

"If ever a time should come, when vain and aspiring men shall possess the highest seats in Government, our country will stand in need of its experienced patriots to prevent its ruin."

Samuel Adams, 1776

# Phactum

The Newsletter of the  
Philadelphia Association for Critical Thinking  
January 2010

editor: Ray Haupt email: [phactpublicity@aol.com](mailto:phactpublicity@aol.com)  
Webmaster: Wes Powers <http://phact.org/>



Picture taken by PhACT member Alfred Erpel around 2002 shows PhACT President Eric Krieg and Skeptic Magazine publisher, Dr. Michael Shermer at an author event at the FLOP, Free Library of Philadelphia. Are Eric and Michael saintly figures, is the orb a spirit, is there a bit of dust or some other optical explanation for this picture from a camera not known to produce this kind of result?

The FLOP is located about 1 city block distant from the reputed site of Benjamin Franklin's legendary Kite and Key Experiment. In fact, our meeting site at Community College of Philadelphia is one city block away in the other direction. More importantly there is a friendly bar called the Kite and Key at the exact location, according to the bar-tender, of Franklin's experiment, and there spirits may be summoned.

Could this orb be the restless spirit of a witness to that momentous event in scientific history? Come to the meeting to find out!

## Orbs or Dust? A Practical Guide to False-Positives

Come venture into the ghostly world of the Paranormal with PhACT  
Saturday, January 16, 2009 at 2:00 PM

Kenneth Biddle, founder of PIRA, Paranormal Investigators & Research Association, will be our speaker.

PIRA is a serious paranormal research organization with three major objectives:

- To investigate and research claims of paranormal activity through the use of Common Sense and Critical Thinking, applying knowledge and science to understand the causes of the activity being experienced.
- To study, experiment and test any and all procedures, abilities, evidence and devices that claim to capture or communicate with entities.
- To educate the public, so that they may be more informed when dealing with evidence, devices and people that make erroneous or false claims.

**More on Page 6.**

**In my many years I have come to a conclusion that one useless man is a shame, two is a law firm and three or more is a congress. -- John Adams**

# 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, in **Lecture Room C2-28 in the Center for Business and Industry at the corner of 18th and Callowhill Streets**. Parking is easily available but is no longer free for PhACT attendees at CCP events. The Saturday parking rate is \$3.50. Enter the college parking lot on 17th Street which is one way south bound. This meeting site is handicap accessible. **PhACT Meetings are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted.**



**Saturday, January 16, 2010 - Orbs or Dust? A Practical Guide to False-Positives.** Come venture into the ghostly world of the Paranormal with PhACT. **Kenneth Biddle**, founder of PIRA, Paranormal Investigators & Research Association, will be our speaker. For more information see page 1 and page 6.

**Saturday, February 20, 2010 - Conspiracy Theories in Science.** Ted Goertzel of Rutgers University will speak to us on "Conspiracy Theories in Science" and will give some up to date insights on the global warming email scandal.

**Saturday, March 20, 2010 - TBA**

**Wednesday, January 13, 2010 at 7:30 PM** at Congregational Hall of Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church, 625 Montgomery Avenue, Bryn Mawr. **The Economics of Religion and the Religion of Economics.**

Dr. William Grassie compares two great domains of human culture which pretty much cover the waterfront – Religion and Economics. He sketches the astounding growth and current dimensions of the world economy, introduces “social technologies” and explains their role in producing wealth. He presents his own views on the virtues of limited government and personal liberty, but maintains that they are secularly derived and independent of religious doctrine.

Next, Grassie provides an overview of the impact of religion on economics. He begins by attacking Max Weber’s thesis that religion conditions the evolution of economic systems and particularly that the Protestant Ethic undergirds capitalism. He also observes that secularization theory, the notion that religion would fade away with the rise of capitalism, has been proven wrong by the explosive growth of religion around the world. After surveying some other theories about the interaction of religion and capitalism, Grassie takes a long and informative look at “Islamic Economics.” He concludes this part of his analysis with a comparison of Adam Smith and Jesus, leading to the idea that the tension between capitalist greed and religious morality may be a necessary condition for the success of capitalism.

Grassie next applies economic models to religion. He points out that Karl Marx was one of the earliest theoreticians to attempt this – unsuccessfully according to Grassie. Also considered are

Gary Becker’s competitive models of religious markets and Rodney Stark’s attempt to model religion via Rational Choice Theory. Grassie concludes by briefly examining economics as though it were itself a religion.

This talk and all talks in Metanexus Science and Spirit lecture series are free to the public and will take place at 7:30 pm in For more info: (484) 592-0304 or [info@metanexus.net](mailto:info@metanexus.net).

**Saturday, January 16, 2010 at 7 PM:** The Secular Book Club, in association with the Humanist Association of Greater Philadelphia, will discuss *Galileo's Daughter: A Historical Memoir of Science, Faith, and Love* by Dava Sobel. “Despite its title, this impressive book proves to be less the story of Galileo's elder daughter, the oldest of his three illegitimate children, and more the story of Galileo himself and his trial before the Inquisition for arguing that Earth moves around the Sun. That familiar tale is given a new slant by Sobel's translation for the first time into English of the 124 surviving letters to Galileo by his daughter, Sister Maria Celeste, a Clarisse nun who died at age 33; his letters to her are lost, presumably destroyed by Maria Celeste's convent after her death.” - Publisher's Weekly.

At Barnes and Noble, 102 Park Ave., Willow Grove, PA

**Saturday, January 23, 2010 at 12 P.M. Records Unearthed: A Genealogist's Workshop.** What better place to “unearth” one’s past than in a cemetery?! Participants may register for one or both sessions, at a cost of \$15 each or \$30 total. A light lunch will be

*(Continued on page 3)*

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. Phactum does not accept paid advertising.

provided in between workshops for those registered in both sessions. A guided tour of Laurel Hill Cemetery will be offered at the conclusion of the second session. Space is limited and advance registration is required. Call the cemetery office at (215) 228-8200 to register, or mail payment to the Friends of Laurel Hill Cemetery at 3822 Ridge Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19132.

Session I: No Good Deed Goes Unrewarded - 12-1 PM

This session will guide genealogists through the materials that can be found in the Recorder of Deeds Office, stressing the importance of information found in deeds, registry jackets, sheriff deeds, and miscellaneous books.

Session II: Getting the Most Out of Your Philadelphia Research - 2-3 PM - This session will detail the area facilities where participants can get the most "bang for their buck." The location, hours, and records available will be covered for repositories such as City Hall, City Hall Archives, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the National Archives Mid Atlantic-Region, and the Free Library of Philadelphia.

Both sessions will be led by Susan S. Koelble, a Certified Genealogist, lecturer, teacher and author. Her own family genealogy goes back 10 generations to 1686. As an expert in the history of Philadelphia and its people, and with over 25 years of professional experience in her field, Susan founded Bare Roots Publishing and Research with her daughter in 1999.

**Tuesday, January 26, 2010 at 6:00PM** at the University of Pennsylvania Museum, 3260 South Street in Philadelphia. **The Poison King: The Life and Legend of Mithradates.** Adrienne Mayor is author of several books, including *The Poison King: The Life and Legend of Mithradates, Rome's Deadliest Enemy* (Princeton University Press, 2009), and a visiting research scholar in classics and the history of science at Stanford University. She recounts the story of Mithradates, a ruthless king, master of poisons, and visionary rebel who challenged the power of Rome in the 1st century BCE. A book signing follows the talk. \$10 general admission; \$5 Penn Museum members. Information: (215) 898-4890.

**Saturday, April 10, 2010 at 3 P.M. - TITANIC'S FLOATERS: Recovery, Preparation, and Disposition.** - According to the statistics from the existing records of the White Star Line, managing company of the R.M.S. Titanic, there were 98 passengers destined for Pennsylvania on that fateful voyage in April of 1912. Of

that number, 45 were from the Philadelphia area. Six of these are entombed or memorialized at Laurel Hill Cemetery.

Every year in April, Laurel Hill Cemetery commemorates the solemn anniversary of the sinking of the "Ship of Dreams." The event commences with a walking tour of Laurel Hill, where we visit the burial places of the Titanic passengers, and hear their unique stories. The tour continues at West Laurel Hill Cemetery, where six additional Titanic-related men and women rest. Following the walking tours, a slide-supported presentation will highlight the connection between Philadelphia and the Titanic; this year's focus is not on the survivors or the bodies immediately recovered at the scene of the disaster, but on the bodies that later re-emerged from the depths. The evening is always capped off by a sumptuous feast that replicates the one served aboard Titanic on that final, fateful day.

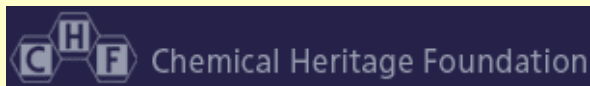
Widener University Professor and Resident Folklorist, Dr. J. Joseph Edgette, hosts this annual event, which will take place starting at 3:00pm on Saturday, April 10, 2010. The cost is \$25 per person for the tours only, and \$75 per person for the entire package, including tours, presentation and dinner. Advance registration is required. Space is limited, so make your reservations early by calling 215-228-8200.



**Saturday, May 1, 2010 Public Paranormal Investigation of Eastern State Penitentiary** Cost : \$100 per person for 9 hours at the prison!! from 5pm - 2am. There will be a brief guided tour along with the history of the prison, then we will break off into groups and start investigating. you will be grouped with experienced investigators and learn how

to perform a true paranormal investigation in one of the most active locations in our area. The best part is, all Proceeds are going directly to the Hospital Restoration Project at Eastern State! let's help preserve this piece of history! Details to follow. See the PIRA website:

<http://home.comcast.net/~parainvestigator/Index/Main.html>



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

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

**Tuesday, January 12, 2010 - 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**  
**Nanomedicine Terminology Workshop**

Free, but register at: <http://www.chemheritage.org/events/event-rsvp.asp?id=502>

This event is presented by the American National Standards Institute

### Ongoing exhibitions

**Transmutations: Alchemy in Art (exhibit) :**  
Monday-Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., by appointment only  
**Call 215-925-2222 to make an appointment.**

**The Whole of Nature and the Mirror of Art: Images of Alchemy (exhibit)**  
Du Pont Gallery  
Free and open to the public.





1700 West Montgomery Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19121

ph 215-763-6529 [www.wagnerfreeinstitute.org](http://www.wagnerfreeinstitute.org)

The Wagner Free Institute of Science announces its free science courses for Winter/Spring 2010. The courses run from five to ten weeks. Lectures are held in the evening and last approximately one and a half hours. The courses are taught on an introductory college level and are appropriate for adults wishing to enrich their knowledge of the sciences, as well as for motivated junior and senior high school students.

**Fungi and Plants**, Professor Karen Snetselaar. Wednesday, January 20, 2010, and then Monday, January 25, 2010 for 5 Mondays beginning at 6:30 PM. Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, 100 N. 20th Street. There are over 100,000 species of fungi. This course will look at groups of fungi that are particularly important to plants and to people who are interested in plants. This course requires preregistration. To preregister, call 215-763-6529, ext. 23, beginning Monday, November 16, 2009.

**Evolution in Action: A Study of Species' Options Over Time**, Professor Mary Beth Davis. Wednesday, January 20, 2010, beginning at 6:30 PM. 8 Wednesdays. Independence Branch of the Free Library, 18 S. 7th Street. Charles Darwin proposed that in nature, changes in the environment present species with three possible evolutionary scenarios: adaptation, migration, or extinction. This course will examine these responses in depth through case studies of the natural history of individual species. No preregistration required.

**Global Change, Mass Extinctions, and Biodiversity in the Fossil Record**, Professor William B. Gallagher. Saturday, January 30, 2010, beginning at 10:15 AM. 10 Saturdays. University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 33rd and Spruce Streets. This course will consider the linkages between environmental change and biodiversity fluctuations by studying the geologic record of mass extinctions. It will also look at biotic recovery and diversity rebounds after extinctions. No preregistration re-

quired.

**Introduction to Pollination Biology**, Professor Tatyana Livshultz. Monday, April 5, 2010, beginning at 6:30 PM. 6 Mondays. Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, 100 N. 20th Street. This course will survey the science of pollination biology, including the discovery of plant pollinations in the late 17th century, plant adaptation to animal pollination and how they evolve, and the importance of pollination to human society. This course requires preregistration. To preregister, call 215-763-6529, ext. 23, beginning Monday, November 16, 2009.

**Introduction to Birding in the Delaware Valley**, Professor Clifford Hence. Wednesdays, April 7 - April 28, 2010 (6:30-7:45 PM) and Saturdays, May 1, 8 & 15 (3 field trips from 8:00-11:00 AM). Independence Branch of the Free Library, 18 S. 7th Street and three field trips to local parks. This course will provide an introduction to birding in the region, including when and where to bird, and how to identify species in the field. No preregistration required.

All courses, unless otherwise indicated, are offered free of charge. For full course information and syllabuses, call 215-763-6529 or visit [www.wagnerfreeinstitute.org](http://www.wagnerfreeinstitute.org)

## Lectures

### Thursday, March 4, 2010

"Stories Behind the Species: Animals at Risk" - Presented by DR. SCOTT McROBERT, St. Joseph's University  
4:00 - 7:00 PM Lecture at 5:30 PM

**Saturday, March 27 at 1:00 PM - Westbrook Lecture 2010**  
Dr. Bonnie Bassler "I Am One of You: The Secret Language of Bacteria"

### Thursday, May 20, 2010

"Silent, Weird, Beautiful:  
Philadelphia's City Hall and It's Architect"  
Presented by DR. MICHAEL LEWIS, Williams College  
4:00 - 7:00 PM Lecture at 5:30 PM

### Family Program

**Saturday, April 24, 2010** - 3rd Annual 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 1:00 PM  
Road Show from 2:00 to 4:00 PM  
Bring your treasures!



## 2009-10 Penn Science Café Schedule

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

6 p.m. at the White Dog Café, 3420 Sansom Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104. Menu items available for purchase RSVP to Jordan

Reese, [jreese@upenn.edu](mailto:jreese@upenn.edu) or 215-573-6604. RSVP's are encouraged, but we aren't sticklers.

- **Jan 20, 2010**, Ruth Schwartz Cowan, History and Sociology of Science: **DNA Banks and Genetic Tests, Should I make a deposit? Should I take one?**
- **Feb 16**, Max Mintz, Department of Computer Science **Quantum Computing**
- **March 17**, Jonathan Moreno, History and Sociology of Science: **Bioethics in Washington**
- **April 14**, Josh Plotkin, Department of Biology **: A Viral Evolution**
- **May 12**, Robert Kurzban, Department of Psychology: **The Cognitive Process Behind Hypocrisy**



## Science on Tap, A Science Café

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

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

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

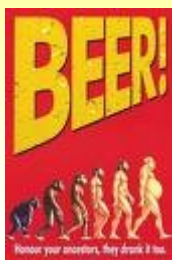
### What's On Tap

**January 11, 6:00 p.m.**

#### **"The Origin and Evolution of Beer"**

Ernie Schuyler, Curator Emeritus of Botany,  
Academy of Natural Sciences

About ten thousand years ago, humans became farmers who cultivated a new kind of barley and brewed beer from it. Some think that the desire for beer was the driving force for cultivating grains



and therefore the foundation of civilization. Natural selection favored consumers of beer for health reasons. It was safer to drink than contaminated water and it had nutritional value. Over eight millennia after the invention of beer, a major evolutionary change occurred when hops began to be used in brewing for its bitterness, flavor, aroma, and preservative properties. Eventually the role of yeast in fermentation became known and techniques were devised to control the quality of the final product. Today beer continues to evolve thanks to the efforts of creative brewers, including many in and around Philadelphia.

Presented by the Academy of Natural Sciences.

**February 8, 6:00 p.m.**

#### **"Imperialism and the Family Business: Population Structure and Political Change on the Central Coast of Peru"**

Lori Jahnke, S. Gordon Castigliano CLIR Fellow at The College of Physicians of Philadelphia. Presented by the Mutter Museum of The College of Physicians of Philadelphia.

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

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



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

[http://www.collphyphil.org/prog\\_calendar.htm](http://www.collphyphil.org/prog_calendar.htm)

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

**Tuesday, January 12, 2010 at 6:30 PM**

#### **Ethics in Medical Education, and Medical Education as Ethics**

Richard Gunderman, MD, PhD Professor of Radiology, Pediatrics, Medical Education, Philosophy, Liberal Arts, and Philanthropy; Vice Chairman, Radiology at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis

Over the past several decades, courses and lectures on ethics have been added to the curricula of medical schools and residency programs. This suggests that ethics is a component of medical education, much as molecular biology and internal medicine. In fact, ethics may differ in important respects from any particular domain of medical knowledge and skill. This presentation explores these distinctive features of ethics, and suggests strategies by which we can do a more effective job of cultivating the characters of the next generation of physicians. Sponsored by the College's Section on Medicine, Ethics, and the Law.

**Thursday, January 21, 2010 - 8:30AM - 3:30PM**

#### **Gambling and Recovery Forum: Expanding Philadelphia's Recovery Transformation**

This forum will address gambling through adopting a Behavioral Health Framework. Prevention, intervention and

ancillary support services for recovery from gambling is a growing public health need. Since Philadelphia has been slated for two casino sites, DBH/MRS and various stakeholders recognize the need to take proactive steps to understand and address behavioral health issues. This program will explore the causes, the impact of gambling on individuals, families and communities, and recovery support services available for problem and pathological gambling. Discussions will also begin on appropriate and effective approaches for the healing process.

Keynote Speaker: Petros Levounis, MD, MA, Director, The Addiction Institute of New York Chief, Division of Psychiatry, St. Luke & Roosevelt Hospitals Associate Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, Columbia University College of Physicians & Surgeons. Followed by a panel "Gambling and Recovery: Social Impact on Communities" and "Understanding Gambling and the Healing Process"

Co-sponsored by The Behavioral Health Training and Education Network with support from the Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health/Mental Retardation Services and The College of Physicians of Philadelphia's [PhillyHealthInfo.org](http://PhillyHealthInfo.org).

**Saturday, January 23, 2010 - 9AM - 5PM**

#### **Medical Film Symposium**

Hosted by Community Screen and the Greater Philadelphia Film Office, the Medical Film Symposium will take place in Philadelphia from January 20-23, 2010. Featuring four nights of screenings and one full day of scholarly presentations, the symposium will take place at The College of Physicians of Philadelphia (on January 23 only) and various arts and medical venues around the city. The purpose of the symposium is to investigate the history and the ethical implications of medical film material. Each screening will explore a different category of medical film: narrative, surgical, educational and experimental. Presenters include archivists, scholars, filmmakers and physicians. For more information and to register visit:

[www.medicalfilmsymposium.com](http://www.medicalfilmsymposium.com).

**Dr. David Cattell, Chairman of the Physics Department of Community College of Philadelphia will host Ken Biddle, founder of PIRA, Paranormal Investigators & Research Association, who will be our speaker on the topic:**

## **Orbs or Dust? A Practical Guide to False-Positives.**

**Saturday, January 16, 2010 at 2:00 PM at Community College of Philadelphia,  
Lecture Room C2-28 in the Center for Business and Industry  
at the corner of 18th and Callowhill Streets.**

**This facility is handicap accessible, admission is free, and is open to the general public.**

About photographic orbs and other ghostly manifestations Ken Biddle states: "It's a simple question. The answer depends on who you talk to. Some believe they are indeed Orbs, pure energy representations of what used to be a living person. Those on this side of the coin offer detailed diagrams exploring the visible layers of the Orbs, color-coded charts to explain the emotion Orbs are displaying when photographed...and even insight into the "psychology" of Orbs.

I'm more on the flip side of that coin. I've done my homework and have found many natural causes that can create the same image of an Orb. So, yes...I usually lean towards the answer of Dust.

Come with me as we take a look at False-Positives; evidence that appears to be paranormal, but actually has a natural explanation. We will take a look not only at Orbs, but through the many other forms in which ghosts have been "captured". You will learn about mistakes, tricks of light and a camera feature that has been wreaking havoc in the ghost hunting community. We will also look at a few ways "Investigators" deliberately produce images, including step-by-step instructions on how they "capture" a shadow man with the help of Photoshop. I've even included a few experiments you can do to verify many of these results yourself."

Lest Skeptics be overly skeptical about this topic, Benjamin Radford, Managing Editor of Skeptical Inquirer stated: *"I have to say, I liked it a lot. It was refreshingly skeptical and shows a level of scientific methodology and critical thinking rare in ghost hunter circles. It should be required reading for anyone interested in ghosts; both novice and veteran ghost hunters will save themselves a lot of time chasing wild geese if they read and understand what you have to say."*



**Cartoon by Dave Lowe**  
<http://www.paraabnormalthecomic.com/>  
**Used by Permission**

**To learn more about PIRA visit their website: [//home.comcast.net/~parainvestigator/Index/Main.html](http://home.comcast.net/~parainvestigator/Index/Main.html)**

PIRA does get involved with many charitable causes, mainly by participating in fund raising events at historical sites in the Delaware Valley area. They, along with other local paranormal investigative groups, have recently supported historic Fort Mifflin, and in May of 2010 will participate in an event at historic Eastern State Penitentiary. View their website and at least consider supporting some of their activities.

**Saturday, May 1st, 2010 Public Paranormal Investigation of Eastern Sate Penitentiary** Cost : \$100 per person for 9 hours at the prison!! from 5pm - 2am. There will be a brief guided tour along with the history of the prison, then we will break off into groups and start investigating. you will be grouped with experienced investigators and learn how to perform a true paranormal investigation in one of the most active locations in our area. The best part is, all Proceeds are going directly to the Hospital Restoration Project at Eastern State! Let's help preserve this piece of history!



## You are invited to stand upon our Soapbox

Use our megaphone to tell the world what you think about things that interest or bug you. Articles and Letters to the Editor about almost any topic are welcome. Readers are invited to suggest improvements and comment on matters reported in Phactum. You need not be in agreement with matters discussed here, especially with the Editor. In fact, polite disagreement and constructive criticism are especially welcome. We do attempt to eschew Partisan Politics and harsh broad brush criticism of religion.



Send articles and letters to the Editor at [phactpublicity@aol.com](mailto:phactpublicity@aol.com)

III (November/December 2009). This is an outstanding essay and, as background data, could help us here in Maine where we regularly entreat corrections officials to continue or restore academic programs through the advocacy work we do. See [www.jailvolunteers.org](http://www.jailvolunteers.org)

Jim Bergin / Judy Garvey

Blue Hill, Maine

*Editors note: This essay has been sent along to Jim Bergin and Judy Garvin along with a shorter version that has been printed in The Mt. Airy Independent and the Germantown Chronicle. We are pleased to share articles with other groups.*

Editor: This isn't new, but it's new to me. I've always wondered if criminal profilers were any better than psychics, who, as we all know, are no damn good at all. Here is a short article from the New Yorker, November 12, 2007: [http://www.gladwell.com/2007/2007\\_11\\_12\\_a\\_profile.html](http://www.gladwell.com/2007/2007_11_12_a_profile.html)  
Howard J. Wilk  
Philadelphia, PA

Editor: A poem, with apologies to the Baroness Emmuska Orczy.

**They seek them here  
They seek them there  
Chiropractors seek them everywhere.  
Are they for real  
Or just fixations  
Those damned, elusive subluxations!**

Lynn DeWees

Pottstown, PA

*Editor:* Anyone who denies that the earth's average temperature hasn't risen, must believe that scientists can't read thermometers, add them up, and then divide. Those believers have found themselves a new religion.

Earth's temperature has swung wildly in the past billions of years. No one can prove that mankind has anything to do with the current warming although we may. The \*why\* of the earth warming is what is not known. Viewpoints denying that the earth is warmer or denying that mankind may have an effect on global temperatures are religion (belief without evidence or in the face of evidence).

When is the last time you heard a global warming zealot rail on about water vapor as a culprit for their cause? Yet atmospheric water vapor retains at least 251 times more heat energy than the heat energy that atmospheric carbon dioxide retains (see math below).

Just the fact that you never hear (from the media) about the role of water vapor in the retention of heat energy, shows that the contention is politics and not science. Political agendas, right or wrong, laudable or not, but certainly without regard to the truth, are trying to guide us away from technologies which emit carbon dioxide.

## Letters to the Editor

Editor: Eureka! Finally a fool proof method to solve this



age old problem. I think your readers would be happy to hear about it.

Anonymous  
an ancient Greek philosopher

Editor: Thanks for another great newsletter. Phactum is more than a newsletter; it's closer to a journal filled with important (and entertaining) information that can't be found elsewhere. On that note, I'm wondering if you have a word document format for "Prisoner Literacy" by Paul Schlueter

- ▶ The earth's atmosphere had 285 part per million (ppm) of carbon dioxide 100 years ago, now it has a 380 ppm concentration.
- ▶ Water vapor comprises 2% to 3% of the atmosphere. That is 20,000 ppm.
- ▶ from <http://physics.info/heat-sensible/> specific heat of water vapor at 0°C = 3909.2 J/kg·K
- ▶ from [http://www.engineeringtoolbox.com/carbon-dioxide-d\\_974.html](http://www.engineeringtoolbox.com/carbon-dioxide-d_974.html) specific heat of carbon dioxide at 0°C (~275K) = 819 J/kg·K thus the relative heat capacity (without using units) at parts per million for water vapor at 0°C is 20,000 \* 3909.2 = 78,184,000
- ▶ and the relative heat capacity (without using units) at parts per million for carbon dioxide at 0°C is 819 \* 380 = 311,220
- ▶ Dividing 78,184,000 by 311,220 = 251.

So the total heat capacity of all the water vapor in earth's atmosphere at 0°C is 251 times greater than the total heat capacity of all the carbon dioxide in earth's atmosphere at 0°C (and also roughly 251 for any earth type temperature).

The above doesn't take into account that CO2 emissions are substantially point sources spread out globally (mammals, termites, volcanoes, etc. and other natural sources). These point sources are mostly widely separated (relative to water vapor sources) and get dispersed and homogenized into the atmosphere by winds to a concentration of 380 ppm. Water vapor on the other hand is often highly concentrated as clouds and humidity since the earth is substantially covered with water. Everyone has walked outside on a summer or winter morning finding it still relatively warm because of the cloud cover the night before. Without the cloud cover (concentrated H2O gas) the heat just radiates into space and the morning is cold. Because of this insulating property, water vapor's effect may be a large multiple of the simple ratio of 251 times the thermal energy storage capacity of global carbon dioxide compared to the energy storage capacity of global water vapor. Also this effect is most concentrated at earth's surface where there is the most water vapor AND THE MOST HEAT, further enhancing the multiple. It seems that H2O gas could easily be a 1000 times or more important than CO2 gas is when it comes to heat effects in the earth's biosphere.

This analyses ignores the relative densities of CO2 and H2O which I don't believe will have a substantive effect to the point that is being made. This analyses ignores how CO2 and H2O may absorb or NOT absorb heat better at different radiated wavelengths. It ignores the pressure gradient of our atmosphere and/or other issues not mentioned here. Such other effects could enhance or detract from the relative importance of H2O gas vs. CO2 gas as regards the earth's temperature.

And lastly, I agree that we should embrace all clean non-

fossil fuel technologies of creating energy. This is for mankind's own good in the long term. And for what it's worth, we can make it bad in the short term for oil supplying unfriendly nations by the reduction of their power and influence, which often would be nil except for the oil they have that we need. However, using lies and bad or false science to forward this proper agenda will be self defeating.

Alfred Erpel  
New Britain, PA

Editor:

*"... In 1922, the American Society of Composers and Publishers (ASCAP) and the Music Publishers' Protective Association (MPPA) made it illegal to broadcast records. This may sound odd, but in those days the very idea of broadcasting music from disc seemed not only cheap but trivial, and above all commercial suicide. Why would the radio want to promote sales of its rival, the record business? Conversely, why would the record industry want to help out the popularity of radio by allowing discs to be used for broadcast, giving the radio stations free programming?"*

*Guitar; An American Life  
2005, Tim Brookes  
Grove Press, NY, NY*

The quote above relates an arcane bit of music history, which today seems to be repeating itself. For the last several years, record companies and music publishers have fought with internet music providers such as the infamous Napster, seeking payment of royalties for what Americans desire at no cost to themselves. Where radio once provided the music of live performers to the exclusion of recordings, it eventually became so intertwined in mutual exploitation with the recording industry that neither now seems separable from the other. The latest twist is that radio, nearly exclusively using pre-programmed musical selections from a mere handful of outlets, today broadcasts entire blocks of airtime exactly identical (save for inserted ads) to that played at hundreds of other stations across the country. The internet is quickly becoming the sole means for listeners to find and hear music they select for themselves. In time, as with radio, the recording industry will find a way to link to internet retailing, reliably taking their cut from revenues earned. It's inevitable; we need only wait to see what develops from the eternal struggle to exploit new music markets.

Paul Schlueter III  
Dallas, PA

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# Various Ruminations

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

## Annular Solar Eclipse of January 15

To underscore the importance and significance of PhACT meetings, a solar eclipse has been arranged to begin PhACT's series of lectures in 2010. Unfortunately we miscalculated and the eclipse will only be visible in Africa and one day early. Furthermore, Eric's Free Energy suppliers did not come forth with unlimited power for this display.

Nonetheless the first solar eclipse of 2010 occurs at the Moon's ascending node in western Sagittarius. An **annular eclipse** will be visible from a 300-km-wide track that traverses central Africa, the Indian Ocean and eastern Asia. A partial eclipse is seen within the much broader path of the Moon's penumbral shadow, which includes eastern Europe, most of Africa, Asia, and Indonesia.

There are four types of solar eclipses:

- ♣ Partial - Moon's penumbral shadow traverses Earth (umbral and antumbral shadows completely miss Earth)
- ♣ **Annular** - Moon's antumbral shadow traverses Earth (Moon is too far from Earth to completely cover the Sun)
- ♣ Total - Moon's umbral shadow traverses Earth (Moon is close enough to Earth to completely cover the Sun)
- ♣ Hybrid - Moon's umbral and antumbral shadows traverse Earth (eclipse appears annular and total along different sections of its path). Hybrid eclipses are also known as annular-total eclipses.



Those of us who attended Dr. Robert Park's lecture in November might remember that he mentioned Thales of Miletus, a Greek philosopher often referred to as the "Father of Science". Thales (ca. 624 BC - 546 BC) predicted a solar eclipse in 585 BC. Unlike various End-of-the-World predictions, Thales' calculations proved true, the eclipse happened, and the world

continued.

After the eclipse on May 28, 585 BC Herodotus wrote: *... day was all of a sudden changed into night. This event had been foretold by Thales, the Milesian, who forewarned the Ionians of it, fixing for it the very year in which it took place. The Medes and Lydians, when they observed the change, ceased fighting, and were alike anxious to have terms of peace agreed on.*

## Mammoth Meat

Have you ever thought about eating frozen woolly mammoth meat? PhACT member Paul Menga has mused on that chewy matter.

"Over Thanksgiving dinner I thought I had heard of woolly mammoth meat being eaten", states Paul. He subsequently did some internet searches and did indeed come up with some results.

This article says it was done in 1951 by the explorer's club: <http://www.straightdope.com/columns/read/2725/prehistoric-its-whats-for-dinner>

From this article we have:

<http://www.bravenewtraveler.com/2008/07/14/the-explorers-club-travels-most-secret-society-revealed/>

"In 1951 (and this has been confirmed by the club archivist), they even went so far as to include bits of woolly mammoth meat that had been languishing in Siberian permafrost for ten thousand years."

This article is very skeptical:

<http://archives.stupidquestion.net/sq21405.html>

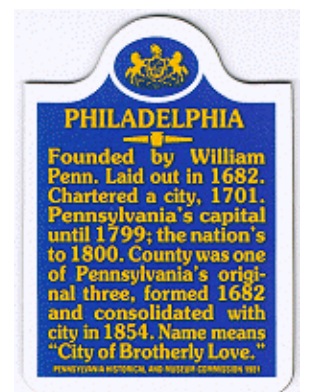
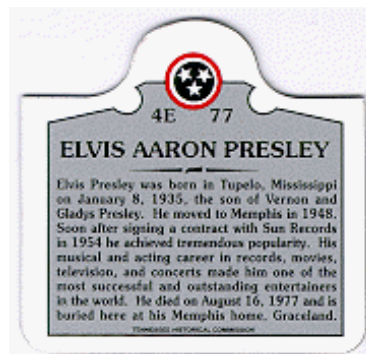
"There is no reliable report of a modern human eating any part of a frozen mammoth—and very few unreliable reports, for that matter." This article is just plain weird (but interesting): <http://www.findingyourhealth.org/health-articles/47-probiotics/60-want-to-live-longer-eat-woolly-mammoth-steak> "While excavating at Mammoth Mountain, they inadvertently discovered a new strain of bacteria in the frozen tundra that had a profound impact on mice when vaccinated with the bacteria. Elderly mice were rejuvenated and not only gained strength, lived longer and had increased sexual virility (Latin: bacterium viagriium), they were able to bear young at the equivalent human age of 70. Scientists suggest this ancient bacteria could hold the key to longer life for humans."

But what could possibly have gotten Paul to think of such a thing? Perhaps the turkey was tough and dry: the Thanksgiving Mammoth.

## Refrigerator Magnets

PhACT member Bruce Clark is proprietor of a unique little business: making refrigerator magnets of images of roadside signs and historical markers. Check out his website: [www.RoadsideMagnets.com](http://www.RoadsideMagnets.com)

Did you know that the King's middle name was Aaron?



### Dangerous Cell Phones: San Francisco mayor backs radiation labels for cell phones

Get a load of this item reported by the Associated Press on December 15, 2009.

*SAN FRANCISCO (AP) - Mayor Gavin Newsom is endorsing a proposal that would make San Francisco the first city in the country to require radiation labels for cell phones. The legislation would require cell phone retailers to post radiation levels next to each phone in a font at least as large as the price. The retailers also would have to inform customers about what the radiation levels mean. Scientists do not agree on whether radiation from cell phones poses any health hazard. The federal government has established limits for safe exposure. The Federal Communications Commission says all phones legally sold in the U.S. are safe. Newsom spokesman Joe Arellano says a bill to enact the rules likely will go before the Board of Supervisors within the next few months.*

Personally I have not heard of people keeling over from cell phone usage other than suffering various kinds of accidental falls and automobile accidents. Cell phone chat on a bicycle, for example, is not a healthy pursuit. I myself managed to fall down the steps while dialing a physician friend whose subsequent advice was to ice the bruise and not walk and cell phone. I did manage to avoid serious injury but I learned a lesson.

The cell phone brain cancer controversy sounds familiar. It is like going back in time a decade or two to the good old "power lines cause cancer scare days" that was brought about by a single flawed study in 1979. That scare turned out to be false and I expect the cell phone scare to follow suit.

The cell phone cancer controversy will be with us for a long time I fear. The Maine Legislature announced on December 21, 2008 that it would consider legislation requiring cell phones to have a warning label stating that cell phone radiation may cause cancer. The label should be a good shield, but I think an aluminum colander would be even better. Better yet see Tom Napier's article on page 14 on how to cure or prevent all manner of diseases with magnetism.

For those truly distraught over the dangers of electromagnetic and radio frequency radiation we recommend using the Tin Foil Deflector Beanie to bounce back harmful radiation.

### Improve Your Memory With Ginkgo Biloba

Well ... Maybe not. A new study released in JAMA claims that this all natural herbal supplement does not help improve memory or reduce the effects of Alzheimer's Dis-

ease as advertised. The studies conclusion: "Compared with placebo, the use of *G biloba*, 120 mg twice daily, did not result in less cognitive decline in older adults with normal cognition or with mild cognitive impairment."

<http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/full/302/24/2663?home>

Also see Dr. Steven Novella's comments on this matter at the New England Skeptical Society website:

<http://www.sciencebasedmedicine.org/>

**The Ginkgo Biloba tree is a living relic that only survives in the wild in a small region of China. This unique tree that can grow to large proportions is now cultivated in many urban areas around the world as an ornamental and shade tree.**



### Lunch time at the Mutter Museum

Here is a Youtube video of Dr. Robert Hicks, Director of the Mutter Museum, feeding his pet leeches, Harvey and Hunter. Is this a classic case of one being consumed by his work? <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-cQGXmU-cuo>

If you have not been to the Mutter Museum, part of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia, you should go. See event listings on page 5 and by all means spend a day at the museum. The Mutter Museum does charge admission but visitors are not expected to feed Harvey and Hunter

### Historic Mansions in Philadelphia's Fairmount Park

PhACT member Christine Mifsud was recognized in a nicely presented article by Vernon Clark in the Philadelphia Inquirer, November 23, 2009 for having organized an arts contest and exhibition that was on display in City Hall entitled "Fairmount Park's Colonial Elite". The themed exhibition is intended to reflect the art and architecture of Fairmount Park's historic mansions and to renew interest in these 18th and 19th century treasures.

Christine is a graduate of Moore College of Art in Philadelphia, located between the Franklin Institute and the Academy of Natural Sciences. She works as a volunteer guide at Woodford, a summer mansion built in 1756 by William Coleman, a merchant and confidant of Benjamin Franklin.

Coleman, after he was admitted to the bar, held a variety of municipal offices, beginning as Town Clerk and Clerk of the City Court. He became a Judge of various local courts including the Orphan's Court, Court of Common Pleas, and Quarter Sessions. In 1758 he was appointed an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. He was also active in Philadelphia's emerging cultural institutions.

By 1727 Coleman was a friend of Benjamin Franklin and member of Franklin's Junto. He was a founder and first treasurer of the American Philosophical Society, one of the first



directors of the Philadelphia Contributionship, and an early supporter of Pennsylvania Hospital. Coleman was also a founder of the College of Philadelphia, serving as the original clerk of the Board of Trustees, from



1749 to 1755, and as its first treasurer, from 1749 to 1764.

Woodford is located in East Fairmount Park, near numerous cultural and historic resources.

33rd & Dauphin Streets  
East Fairmount Park  
Philadelphia, PA 19132  
(215) 229-6115

Hours: Tuesday-Sunday from 10-4. Closed on major holidays. Tours: Guided tours only. Admission for a guided tour is \$5.00 for adults, \$3 for senior citizens, and \$2 for children (ages 6-12). To schedule a special customized group tour call: (215) 229-6115.

To read the article go to:

<http://www.philly.com/philly/news/local/71316587.html>

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**“I do detest all offices — all, at least, that are held on a political tenure. And I want nothing to do with politicians. Their hearts wither away, and die out of their bodies. Their consciences are turned to india-rubber, or to some substance as black as that, and which will stretch as much.”**

**— Nathaniel Hawthorne (July 4, 1804 – May 19, 1864), American novelist and short story writer.**

**Denialism: How Irrational Thinking Hinders Scientific Progress, Harms the Planet, and Threatens Our Lives**  
by Michael Specter

**Publisher: Penguin Press HC, The (October 29, 2009)**  
**ISBN-10: 1594202303 ISBN-13: 978-1594202308**  
**Hardcover: 304 pages \$27.95**

In *Denialism*, New Yorker staff writer Michael Specter reveals that Americans have come to mistrust institutions and especially the institution of science more today than ever before.

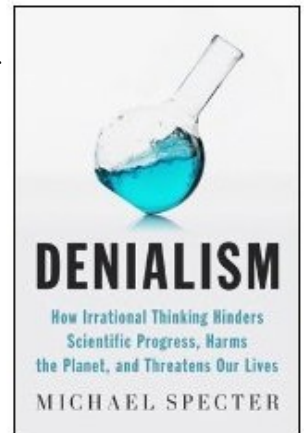
For centuries, the general view had been that science is neither good nor bad—that it merely supplies information and that new information is always beneficial.

Now, science is viewed as a political constituency that isn't always in our best interest. We live in a world where the leaders

of African nations prefer to let their citizens starve to death rather than import genetically modified grains. Childhood vaccines have proven to be the most effective public health measure in history, yet people march on Washington to protest their use. In the United States a growing series of studies show that dietary supplements and "natural" cures have almost no value, and often cause harm.

We still spend billions of dollars on them. In hundreds of the best universities in the world, laboratories are anonymous, unmarked, and surrounded by platoons of security guards—such is the opposition to any research that includes experiments with animals. And pharmaceutical companies that just forty years ago were perhaps the most visible symbol of our remarkable advance against disease have increasingly been seen as callous corporations propelled solely by avarice and greed.

As Michael Specter sees it, this amounts to a war against progress. The issues may be complex but the choices are not: Are we going to continue to embrace new technologies, along with acknowledging their limitations and threats, or are we ready to slink back into an era of magical thinking? In *Denialism*, Specter makes an argument for a new Enlightenment, the revival of an approach to the physical world that was stunningly effective for hundreds of years: What can be understood and reliably repeated by experiment is what nature regarded as true. Now, at the time of mankind's greatest scientific advances—and our greatest need for them—that deal must be renewed.





# Secundum Artem:

*Selected works of art and design from the University collections*



The Marvin Samson Center for the History of Pharmacy presents *Secundum Artem: Selected works of art and design from the University collections*, a new exhibition of more than 150 objects related to the history of pharmacy and science. The exhibition, which runs through January 31, 2011, explores the products of various skilled scientists, artists, craftsmen, and designers active primarily in Europe and the U.S. during the last 300 years.

The exhibition features a wide array of media – prints, photographs, manuscripts, paintings, ceramics, glass, wood, and metal – and categories of objects – instruments, advertising and packaging, and natural science – that were manufactured according to the specific art or practice, or *secundum artem*, of their makers. Each object was conceived with a particular function in mind, ranging from the purely utilitarian to the purely decorative, but very often with the boundary between the two being blurred.

Ostensibly made to be drug containers, a pair of late-17<sup>th</sup> century Italian blue and white ceramic apothecary jars feature finely-painted decorations that eclipse their utilitarian function and distinguish them as notable works of art. The late-19<sup>th</sup> century German botanical panels displayed in the galley niches were produced as teaching aids, but are now valued as artistic prints.

“This exhibition sheds new light on a series of diverse artifacts made *secundum artem* and how design can transcend function,” said Michael J. Brody, director and curator. “It is my hope that visitors discover how, beyond their value as historical documents, such products of creative minds relate and compare to standard and accepted concepts of the art object.”

*Secundum Artem: Selected works of art and design from the University collections* is free and open to the public. The Marvin Samson Center for the History of Pharmacy is located

on the campus of University of the Sciences in Griffith Hall (600 South 43<sup>rd</sup> St., Philadelphia, Pa.). Exhibition hours: Standard hours are Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., however, please visit [www.usp.edu/museum](http://www.usp.edu/museum) to confirm opening dates and times and closures.

The Marvin Samson Center for the History of Pharmacy serves as an educational, cultural, and research resource for the University, pharmacy professionals, historians, and the general public through its collections of fine art, artifacts, instruments, and documents representative of all aspects of pharmacy, including the pharmacy college’s illustrious history. Through changing exhibitions, tours, and programs, the Center aims to

deepen visitors’ appreciation of the pharmacy, health, and science industries in the broader social context and in the development of American life, especially in the City of Philadelphia and the region. For more information on The Marvin Samson Center for the History of Pharmacy, please visit [www.usp.edu/museum](http://www.usp.edu/museum).



INTERIOR OF AN APOTHECARY'S SHOP.  
Late XIV. or Early XV. Century. Flemish.  
(From an Old Painting.)

At University of the Sciences in Philadelphia, students embark on a challenging learning experience in a proving ground for successful professionals in the healthcare-related fields. A private, coeducational institution dedicated to education, research, and service, and distinguished as the nation’s first college of pharmacy, the University has produced leaders in the healthcare marketplace since its founding in 1821, including founders of six of the top pharmaceutical companies in the world. With undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral degree programs in such disciplines as pharmacy, bioinformatics, physical therapy, healthcare business, and health policy, the 3,000 students in the University of the Sciences’ five colleges learn to excel in scientific analysis and to apply their skills to improving healthcare in their communities and in the lives of people worldwide. For more information about University of the Sciences, visit [www.usp.edu](http://www.usp.edu).

# " LUCY'S AUNT, ARDI "

by Paul Schlueter III

**Lucy** is the famous partial *Australopithecus afarensis* fossil, found in 1974. For many of us, she was considered an example of our oldest ancestral species. Well, not quite... At 3.2 million years old, Lucy is pretty far back along the lineage, but there are older species between the hominid divergence from the chimpanzee lineage and Lucy's contemporaries.

Our line split from that of chimps, gorillas, and orangutans about 6 million years ago (mya). We "came down from the trees" about 4 mya, and first developed stone tools about 2.5 mya. *Homo Erectus* stone tools show up in China around 1.36 mya. *Australopithecines* overlap a lot of that, appearing in the fossil record from roughly 5 mya until about 1 mya. We *Homo sapiens* only appeared around 200 thousand years ago.

Scientists are now bringing out their latest discovery, a species considered a predecessor of *A. afarensis*, yet subsequent to our split from the other great apes. *Ardipithecus ramicus* turns out to be, in several ways, an anomaly, and it is represented in popular discussion by an individual nicknamed "Ardi", presumed to be female, first discovered in 1994. It appears that fossilized remains of at least 36 individuals have been found, but volcanic ash layers that "sandwich" Ardi's remains have been Argon dated to 4.4 mya.

Project Director Tim White, of the University of California, Berkeley, was interviewed by Bruce Bower, a human sciences writer for *Science News* (Oct. 24, 2009). White states that "Ardi's" skeleton indicates that the common ancestors of people and chimpanzees did not resemble chimps, " instead displaying "an unexpected mix of apelike and monkeylike traits suitable for both tree climbing and upright walking."

One distinction that caught my attention was that Ardi was actually much bigger than Lucy, breaking tradition from all those drawings that show smaller apelike animals

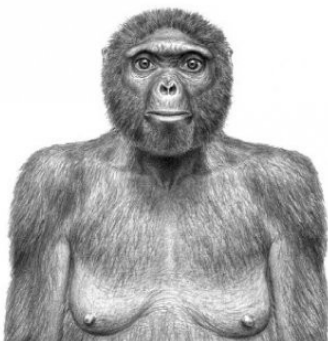
growing progressively taller until they become upright humans. Ardi was described as 120 cm tall (nearly 4 feet), and weighing 50 kg (110 lbs.), whereas Lucy was merely 105 cm tall, and only around 25 kg. White's team concluded that Ardi's limbs were suited to "moving capably in the trees, on hands and feet," but that her species "lacked skeletal traits for hanging from branches, adeptly climbing tree trunks, or knuckle-walking. In fact, says White, "Ardipithecus is so rife with anatomical surprises that no one could have imagined it without direct fossil evidence." White's team describes Ardi's partial skeleton, and the remains of 3 dozen other specimens, in the Oct. 2 issue of *Science*.

Owen Lovejoy, a team member from Kent State University, in Ohio, believes that the small faces and canine teeth of *Ardipithecus* indicate that "males rarely fought" (there goes the cherished idea that evolution is always in a positive direction...), and he thinks the species had family relationships.

A remarkably detailed artist's conception drawing of Ardi is shown in *Science News*, and a smaller-scale copy is seen in a shorter article, published by *The Week* in their Oct. 16, 2009 issue. *The Week's* article unclearly reports that Lucy "was previously the oldest known hominid", but it's a minor detail that isn't very important. As noted earlier, there is fossil evidence for hominids going back around 6 million years, squarely including Ardi's heyday.

Ardi shares braincase features with pre-hominid species, one of which being *Sahelanthropus*, which lived 6-7 mya. Though the concept of any single "missing link" has been pretty well refuted, *Ardipithecus* does seem to indicate a transitional form very close to that representing the hominid-great ape split. As more information is gleaned from these and similar fossils, we will develop much more knowledge about how the hominid line developed, leaving us as the only surviving example.

**Aunt Ardi**



**Not Aunt Ardi**



# “I’ll bet I can be nicer than you.”

By Dr. Gary Lange



**Recently**, I was one of three English speaking Gambling Treatment “experts” invited to the UCan International Gambling conference in Seoul, South Korea. They hosted our trip and we were to share what theories and strategies we have used in our country to successfully treat problem gamblers. The South Korean hospitality far exceeded what we Americans would call “service”. A deep bow and “how may I serve you?” were only the start of the most spectacular service I could have imagined.

Michelle Timmins from Windsor, Ontario, John Wong from Auckland, NZ and I were given interpreters, drivers, guides, first class accommodations and of course, the best Korean food I have ever tasted. In turn, we gave them some tips on how to treat problem gamblers and their families. The best of human respect and generosity came out of each of us. The nicer they were to us, the nicer we wanted to be to them. It became an accelerating “game” to see who could be the most accommodating person or group.

Never underestimate the importance of joining and respecting another’s culture or language. We know the Koreans are more formal than most Americans and especially at a conference with “foreigners”. When I began my presentation, I respectfully bowed, and said, “Hello, thank you for your invitation” in Korean. They spontaneously laughed and applauded my efforts! My workshop was entitled: “Never a Dull Moment: Treating the Gambling/Amphetamine Addict.”

The South Koreans, as others, are confronted with a very difficult disorder to treat: Pathological Gambling. As we know, gamblers tend to have concomitant co-morbid and personality disorders. In Korea, the only legal gambling is on horse racing and all other familial and social forms of gambling are illegal. The Korean gamblers are challenged by limited resources, funding, social and cultural pressures. We shared some successful cases using CBT, MI and other theories to help intervene and stop gambling. Their clinicians, like ours are challenged to treat people who are psychologically and socially impaired. Success was reported at the conference from gentle interventions, family therapy and behavioral contracts. Half of Koreans do not espouse belief in a God or Higher Power, so spiritual resources and 12 step programs like Gamblers

Anonymous are not so available or helpful. As I gave them my Functional Analysis and Pleasant Events handouts, they gave me a brochure of a cartoon showing the problems resulting from gambling which did not need translating.

Next I went to Japan and met with several addiction and gambling treatment programs. My presentation entitled “Strategies for Treating Problem Gamblers” was at the One-Day

Port program in Yokohama. This residential program for male gamblers is directed by a very dedicated Tsutomu Nakamura, a very dedicated man who was eager to learn about other strategies and exercises to use with his recovering gamblers. I also attended a GA and a GamAnon meeting that were very focused on the 12 steps. They struggle like other recovering gamblers to live without gambling one day at a time. I gave director Tsutomu one of my Gambling Treatment DVDs and in turn, he gave me two succulent Asian pears.

Our lives are often our workshops and can all be used as information or metaphors for human interaction. During the trip, I felt such positive, loving and kind exchanges and I now humbly bow and remember the old adage “What you put out, you get back”.

*Gary Lange, Ph.D. is a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in private practice in Rancho*

*Mirage, CA. He holds a National and California Certification as a Gambling Counselor and is Chair of the Training Committee for the California Council on Problem Gambling. Dr. Lange supervised the Family Program at the Betty Ford Center where he completed his dissertation on the recovery symptoms/patterns of family members. Additionally he is a Certified Addictions Specialist and has been a professor of Psychology with Cal State University, San Bernardino for the past fifteen years. Dr. Lange has done numerous professional presentations on problem gambling as well as the quarterly trainings for counselors seeking their Certification as a Gambling Counselor. Past topics included, “You Bet Your Life”, “When Luck Runs Out”. He has published articles for The Counselor, The Therapist magazines and is currently writing a book for treating families of gamblers.*

[www.GaryLangePhD.com](http://www.GaryLangePhD.com)

## 3.95 Million Gambling Addicts Have Nowhere to Turn

Gambling addiction is becoming a serious social problem. According to a 2008 study by the Korea Culture & Tourism Institute, 9.5 percent of Korean adults had experienced trouble as a result of their gambling addiction.

That translates into 3.95 million who are addicted to gambling. Among them, 7.2 percent were classified as “serious” addicts who need immediate attention and 2.3 percent or around 870,000 people were “problematic” cases needing medical treatment.

Korea's prevalence rate compares to 2.9 percent in Canada, 2.4 percent in Australia and 4.1 percent in Singapore. It is even higher than the 6.4 percent in the U.S. state of Nevada, which includes Las Vegas.

“There is a strong tendency in our society to think of casinos and horse racing as ways to make money rather than leisure activities,” said Cho Hyun-seob, head of the Korea Prevention and Cure Center for Gambling Problem. Another problem is the proliferation of illegal gambling sites on the Internet and off-line gambling parlors. “Many people, both men and women, become habituated to gambling through the Internet,” said Park Eun-kyung, a counselor at the center.

[http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2009/09/22/2009092200265.html](http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2009/09/22/2009092200265.html)



# "Discover the Power of Magnets!"

By Tom Napier



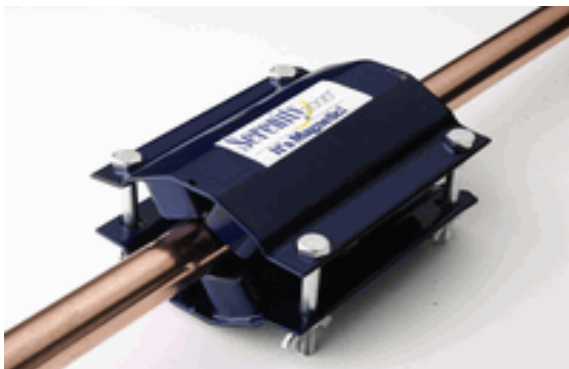
Some 25 years ago I had a fellow-worker who wore a copper bracelet to alleviate her rheumatism. It was solid copper and you could tell it might have some pharmacological effect; it stained the skin of her wrist green.

Judging by the flyer from J-O Direct, Inc. enclosed with my last credit card bill, we now live in more enlightened times. For a mere \$19.95 (plus S&H) they will send you a "Magnetic Bracelet with copper." No specific claim is made for the copper but you'd hardly expect it to do anything as it's gold plated.



It must be the magnets that do all the work. These are tiny and round and are embedded in the inside of what appear to be stainless-steel links. The gold-plated copper merely decorates the outer surface of the bracelet. The flyer invites you to "Discover the Power of Magnets!", no doubt their power to pick up ferrous grit and hold it against your skin. Magnetic therapy, it proclaims, may help "Increase energy, Relieve pain, Accelerate healing and Improve circulation." The magnetic field "attracts and repels charged particles in the blood creating movement and heat; this process causes blood vessels to dilate, increasing circulation, thus accelerating healing."

Contrast this with the warning on the other side of the flyer, "Caution: Not for use by pregnant women or individuals fitted with cardiac pacemakers and/or internal automatic defibrillators. No health or medical claims



Home Water Magnetic Water Conditioner  
\$189.95 plus shipping and handling

MentalHealthHumor.com

By: Chato B. Stewart



## Magnet Therapy for Depression

Permission granted for non-profit use by artist:

Chato B. Stewart.

<http://www.mentalhealthhumor.com>

expressed or implied."

Read that last sentence again. Yes, medical claims both expressed and implied are right there on the other side of the page. I don't know where the threat to pregnant women comes from but the other warnings are plausible. Unlike most magnetic therapy devices, this bracelet may contain quite powerful magnets having a significant depth of field. They could conceivably trigger switches in implanted medical devices.

Curiously, there is no warning that the claimed 1000 gauss field is capable of erasing credit cards. I'd have thought that was a far more immediate danger.

*Tom Napier is a long time skeptic, a physicist, and an occasional poet. Tom has worked on high energy projects such as CERN and is very well acquainted with magnetic fields and other forms of radiation. Tom is a boats man in his spare time and it is reliably asserted that despite having worked near high energy magnets he does not deflect a compass.*



## Drexel promotes junk science

By Robert Hart

This article originated in *The Triangle*, November 13, 2009.  
*The Triangle* is the independent student newspaper at Drexel University.  
<http://TheTriangle.org>

With the growing cost of health care in the U.S., many in our nation are turning to Complementary and Alternative Medicine. According to the National Institutes of Health, Americans spend almost \$34 billion per year, and 11 percent of all out-of-pocket medical expenses on CAM. Despite these figures, there is hardly any evidence that it actually works. There is a lack of rigorous scientific research on this subject, and the few large studies that do exist show little or no effect compared to placebo or control groups. At a time when scientific institutions should be speaking out against the use of dubious medical treatments, why is Drexel offering a class on qigong, a CAM treatment?

Last week, Dr. Wonsup Choi, a professor from the Graduate School of Natural Healing Science, DongBang University, gave a presentation on qigong and will be offering an online course this coming winter quarter at Drexel's College of Nursing and Health Professionals. Qigong is based on controlling a kind of "life force" or "personal energy" known as qi or chi. Many CAM disciplines claim a basis in similar "energy" concepts even though they are poorly defined, un-testable, unquantifiable and undetectable. Needless to say, any idea with those characteristics cannot qualify as science.

When questioned about this, adherents of qigong and other traditional medicine practices justify their legitimacy by citing their ancient roots. Qigong, you see, has been practiced for thousands of years. But why should we trust a medical system that was developed long before any useful information about the human body existed? Countless other practices have been utilized throughout history, yet we scorn them now. Human and animal sacrifice was carried out all over the world to appease gods, witches were hunted down to remove imagined vexes and curses, and magic charms and spells were once commonplace. Modern science, not ancient history, should be our guiding principle.

Despite all of this, is it still possible that qigong provides

real health benefits? It very well might, but the answer is irrelevant. Relaxation, meditation and exercise can provide real health benefits without ascribing the results to invented energy sources. This is the crux of the issue and the reason Drexel should not offer a class on qigong.



**The Drexel Dragon  
 "Mario the Magnificent"**

Does this seem rigid? Closed-minded? Perhaps, but this is not a question about open-mindedness, but one of standards-and I'll answer such questions with two of my own. Should we all be open-minded enough to consider lowering our standards on preparing the next generation of health professionals? Is it closed-minded to refuse a medical treatment that has "alternative" safety standards? As an institution of higher learning, Drexel should have greater academic standards, especially when it comes to teaching healthcare. Instead of promoting an unproven medicine, Drexel should become a leader in actively and loudly promoting evidence-based medicine.

*Robert Hart is a PhD student in biomedical engineering at Drexel University.*

**Qi Gong (pronounced Chi Kung) is an ancient Chinese energy (Chi) practice. Qi means energy.**

**Qigong is a self-healing art that combines movement and meditation. Visualizations are employed to enhance the mind/body connection and assist healing.**

**The Chinese character "Gong" represents the effort placed into Qi practice as well as the power gained through such practice. Qigong literally means the meditation practice of Qi energy.**

**Qigong is based on the concept of Chi, energy which flows through the body. There are 460 movements to learn in the Qigong and related Tai Chi programs. Breathing techniques help the chi flow. It is a self healing practice that can lead to the connection of mind, body and spirit.**

**Images and symbols may be mentally used to assist with the healing.**

# Falsification

By Don Nigroni

You can't teach an old dogma new tricks. - Dorothy Parker (1893 - 1967)

One might think that an important difference between science and philosophy is that the theories of the former can be confirmed while those of the latter can't and that this helps explain the much greater progress and success seen in science when compared to philosophy. However, any empirical theory, no matter how firmly established, could be wrong, such as the apparently almost certainly true but evidently amazingly false geocentric theory which contended that the Earth, which we stand on, assuredly didn't move and the Sun, which we evidently see rising and setting, surely revolved around the Earth. Even if one thought that science couldn't confirm any theories, then one might still contend that the difference between science and philosophy is that at least science could disconfirm them. Alas, even that is not the case. If someone were seemingly able to repeatedly rise into the air in an evidently paranormal manner while apparently being observed by numerous top scientists and magicians under evidently rigorous laboratory conditions, even that could never falsify the law of gravity.

There are always an infinite number of theories that can explain any phenomena and we always have to rely on values when choosing among them. Furthermore, we can never confirm nor even disconfirm any empirical theory. No matter how many white swans were observed, that would

never confirm the theory that all swans are white. You could never be absolutely certain that a black swan wouldn't show up somewhere, perchance Australia, someday, say in 1697.



Australian  
Black Swan

But surely wouldn't a black swan at least disconfirm the theory? You can always retain any theory in the face of any evidence that apparently falsifies it and instead change at least one background assumption. Of course, depending on the quantity and quality of the evidence, if one wanted to retain some theories then the revisions to the background assumptions might have to be quite radical indeed. One could argue that the apparently black swan was really due to a practical joke, a dream, a hallucination or even a supernatural vision by a deceiving demon. Or perhaps your brain was really in a vat connected to a supercomputer which was programmed to produce the sense-data of a black swan appearing before a group of scientists at a laboratory.

Unfortunately, due to the human condition, there are limits to our understanding. We can never directly know the noumena or things-in-themselves which presumably cause the phenomena or sense-data that we do directly observe and that uncomfortable situation applies to both philosophers and scientists. Nonetheless, we should use good sense in selecting theories while *always* keeping an open mind.

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## Of the Subconscious and Coincidence

By M. Paul Menga

Some time ago, I was having trouble bringing to mind the name of an old, dead rapper. I don't know why I was trying to think of it; I had never been enthralled with his music. The fact that I couldn't recall it became a matter in and of itself, and I was desperate to come up with the name—but I refused to look it up. It was on the tip of my tongue; surely it would bubble up eventually. One day I found myself walking into a record store, and immediately having two thoughts: "Well, you know, I have been bugging myself with this long enough, I might as well try to find his name." Then, "Wait, a minute, I don't need to. It's Tupac Shakur!" My initial impression was that just being in a music store must have jolted the memory (cue-dependent retrieval), but wait... I backed up a couple steps. Sure enough, there on a placard marking his section was "Tupac" in bold letters. Though I hadn't picked up on it consciously, the name had certainly been in my field of view, immediately prior to my conscious mind coming up with it. Did I just happen to recall the name at this exact time, or had I seen it and not realized? If I hadn't of backed up to investigate, I wouldn't even be aware there was a second option. Sometimes a little on the spot investigation can go a long way towards explaining things. The mind—our stream of consciousness, the unconscious streams behind that, and the processing of sensory inputs—is still a very active topic of scientific research, and one that interests me greatly. Though a little dated (2002), *Consciousness: a User's Guide* by Adam Zeman gives wonderful demonstrations of how removing parts of the human brain has predictable effects on one's conscious experience. Your manner of self-awareness is very organic based indeed.

PS: Like Elvis, there are many people who won't accept Tupac is dead.



# Human Memory and the Paranormal

By Don Nigroni

Although people once thought that we possessed an enigmatic mental storehouse which somehow contained our memories, whether perceived or unperceived, we now think that our memories are somehow mysteriously stored in our brains. We have compelling evidence that our ability to remember can be impaired if our brains are affected by traumatic injuries or some diseases. In addition, most people can remember things that they once saw basically from the point of view that they actually saw them or by flipping to some other perspective. For example, if a man and a woman remembered walking together along the beach last summer, he might remember seeing the waves and the sand basically as once seen from the perspective when he was walking along the beach while she might remember seeing them as walking together from above and thus remember seeing the top of her own head. Of course, she never really saw the top of her head when walking along the beach last summer and, on reflection, realizes that. Hence, it is easier to explain to people who can flip perspectives than to those who only remember seeing things basically from the point of view that they actually saw them that such memories are really constructions of past perceptions and not exact copies made from past perceptions.

Our change in view concerning where memories are stored had serious consequences for various types of paranormal phenomena such as ghosts, contact with the dead through mediums, after death communications (ADCs), reincarnation and out-of-body experiences (OBEs). Without our memories and our ability to remember we would be more helpless and confused than a newborn baby or someone with advanced dementia, not even being able to remember our own language anymore. For ghosts, contact with the dead through mediums and ADCs, since the minds of the departed are separated from their physical bodies, including their brains, we would not expect the deceased to communicate with us in a way that indicated that they remembered their own past. As for the reincarnated, we would not expect them to remember any of their past lives. And if people really could have OBEs then their minds and brains would have been separated during that experience and hence one would expect that they would no longer have had access to any of their past memories nor would they be able to ever remember anything that happened to them during that experience.

Nevertheless, one might counter that when our minds separate from our bodies then they naturally attain greater powers which the prison of our corporal bodies had somehow

blocked or that our minds are then enhanced by some superior being. Thus, our minds could then have extraordinary knowledge of the past itself such as of a past that still exists or in some way subsists or perhaps by occult knowledge about a past which not only no longer exists but doesn't even somehow subsist. Such knowledge might be limited to our own past experiences or unlimited as to the past in general and would raise some intriguing questions about the nature of time itself which is indeed a baffling enigma. However, if natural then one might expect that that knowledge would be lost upon entering a corporal body

which eventually happens in cases of reincarnation and OBEs. As for being enhanced, then one would expect the reincarnated and those having had OBEs to be able to still know the past even if their brains were eventually damaged by injury or disease after having been subsequently joined with a corporeal body. Nonetheless, for ghosts, contact with the dead through mediums and ADCs, having such knowledge, either naturally or by being enhanced, could explain purported communications from the departed

who seemingly remember their own past. In fact, countless extraordinary alternatives could replace the discredited notion that such contacts were possible because the deceased still possessed a mental storehouse of memories. Thus, if one accepted the current view that our memories are stored in our brains and one believed such communications with the dead were occurring, then one might feel compelled to propose some such extraordinary alternative in order to explain how the departed seemingly remember their own past. Of course, another option for those who believe that our memories are stored in our brains would be to simply reject that said mystical communications occur and thus there would be no need for them to explain how the deceased seem to be able to remember things. In conclusion, beliefs in various paranormal phenomena arose within certain historical and cultural contexts and originally rested upon various assumptions, some of which are now considered awfully outdated, and rejecting those discredited assumptions may undermine some traditional beliefs.

*Don Nigroni 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.*



Cartoon by Chris Madden  
<http://www.chrismadden.co.uk/moon/jigsaw.html>  
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# On Catching Colds and Catarrhs

TO BENJAMIN RUSH

London, 14 July, 1773.

Dear Sir:—I received your favor of May 1st, with the pamphlet, for which I am much obliged to you. It is well written. I hope that in time the endeavors of the friends to liberty and humanity will get the better of a practice that has so long disgraced our nation and religion.

A few days after I received your packet for M. Dubourg, I had an opportunity of forwarding it to him per M. Poissoniere, physician of Paris, who kindly undertook to deliver it. M. Dubourg has been translating my book into French. It is nearly printed, and he tells me he purposes a copy for you.

I shall communicate your judicious remark, relating to the septic quality of the air transpired by patients in putrid diseases, to my friend Dr. Priestley. I hope that after having discovered the benefit of fresh cool air applied to the sick, people will begin to suspect that possibly it may do no harm to the well. I have not seen Dr. Cullen's book, but am glad to hear that he speaks of catarrhs or colds by contagion. I have long been satisfied from observation, that besides the general colds now termed influenzas (which may possibly spread by contagion, as well as by a particular quality of the air), people often catch cold from one another when shut up together in close rooms, coaches, etc., and when sitting near and conversing so as to breathe in each other's transpiration; the disorder being in a certain state. I think, too, that it is the frouzy, corrupt air from animal substances, and the perspired matter from our bodies, which being long confined in the beds not lately used, and clothes not lately worn,



and books long shut up in close rooms, contains that kind of putridity which occasions the colds observed upon sleeping in, wearing, and turning over such bedclothes, or books, and not their coldness or dampness. From these causes, but more from too full living with too little exercise,

proceed, in my opinion, most of the disorders which for about one hundred and fifty years past the English have called colds.

As to Dr. Cullen's cold or catarrh a frigore, I question whether such an one ever existed. Travelling in our severe winters, I have suffered cold sometimes to an extremity only short of freezing, but this did not make me catch cold.

And, for moisture, I have been in the river every evening two or three hours for a fortnight together, when one would suppose I might imbibe enough of it to take cold if humidity could give it; but no such effect ever followed. Boys never get cold by swimming. Nor are people at sea, or who live at Bermudas, or St. Helena, small islands, where the air must be ever moist from the dashing and breaking of waves against their rocks on all sides, more subject to colds than those who inhabit part of a continent where the air is driest. Dampness may indeed assist in producing putridity and those miasmata which infect us with the disorder we call a cold; but of itself can never by a little addition of moisture hurt a body filled with watery fluids from head to foot.

With great esteem, and sincere wishes for your welfare, I am, sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

A cursive signature of Benjamin Franklin, written in dark ink. The signature is highly stylized and flows across the bottom right of the page.

# WHO'S THE MONKEY'S UNCLE?

by Paul Schlueter III

You guessed it... this article is about our shared genetic heritage with other animal life on this planet, the most compelling proof we have of the process of evolution. Who among us hasn't heard a creationist try to rebuke evolution with the ridiculous question, "Which one of your grandparents was a monkey?" If someone's intellect is limited to only the number of generations they can count on one hand, then maybe that argument makes sense... but let's look at some facts.

A human generation is physically limited, primarily by women's fertility. Pregnancy isn't possible until age 10 or 12, nor after age 50 or so. Outside of those ages, it doesn't matter how many fertile men there may be in a society - that woman won't be having children. In the past 100 years or so, the urbanized, industrial-based society of the U.S. has been fairly successful at enforcing an entirely artificial "statutory age of consent" (primarily applied to girls) of 18 years, and suffrage and equal rights for women have opened doors to uncounted girls who have enjoyed other options (nearly universal High School educations, widespread College educations, and a wide variety of careers outside the traditional home) than early child-bearing, so the U.S. average for "a generation" is longer than the physical fertility age would suggest. For purposes of argument, let's call a generation 20 years.

That puts us about 4 1/2 generations beyond the advent of powered flight ( 1903 ), 5 generations beyond the abolition of slavery ( 1860s ), and just 8 generations beyond Darwin's (and Lincoln's) birthday! Take a brief break right now, go to the fridge and get a drink, and consider how stunningly compressed the advancement of human knowledge has been within just those 8 generations!

Welcome back! Now, let's look at your ancestors across the same time period. Remember that with each generation, the quantity of ancestors is doubled, because each has two parents, who each have two parents, etc. Just going back 8 generations, each of us has 256 ancestors on our inverse family tree! It's like that logarithmic riddle, that when you start with a penny and double it each day, what do you have at the end of a month? (Answer: \$10,737,418 -- assuming only 30 days!) Multiply that by 100 (because you only started with 1/100th of a dollar), and you have 1.074 BILLION ancestors, going back only 30 generations (a mere 600

years!)

Think about that, now. . . it's just 4 generations before Columbus discovered the Caribbean islands. We're talking about the era when Europeans wore those frilly collars, and lived under the rule of Kings who were almost all coronated by Bishops of the Catholic Church. Blunderbusses were the cutting edge of weaponry, and Musketeers would have been contributing to the gene pool. It's doubtful that there were a Billion people alive on the entire planet at one time, let alone that all of them would have been your ancestor (the obvious resolution of this is that a whole lot of our ancestors shared ancestors!)

And, not a monkey in the bunch!

Geneticists have developed a formula for measuring time since species diverged on the evolutionary tree. Essentially, they count the mutations in the genome, and divide that by a fairly stable rate of mutations per generation. Divide that by the number of years per generation, and you can make pretty good ballpark guesses about when species diverged. Humans and our nearest living animal relatives, chimpanzees, diverged about 6 million years ago (mya), or about 300,000 generations ago (and that's still sticking to the 20-year

generation, not using the far more likely 12-year generation that you can probably count on for the first 290,000). Since that time, we've gone through several different species; just one, Australopithecines, lived from about 5mya to about 1mya. Homo Erectus left stone tools in China as long as 1.36mya.

Neanderthals, probably NOT direct ancestors of living humans, lived 130kya to 26kya. We Homo Sapiens came along a bit earlier, it seems, at approximately 200kya (10k generations ago). All my numbers, by the way, are based on mentions I collect from various scientific articles, which include pretty much disagreement and contradiction, because the info comes from a huge variety of root sources.

Roughly, "modern humans" expanded from Eastern Africa about 60kya, reaching Australia 50kya, Europe and Western Asia 45kya, and Russia 40kya. Presumably, we stopped over for a vacation in Eden about 5-10kya. The so-called Upper Paleolithic period, which pretty much covers human prehistory, is the period between 400kya and 10kya. Some of those ancestors might have been pretty short, and many were possibly rather hirsute, but not a one of them had an opposable thumb on their feet. Even though we still share 98% of our genome with chimps, the 2% difference





was a long time in the making, for BOTH of our species!

Mitochondrial Eve (a handle any modern gal would disown her parents for giving her) presumably lived 100-200kya, in Eastern Africa. She would have been the single woman from whom we have all descended, according to the genetic record of cell mitochondria, which we inherit from our mothers only, and once again, she's just an abstraction from measuring the differences in modern mito. DNA and dividing that by the number of mutations per generation we currently believe to have taken place. She would have been one of the first of our H. Sap. ancestors, presumably living at a time when our global population was so threatened that none of her contemporary cousins mothered a line that has survived to our times. THERE'S the core concept of a rather spooky sci-fi time travel flick, if you think about it! In the 10k generations to have followed her, there has been not one monkey in our family tree, thank you. It's been 300k generations, or thirty times the duration of our species so far, since we've shared an ancestor with a fellow Great Ape.

Here's another aspect of this which hardly ever gets mentioned: neither we or our related species have ever STOPPED evolving, through all that time! There is no living species that represents a COMMON ancestor of humans and

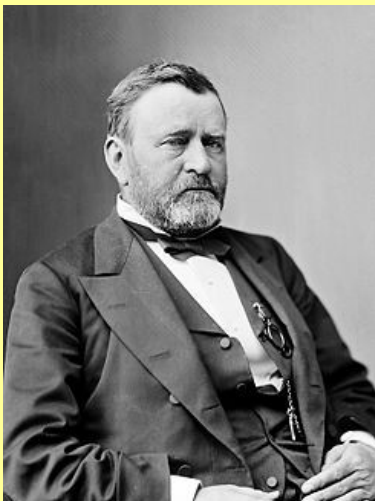
chimps, and neither humans nor chimps resemble our ancestral uncle! We have not evolved "farther" than our cousins, only "differently", and to a more or less equal degree. The very first primate (a lemur-like creature presumed to be about 65-90M years old) is our most primitive relative on this branch of the tree, but even the modern lemur (that cute little furry critter with huge eyes) is JUST AS FAR DOWN THE EVOLUTIONARY PATH as we are. As different as it is, that little ball of fluff is just as evolved as us! In fact, so are dogs and cats, whales and fish, birds and bees, nemotodes and bacteria ... you name it. All life on Earth today has survived just as long from the common original life form as we have, no matter how different it may be from us today. Rather than trying to shout one another down with ancestral insults, maybe it's better to give awestruck respect to the many

thousands of evolutionary paths all Earthly life has successfully followed to share this planet today, and to appreciate our common heritage and the interdependence we have between our many species and genera. As it turns out, we truly are not alone!

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



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**“Leave the matter of religion to the family altar, the church, and the private school, supported entirely by private contributions. Keep the church and state forever separate. “**

**Ulysses Simpson Grant (born Hiram Ulysses Grant (April 27, 1822 – July 23, 1885) was general-in-chief of the Union Army from 1864 to 1869 during the American Civil War and the 18th President of the United States from 1869 to 1877.**

Pennsylvania's long delay in adopting a budget was prompted by severe revenue shortages and an insistence on cutting spending.

Yet, before the spending plan was approved, the Department of Corrections was shopping for out of state cells to house Pennsylvania prisoners – a move that would cost tens of millions of dollars and do little to alleviate growing and dangerous overcrowding.

If this were an episode of the television sitcom *Seinfeld*, they would describe this logic as *bizarro*. It's like going out for dinner after losing your job.

The state's prison population has been swelling steadily for the past year. Currently, the 27 prisons hold some 51,000 inmates but have capacity for just 43,000. And by 2013 the population is projected to exceed 58,000. That means the four prisons currently on the drawing boards – at a cost of \$200 million each -- will be filled as soon as they open and the system will be at least as overcrowded as it is today.

In September, the Department sent letters to six states – Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, Oklahoma and Virginia – asking them to submit bids for housing up to 1,500 inmates. Pennsylvania already is paying as much as \$50 a day to house more than 300 state prisoners in several county jails and expects to accommodate up to 900 in this way.

Even reducing the population by 2,500 at a cost of close to \$50 million a year will do little to reduce the strain on the state system which has slowed parole releases, absorbed prisoners traditionally in county jails who serve between two and five years, and seen a steady flow of new inmates and returning parole violators.

What we should be asking these six states, as well as others that have gotten control of their prison systems, is how they developed excess capacity. One response, almost certainly, would be the use of alternatives to incarceration. Prisons are expensive to build and even more costly to operate with staffing around the clock. There is no reason to use such expensive facilities to sanction non-violent offenders who currently account for thousands of prisoners. Community-based treatment programs are alternatives to prison that not only cost less but also increase the prospect of successfully addressing drug and alcohol addictions and thereby reducing the recidivism levels and the future prison population.

New York recently made early release available to some

1,500 nonviolent drug offenders by repealing mandatory sentences. At the bill signing, Governor David Paterson noted: "Under the Rockefeller Drug Laws, we did not treat the people who were addicted. We locked them up. Families were broken, money was wasted, and we continued to wrestle with a statewide drug problem. The reforms that take effect today address those problems. By returning judicial discretion to the courtroom, we are reuniting families and fighting criminal activity and addiction in our communities."

Another alternative is removing the mentally ill from prisons, where their impairments are often made worse, to secure facilities equipped to meet their needs. Some 16 percent of the prison population is diagnosed with mental health issues.

Also, a halt should be put on the practice of returning to prisons individuals who violate technical aspects of parole. Except for extraordinary cases or where new crimes have been committed, tightened restrictions in the community should be used.

Parole violators and non-violent offenders are said to account for almost half of the prison population. The exact number is uncertain because of disagreements over what constitutes a violent offense. Still, the picture is clear that huge savings could be made without compromising public safety by adopting some of these strategies. And, because treatments have a better chance of correcting problems that lead to crimes, Pennsylvania's overwhelming cycle of crime and incarceration could be disrupted.

Prisons should be used for people who are a danger to society – not for those with whom we are angry or annoyed. Legislative action would be needed to adopt some of these changes. Implementation of other measures already on the books should be expedited. The severity of the current economic climate challenges us to be serious about effective changes to improve the criminal justice system. Anything else is just *bizarro*.

*William DiMascio is executive director of the Pennsylvania Prison Society, a private, nonprofit that has advocated for prison reform since 1787.*

*This article was published recently as an op-ed in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette and the Allentown Morning Call.*

## "Sham 'DIGITAL' Devices"

by Paul Schlueter III

There's a popular advertising gimmick which has swept the country, and it may be costing consumers needlessly. Particularly with the FCC changeover to digital TV broadcasting, many audio products are now advertised as being "Digital"; when they are just the same old analog items.

"Digital", in electronics, means that a signal is "sampled" extremely rapidly, to produce minuscule fragments of a signal which can be measured and manipulated by microchips. Such devices almost always carry some indication of their "Sampling Rate", listed as a frequency, in Hz, KHz, MHz, etc. Also, every single device that performs digital signal operations MUST have a power supply (such as a plug-in adaptor, power cord, or batteries). If the device lacks either a power supply or labels specifying its "sampling frequency", then it is NOT digital.

Consumers are generally unaware that their same old analog headphones, connector cables, splitters, etc., are analog, but any device which is "passive" (lacking a power supply) must necessarily be analog. Also, any device with no "sampling frequency" is analog; analog essentially means that the signals that pass through it are an analogy of the signals it receives. And, what advertisers would probably rather that you didn't learn is that passive analog devices are almost

always compatible with the inputs and outputs of digital audio devices!

The reason is that inputs and outputs are almost always analog! The conversion from analog to digital, and back again, takes place within the device. The I-Pod operates digitally, but its output is converted to analog, so analog speakers and analog headphones work just fine. YOU DON'T NEED TO BUY NEW ONES! Also, your old analog antenna works just fine, even with a digital broadcast signal. A powered (amplified) antenna can have digital or analog amplifiers, but either way, its input AND its output are analog, even if it is receiving a "digital signal".

Computers operate with digital signals, so most computer connections carry digital. Still, it's only the devices at the ends of the wires that are digital; the wires themselves are compatible with analog or digital. Before you run out and spend scarce money on so-called "digital" accessories to any of your home appliances, TRY THE OLD ANALOG EQUIVALENT FIRST. Just because an advertiser tries to play your lack of electronics techno-savvy against you, doesn't mean that you have to fall for the game!

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### High School Science Fairs need support from the community

Delaware Valley Science Fairs, Inc. (DVSF) was founded in 1949 and incorporated as a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization in 1993, making it one of the oldest Fairs in the country. It is now also one of the largest. The Fairs were designed as a vehicle for stimulating interest in science and technology among students in middle and high schools in the tri-state area. The philosophy behind the Fairs is that students learn science by doing science.

Our Mission is to bring parents, teachers, and industry together to stimulate and nurture young people so that they grow and develop into contributing members of the community.

We provide a forum for students to present their scientific work and interact with scientists in their field to receive feedback on their efforts. Students are awarded, scholarships, cash prizes, and other non-monetary recognition for outstanding work. We provide mentoring and teacher training to facilitate participation in this activity.

DVSF is an Affiliated Fair for the **Intel International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF)**.

<http://www.drexel.edu/dvsf/>



# Attempted Robbery By Lawsuit©

By Professor I. Nelson Rose

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Woody Guthrie said: *“Some rob you with a six-gun, some with a fountain pen.”* But, you do not usually find someone trying to do both.

On Dec. 21, 1998, Mark A. Merrill robbed a bank in Peotone, Illinois. A month later, he held up the First National Bank of Illinois in Mokena. He managed to make off with almost \$22,000. But he did not get far.

Merrill pleaded guilty to the two bank robberies in March 1999. In August, he was sentenced to serve 63 months in prison.

Now, if you are sitting in federal prison for more than five years, you have a lot of free time to think about how you got there. Whose fault is it anyway?

The answer is obvious: Donald Trump!

In February, 2000 Merrill filed suit against Trump, the Trump Casino in Gary, Indiana, and its manager, for \$2.1 million. Merrill alleges that if it were not for that darned casino encouraging his compulsive gambling, he never would have robbed those two banks.

Talk about being in denial!

Frivolous lawsuits are fun to read about, but they are a nuisance to the already overburdened judicial system and to the companies that have to pay the bills. Unfortunately, in the coming years, nuisance suits against casinos are only going to grow more numerous.

Potential plaintiffs often see casinos as the ultimate deep pocket. Not only do casinos have lots of cash, but they do not get a lot of sympathy from juries.

In the U.S., anyone can file a lawsuit against anyone else for any reason, or for no reason at all, with virtually no risk. Most other countries follow the “English Rule,” which allows a judge to make a party pay dearly for bringing a worthless suit. Under the “American Rule,” the losing party does not have to pay the winner’s attorneys fees.

A plaintiff on his own or with a lawyer on a contingency fee can roll the dice with the legal system and maybe get a jackpot verdict. At the very least he can force a company to spend time and money getting the case thrown out.

The law has made a little progress in containing the worst misuses of the courts. Anyone on California’s “Vexatious Litigant List” cannot file a lawsuit without first clearing it with a judge. But to make the list, you have to be pretty outrageous: Like the convict who sued his prison cafeteria for serving him a broken cookie.

Prisoners are a major source of lawsuits and appeals.

They have plenty of time on their hands and easy access to law libraries.

What does a casino lawyer do with a case like Merrill v. Trump?

The first step is checking to see if the plaintiff has made any procedural mistakes. Defense attorneys look for these first, because if they do not object immediately, they may have accidentally waived away their defense.

A common mistake made by non-lawyers is filing suit against entities that do not actually exist. For example, a government official who felt he had been libeled by an article in Fortune magazine, sued the magazine and sent the papers to the Time-Life Building in New York. The case ended up in the U.S. Supreme Court, because although the address was correct, the defendant technically did not exist. There was no Fortune magazine, only a company known as Time-Life, Inc., doing business as “Fortune” magazine.

If Merrill’s suit survives to the point where it will be judged on the merits, the casino’s lawyers will attempt to have the case quickly dismissed. Even though the lawyers may be getting paid by the hour, no one likes to spend years on a case that will eventually be thrown out.

The casino fears not only the cost and trouble, but also the remote possibility that the case may actually get to a jury. Jurors almost always try and do their best, but there are occasional travesties, like the O.J. Simpson criminal verdict.

Trump’s lawyers will file a motion to dismiss for failure to state a claim. Their job is to analyze the plaintiff’s complaint and point out its weaknesses to the judge. Merrill’s suit boils down to the claim that he discovered he was a compulsive gambler, that he asked the Trump Casino to bar him and that the casino instead encouraged him to gamble by offering incentives, including trips to Las Vegas.

I expect their arguments will go as follows:

- ♠ There is no statute, regulation or prior case in Indiana requiring casinos to bar compulsive gamblers.
- ♠ Even if the judge finds the casino should have put Merrill’s name on a “Keep Out” list, this does not give him the right to sue. A few other states do require lists of self-excluded players and have fined casinos for failing to put someone on the list. But even these states have not said that a person can sue a casino for being left off the list.
- ♠ Even if the casino had a duty to keep Merrill out and he has the right to sue for breach of that duty, the casino did

not cause him to rob any banks.

The last is the killer argument. Merrill claims he told the casino he was a compulsive gambler. Even if true, there was no way the casino could foresee that allowing him to gamble would result in bank robberies.

Further, the law still treats human beings as having free will. It was Merrill's choice to hold up two banks. In the language of the law, his criminal act broke the chain of causation.

If Merrill's case makes it all the way to trial, he will still have a tough time proving the facts he is alleging. After all, who is going to believe that Donald Trump's Indiana floating

casino would comp a player to a trip to Las Vegas? The last thing Trump would want is his patrons going there -- Trump owns no casinos in Nevada.

*Professor I Nelson Rose is recognized as one of the world's leading experts on gambling law and is a consultant and expert witness for players, governments and industry. His latest books, **Internet Gaming Law** (2nd edition just published), **Gaming Law: Cases and Materials**, and **Blackjack and the Law** are available through his website:*

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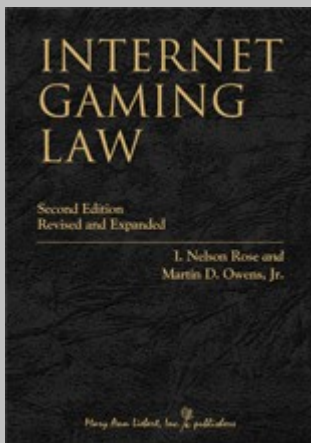
## Internet Gaming Law: Second Edition, Revised and Expanded

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