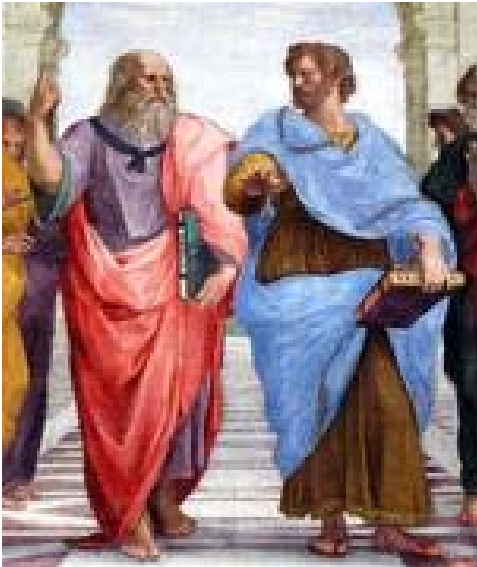


# Phactum

The Newsletter of the  
Philadelphia Association for Critical Thinking  
April 2009

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## Thinking Socratically



Dr. David Cattell, Chairman of the Physics Department at Community College of Philadelphia, will host PhACT and Cabrini College professors **Sharon Schwarze** and **Harvey Lape** at 2:00 PM on Saturday, April 18, 2009 at Community College of Philadelphia, 17th and Spring Garden Streets, in room S2-03 of the Winnet Student Life Building, the round building on 17th Street just south of Spring Garden Street. **This Meeting is free and open to the public. Parking is free.** Enter the college parking lot on 17th Street which is one way south bound. At the meeting be sure to get a free parking voucher from Dr. Cattell. This meeting site is handicap accessible.

Those of us who fancy ourselves as Critical Thinkers, or Socratic Thinkers, should have a special interest in this topic, it is after all, part of the name of our organization and is a concept central to our existence as an organization. Professors Schwarze and Lape

*(Continued on page 4)*

"The liberties of our country, the freedom of our civil Constitution, are worth defending at all hazards; and it is our duty to defend them against all attacks. We have received them as a fair inheritance from our worthy ancestors: they purchased them for us with toil and danger and expense of treasure and blood, and transmitted them to us with care and diligence. It will bring an everlasting mark of infamy on the present generation, enlightened as it is, if we should suffer them to be wrested from us by violence without a struggle, or to be cheated out of them by the artifices of false and designing men." - Samuel Adams (1722 – 1803) statesman, political philosopher, and one of the Founding Fathers of the United States.

# 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, 17th and Spring Garden Streets, in room S2-03 of the Winnet Student Life Building, the round building on 17th Street just south of Spring Garden Street. **Meetings are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted. Parking is free** at all PhACT events at CCP. Enter the college parking lot on 17th Street which is one way south bound. At the meeting be sure to get a free parking voucher from Dr. Cattell. This meeting site is handicap accessible.



**Saturday, April 18, 2009 - Teaching critical thinking.** Speakers **Sharon Schwarze** and **Harvey Lape** of Cabrini College are the authors of *Thinking Socratically*, a textbook on critical thinking that has been very well received. Pearson Publishing is currently considering supporting a third edition. The book emphasizes open rational dialogue as the basis of critical thinking. Philosophically, the authors are much indebted to the writing of Richard Rorty and consider their text to be a reduction to practice of Rorty's pragmatic viewpoint. They are currently working on a companion ethical theory, a theory which they call Harm Theory.

**Saturday, May 30, 2009 - Annual luncheon meeting/fundraiser** at *Edibles* restaurant in Horsham, PA from noon on. Our speaker will be **Faye Flam** with a talk and a book signing for her latest book called "*The Score - how the quest for sex has shaped the modern man*". Faye has long been the Science writer for the Philadelphia Inquirer and switched to a science-sex column called "Carnal Knowledge". In the course of her research, she investigated a training class where men supposedly learned how to be more successful getting action. See last page of Phactum to make reservations. Reservations are a must.

**Sunday July 19, 2009 - annual PhACT Picnic.**

**Friday, April 11, 2009 at 8 PM. Delaware Valley Mensa** General Membership Meeting. The General Membership Meeting will be held at the Police Administration Building, 750 Race Street, Philadelphia, PA. This meeting is DVM's only activity specifically open to the public, so feel free to invite your friends and relatives. Free. <http://dvm.us.mensa.org/>. So who says Mensans are just a bunch of eggheads? **Susan Mayers, Sexologist**, presentation on the **Ageless Sex Life: Secrets of Great Sex at Any Age**; is geared to adults of all ages. This entire event will be given in lecture and anonymous question format.

You will gain knowledge of how to deal with your evolving pattern of sexual desire and arousal. These change constantly throughout your life-span. You will be given specific guidelines on how to create new erogenous zones that can elicit sexual pleasure and even orgasm. You will be shown techniques for whole-body orgasms. Q&A - questions will be accepted anonymously in written format at the end of lecture.

Ms. Mayer is a certified sexologist and sex coach specializing in challenges of the libido – human sexual desire and arousal. Susana is a champion of the Ageless Sex Life™lecturing on sexual techniques to fit an individual's evolving pattern of sexual desire and arousal. She is also the creator and Salonnière of The Erotic Literary Salon in Philadelphia, [www.TheEroticLiterarySalon.com](http://www.TheEroticLiterarySalon.com), unique in the English-speaking world, a comfortable place to hear all styles of erotic literature.

**Tuesday, April 21, 2009 - Invasive Plants in the Philadelphia Area. 6:30PM Reception 7:00PM Lecture** Dr. Alfred E. Schuyler, Curator Emeritus of Botany at The Academy of Natural Sciences leads an engaging presentation on the invasive plants that have been the subject of considerable environmental concern in the Philadelphia area. In this lecture, Dr. Schuyler will discuss how invasives differ from non invasives and the environmental impacts of invasives from the 18th century to the present day. At The Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education | 8480 Hagy's Mill Road | Philadelphia | PA | 19128 <http://www.schuylkillcenter.org/>

**Wednesday, May 6, 2009 at 6:00 pm - Great Sites Lecture Series : Erasing a City: The Day Life Stopped at Hasanlu Tepe, Iran in 800 BC.** Michael Danti, Assistant Professor of Archaeology at Boston University, speaks of the realities of ancient warfare alluded to in ancient textual sources from Hasanlu around 800 BC when enemy invaders sacked and burned the city. Reception follows. At the University of Pennsylvania Museum, 3260 South Street, Philadelphia 19104 . 215-898-4000. \$5 General Admission; Free for Members.

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](mailto: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.

**Sex: the pleasure is momentary, the position ridiculous, and the expense damnable.**  
**Lord Chesterfield (1694 - 1773)**

# PHACT CALENDAR

## Science on Tap, A Science Cafe

### Eat. Drink. Science.

- **Who:** Everyone you know or don't yet know
- **What:** Real Scientists. Real Conversations. Real Bar.
- **Where:** [National Mechanics](#)
- **When:** The second Monday of every month at 6:00 pm

*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!

### What's on tap in April

**April 13:** "Take Some Fruit and Pass the Seeds". **Brenda Casper**, plant ecologist and professor of biology at the University of Pennsylvania, will encourage participants to explore the ways that plants manage to "move" through fruits and seeds, from the ethylene that allows us to transport tomatoes long before they're ripe, to the sugars that make fruits attractive for creatures to eat, to the ways that animals ultimately disperse plants' seeds in far-flung places.

### Upcoming speakers

- May 11: Scott Gilbert, biologist at Swarthmore College
- June: speaker TBD
- July 13: speaker TBD

*Science on Tap* is sponsored by a consortium of four Philadelphia institutions: the Academy of Natural Sciences, the American Philosophical Society (APS) Museum, Chemical Heritage Foundation, and the Wagner Free Institute of Science.

### National Mechanics

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

Every Monday, except holidays, at 7:00 PM .

**Socrates Cafe** is moderated by PhACT member Sam Frederick at the Springfield Township Library at 1600 Paper Mill Road, Wyndmoor, PA 19038. This discussion group is free and open to the public. Bring an open mind and positive attitude.



## Wagner Free Institute of Science

1700 West Montgomery Avenue  
, Philadelphia, PA 19121  
ph 215-763-6529 [www.wagnerfreeinstitute.org](http://www.wagnerfreeinstitute.org)

Thursday, May 7, 2009

**Please Don't Eat the Monkeys:  
Biodiversity Conservation on Africa's Bioko Island**

*Presented By*  
**Dr. Gail Hearn, Drexel University**

**4:00 - 7:00 PM**  
**Lecture at 5:30 PM**



*Papio leucophaeus.*  
The Natural History of Monkeys by Sir William Jardine.  
Edinburgh: Lizars, 1833.

**Primatologist Gail Hearn** will take us to the pristine island of Bioko, home to Africa's largest concentration of endangered primates. She has been traveling there for the last twelve years to track dwindling primate populations that are being hunted for their meat and to determine how we can save them from extinction.

Dr. Gail Hearn is a professor in the Department of Bioscience and Biotechnology at Drexel University. She founded the Bioko Biodiversity Protection Program in 1998 to protect Bioko's primate species. Her work was featured in the August 2008 issue of National Geographic.

This lecture is FREE but donations to The Wagner Free Institute of Science are greatly appreciated.

are members of the Philosophy Department at Cabrini College and will be discussing various aspects of critical thinking, especially as it pertains to our ordinary daily lives. They are the authors of a college text, *Thinking Socratically: Critical Thinking About Everyday Issues* which has been well received and is likely to be in its third printing.

Bring an open mind and willingness to consider real-life situations that raise questions about the basic assumptions of rationality, connections, deductive reasoning, inductive reasoning, and reasoning about values and the importance of open rational dialogue.

Also, see the article by Ed Gracely on page 21 of this Phactum.

## **Thinking Socratically: Critical Thinking About Everyday Issues**

by Sharon Schwarze and Harvey Lape

**Paperback: 384 pages \$76.00 Publisher: Prentice Hall; 2 edition (September 8, 2000)  
ISBN-10: 0130281638 ISBN-13: 978-0130281630**

*Thinking Socratically: Critical Thinking About Everyday Issues, Second Edition* encourages students in a user-friendly way to improve their own natural reasoning skills. An enjoyable collection of readings presents students with real-life situations that raise questions about the basic assumptions of rationality, naturally engaging them in open dialogue—the hallmark of the rational person. The situations range from the problem of evidence at a trial to the absence of an explanation of why two children died in the same day-care center on the same day. The text is distinctively different, both conceptually and pedagogically in its approach and critical thinking.

- Teaches critical thinking in contexts of ordinary life issues
- Shows how to be a critical thinker using Socrates as a model
- Emphasizes open rational dialogue, especially among friends, but even among enemies
- Is organized in short packets for ease of assignment and retention
- Includes puzzles of rationality as well as standard items



## **Critical Thinking Applied**

Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson went on a camping trip. After a good meal and a bottle of wine, they lay down for the night and went to sleep.

Some hours later Holmes woke up, nudged his faithful friend and said, "Watson, I want you to look up at the sky and tell me what you see." Watson said, "I see millions and millions of stars." Sherlock said, "And what does that tell you?"

After a minute or so of pondering Watson said, "Astronomically, it tells me that there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets. Astrologically, I observe that Saturn is in Leo. Horologically, I deduce that the time is approximately a quarter past three in the morning. Theologically, I can see that God is all powerful and that we are small and insignificant. Meteorologically, I suspect that we will have a beautiful day today. What does it tell you?"

Holmes was silent for about 30 seconds and said, "Watson, you idiot! Someone has stolen our tent!"

# Thank you, CCP

**The Philadelphia Association for Critical Thinking** wishes to express its gratitude to Community College of Philadelphia and especially Dr. David Cattell, Chair of the Physics Department, for hosting PhACT and giving us access to such excellent facilities. Part of CCP's mission is to serve Philadelphia as a premiere learning institution and PhACT is glad to support to this goal by having talks on wide ranging, engaging, and educational topics.

## About the College

Community College of Philadelphia is the largest public institution of higher education in Philadelphia. Since 1965, over 500,000 students have passed through the doors seeking associate's degrees, certificates, improved workplace skills and lifelong learning. Many degree students transfer to four-year institutions while others seek employment in the Philadelphia region. Over 90 percent of graduates remain in the area and seek employment, strengthening our local economy and workforce. Local businesses look to CCP to provide workplace training to keep their workers skilled and their companies competitive.

Over 70 degree and certificate programs in art, science, business, technology and liberal arts are offered. Many students have hectic schedules, and the College can accommodate every type of learner. Classes are held during the day, in the evening and on Saturdays at the Main Campus, at three Regional Centers, and at neighborhood sites throughout the City. Distance education classes are also available.

If students wish to continue education, transferring to a four-year institution is easily possible as the College's specialized dual admissions and transfer programs will assist students in this process.

At the College, excellent educational support services are available to students, from counseling and tutoring to adult education programs.

Student life is an important aspect at the College. Over 40 clubs and associations give opportunity to learn something new, make more friends and have fun. Thirteen intercollegiate athletic programs, plus more than twelve intramural sports, provide a competitive outlet. The gymnasium offers many fitness options with a full-size basketball court, cardiovascular and weight room, aerobics facilities and racquetball courts.

CCP students are diverse in many aspects and represent dozens of different cultural backgrounds, including local students and international students that come from 65 countries. Students are of all different ages and have different educational objectives. In conjunction with educational mission, CCP encourages the appreciation of all cultural backgrounds and is proud of the diverse student population.

# Speak up!



**Don't be tongue tied!! Sing out and let your views be known. Letters to the editor of Phactum are welcome, as are original poetry, articles, clerihevs, good recipes, and anything else that might be on your mind. No partisan politics or religion bashing, please, but you may denounce the Editor. Send email to [phactpublicity@aol.com](mailto:phactpublicity@aol.com)**

## Letters

Editor: Both Al Erpel and Paul Schlueter III's recent pieces take for granted that there exist objective moral principles which it is our job to discover and comply with. I don't accept this premise.

As a materialist I think morals, like other ideas, are patterns in central nervous systems, and do not exist outside of human brains. Further, morals are normative ideas concerning "what ought to be." Unlike positive ideas about "what is," they can't be tested, and so have no empirical meaning.

Precisely as materialism has proliferated at the expense of religious and metaphysical world-views, the quality of human life has by most measures improved. So I am hopeful that further advances in our understanding of humanity -- as individuals, as a species, and in relation to our environment -- will lead to further insights about how we can coexist to our mutual satisfaction, and that we will collectively gravitate toward acting on these insights.

To be sure, I can't be certain we will do so, nor can I absolutely disprove the rather dismal notion held by some that supernatural beliefs, even if illusory, are needed to keep our mutual relations from becoming far less congenial. But I see no evidence from history that this is the case -- that acceptance rather than rejection of supernaturalism does anything to help us get along.

On the contrary, there appears considerable evidence that non-empirical and non-skeptical cognitive habits, such as believing things on faith and jumping to conclusions -- along with social structures and practices that promote such habits and discourage critical thinking -- contribute a great deal to conflict in the world. The reason is simple: the more readily we believe things without strong evidence, the more likely we are to hold different beliefs impelling us toward conflicting courses of action.

This isn't something exclusively to do with religion. In my experience as a political activist, I have observed how sectarian habits of thought, sometimes encouraged by a cultic organizational milieu, prevent people from examining the views of others with an open mind. Sometimes the greatest hostility is shown toward the groups that are ideologically closest to one's own -- indicating that jealousy of group identity is shaping behavior more than are empirical measures of efficacy.

The above considerations suggest that promoting critical thinking as a personal practice -- and fostering communities that promote it, defining themselves by that shared practice rather than by specific beliefs -- may be the most effective way to increase general harmony. Simply debunking false ideas one by one is of limited value if not combined with teaching people how to test and judge claims, including their own assumptions, for themselves.

Eric Hamell  
Philadelphia, PA

Editor: (Phactum March 2009) I saw this:

Friday, March 13, 2009 at 8 PM. Delaware Valley Mensa. General Membership Meeting. Program TBA. The General Membership Meeting will be held at the Police Administration Building, 750 Race Street, Philadelphia, PA.

Was this because Mensa member Vinny Fumo is under arrest . . . .

David T. Moore  
Philadelphia, PA

**Editors note:** See article by Bill Kearney on Page 14.

Editor: Re: "Questionable Science Quotations," March 2009 Phactum, p. 9: Question: Would that be "Questionable Science-Quotations" or "Questionable-Science Quotations?" Answer: Yes. Thomas J. Watson apparently never said or

wrote the quotation attributed to him: see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas\\_J.\\_Watson#Famous\\_misquote](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_J._Watson#Famous_misquote) or just go to the wikipedia Thomas J. Watson article and scroll down to Famous Misquote. With regard to Woolley's statement, which apparently appeared in Time January 16, 1956 - see <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,861825,00.html> -- if you look at the complete quotation, and the context in which it was said, he seems to be suggesting not that manned space travel is technologically impossible, only that it is not cost-effective by comparison with other means of research...and he was and is probably right  
Howard J. Wilk  
Philadelphia, PA

Editor: I recently came across this remarkable but not in the least questionable quotation: "I do not think it at all probable that aeronautics will ever come into play as a serious modification of transport and communication." - H. G. Wells 1901.

Tom Napier  
North Wales, PA

Editor: Re: Benjamin Franklin's "Of Lightning..." (*Phactum* March 2009, pp. 14-15): Franklin recommended that lightning rods have sharp points and the Royal Society agreed. King George III, angry at Franklin for some recent unpleasantness, ordered some blunt ends installed and asked John Pringle, President of the Royal Society, for an opinion in favor of the change. Pringle replied that "the laws of Nature were not changeable at royal pleasure." Gossiped Londoners:

**While you, great George, for safety hunt,  
And sharp conductors change for blunt,  
The nation's out of joint.  
Franklin a wiser course pursues,  
And all your thunder fearless views,  
By keeping to the point.**

(Wright, Esmond. *Franklin of Philadelphia*. ISBN 0-674-31809-9. pp. 68-69.)  
Howard J. Wilk  
Philadelphia, PA

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## Various Ruminations

### Collected/written by Ray Haupt (with help from others)

#### FTC curbs unsubstantiated claims by radio talk-show broadcasters.

Dr. Stephen Barrett reports in *Consumer Health Digest*, March 12, 2009:

*Rodney H. Burreson, Mark Alexander, and their company, Roex, Inc., have agreed to pay \$3 million in consumer redress to settle Federal Trade Commission charges that they deceptively claimed their products were effective against many serious medical conditions. [Marketers of dietary supplements and devices agree to pay \$3 million to settle FTC charges of deceptive advertising. FTC news release, March 3, 2009: <http://www.ftc.gov/opa/2009/03/roex.shtm>*

*The challenged products included an infrared sauna sold to treat cancer; and dietary supplements claimed to treat, reduce the risk of, or prevent cancer, HIV/AIDS, diabetes, strokes, heart attacks, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, arthritis, multiple sclerosis, other autoimmune diseases, ulcers, herpes, asthma, and glaucoma. The marketers' main advertising vehicle is "The Truth About Nutrition," a nationally broadcast, hour-long, 5-day-a-week call-in radio program that Burrelson and Alexander co-host with Julie Lynch.*

*The agreed-upon final order prohibits the defendants from making unsubstantiated claims about any product. The Commission vote authorizing the staff to file the complaint and final order was 3-1, with the dissenting vote cast by Commissioner J. Thomas Rosch, who said that the monetary relief did not reflect the seriousness of the conduct involved. Roex's Web site states that more than 60 of its products are sold through about 600 retail outlets.*

The Roex company website is <http://www.roex.com> but as of March 14, when I popped this item into *Phactum*, there was no hint on the website that something was wrong. I, for one, agree with Commissioner Rosch. The monetary settlement is not enough. Some jail time would be appropriate as well and might make such deceptive marketing activities less appealing to other hucksters of sham cures.



King George III (1760 - 1820)

### Misguided legislator pushing for dietary supplement coverage.

Dr. Stephen Barrett reported this item in Consumer Health Digest, April 2, 2009

*Maine State Representative Andrea Boland is crusading for a bill intended to force insurance companies to pay for all "nutritional measures and products, including dietary supplements, whose primary purposes are to enhance health, improve nutritional intake, strengthen the immune system, cleanse the body of toxins, address specific health needs and aid in resisting disease." The bill would require coverage and reimbursement for all such methods "shown to be beneficial to an enrollee's health when used as directed by the manufacturer or manufacturer's representative and recommended by the enrollee's physician." A local newspaper editorial indicates that Boland was motivated by a personal experience and makes from \$500 to \$1,000 per month as a distributor for Reliv International (a multilevel marketing company).*

*The report expressed concern about this conflict of interest and noted that Maine's highest public health official opposed the bill. [Lawmaker crosses ethical boundary. Morning Sentinel, March 25, 2009] The bill would apply to all products (including herbs) that fit the federal definition of "dietary supplement."*

<http://morningsentinel.maintoday.com/view/columns/6110893.html>

**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 their work.

### Borneo Snake Hoax

In the March 2009 Phactum we had a little item about a 100 foot snake in Borneo. Scientific American investigated and discovered that this was actually an older photo taken over the Congo River in Africa, not the Baleh River in Borneo. The original photo had been modified and entered in a 2002 Hoax Contest.

AOL had a poll when the original story was presented, the results being that 55% of respondents believed that the snake was real.

### Garden of Eden found!!!

Here is an interesting story from the Daily Mail, March 5, 2009. I am skeptical, to say the least, about the Garden be-

ing discovered, but the archeology is interesting and the ruins are very ancient indeed going back to about 10,000 BC which messes up Young Earth Creationist dating systems. Note that Adam and Eve are redheads.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-1157784/Do-mysterious-stones-mark-site-Garden-Eden.html>

### There couldn't be a hidden agenda, could there?

Apparently, creationists legally attacked a writer at The New Scientist and forced them to remove an article about science books with religious agendas. The article has posts that show the article that was removed:

<http://www.the-scientist.com/community/posts/list/423.page>

It's definitely worth a read. The article might get more exposure by being banned. Banning ideas is bad news for the most part. It seldom succeeds and it shows insecurity on the part of those seeking to suppress free expression. Let various ideas compete on their own merits.

### The "I didn't come from a salamander" Department

The Institute for Creation Research wanted to offer an online master's degree in science education approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board last year. They were refused.

Undeterred, an East Texas lawmaker devised an alternative: Exempt the ICR from the coordinating board's rules. Rep. Leo Berman, R-Tyler, said his proposed legislation is intended to allow the Bible-oriented group to proceed without the coordinating board's blessing. "Why are people who call themselves scientists afraid to hear two sides of a debate?" Berman asked Friday.

Berman's proposal would exempt private, nonprofit educational institutions that do not accept state funding and state-administered federal funding from coordinating board rules.

Berman said his proposal encourages different viewpoints and debate. "Personally, I don't believe in evolution," he said. "I don't believe I came from a salamander that came out of a pond."

Steven Schafersman, president of Texas Citizens for Science, said the measure "would make Texas a magnet for unscrupulous private 'educational' companies that will want to



Blind Salamander

**If nature has made any one thing less susceptible than all others of exclusive property, it is the action of the thinking power called an idea, which an individual may exclusively possess as long as he keeps it to himself; but the moment it is divulged, it forces itself into the possession of everyone, and the receiver cannot dispossess himself of it. — Thomas Jefferson (1743 - 1826)**



offer students the opportunity to pay for bogus advanced degrees," Schafersman wrote on his group's Web site. "If H.B. 2800 became law, it would be a gold mine to every fly-by-night, degree-granting outfit in the country."

Berman's question is fair enough though: "Why are people who call themselves scientists afraid to hear two sides of a debate?" Possible answer: Could it just be that scientists are busy folks with more important things to do than debate with a salamander?

If you want a lot more detail on this issue, and many other issues concerning Creationist encroachment in public education, go to the website of the National Center for Science Education. <http://www.ncseweb.org>. Sign up for their weekly newsletter. Glenn Branch, the director, will happily add you. By the way, Glenn, how many Steve's are there now since Steve Darwin, a descendant of Charles and still a primate, so very coincidentally, became the 1,000th member of the list on Charles' 200th birthday?

### Saw Palmetto

I was recently chatting with an old friend and a new friend. My new friend was complaining of some symptoms that suggest a prostate problem. He has been taking saw palmetto, a self-prescribed over the counter remedy that is heavily advertised as a cure for prostate problems. Our advice: see a urologist and also see page 17 for a description of Saw Palmetto as described by the **Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center**.



Cartoon by Chris Madden <http://www.chrismadden.co.uk>  
Used by Permission

### Gambia gripped by fear as leader scours country in search of witches

Get a load of this news report by The Independent, a UK newspaper, Thursday, March 19, 2009. *A state-sponsored witch-hunt has begun in Gambia where as many as 1,000*



*people have been kidnapped from their villages and taken to "secret detention centres" then stripped, beaten and poisoned.*

*The campaign launched in the tiny West African nation*

*is the latest manifestation of the increasingly brutal and bizarre rule of President Yahya Jammeh, who has claimed he can cure people of Aids. Now the President is thought to believe he is under attack from witches.*

Victims have been held in secret detention camps for up to five days and forced to drink hallucinogenic substances which have killed at least two people through kidney failure, Amnesty International, the London-based human rights organisation, said in a statement.

Sadly it is not a great surprise that state sanctioned witch-hunts still happen in a nation when the national leader such as Yahya Jammeh fancies himself a thaumaturgist\*.

There is more to this story which can be found at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/gambia-gripped-by-fear-as-leader-scours-country-in-search-of-witches-1648414.html>

\* *thaumaturgy* \THAW-muh-tuhr-jee\, noun: *The performance of miracles or magic. Thaumaturgy comes from the Greek words for "wonder" (thauma) and "work" (ergon). A practitioner of thaumaturgy is a thaumaturgist or thaumaturge. Example: the personal trainer is surely a thaumaturge as he gave Arnold Stang the strength of Charles Atlas. Thanks for the classy word, Wendy.*

### A new low in the anti-vaccine campaign

In her own words, entertainer Jenny McCarthy states: "I do believe sadly it's going to take some diseases coming back to realize that we need to change and develop vaccines that are safe. If the vaccine companies are not listening to us, it's their f---ing fault that the diseases are coming back. They're making a product that's s---. If you give us a safe vaccine, we'll use it. It shouldn't be polio versus autism."

That is just great, a clueless celebrity using her fame to push an anti-vaccine claim that has been resounding scientifically disproven multiple times. McCarthy has claimed

herself to be an Indigo Mom and her son a Crystal Child.

Meanwhile the controversy rolls along and here is a website about that called the Jenny McCarthy Body Count: [http://www.jennymccarthybodycount.com/Jenny\\_McCarthy\\_Body\\_Count/Home.html](http://www.jennymccarthybodycount.com/Jenny_McCarthy_Body_Count/Home.html)

What is an Indigo Mom and a Crystal Child anyway? Anyone care to research the question in a letter or article to be published in Phactum? It all sounds so touch feely and New Age, an artifact of people with too much time and money on their hands.

There is more about the autism/vaccine non-connection in "Sound Bites".

In the March 2009 Phactum we reported that in 1909, an Army doctor, Dr. F.F. Russell had developed a vaccine against typhoid, a major disabler and killer of military personnel in earlier wars.



Doctor F.F. Russell and Doctor John Neate, vaccinating volunteers at the Army Medical Museum against typhoid. Taken about March of 1910. Doctor Russell is to the right.

### 'Detox' update

In the March 2009 Phactum we reported that Sense About Science (SAS), a United Kingdom science organization, had raised concerns about Duchy Originals Detox Tincture, a homeopathic product marketed by none other than the Prince of Wales. Since then, in light of the publicity and some investigation Duchy Originals have now been forced to withdraw their herbal products' efficacy claims as on the 20<sup>th</sup> March the MHRA (Medicines and Healthcare products

Regulatory Agency) upheld a complaint that contrary to advertising the products had not been assessed for efficacy. See the SAS website for more information.

[www.senseaboutscience.org](http://www.senseaboutscience.org)

In defense of Price Charles it should be noted that profits from Duchy Originals go to charitable causes.

### Making Sense of GM

We are not talking about General Motors here, we are thinking about Genetic Modification as it applies to food crops. To the best of my recollection this topic has not been addressed in Phactum.

Sense About Science has done some thinking about it however and here is a brief statement from their March 2009 newsletter.

*"In February we launched Making Sense of GM to move the debate back onto what the technology can and cannot do, and what society is asking of it. In the past we have found it difficult to point people towards anything that could give them a direct way into the debate without being overwhelmed by scientific details on the one hand or polemic on the other. The guide brought together the heads of the UK plant research institutes and many scientists, plant breeders and farmers to discuss what GM is and why they are interested in it.*

*Professor Ian Crute of Rothamsted Research was interviewed on the Today programme and coverage in the print media has led to hundreds of requests for copies for schools, students, local horticultural groups, farmers' co-ops and many others. We want as many people as possible to know about it, so can you link to the PDF on our website or include an article about it in your magazine/newsletter?"*

<http://www.senseaboutscience.org.uk/PDF/MakingSenseofGM.pdf>

### Electric cars

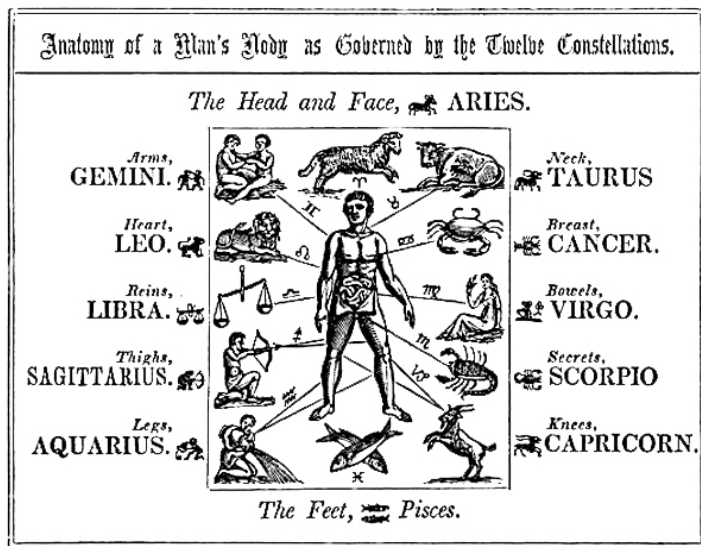
The notion of electric cars has become a popular one and I must say that I like the notion too, but I am skeptical of implementation of electric motor vehicles for private transportation any time soon. They are better adapted for fleet vehicles such as urban Post Office vehicles.

General Motors has been working on a vehicle called the Chevy Volt. It promises to allow the motorist to drive about 40 miles using no fuel other than that which is stored in its battery. After the battery runs down an internal combustion engine will turn on to recharge the battery as the car is running. That is all fine and dandy, but as things stand right now the batteries have a 6 hour recharge time if fully discharged and plugged into a home charging station.

That is not so bad if the vehicle owner has a home recharging station. In Philadelphia, a city of row homes, an enormous number of houses are not well suited for that purpose unless it becomes all the rage to run wires out of windows to create tripping and electrocution hazards.

## Health and Your Sign

This little item was on the AOL Home Page on April 6, 2009: "Frequent headaches? Constant tummy troubles? The answers to your health issues could lie in the stars. "In medical astrology, different parts of the body are associated with each of the 12 signs," writes Stephanie Gailing in her new book, "Planetary Apothecary." Those parts of the body may be the most vulnerable, but, she argues, when taken care of, can be areas of great strength. Gailing also offers foods that are especially beneficial to each of the signs."



Astrological Medicine might sound harmless, but is it? Here is one more example of a media outlet presenting highly questionable health information as if it deserves serious consideration.

## In 1492 Columbus Sailed the Ocean Blue

I happened to stumble upon the charter given to Christopher Columbus by Their Catholic Majesties Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain and a lot of other places. It is interesting to read and is one of the earliest documents concerning the colonization of the New World. The document is dated April 3, 1492 but it was not until August 3 that Columbus actually set sail. This document can be found in the Library of Congress and it was mighty obliging of Their Majesties to have written in English. Hopefully Columbus understood what he was in for.

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## Soundbites

Compiled by Becky Strickland

► "If an author wishes for 'academic freedom, it is usually a code for 'acceptance of creationism'." Amanda Geffer, editor, opinion section of *New Scientist*, February 28, 2009.

► "I'm not going to answer that question. I am a Christian and I don't think anybody asking a question about my religion is appropriate." Gary Goodyear, Canada's minister for science and technology, upon being asked about his stance on evolution. *Globe and Mail*, Toronto, March 17, 2009. Reported in *New Scientist* March 21, 2009.

► "The doctor who sparked the scare over the safety of the MMR vaccine for children changed and misreported results in his research, creating the appearance of a possible link with autism, a Sunday Times investigation has found.

Confidential medical documents and interviews with witnesses have established that Andrew Wakefield manipulated patients' data, which triggered fears that the MMR triple vaccine to protect against measles, mumps and rubella was linked to the condition." Reported by Brian Deer, *The Sunday Times* (London) February 8, 2009.

► "Careful studies have been carried out comparing rates of autism in vaccinated and non-vaccinated children, and in those receiving different kinds of vaccines, in this country and others. Thousands of children receiving the MMR vaccine have been analyzed. US organizations such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences, as well as the UK National Health Service and the Canadian Pediatric Society, have all concluded that there is no evidence of a link between the MMR vaccine and autism, and that the benefits of eradicating measles far outweighs any presumed side effects. Children should get their MMR vaccinations!" Guy McKhann, MD, *Brain in the News*, March 2009. (This is a free monthly newsletter from the Dana Foundation. For more information go to [www.dana.org](http://www.dana.org) )

► "It's simply sham science. Blood types, determined by the proteins in the blood, have nothing to do with personality." Satoru Kikuchi, associate professor of psychology at Shinshu University. He is speaking on the current craze in Japan of determining personality by blood type. Over 5 million books on the subject have been sold, Nintendo has a game and TV has a comedy in the works. Matchmaking agencies provide a blood type compatibility service, some companies ask about blood type in interviews, and children in some kindergartens are divided up by blood type. Scientists and the Health, Welfare and Labor ministry have been unsuccessful in debunking the theory, most recently introduced in the 1970's by Masahiko Nomi, who has no medical background. Associated Press, Mari Yamaguchi, reported in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 15, 2009

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# March 2009 Meeting Report

By Becky Strickland

In the 200<sup>th</sup> year of Darwin's birthday, journalist Lauri Lebo spoke about her experiences covering the now world famous Dover trial.

The controversy in Dover Twp. started with a student's mural of human evolution, depicting a continuum of monkeys morphing into humans. The initial uproar was due to the anatomically correct parts of the painting but quickly 'evolved' into concern that students were being taught evolution in school. The school board then adopted a formal policy requiring intelligent design as well as evolution to be taught in ninth grade biology class. They also selected an ID textbook, *Of Pandas and People*, to be used.

Many parents were upset at this decision and explored ways to remove the board members from office, calling congressmen and the ACLU. The only solution was to wait for the next election and vote them out of office or take the case to court. Waiting was not an option. Although many parents disagreed with the ID policy, ultimately only 11, some church goers and Sunday school teachers, were brave enough to become plaintiffs in the case. The law firm was Pepper Hamilton of Philadelphia, Judge John E. Jones III (who later quipped his real first name is "Bush appointee") presided.

Various scientists testified during the trial, turning it into "the biology class you wished you had taken". Everyone but the defendants listened closely to the scientists who testified, some took notes. The defendants denied they were try-

ing to bring religion into the classroom, and were careful, at least during the trial, to avoid the word 'creationism'. But the defendants repeatedly lied about statements they had made in the past and the source of the money used to buy "Of Pandas and People". They were admonished by the judge but never prosecuted for perjury.

The verdict in the trial is well known. In a "constitutional smack down" the judge ruled for the plaintiffs and against teaching Intelligent Design, stating the defendant's decision was "breathtaking inanity".

Cindy Sneath, one of the 11 remarkable plaintiffs, was in the audience. I spoke to her after the meeting and complimented her on standing up so publicly. She said "I didn't think I was doing anything big, I was just so annoyed at what they were doing." She still has the \$1 check she received as payment for damages. "You have to ask for something financial, but I just wanted ID out of the classroom" Life has returned to nearly normal for the plaintiffs and some are now on the Dover school board.

Why do people cling to ID? Laurie explained, as Andrew Petto did a couple years ago, "They think their children will go to hell if they believe evolution, and nothing else matters to them". Lauri's book about the case, *The Devil in Dover*, is available on her website, [www.laurilebo.com/dp](http://www.laurilebo.com/dp)

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## The Devil in Dover:

### An Insider's Story of Dogma v. Darwin in Small-town America

Hardcover: 256 pages Publisher: New Press (May 2008) \$24.95

ISBN-10: 1595582088 ISBN-13: 978-1595582089

*"What happened in Dover is a tiny sliver, a broken shard of glass mirroring what plays out across the country. A war of fundamentalist Christian values versus secularism. A battle between evangelical fanaticism and tolerance."*—from *The Devil in Dover*

In December 2004, following the Dover area school board's decision to teach intelligent design in ninth-grade biology classrooms, eleven parents sued, sparking a federal constitutional challenge. Lauri Lebo, a small-town reporter who covered the trial, knows not just the legal case and science, but the people on all sides of the divisive battle.

In *The Devil in Dover*, Lebo traces the compelling backstory of this pivotal case described by some as a perfect storm of religious intolerance, First Amendment violations, and an assault on American science education. In a community divided across unexpected lines, the so-called activist judge, a George Bush-appointed Republican, eventually condemned the school board's decision as one of "breathtaking inanity."

Lebo follows the story through its surprising twists, pondering whether this was a national war playing out in a small town or a small-town political battle playing out on the national stage. As a "local girl" with a fundamentalist Christian father, Lebo provides an account that is both fascinating and moving, as she thoughtfully probes one of America's most divisive cultural conflicts—and the responsibility journalists have when covering such a controversial story.

**Lauri Lebo** has been a journalist for twenty years. As part of an investigative reporting team, she helped solve two civil rights-era murders. As the *York Daily Record's* education reporter, she covered intelligent design's First Amendment battle. The winner of numerous state and national awards, she lives in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

# Animal Life, Now 55 Million Years Older

by Paul Schlueter III



**B**efore now animal life was thought to be about 580 million years old based on apparent fossil embryos of that age. Now, an analysis of chemicals apparently provides evidence that animal life is “at least 635 million years” old.

According to an article by Rachel Ehrenberg in the February 28, 2009 Science News, citing an article in the February 5, 2009 issue of Nature, Gordon Love, at the University of California, Riverside, led a study which discovered “the molecular remains of an animal steroid”, also referred to as “the steroid fossil”. The complex chemical is today produced by a class of sponges called the Demospongiae, and by a type of algae, but ratios of this chemical to other compounds rules out algae as the source of this evidence. These chemical markers were obtained from salt cores taken from a basin in south Oman. Love speculates that animals which must have produced these steroids might have lived even as early as 751 million years ago.

Paleobiologist Kevin Peterson, of Dartmouth College, says that such early sponges may have helped to oxygenate the deep oceans, enabling the development of other life forms. During this time period, called the Cryogenian Period (790 - 630 mya), the Earth was heavily glaciated, between two extreme Ice Ages, and life

seems to have found deep oceans most comfortable.

The **Demospongiae** are the largest class in the phylum Porifera. Their "skeletons" are made of spicules consisting of fibers of the protein spongin, the mineral silica,



or both. They contain 90% of all species of sponges and are predominantly leuconoid structural grade. There are many diverse orders in this class, including all of the large sponges. Most are marine dwellers, but several live in freshwater environments. Some species are brightly colored, and there is great variety in body shape. They reproduce both sexually and asexually.

While evidence based on steroids resembling those produced by a modern life form might not convince everyone, it is important to remember that the fossil record of actual animal body parts is spotty at best. It's even more difficult to imagine soft sponges being preserved from so long ago. However, these “fossil steroids” are important clues to something of extraordinary age, and as such they belong on the books as one more piece of the complex puzzle of animal genesis.

Unless and until plausible explanation for some other source of those complex chemicals can be given, it's entirely reasonable to consider this new evidence to be provisional justification to extend the development of animal life 55 million years into the past than previously indicated, and to say that animal ancestors were present at least 635 million years ago.

*Paul Schlueter III is serving Life in Prison in NE Pennsylvania. His supporters have recently created a website about him. [www.jaylbird.org](http://www.jaylbird.org)*

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The Cryogenian period is a geologic period from 850 million to 630 million years ago. It occurred before the Ediacaran Period and after the Tonian Period, and is part of the much longer Proterozoic era, meaning "era of primitive life." In Greek, Cryogenian means "ice origin." Although ice did not really originate with the Cryogenian period, it was everywhere, and glaciers may have extended from pole to pole. A human transported to that time might have been able to ski all the way around the Earth. The Cryogenian period is one of the few geologic periods in the last billion years to be named after a substance or concept (in this case, cold) rather than a modern area where fossils from the period are found (for instance, the Jurassic is named after the Jura Mountains).

# Bernie Madoff and Ponzi Scams - Governor Rendell and Casino Scams



By Bill Kearney

As I watch Bernie Madoff in his bulletproof vest make his first public comments about his \$65 billion ponzi scam, it dawned on me the similarities of his ill doings and what Gov. Rendell's billion dollar casino scam is doing to Pennsylvanians.

Madoff's scam started as a short-term way to weather the early 1990s economic recession. His investment securities were an innovative, high-tech operation that expertly matched relatively small buy and sell orders from retail investors. It wasn't long before he was stealing volume from the New York Stock Exchange by trading many of its listed stocks. He had correctly anticipated that the buying and selling of stocks would become computerized, and his systems often provided better prices, attracting clientele that included big retail brokers like Fidelity and Charles Schwab. During the decades that Mr. Madoff built his business, he cast himself as a crusader, protecting the interests of smaller investors and bent on changing the way securities trading was done on Wall Street. As investigators try to untangle the Madoff scam one basic fact is emerging, he may not have been making any trades at all. A federal agency that regulates brokerage firms says there is no record of Madoff's investment funds placing trades through his brokerage operation. That leaves only two options, either he was placing trades only through other firms, which would be highly unusual, or he was not placing any trades. As a result, many victims are turning against those believed to have willingly, or unwittingly, perpetrated Madoff's alleged fraud by endorsing his business. That includes the investment firms that entrusted Madoff with clients' money, their auditors, even the federal government.

Gov. Rendell, when mayor of Philadelphia in the 1990s, wanted badly to put riverboat casinos on the Delaware River, but he never flexed quite enough political muscle to make it happen. He made a campaign promise in 2002 when running for governor to expand legalized gambling, but the idea didn't get traction until

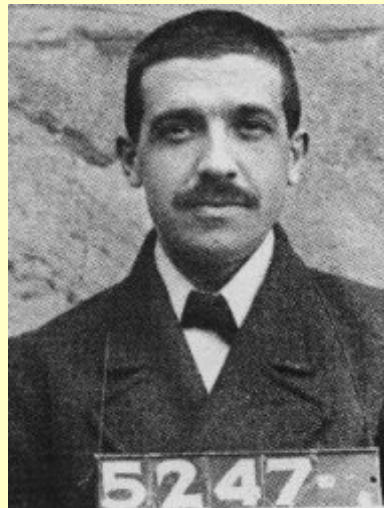
2003, when, now flailing as governor, he proposed a whopper of a program called the "Plan for a New Pennsylvania."

This new plan aimed to fix schools, reform property taxes, and patch a hole in the state's budget mostly through gaming profits. He toured the state promoting the plan, and his most effective pitch was the three to four billion gambling dollars exiting Pennsylvania every year and filling boarding casino state coffers. To seal the deal, Rendell made amends with one particular man, who he had been political pals in the past, State Senator Vince Fumo, AKA, The Dark Prince. Their relationship had withered when Fumo backed Rendell's opponent, Bob Casey, in the Democratic primary during the governor election. Naturally, Rendell wasn't happy about that, but Fumo was powerful and he made a far better friend than enemy. In the early morning hours of, Sunday, July 4, with the help of the Dark Prince, who now considers himself the architect of our Gaming Bill, the PA House passed what eventually became Act 71. It permits 61,000 slot machines at five free standing casinos, seven racetracks, and two at already established resorts. This total of 61,000 slot machines is exceeded only by Nevada and initiated the single largest expansion of gambling in American history.

Madoff is a very intelligent man and was a well-respected investment professional. His knowledge of investment securities and Wall Street greed was impeccable. Novice investors trusted his reputation, sophisticated clients figured he had an angle, but no one questioned if it was a rigged game. And if Madoff hadn't faced \$7 billion in redemptions, his Ponzi scam might not have been discovered. So far he hasn't implemented anyone and his family and other key employ-

ees have lawyered up. The day after he was thrown behind bars, investigators returned to the arduous task of piecing together one of the largest frauds in history. Experts say, given the size of this scam, a \$65 billion 5,000 victims monthly

**Charles Ponzi (1882 – 1949)**



**Mugshot 1910**

Ponzi was one of the greatest swindlers in American history. His aliases include **Charles Ponei, Charles P. Bianchi, Carl and Carlo**. The term "Ponzi scheme" is a widely known description of any scam that pays early investors returns from the investments of later investors. He promised clients a 50% profit within 45 days, or 100% profit within 90 days, by buying discounted postal reply coupons in other countries and redeeming them at face value in the United States as a form of arbitrage. Ponzi was probably inspired by the scheme of William F. Miller, a Brooklyn bookkeeper who in 1899 used the same pyramid scheme to take in \$1 million

statements paper trail that goes back nearly two decades could take six months to a year before charges are brought against any accomplices.

Gov. Rendell is also an intelligent man and a well-respected politician. His name was on the short list as a potential running mate for President Barack Obama. There was also a rumor of him leaving the governor's office and becoming a cabinet member. He nixed both ideas first by saying, "why settle for a Clinton supporter when you can have the real deal," and the second idea when saying he has an implied contract between him and the voters of Pennsylvania and he's going to serve out that term. There's no doubt about it, as governor, Rendell has showed a lot of the same progress as he did when he was mayor of Philadelphia. But when it comes to his legalizing casino gambling he's put Pennsylvanians fate in the hands of Gaming professionals whose ideology is the same as Bernie Madoff's.

To that end, there are those who say Madoff's is the worst kind of fraud because it preys on individuals and families rather than a fraud on the market where the damage is spread relatively thinly among a larger number of people. Now I am not saying I disagree with that, but what I'm having trouble with, and find very strange, is all this compassion I've been hearing for Madoff's victims. In other words, where's the personal responsibility, and the "no one held a gun to your head" that compulsive casino gamblers get crucified with when they get in bed with the casino scam. Shouldn't those investing, or should I say gamblers, in the stock market be held accountable for their actions? Is it because Madoff's victims run the gamut from the very, very wealthy to the not-all-that-affluent. Is there a double standard here? Or is it because the Bernie Madoff's of the world want you to believe that casino gambling is a form of entertainment no different than going to the ballpark or theater?

Today there are 20 states with Commercial Casinos. Their gross gaming revenues come from those who lost, and they totaled more than \$36 billion in 2008.

*Bill Kearney is a former casino gambling addict living in Philadelphia. He is an activist against legalized casinos and other gaming sites in Pennsylvania.*

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## Politics Philadelphia Style

**Vincent Joseph "Vince" Fumo** (born May 8, 1943) is a State Senator, lawyer and businessman from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Fumo holds a B.S. from Villanova University ('64), a law degree from Temple University School of Law ('72) and an MBA ('84) from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. He currently served on the Board of Trustees of the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia, a museum dedicated to the U.S. Constitution. Fumo has pursued an array of interests over his life as he is also a licensed electrician, pilot, and boat captain. He has also been a longtime member of Mensa.

Senator Fumo has represented South Philadelphia's 1st Senatorial District since 1978 when he succeeded Buddy Cianfrani, who had been **convicted of racketeering, bribery and obstruction of justice**. Fumo was the Democrat ranking Member of the Senate appropriations committee until his federal indictment in February 2007 - **137 counts of various fraud charges including hindering an FBI investigation**. He also serves on the Communications & Technology, Consumer Protection, Game & Fisheries, Rules, & Urban Affairs & Housing Committees.

In addition to his State Senate work, Fumo is associated with the Philadelphia Law firm of Dilworth Paxson LLP. He was the Chairman of First Penn Bank. The bank was originally founded as Pennsylvania Savings Bank, by his grandfather. Fumo took over control after his father was **convicted of bank fraud** in 1976. The bank grew rapidly under Fumo's control from \$1.5 million in assets to about \$550 million, and was eventually sold in 2007 for \$94 million, potentially netting \$19 million for Fumo.

Fumo was hospitalized on March 2, 2008 after suffering a heart attack at his home. He underwent a successful emergency angioplasty at Hahnemann University Hospital and was released on March 9, 2008.

On March 12, 2008, Fumo announced he was dropping his bid for reelection and retiring from public service, citing his federal indictment.

On March 16, 2009, Vincent Fumo was **convicted in a US District Court in Philadelphia of all 137 counts against him** as his marathon federal corruption trial ended.



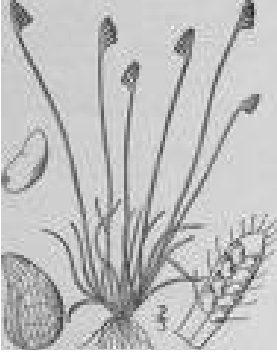
(left) Pennsylvania State Senator Vincent Fumo  
(right) Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell.

**“O, it is excellent to have a giant's strength; but it is tyrannous to use it like a giant.”**  
William Shakespeare (1564 - 1616), *Measure for Measure*, 1604-1605

# The White Stag of Shamong

By Don Nigroni

**Today** at Quaker Bridge, located deep in the New Jersey Pine Barrens in an area once known as Shamong, people might only note a lonely, isolated metal bridge across the Batsto River. Nonetheless, this place has many claims to fame. After a meeting of Quakers in 1772, a wooden bridge was constructed here to allow them to safely cross the Batsto River on their way to Tuckerton. In 1805 or 1808 the rare Curly-grass Fern (*Schizaea pusilla*) was discovered here. The Quaker Bridge Tavern was operating there by 1809 as a stopping place for stagecoaches traveling along the sandy Tuckerton Stage Road. And Quaker Bridge is also the site of a famous Pine Barrens folktale about the White Stag of Shamong.



Curly-grass Fern  
(*Schizaea pusilla*)

The earliest published account of this story seems to have been in a 1957 book by Arthur D. Pierce entitled *Iron in the Pines: The Story of New Jersey's Ghost Towns and Bog Iron*. According to that account, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century a stagecoach heading east on the Tuckerton Stage Road was approaching Quaker Bridge during a stormy summer night when suddenly from out of nowhere a white stag appeared in the middle of the road. The stage driver stopped the coach and approached the deer which simply vanished into thin air. As he looked around he noticed that the bridge had been washed away during the storm and had it not been for the white stag they would have plunged into the raging river. A variant of this tale, which was heard by William McMahon and included in his book *Pine Barrens Legends & Lore* (1980), claimed that ever since no hunter would dare shoot a white stag in the Pine Barrens.

White-tailed Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), once abundant in the Pine Barrens, were mostly extirpated by 1900. The deer, unlike the eradicated mountain lions, wolves and bears, were then reintroduced early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and today are once again abundant. Long ago cougars and wolves would have kept their numbers in check while today many are killed by motor vehicles and deer hunters. However, albino and leucistic white-tailed deer are indeed rare, perhaps one in 30,000, but a sighting of one would not be all that extraordinary considering the large number of deer in the Pinelands. Cornelius Weygandt in *Down Jersey: Folks and Their Jobs, Pine Barrens, Salt Marsh and Sea Islands* (1940) has a chapter entitled *The White Stag of Shamong*. However, that animal was a well-known local white-tailed deer and was not considered a supernatural creature by anyone that Weygandt had met, "but they all consider him strange and wonderful." And Pierce told of a sighting in 1953 of a white

stag near Chatsworth, formerly called Shamong, which is within 12 miles of Quaker Bridge. People still occasionally report spotting a white deer in the Pine Barrens, though I've never seen one myself. Atypically white animals could seem ghostly, hence, otherworldly. And animals capable of shedding and re-growth, like snakes with their skin or deer with their antlers, could become associated with re-birth and hence the afterlife. Thus a white stag could be considered a sacred creature that should be protected from harm.

I've been to Quaker Bridge in Wharton State Forest many times since May 2005: by car and mountain bike over the sand roads, on foot by the Batona Trail and I've kayaked the Batsto River by both putting in at Quaker Bridge and taking out there. I found two cellar holes on a rise on the east side of the Batsto River at Quaker Bridge in January 2006, a small one which is all that remains of what might have been a dwelling and a large one which might once have been the site of the Quaker Bridge Tavern. After taking out a kayak at Quaker Bridge in April 2008, I tried to use a cell phone in order to call the rental place to tell them to come and pick me up. But the cell phone wouldn't work in that remote location and I had to wait there for almost two hours until they finally came, apparently because they were becoming concerned about ever getting their kayak back.

The story of the White Stag of Shamong at Quaker Bridge probably existed orally for some time before Pierce finally mentioned it in his book. Could someone long ago have seen a white deer in the Pine Barrens? Of course people would have occasionally seen one during the years when large numbers of white-tailed deer roamed the land. And the sight of such a deer would be startling and, for some, mystical. Did the tale of such a sighting then become embellished during its oral transmission over the years into the story reported by Pierce? Perhaps. Nonetheless, the origin and historicity of this tale appear to be mainly lost in the mists of time.



Quaker Bridge



## Saw Palmetto

The information contained here was shamelessly copied from the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center website at: <http://www.mskcc.org/mskcc/html/69364.cfm#top>

**Bottom Line: Saw palmetto can help relieve the symptoms of benign prostatic hypertrophy (BPH), but there is no proof that it can prevent or treat prostate cancer. Some saw palmetto supplements may contain far less than the labeled amount.**



Studies in the laboratory and in animals show that saw palmetto works by countering the effects of androgens (the male sex hormones), such as testosterone and DHT. It is thought that saw palmetto does not reduce the levels of these hormones circulating in the blood, but causes body tissues (like the prostate) to take in lower levels of the hormones. Other studies have noted that saw palmetto reduces the conversion of testosterone to the DHT, its more potent form, by inhibiting the enzyme 5 alpha reductase. Saw palmetto berry extracts also reduce inflammation and edema in laboratory studies by inhibiting the formation of compounds that cause these reactions.

### Purported Uses

# To treat benign prostatic hypertrophy (BPH) - Several clinical trials and meta-analyses have shown that saw palmetto improves urinary tract symptoms associated with BPH.

# To treat prostate cancer - Saw palmetto shows anti-inflammatory and anti-androgen properties in laboratory studies and reduces the levels of DHT in the prostate in clinical trials, but there is no proof from clinical trials that saw palmetto can treat prostate cancer.

# As a diuretic - No scientific evidence supports this use.

# As an anti-inflammatory - Laboratory studies support this use, but there is no proof from clinical trials that this effect occurs in humans.

### Research Evidence

Benign prostatic hypertrophy (BPH)

Two hundred and twenty-five men (over the age of 49 years) with moderate-to-severe symptoms of benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) were given saw palmetto extract (160 mg twice a day) or placebo for one year. There was no significant difference in the American Urological Association Symptom Index (AUASI) scores or the maximal urinary flow rates between patients taking saw palmetto or placebo. Also, no significant differences were observed in prostate size, quality of life, or serum prostate specific antigen (PSA) levels between the two groups.

In an evaluation of men with symptomatic BPH, 20 men taking saw palmetto were compared to 20 men receiving placebo and 15 men receiving finasteride. The levels of androgens (testosterone and DHT) in their prostate tissue were measured at the start and end of the study. Finasteride reduced levels of both testosterone and DHT, while saw palmetto was found to reduce DHT levels by 32%, a modest but significant amount.

A meta-analysis of all published clinical trials using saw palmetto for the treatment of benign prostatic hypertrophy (BPH) was conducted. Eleven randomized clinical trials and two open label trials were evaluated, overall showing a significant improvement in peak urination flow rate and reduction in nocturia (needing to urinate at night) in saw palmetto patients compared to placebo.

In a meta-analysis of the effect of saw palmetto on benign prostatic hypertrophy (BPH), 18 randomized, controlled trials conducted between 1966 and 1997 were analyzed. Compared to men receiving placebo, men treated with saw palmetto reported a decrease in urinary tract symptoms. Compared with men receiving finasteride, men treated with saw palmetto had similar improvements in urinary tract symptoms. Side effects from saw palmetto were mild and infrequent; erectile dysfunction was more frequent with finasteride.

### Warnings

# This product is regulated by the FDA as a dietary supplement. Unlike approved drugs, supplements are not required to be manufactured under specific standardized conditions. This product may not contain the labeled amount or may be contaminated. In addition, it may not have been tested for safety or effectiveness.

# In fact, a recent laboratory evaluation of six commercially available brands of saw palmetto revealed actual content to vary considerably from the labeled dosage, from only 3% to over 240%. Three brands contained less than 20% of the stated amount.

### Do Not Take If

# You are taking warfarin or other blood thinners (Saw palmetto may increase the risk of bruising and bleeding).

### Side Effects

# Gastrointestinal complaints: nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea

### Special Point

# Because of inconsistencies in product labeling, the saw palmetto supplement you are taking may not contain as much active ingredient as it claims. It has been recommended that patients who have not responded to a certain saw palmetto product try a second brand.  
# Four to six weeks may be necessary to see results.

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# Capt. Kidd and the Headless Pirate

by Don Nigroni ..... arrrrrrrr



It's a story that's been told and retold many times in many publications over the years such as in *Jersey Genesis: The Story of the Mullica River* (1945) by Henry Charlton Beck and *The Jersey Devil* (1976) by James F. McCloy and Ray Miller, Jr. According to this tale, Captain Kidd buried some of his plunder somewhere near Barnegat Bay, New Jersey, in later versions said to be buried along the bay, and then lopped off the head of a seaman, who eventually became identified as one of his pirate crewmen, so that his ghost could guard the treasure. Barnegat Bay, in the narrow sense of the phrase, is an inlet of the Atlantic Ocean that extends along Island Beach and the northern end of Long Beach Island but, in a broader sense, also includes Manahawkin Bay and Little Egg Harbor extending down to the southern end of Long Beach Island.

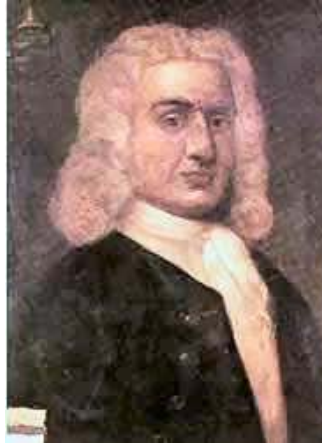
The infamous pirate Captain William Kidd seized the *Quedagh Merchant* off the coast of India in early 1698, was back in the Caribbean by early April 1699 and from there proceeded up the eastern coast of America. In early July 1699, he was arrested in Boston and then sent to England. There he was tried for murder and piracy, found guilty of both and hanged in Wapping on May 23, 1701. Legends tell of many sites where his treasure supposedly lies buried and of the many guardians of that loot, including somewhere around Barnegat Bay where it's guarded by a headless ghost. And numerous treasure hunters over the years have spent an awful lot of time, money and energy looking for Kidd's treasure in various places around the globe, from the South China Sea to the east coast of America.

Charles M. Skinner in *Myths & Legends of Our Own Land* (1896) noted many places and various guardians for Kidd's buried lost treasure, for example:

Places	Guardians
in a cave at Monhegan Island, off the Maine coast	Spirits
at Appledore in the Isles of Shoals, off of Maine and NH	Crewmen Kidd had killed
near the Piscataqua River, between Maine and NH	Monster horse
at Lion's Rock, near Lyme, Connecticut	Demon
at Charles Island, near Milford, Connecticut	Headless man
on Liberty Island in New York Harbor	Horned, winged being
in Money Hill on the Shark River, New Jersey	Half-dozen goats

F. Alexander Lucas in *Barnegat Yarns: Tales of Jersey's Popular Barnegat Bay and Shore* (1911) told a tale pur-

portedly passed down through the generations of where Captain Kidd buried some of his treasure. According to this account, the pirates went through "Barnegat Inlet" into the bay (Barnegat Bay), made a "quick turn" and followed "the bay shore down stream", and then about a mile past the "old cedars" they stopped. The crew then went on foot across the barrier island to the beach front and buried the treasure chest about four feet down in the ground in the middle of a trench leading from the old hawk tree to the sand hill. The loot was protected by gunpowder and brimstone such that if a shovel should strike the brimstone or grind the gunpowder and sand together then the area would explode. If the "old cedars" referred to the Great Swamp, an anomalous barrier island cedar swamp that was



**Captain William Kidd (c. 1645 - 1701) ..... arrrrrrr**

once located at what is now Surf City but was destroyed by the Hurricane of 1821 and turned into marshland, then the treasure chest should be buried somewhere around the ocean-front beach in Ship Bottom on Long Beach Island. The phrase "old cedars" appeared in quotes in the text and must have referred to a once well-known locale.

A story about a Kidd artifact found in 1951 in New Jersey was carried by many newspapers, for example, *The Daily News*, Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, article of March 21, 1951 entitled *Boy Finds Plate Bearing Name Of Captain Kidd* stated that a boy had found a brass plate in marshlands near Ship Bottom bearing the inscription "William Kidd, master". However, by the following week newspapers were reporting that the plate was a fake, like *The Evening Independent*, Massillon, Ohio article of March 26, 1951 entitled *Capt. Kidd Nameplate A Phony* which noted that the boy's father admitted that he had planted the plate in Cedar Run, which is on the mainland across the bay from Ship Bottom, ten years before so that his little boy could find it, which he eventually did as a teenager.

The earliest published account of the legend of a headless ghost guarding Captain Kidd's treasure near Barnegat Bay that I could find appeared in an 1899 syndicated *New York Herald* newspaper article entitled *JERSEY SEES A DEVIL. Leeds' Monster Reappears Among the Pines.* on what would later become known as the Jersey Devil. In fact, all of the published accounts of this legend over the years seem to ultimately trace back to this source. That article noted that the Leeds' devil had three companions, one of whom was apparently a headless seaman from the Barnegat



**Captain Kidd burying his loot ..... arrrrrrr**

Bay area:

*Again this same son of Satan shared his haunts with a headless seaman whom the Barnegat people say Captain Kidd decapitated and whose stiffened trunk that very pirate king left standing as a sentinel of his buried ill gotten gold.*

If a separate and distinct ghostly guardian legend had become conflated with the Jersey Devil legend by 1899, then it almost certainly had existed by itself for a good time beforehand, however, I can't tell for how long before with much precision. Somewhere between the time in 1699 when Kidd sailed by this part of New Jersey and could have buried some of his treasure there and well before 1899 when the legend appeared in print, this story must have developed and been orally passed on for generations.

A brief comment about ghosts in general would seem appropriate here. A ghost is a disembodied spirit. A spirit, from the Latin *spiritus* which means breath, was thought to be composed of air. God gave life to Adam by breathing into his nostrils the breath of life. Breath supposedly permeated and animated the corporeal body and presumably survived the death of the corporeal body from which once the spirit left, typically via the mouth or nostrils, became inanimate. Ghosts might look pale white and that's because breath, which you can see coming from your mouth in cold weather, is ghostly white. However, there are obvious problems with the traditional reported sightings of ghosts such as the ghosts seen are typically not naked but clothed and they possess implements like eyeglasses, walking canes and swords. Whoever made that clothes or those implements and whatever could they have been made of? Besides, modern science has revealed that animation is not caused by an aerial body inside our corporeal body but is really due to electrochemical reac-

tions in the nervous system.

Nonetheless, in late January and early February, 2009, I visited my cousin, Bruce Clark, in Beach Haven on Long Beach Island to do some bird watching and treasure hunting. Bruce, his brother and I went to the Maritime Museum in Beach Haven to do some research, then Bruce borrowed his son's metal detector and off we went to search for Kidd's buried plunder. I figured that if the ghostly guardian legend was indeed true then it shouldn't really be all that hard to find Captain Kidd's lost treasure since a headless pirate should stick out like a sore thumb around there today. However, while we did see some interesting birds during that trip, alas, we were unable to find any lost pirate treasure.



**The author looking for Captain Kidd's buried lost treasure at Ship Bottom, N.J. .... arrrrrrrr  
Photograph by Bob Clark**

*Don Nigrone received a BS in economics in 1971 from St. Joseph's University and a MA in philosophy from Notre Dame in 1973. He retired in 2007 after working for 32 years as an economist with the US Bureau of Labor Statistics. He now spends much more time hiking, mountain biking, kayaking and bird watching.. ..... arrrrrrrrr*

## What Makes a Skeptic -- Being Rational, or Being Informed? Or, Can Rational Thinking Keep Bigfoot Away?

By Ed Gracely



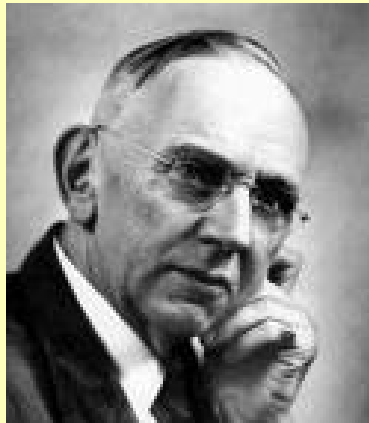
**This** brief note examines the oft-made argument that the answer to psychic claims is "rational thinking" and that a key part of the task for skeptics is to help people think rationally and critically. In fact, the name of our organization (the Philadelphia Association for Critical Thinking) embodies this notion.

An alternative view asserts that it is primarily ignorance, not unreason, that leads to belief in the paranormal and irrational.

I believe there is value in both sides, but that ignorance is by far the bigger problem. What kind of ignorance, you ask? Not of scientific theory or mathematical formulae. No! But how many non-skeptics are aware of all (or even most) of the following points that skeptics would readily affirm?

- There are numerous frauds and hoaxers seeking either fame or fortune by deceiving others about matters of the paranormal.
- Human psychology and natural phenomena can easily produce apparent paranormal phenomena, or at least reports thereof, even in the absence of deliberate deception.
- Media may collaborate with deception (or at least not challenge it) in the interest of creating a flashier story.
- Frauds can seem very sincere. Con artists are good at what they do.
- Frauds span the gamut of the types of people one may encounter, and have included individuals in professions often considered trustworthy (such as health care professionals and religious leaders).

### Edgar Cayce (1877–1945) 'the Sleeping Prophet'



Some notes from the Fortean Times website:  
[http://www.forteanimes.com/features/profiles/222/edgar\\_cayce.html](http://www.forteanimes.com/features/profiles/222/edgar_cayce.html)

Edgar Cayce was widely regarded as a prophet and mystic, one of the great clairvoyants and psychics of the 20th century. His followers claim that he cured hundreds of people; that he was a kind of latter day Nostradamus, a seer without parallel in modern times. Detractors, on the other hand, portray him as an attention-seeker, pointing out that many of his prophecies have not stood the test of time, or with hindsight seem absurdly simple. He was unscientific, in that many of his cures could not be replicated and the "over 85 per cent" success rate of cures claimed for him has never been independently verified.

According to Edgar Cayce, by late 2001 a huge chamber beneath the Sphinx, by the Great Pyramid, should have been opened. He believed that inside the chamber is a magical library, left there by Atlanteans, with information that will shock the world. In fact, we should now be living in Year Two of the Age of Aquarius, an era of peace and harmony ushered in by Jesus Christ Himself. Yet, as the year 2000 receded and the planet blundered past this much-touted deadline, believers in Cayce's prophetic power continue to insist that their man is right and its 'simply a matter of time'. In the Spirit world, they say, two or three years either way mean nothing.

- Some of what is presented as evidence ("OK, here's the sequence. Judge for yourself...") may in fact be distorted, dishonest, or omit critical details, even if it seems very objective.
- If enough people dream about future events, sooner or later one of the dreams will match what happens, just by chance.

Etc... Let's consider some specific examples.

My personal history is relevant in that it probably parallels many others' experiences. I recall reading stories of poltergeists in my pre-skeptical days. Since ghosts seemed to be the stuff of cartoons and superstition, whereas psycho kinesis seemed merely unproven, I leaned towards the latter as the explanation for the phenomena reported. Then I learned how easily such poltergeist effects can be produced by trickery. Aha! An explanation that worked! -- My critical thought didn't get me there, but the information did.

I consider myself a pretty logical, rational, person. But I didn't become a skeptic until I learned how easy it is for bad evidence to seem much stronger than it is. And how ready the ubiquitous tricksters are to manipulate the evidence in their favor.

Examples of deceptive and tricky practices that may not be obvious abound. Clairvoyants pick and choose among innumerable predictions to report to the media one that is "correct". Psychic detectives use the combina-

tion of vague predictions, after-the-fact statements, and outright fabrications (almost impossible to check) to construct what seems to the uninformed powerful support for their

abilities. Psychic "readers" collaborate with TV programmers to show only the handful of "successful" assertions, while making it seem to viewers that this was the entirety of their program. And so on, and on, and on...



The Fox sisters - Margaretta, Kate and Leah

Interestingly, often the accounts of paranormal incidents like poltergeist attacks are supported by statements that suggest, to the uninformed, that the evidence is much better than it actually is. You may read, "We were watching her the whole time, yet odd things kept happening." It appears from such unequivocal statements that there is little room for fraud. But skeptics recognize that someone with a will to deceive needs only a fraction of a second to pull off a deception (like tossing or kicking something, to create a poltergeist effect). Very few observers are alert enough to catch such tricks, and distraction is easy to achieve. The Amazing Randi reports similar instances when he or a colleague used magical methods to convince a parapsychologist that they had powers. The description says, "He was never out of my sight!", even as they left the magician alone in the room repeatedly.

The famous Fox sisters fooled a large number of intelligent people into believing in spirits largely because nobody thought a couple of "innocent" young girls could be both skillful and deceptive. See, for example, <http://www.answers.com/topic/the-fox-sisters>. Now, we know better!

In other cases, there may be no deception, at least not deliberately, but simple human psychology and a bit of statistics provide the result. Imagine that we gave 10,000 people with

(serious) disease X a medication M that doesn't work. The chances are good that in the 10,000 are a few who will recover spontaneously, benefit strongly from other (prescribed) medications, or never had disease X in the first place. Those few come forward to sing the medication M's praises! We may hear nothing from the rest. This resembles the story of laetrile, from a few decades ago. Its supporters had a list of "incontrovertible" cures from the drug that they insisted "proved" that it worked. The referenced cases turned out to be much less convincing on truly careful analysis. See [http://www.meb.uni-bonn.de/cancer.gov/CDR0000062976.html#REF\\_10](http://www.meb.uni-bonn.de/cancer.gov/CDR0000062976.html#REF_10) for some of the studies on this drug.

A similar pattern is seen with creature sightings (Bigfoot, say). Some combination of coincidences will create an apparently-convincing story for a tiny fraction of witnesses to such phenomena. Add the likelihood that in any large group there are a few who simply enjoy telling tall tales, plus a few who will quite seriously tell something they heard from someone else as though it happened to \*them\*. Etc... So we end up with fairly numerous "eyewitnesses" to something that didn't happen.

Separating genuine sightings (if any) from the inevitable false positives when there are a large number of self-selected potential witnesses is very difficult. I discussed this issue in a previous Phactum article (December 2001), available at: [http://www.pages.drexel.edu/~eg26/Witnesses\\_to\\_high\\_Weirdness.pdf](http://www.pages.drexel.edu/~eg26/Witnesses_to_high_Weirdness.pdf).

The same issue arises with UFO sightings and any other paranormal events in which witnesses are self-selected from a large pool. The tiny fraction for whom the coincidences, and personal responses to them, are just right as to create an interesting experience are the only ones we hear from!

It is hard to imagine how a logical person unaware of the many forms of deception, self-deception, and natural eyewitness effects take could apply logic to effectively dissect paranormal claims. A big part of the job of the skeptic is to help people better understand all of this.

Sometimes even what seems to be lack of rational thought is actually better considered as ignorance of a different sort as well. Consider, for example, someone who has learned to "read" people by looking at their palms and discussing the implications with them. This reader may honestly feel that the "natural" give and take of open discussions with the client is an important part of what they do. That is a plausible position, but it doesn't reflect a fully rational approach.

Skeptics will insist on a blinded reading, without discussion, in order to do a serious test of palm reading, thereby making it much harder for the reader. Is this a difference in rational

thinking? I would argue that the disagreement comes because the reader doesn't understand the ways in which biases and suggestion can play into such a process, affecting both the reader and the client. An informed skeptic who knows how convincing cold readings can be, even when done by someone with no powers at all (and no palm-reading ability), is better prepared to dissect such arguments.

So, where does lack of reasoning come into play? Are skeptics more aware of logical fallacies, like the assumption that what comes after an event was caused by it (post hoc, ergo propter hoc)? Possibly. The high frequency of coincidences is often mentioned in skeptical writings as something to be aware of. Yet again, however, I might argue that the skeptic is more cognizant of useful information, such as the ubiquitous nature of coincidences, thereby better equipped to avoid being fooled by them.

Certainly biases of all sort can distort judgment. Someone who badly wants to believe in Bigfoot will have a different perception of the evidence than someone for whom this entity is merely an interesting possibility. However (don't yell at me now!) I'm not sure skeptics are much better in this area. We are certainly less prone to pro-paranormal biases, but what skeptic hasn't chuckled and accepted a hastily-constructed "answer" to a paranormal claim that would never

stand up to close scrutiny, but seems "reasonable" because the paranormal claim it challenges does not? If we want to claim to be more rational than our critics, we need to recognize our own biases and deal with them as well.

I'm not arguing that the two sides are ultimately equivalent. No! Skeptical understanding of deception and human nature

provides a much stronger set of premises with which to investigate reality than what many non-skeptics utilize. But that isn't quite the same as being more "rational". Even valid logic will lead to faulty conclusions if the premises are wrong.

So, perhaps we should rename the organization, "The Philadelphia Association for Informed Thinking (PhAIT?)". NOT! OK, OK, the name can remain as it is, but with the recognition that educating ourselves and the public about the numerous ways the world (and its denizens)

can lead us astray is an important part of our mission as skeptics.

*Ed Gracely teaches statistics at Drexel College of Medicine, and is active with a number of organizations, including the League of Women Voters and the UN Association. He is a long time member of PhACT and an occasional contributor to Phactum.*

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## FIRST CONTACT

Cartoon by Nick D. Kim, <http://www.lab-initio.com>  
Used by permission.

**"All human situations have their inconveniences. We feel those of the present but neither see nor feel those of the future; and hence we often make troublesome changes without amendment, and frequently for the worse." - Benjamin Franklin (1706 - 1790)**

## Privileges and Prerogatives Granted by Their Catholic Majesties to Christopher Columbus : 1492

**FERDINAND and ELIZABETH**, by the Grace of God, King and Queen of *Castile*, of *Leon*, of *Arragon*, of *Sicily*, of *Granada*, of *Toledo*, of *Valencia*, of *Galicia*, of *Majorca*, of *Minorca*, of *Sevil*, of *Sardinia*, of *Jaen*, of *Algarve*, of *Algezira*, of *Gibraltar*, of the *Canary Islands*, Count and Countess of *Barcelona*, Lord and Lady of *Biscay* and *Molina*, Duke and Duchess of *Athens* and *Neopatria*. Count and Countess of *Rousillion* and *Cerdaigne*, Marquess and Marchioness of *Oristan* and *Gociano*, &c.

For as much of you, *Christopher Columbus*, are going by our command, with some of our vessels and men, to discover and subdue some Islands and Continent in the ocean, and it is hoped that by God's assistance, some of the said Islands and Continent in the ocean will be discovered and conquered by your means and conduct, therefore it is but just and reasonable, that since you expose yourself to such danger to serve us, you should be rewarded for it. And we being willing to honour and favour You for the reasons aforesaid: Our will is, That you, *Christopher Columbus*, after discovering and conquering the said Islands and Continent in the said ocean, or any of them, shall be our Admiral of the said Islands and Continent you shall so discover and conquer; and that you be our Admiral, Vice-Roy, and Governour in them, and that for the future, you may call and stile yourself, D. *Christopher Columbus*, and that your sons and successors in the said employment, may call themselves Dons, Admirals, Vice-Roys, and Governours of them; and that you may exercise the office of Admiral, with the charge of Vice-Roy and Governour of the said Islands and Continent, which you and your Lieutenants shall conquer, and freely decide all causes, civil and criminal, appertaining to the said employment of Admiral, Vice-Roy, and Governour, as you shall think fit in justice, and as the Admirals of our kingdoms use to do; and that you have power to punish offenders; and you and your Lieutenants exercise the employments of Admiral, Vice-Roy, and Governour, in all things belonging to the said offices, or any of them; and that you enjoy the perquisites and salaries belonging to the said employments, and to each of them, in the same manner as the High Admiral of our kingdoms does. And by this our letter, or a copy of it signed by a *Public Notary*: We command Prince *John*, our most dearly beloved Son, the Infants, Dukes, Prelates, Marquesses, Great Masters and Military Orders, Priors. Commendaries, our Counsellors, Judges, and other Officers of Justice whatsoever, belonging Courts, and Chancery, and Constables of Castles, Strong Houses, and others; and all Corporations, Bayliffs, Governours, Judges, Commanders, Sea Officers; and the Aldermen, Common Council, Officers, and Good People of all Cities, Lands, and Places in our Kingdoms and Dominions, and in those you shall conquer and subdue, and the captains masters, mates, and other officers and sailors, our natural subjects now being, or that shall be for the time to come, and any of them that when you shall have discovered the said Islands and Continent in the ocean; and you, or any that shall have your commission, shall have taken the usual oath in such cases, that they for the future, look upon you as long as you live, and after you, your son and heir, and so from one heir to another forever, as our Admiral on our said Ocean, and as Vice-Roy and Governour of the said Islands and Continent, by you, *Christopher Columbus*, discovered and conquered; and that they treat you and your Lieutenants, by you appointed, for executing the employments of Admiral, Vice-Roy, and Governour, as such in all respects,



Illustration of Ferdinand and Isabella seeing Christopher Columbus off at the Dock at Palos. August 3, 1492

and give you all the perquisites and other things belonging and appertaining to the said offices; and allow, and cause to be allowed you, all the honours, graces, concessions, prehaminences, prerogatives, immunities, and other things, or any of them which are due to you, by virtue of your commands of Admiral, Vice-Roy, and Governour, and to be observed completely, so that nothing be diminished; and that they make no objection to this, or any part of it, nor suffer it to be made; forasmuch as we from this time forward, by this our letter, bestow on you the employments of Admiral, Vice-Roy, and perpetual Governour forever; and we put you into possession of the said offices, and of every of them, and full power to use and exercise them, and to receive the perquisites and salaries belonging to them, or any of them, as was said above. Concerning all which things, if it be requisite, and you shall desire it, We command our Chancellour, Notaries, and other Officers, to pass, seal, and deliver to you, our Letter of Privilege, in such form and legal manner, as you shall require or stand in need of. And that none of them presume to do any thing to the contrary, upon pain of our displeasure, and forfeiture of 30 ducats for each offence. And we command him, who shall show them this our Letter, that he summon them to appear before us at our Court, where we shall then be, within fifteen days after such summons, under the said penalty. Under which same, we also command any Public Notary whatsoever, that he give to him that shows it him, a certificate under his seal, that we may know how our command is obeyed.

GIVEN at *Granada*, on the 30th of April, in the **Year of our Lord, 1492.-**

## I, THE KING, I, THE QUEEN.

By their Majesties Command,

John Coloma

*Secretary to the King and Queen.*

Entered according to order.

RODERICK. Doctor.

SEBASTIAN DOLONA,

FRANCIS DE MADRID,

Councillors.



**The Landing of Columbus - John Vanderlyn**  
**Oil on canvas, 12' x 18' Commissioned 1836/1837; placed 1847**  
**Capital Rotunda**

Source:  
 The Federal and State Constitutions Colonial Charters, and Other Organic Laws of the States, Territories, and Colonies Now or Here-  
 tofore Forming the United States of America  
 Compiled and Edited Under the Act of Congress of June 30, 1906 by Francis Newton Thorpe  
 Washington, DC : Government Printing Office, 1909.



**Especially for the Kids**

Saturday, May 9, 2009

Natural History Road Show

Presented by the **Wagner Free Institute of Science** and a panel of experts specializing in plants, shells, insects, rocks and minerals

Presentation at 1 PM

Road Show from 2 - 4 PM

The talk will be sign language interpreted.

Is that fossil from the Cambrian or Philadelphia era? Is that shell you found last summer a conch or a nautilus? What exactly is that insect you found under your bed last night? Where did the seeds for that plant in your backyard originally

come from?

Join us as we host our 2nd annual Natural History Road Show!!



Bring your rocks, minerals, and fossils. Bring any plants - native and rare - to Botanist **Karen Snetselaar**. Ask entomologist **Greg Cowper** all those questions about insects that have been bugging you. Bring your unknown fossils in to be identified by **Elana Benamy** and

your unknown minerals to **Scott Peters**.

Due to the National Landmark status of the Institute, live animals are prohibited.

**Schedule for the day**

12 - 4 PM Institute is open to the public. Explore the museum collections in the exhibition hall.

12 - 4 PM Hands-on activities for children ages 6-12.

1 PM Presentation by Wagner Free Institute's Children's Education staff.

2 - 4 PM Experts available to answer questions regarding your natural history treasures in the exhibition hall.

ph 215-763-6529

[www.wagnerfreeinstitute.org](http://www.wagnerfreeinstitute.org)**The original PhACT Council circa 1905****The PhACT Council 2009**

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**When they call the roll in the Senate, the Senators do not know whether to answer "Present" or "Not Guilty."**

**Theodore Roosevelt (1858 - 1919)**

