dept. of Public Health, and the University of Pennsylvania, Center for Public Health Initiatives

To register: <http://www.eventbrite.com/event/969143735>

Tuesday, November 16, 2010 at 6:30PM

Hoarding Among Older Adults: Medical, Ethical and Legal Implications

Moderator: Kenneth J. Weiss, MD

Program will feature a screening of short documentary "Packrat" by Kris Britt Montag. A discussion with attorney Sanford Pfeffer of the Philadelphia Corporation for Aging will follow, along with a Q&A.

Sponsored by the College's Section on Medicine, Ethics, and the Law

To register: <http://www.eventbrite.com/event/762422426>

Tuesday, November 30, 2010 at 6:30PM

Dr. Benjamin Rush's Republican Education: A Revolutionary Commitment without Expiration Date

Speaker: William Durden, PhD, President of Dickinson College in Carlisle

Revolutionary Philadelphian Benjamin Rush, a physician, abolitionist, educator and signer of the Declaration of Independence, considered the War of American Independence (1775-1783) to be merely the "first act of the great drama" in an ongoing experiment in self-government that was the real American Revolution. Steeped in the Enlightenment ideas that profoundly shaped Revolutionary-era America and France, Rush warned his countrymen about the "unfinished business" that would require the wisdom and vigilance of an educated and engaged citizenry to overcome. This lecture will explore Rush's extraordinary life and ideas, urging a renewed commitment to building the educated and engaged citizenry upon which the health of our republican form of government depends.

The lecture is co-sponsored by the College of Physicians and The American Revolution Center. The lecture is supported by a grant from the Richard Lounsbury Foundation

To register: <http://www.eventbrite.com/event/807475180>

Friday, December 10, 2010 - 8:30AM - 11:30AM

Health Care Innovation Forum: Taking Proven Health Care Models and Solutions to Scale

A forum featuring leading regional and national experts in best practices and health care solutions to improve health care quality and cost. A keynote speaker will open the forum and be followed by two panels, which will discuss regional and national emerging health care innovations and trends, such as medical home and chronic care solutions, convenient care clinics and nurse-managed health centers, community-based elder care, integration of behavioral health and primary care, and electronic health record implementation.

This Forum has a long list of participants including Edward G. Rendell, Governor of Pennsylvania.

To register: <http://www.eventbrite.com/event/928504181>

The Mutter Museum
19 South 22nd Street
Philadelphia, PA, 19103

Hours of operation: Monday-Friday, 10am-5pm

Saturday & Sunday, 10am-5pm

Closed on Thanksgiving Day, December 25th, and January 1st.

General Admission (Ages 18-64): \$14

Children (Ages 6-17): \$10

Senior Citizens (Age 65+): \$10

Students with valid ID: \$10

Military with valid ID: \$10

Fellows of the College: FREE

Children under 6: FREE

The Mutter Museum was founded to educate future doctors about anatomy and human medical anomalies. Today, it serves as a valuable resource for educating and enlightening the public about our medical past and telling important stories about what it means to be human. The Mutter Museum embodies The College of Physicians of Philadelphia's mission to advance the cause of health, and uphold the ideals and heritage of medicine.

**Events and exhibits at
Chemical Heritage Foundation
315 Chestnut Street - Philadelphia, PA 19106
Tel: 215-925-2222 • Fax: 215-925-1954
<http://www.chemheritage.org>**

Events and exhibitions are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted.

Tuesday, November 16, 2010 at Noon

Brown Bag Lecture: “Astrology and Alchemy before the Spanish Inquisition” A talk by Tayra Lanuza-Navarro

This paper will discuss research that aims to study the attitude of the Spanish Inquisition toward astrology and alchemy, through an analysis of inquisitorial trials of men who were accused of being astrologers or of practicing alchemy, in order to identify accusations against specific people and the content that caused certain astrological and alchemical texts to be forbidden or expurgated.

Tayra Lanuza-Navarro holds a Ph.D. in history of science from Universitat de València. Her research has dealt with the history of astronomy and astrology in the 16th and 17th centuries, publishing several articles about the polemics on astrology in Early Modern Spain and the role of astrology in the interactions of early modern science, religion, and society. Her current research project focuses on early modern alchemical works, with the objective of charting the persecution of these works and of the practitioners of alchemy by the Spanish Inquisition.

Tuesday, November 30, 2010 - 12:00 to 1:00 p.m.

Brown Bag Lecture: “Food or Drug? The Advent of Medical Foods in the U.S.” A talk by Donna Messner

Medical foods are specially formulated nutritional products to be ingested under the supervision of a physician to treat disease. This talk will focus on the development of the first medical food, an infant formula called Lofenalac to treat phenylketonuria (PKU). The development of Lofenalac was associated with a milestone in the history of newborn screening and allowed for countless patients to avoid debilitating PKU-induced mental retardation. It also blurred the definitional boundaries between food and drugs, challenging U.S. Food and Drug Administration regulatory categories of the late 1960s and early 1970s. That challenge continues to resonate, as multiple categories of scientifically engineered foods increasingly dominate contemporary life.

Donna A. Messner received a Ph.D. in science and technology studies from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, in 2008. For the last two years she has been a postdoctoral fellow in the Penn Center for the Integration of Genetic Health Care Technologies (Penn CIGHT) in the University of Pennsylvania's Division of Medical Genetics. Her research has included the history of the development and regulation of drugs for AIDS and cancer, the socio-legal implications of direct-to-consumer genetic testing, and the history of selected gene patents. Prior to pursuing a PhD, Messner had an 18-year career as an analytical chemist.

Friday, December 3, 2010 - 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.

First Friday: Victorian Science Theatrical Demonstration

It's magic! It's an illusion! Nay, it's science!

Join CHF and Brett Kaiser of Nightjar Apothecary as we travel back to 1850 for a revival of Victorian Age science. Our fictive

guide will give a historically accurate theater-style demonstration of some of the most notable science experiments of the era. Please check back soon for additional information.

This will be your last First Friday opportunity to view CHF's current exhibit, *Marvels and Ciphers: A Look Inside the Flask*, on display through December 10. The permanent exhibit, *Making Modernity*, will also be open for viewing.

CHF joins over 40 Old City museums, galleries, and shops in opening its doors from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. for First Friday.

This project has been supported by The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage through the Heritage Philadelphia Program.

Tuesday, December 7, 2010 - 12:00 to 1:00 p.m.

Brown Bag Lecture: “Materials of Independence: High and Low Tech”. A talk by Bess Williamson

Throughout the last half of the 20th century, people with disabilities became increasingly visible in American society, agitating for rights protections and equal access to education and employment. Though this movement drew on the lessons of race- and gender-based activism of the time, it was unique in its focus on technological change—from new medical aids to building design—as a tool of civil rights.

In this talk, Williamson will describe how designers, engineers, and manufacturers directed technological innovation toward the cause of greater independence for people with physical abilities from the postwar period to end of the century. Sometimes employing cutting-edge new materials and devices, sometimes revisiting more conventional tools, these American producers sought technical solutions that would fit a diverse array of body shapes, sizes, and abilities.

Bess Williamson is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Delaware. Her dissertation, “The Right to Design: Disability and Access in the United States, 1945–1990,” describes the role of technology and design in the American Disability Rights movement. She received a Masters in Design History in a program jointly operated by Parsons School of Design and the Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum in 2005.

December 14, 2010 - 12:00 to 1:00 p.m.

Brown Bag Lecture: “Sharing Secrets: Jews, Christians, and the Practice of Alchemy in the Early Modern Period”. A talk by Daniel Jütte

In the early modern period, the trade in clandestine knowledge and the practice of alchemy, especially at courts, became a complex, albeit sometimes hazardous space of mutual contact between Jews and Christians.

This talk explores the role that Jews played in the early modern marketplace for secrets. A special focus lies on the biography of the Italian-Jewish alchemist, engineer, and entrepreneur Abramo Colorni (1544–1599). His career will serve as a point of departure for reassessing the practice of science among early modern Jews.

Daniel Jütte received a Ph.D. in history from the University of Heidelberg, Germany, where he is currently a research associate. His research focuses on early modern and modern European history, with a special interest in the history of science and Jewish history.

Ongoing exhibitions

Gallery hours are 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday-Friday.

(Free and open to the public)

Transmutations: Alchemy in Art (exhibit) :

Monday-Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

The Whole of Nature and the Mirror of Art: Images of Alchemy (exhibit)

Marvels and Ciphers: A Look Inside The Flask

1 March - 10 December 2010



APS Museum Calendar:

Museum Exhibition

Philosophical Hall
104 South Fifth Street

Philadelphia, PA 19106 Donation Requested: \$1

Wednesday, November 17, 2010 at 5:30 PM
George Washington's America: A Biography Through His Maps
BARNET SCHECTER
Benjamin Franklin Hall, 427 Chestnut Street

Please join us for a lecture, reception, and book signing

Wednesday, November 17, 2010 •

Reception: 5:30 p.m. • Program: 6:00 p.m.

Barnet Schecter is a Manhattan-based writer and historian. His interest in architecture, urban planning, and urban history evolved from his first career, as a sculptor. He holds a B.A., magna cum laude, from Yale University and an M.F.A. from Queens College, CUNY. From his teens until his death, the maps George Washington purchased and drew were always central to his work—as surveyor, military leader, private citizen, and statesman. After his death, many of the most important maps he had acquired were bound into an atlas, which remained in his family for almost a century before it was sold and eventually ended up at Yale University's Sterling Memorial Library. By allowing readers to visualize history through Washington's eyes, to see events as they unfolded on the maps he studied, *George Washington's America* offers a unique perspective on history, and important new insight into Washington's character and his transformation from private citizen to founding father.

RSVP: <http://www.amphilsoc.org/library/events/11172010>

Library Lectures at the American Philosophical Society are free and open to the public. Reservations are necessary. All events take place in Benjamin Franklin Hall, 427 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106. Each event will be followed by a book signing where authors' books will be available for purchase.

The American Philosophical Society Library

The American Philosophical Society Library is a major national center for research in the history of the sciences, medicine, and technology. With its roots extending back to the founding of the Society in 1743, it houses over 350,000 volumes and bound periodicals, eleven million manuscripts, 250,000 images, and thousands of hours of audio tape.

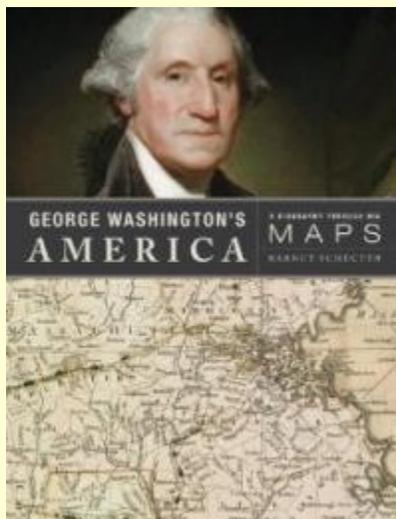
Among the many extraordinary books in the collections of printed materials are first editions of Sir Isaac Newton's *Principia*, Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species*, a presentation copy of Thomas Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia*, the elephant folio of Audubon's *Birds of North America* (for which the A.P.S. was an original subscriber), as well as a majority of Benjamin Franklin imprints and a significant portion of Franklin's personal library.

Manuscript collections range from eighteenth-century natural history, American Indian linguistics and culture, to nuclear physics, computer development, and medical science. The Library is among the premier institutions in the nation for documenting the history of genetics and eugenics, the study of natural history in the 18th and 19th centuries, quantum mechanics, and the development of cultural anthropology in America.

The Library is comprised of four departments: Printed Materials (housing books, periodicals, broadsides, and other printed works), Manuscripts (housing manuscript materials, photographs, and many works of art on paper), Conservation (responsible for the physical preservation and conservation of all library materials), and Technology (managing electronic access to collections, cyber-infrastructure, and digital preservation). Each of the departments contributes to putting up a regular rotation of exhibits based on the Library collection. Mounted in the entrance hall to the Library, exhibits are open to the public free of charge during regular operating hours.

“Without continual growth and progress, such words as improvement, achievement, and success have no meaning.”

~ Benjamin Franklin (1706 - 1790)



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PhACT's High School Science Fair Student Prize Funds

Total contributed for 2010 prizes = \$318.00
2010 Goal = \$300.00

Leftover funds from 2010 fund = \$ 18.00
contributions to 2011 prizes = \$380.00
Total 2011 Prize Fund = \$398.00
2011 Goal = ????

Please donate. Small contributions are preferred and donations in excess of the 2011 goal will be applied to the 2012 Prize Fund or some other youth science education project not yet determined.

ALL money collected for this project will be used for student prizes. PhACT members and others are invited to participate as judges. Contact Eric Krieg for more information: erickrieg@verizon.net