

Phactum

"To educate a person in the mind but not in morals is to educate a menace to society."

~ Theodore Roosevelt
(1858 - 1919)

The Newsletter and Propaganda Organ of the
Philadelphia Association for Critical Thinking
November / December 2011

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PhACT Meeting - Saturday, November 19, 2011

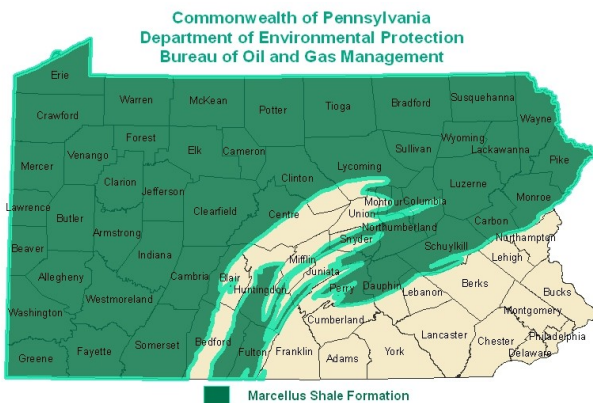
at Community College of Philadelphia

In Lecture Room C2-28 in the Center for Business and Industry
at the corner of 18th and Callowhill Streets. At 2:00 PM.

Dr. David Cattell, Chairman of the Physics Department of Philadelphia Community College, will host
Roland Wall, Director of the Center for Environmental Policy at
the Academy of Natural Sciences, who will discuss the "Fracking Controversy".

All are Welcome. This event is Free and Open to the Public. Handicap accessible.

Hydraulic fracturing, more commonly known as "fracking" is a controversial way to free up natural gas from deep deposits of shale rock that appear in far more than half of the state of Pennsylvania. It involves drilling down about a mile (far below the water table) and then sideways as much as another mile. Highly pressurized water, sand, and various chemicals are injected into rock fractures causing the fractures to expand thus allowing embedded gas to seep out.



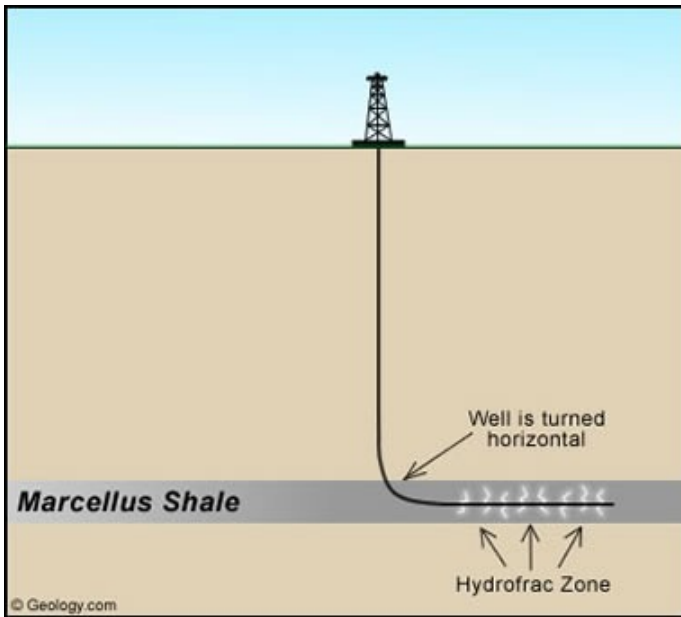
Proponents of fracking claim it would bolster the poorer areas of Pennsylvania and is already bringing in many jobs and money to this region. They say the risks of fracking are relatively small based on a long fairly good track record. They also point out that all other significant sources of energy have known worse affects on the environment during extraction and far worse affects when consuming the energy. They also point out that natural gas releases less CO₂ in use than oil and comes from here rather than countries that tend not to like ours.

Opponents of fracking claim the natural gas can break through unknown pathways and get into drinking water or that the fracking materials can leak into the environment. Some

(Continued on page 2)

Education is the ability to listen to almost anything without losing your temper or your self-confidence.

~ Robert Frost (1874 - 1963)



also say there is a current scam from proponents to cover up low yields of wells already tapping the Marcellus shale. Pennsylvania, they claim, has too little regulation of this industry.

Much is at stake - do we say no to what could be a cheaper, cleaner source of energy that keeps the dollars here? - or do we err on the side of the environment and wait for more information? Come to this meeting to learn about this controversial energy source.

In his ten years at the Academy of Natural Sciences Roland Wall has held several positions within the Academy's Patrick Center for Environmental Research including science writer, coordinator of the Environmental Associates of the Academy, and science policy specialist. His work has focused on linking the Academy's scientific expertise with public policy and communication. In that role he was writer and publisher of the Academy's *Know Your Environment* series, initiated and managed the Town Square Program, and, most recently, developed and directs the Center for Environmental Policy. He holds a B.A. in Political Science and an M.S. in Entomology and Applied Ecology, both from the University of Delaware. Prior to switching careers, Roland was a clinical case manager and administrator for a social service organization. Weekends usually find him in a kayak trying not to capsize."

Note that Environmental Center activities are generally listed in the PhACT Calendar. See November 17, **The Delaware River and Bay: Rebirth of a Natural Treasure (An Urban Sustainability Forum)**

www.ansp.org/environmental/

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Online PhACT Discussion Board

PhACT does have an online discussion board facility where skeptics, critical thinkers, and others can discuss whatever might be on their minds.

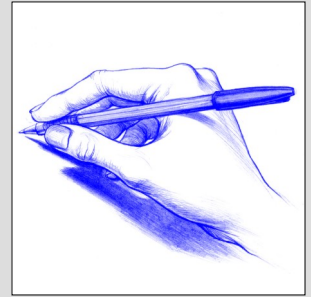
All are invited to participate in discussion of any topic that might be on your mind. You need not be a PhACT member. The discussion board may be found at: <http://phactforum.org/>

Letters to the Editor and other Correspondence

are always desired for inclusion in Phactum. If you have thoughts on some matter why not write down those thoughts and share with other Phactum readers? Writing is a great way to hone and refine critical thinking skills.

Articles, poetry, Letters and Rants to the Editor, suggestions to improve Phactum, items for the calendar, and other matters of interest are wanted for Phactum. Almost all topics are welcome - no partisan politics please.

Send submissions to phactpublicity@aol.com



Correction

In the October edition of Phactum the Editor did foully mis-identify our speaker, Robert Hicks, as the Curator of the Mutter Museum when in fact Dr. Hicks is the Director. We trust that this blunder resulted in no reduction in rank or pay.

Letters to the Editor

Editor: On Page 4 of the October 2011 Phactum, Howard J. Wilk from Philadelphia wrote about an oft-quoted "If I'm not in the obits, I get up" quip. He mentioned it might have gotten started by Harry Hershfield and then went on to say he didn't know who Hershfield was.



Harry Hershfield
(1885 - 1974)

I think Hershfield was a wit of the 1940's. I have some old-time radio tapes, including a few episodes of "Can You Top This." The episodes I have on tape are from 1947. Three leading wits of the day told jokes around a theme suggested by a listener who would write in to the show to have an even better-known wit (Peter Donald -- not that I would have heard of him otherwise) read their joke about a topic. Depending on how funny the listening audience thought the initial joke was, if any of the 3 wits could top the

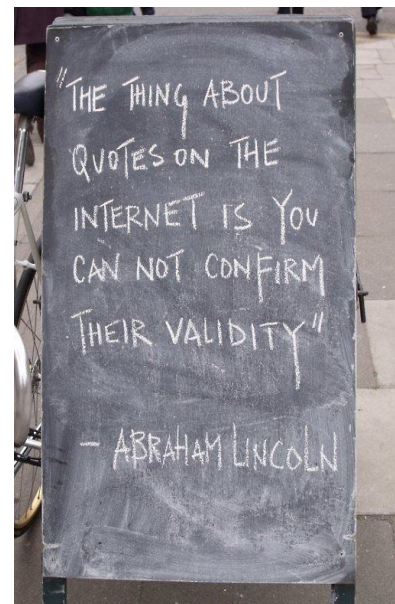
"laugh meter" vs the initial reading of the "laugh meter," the person who sent in the joke wouldn't win additional money, but for every wit who could NOT top the laugh response of the initial joke, the person would win additional money. (It started out as \$10 just for having the joke told on the air, and for every wit who did not top it, there would be an additional \$5, resulting in a potential \$25 to the person who sent in the joke. In any event, they got a phonograph record of Peter Donald telling their joke, besides their \$10 to \$25.)

I was a baby during the war and too small to listen this show in 1947, so I never heard this show when it was new. I first heard the tapes in the 1980's or 1990's.

The 3 main contestants on the show were a jokester named Senator Ford (I assume he wasn't really a senator, but that his name, somehow, was "Senator"), another named HARRY HERSHFIELD, and another named Joe Laurie Jr.

While I know nothing about the "If I'm not in the obits" quip, at least I've explained who Harry Hershfield was. (I don't think any of my tapes contain the quip about obits, and I don't think anyone's topic was -- or could be twisted to be -- obituaries.)

Amy Lowenstein
Yardley, PA



Editor: Here is a link to a comic strip about evolution and politics, which I think our group would enjoy.

<http://www.gocomics.com/doonesbury/2011/09/28>

Amy Lowenstein
Yardley, PA

Editor: Here is my reply to Ed Gracely's letter on p. 4 of the October Phactum:

About the word "infectious" in Elizabeth Drinker's diary...although there was no germ theory, people were aware that some diseases were transferred from person to person or in environments where there were sick people. They just didn't know how this happened. Elizabeth Drinker owned a copy of Dr William Buchan's Domestic Medicine so she was aware of the following: "MANY diseases are infectious. Every person ought therefore, as far as he can, to avoid communication with the diseased....,Such as wait upon the sick in infectious diseases run very great hazard...If the disease be infectious. they will in all probability carry the contagion along with them." pp 99 -101.

Buchan's book was first published in 1769 and two years later there was a Philadelphia edition. Without knowing why, it seemed sensible to be safe rather than sorry.

Clarissa Dillon, Ph.D.

Haverford, PA

Editors note: see Domestic Medicine, page 6

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Various Ruminations

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

Onion DNA is white and looks like snot!!

Here is a fun science project for kids at the fund raising and education website of Children's Medical Research Institute (CMRI) in New South Wales, Australia. The article explains a method of extracting DNA strands from an onion. We are not sure exactly what 7th graders will constructively do with the acquired stuff but we suspect that plenty has been applied to door knobs.

[http://www.jeansforgenes.org.au/default.aspx?](http://www.jeansforgenes.org.au/default.aspx?ArticleID=146)

ArticleID=146 .

A more serious minded website for CMRI may be found at: <http://www.cmri.org.au/>

Homeopathic Snake

In the July/August 2011 Phactum we reported about a homeopathic product called Quietus, which, it is claimed, alleviates a hearing condition called tinnitus. It so happens that one of the ingredients of Quietus is a substance called *Lachesis Mutusis* which is a poison derived from the venom of the deadly bushmaster snake from South America.



It so happens that a man named Constantine Hering (1800 - 1880) donated a pickled bushmaster to the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia. Hering had extracted venom from that particular snake to create a homeopathic remedy called

Lachesis which is used by homeopaths for heart and circulatory ailments.

Constantine Hering attended University in Leipzig and there became acquainted with the writings of Samuel Hahnemann. He taught mathematics and natural philosophy at the university in Dresden, then venturing on a scientific expedition to Surinam he developed *Lachesis*. Hering emigrated to Philadelphia in 1833. He had a keen interest in curing snake bite and hydrophobia.

Hering eventually became a major force in homeopathic circles in Philadelphia and in 1848 was co-founder of the Philadelphia College of Homeopathy located on Broad Street at Vine. The college was the worlds first college of its kind and Hering became known as the "Father of Homeopathy in America" having refined the principles set forth by Samuel Hahnemann and devising his own philosophy of medical cure known as Hering's Law of Cure.

Hering's Law of Cure

- ◆ Symptoms of a chronic disease disappear in definite order, going in reverse and taking about one month for every year the symptoms have been present.
- ◆ Symptoms move from the more vital organs to the less vital organs; from the interior of the body towards the skin.
- ◆ Symptoms move from the top of the body downward.

The college was eventually renamed Hahnemann Hospital and despite the name the hospital has been a thoroughly modern medical facility for many years. It is still known as Hahnemann Hospital but is now part of the Drexel University Health System. In fact, the Academy of Natural Sciences has also recently become part of Drexel University, so in a rather circuitous way that snake has slithered back to his original owner. He and Mario, the Drexel Dragon, can have a good frolic.

<http://www.ansp.org/200/stories/homeopathic-snake>

On the matter of the recent Academy of Natural Sciences / Drexel University affiliation check out this web page: <http://www.ansp.org/about/academy-drexel-affiliation.php>

Was America Founded as a Christian Nation? ...

was the topic of discussion at a recent lecture by John Fea, Professor of American History at Messiah College in Grantham, Pennsylvania. It also is the title of the book written by Professor Fea. The event was hosted by ARRTOP (American Revolution Roundtable of Philadelphia).

It quickly became apparent that the answer is rather complicated with few clear cut conclusions to that question. It is undeniable that in Colonial America Anglicans were the dominant sect, but other Protestant groups were present and powerful forces in forming what would eventually become the United States.

Professor Fea explained that at the time of ratification of the United States Constitution the framers deliberately chose to reject the notion that the U.S. Government was a Christian government or that those who served in government must acknowledge Christianity or even believe in God. It was a hot controversy but did have an escape hatch in the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution which states "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people." Thus, the Constitution in Article VI does not give the national government the right to demand a religious test for office holders and in the First Amendment prohibits the establishment of a national religion. The Constitution is silent on these matters as they might be handled by the states.

At the time of ratification twelve of the thirteen colonies had laws specifying that the right to vote was reserved for Protestants thus establishing Christian republics that re-

flected the values of a Christian people. The thirteenth colony, Virginia, conformed to the notions of the federal constitution.

Professor Fea's book is described below.

ARRTOP hosts lecturers on matters of American Revolution history every month. Meetings are free and open to the public. Their website is: arrtop.com

Risky Behavior

Get a load of this story from Tennessee, a state that is reluctant to recognize the Theory of Evolution.

It seems that the state legislature is considering a bill that will allow use of personal credit cards when purchasing state lottery tickets. No one in their right mind would borrow money at a high interest rate to buy a lottery ticket. But that's exactly what would happen if state lawmakers allow people to purchase lottery tickets using their credit cards.

Right now, lottery tickets can be bought using only cold cash. The new proposal, which also would allow debit cards, comes as lawmakers struggle to figure out how to generate more lottery money for college scholarships.

The lottery is a popular state program, passed by voters in 2002 and since then has raised more than \$2 billion to pay college tuition and for other education programs. Opponents feared it would spark widespread compulsive gambling but it has mainly been pretty innocent. But adding credit cards to the mix makes it a decidedly non-innocent game. Families are drowning under credit card debt, many with double-figure interest rates. The average Tennessee family owes between \$6,000 and \$7,000 on credit cards, in a state that has the nation's highest bankruptcy rate.

[http://www.tennessean.com/article/20111106/](http://www.tennessean.com/article/20111106/COLUMNIST0101/311060017/Gail-Kerr-Credit-cards-sales-lotto-tickets-risky-gamble)

[COLUMNIST0101/311060017/Gail-](http://www.tennessean.com/article/20111106/COLUMNIST0101/311060017/Gail-Kerr-Credit-cards-sales-lotto-tickets-risky-gamble)

[Kerr-Credit-cards-sales-lotto-tickets-risky-gamble](http://www.tennessean.com/article/20111106/COLUMNIST0101/311060017/Gail-Kerr-Credit-cards-sales-lotto-tickets-risky-gamble)

Was America Founded As a Christian Nation?:

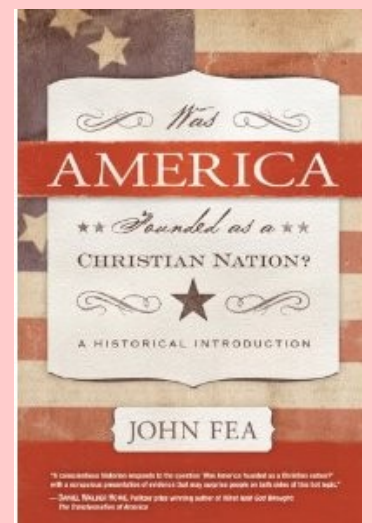
A Historical Introduction

by John Fea

Publisher: Westminster John Knox Press (February 23, 2011)

Paperback: 304 pages, ISBN-10: 0664235042 ISBN-13: 978-0664235048

John Fea offers an even-handed primer on whether America was founded to be a Christian nation, as many evangelicals assert, or a secular state, as others contend. He approaches the title's question from a historical perspective, helping readers see past the emotional rhetoric of today to the recorded facts of our past. Readers on both sides of the issues will appreciate that this book occupies a middle ground, noting the good points and the less-nuanced arguments of both sides and leading us always back to the primary sources that our shared American history comprises.



A Great Mystery Solved

Well ... not all that great a mystery ... but it has been solved.

The Reporter, a newspaper in Cape May, NJ, had a front page article concerning PhACT member Bruce Clark's photographic analysis of the infamous Bill Dock photo. Bill Dock, if you recall, was the hero who held off the Martian attack during Orson Welles Mercury Theatre radio production of "War of the Worlds" in 1938. For more about this bit of history see the article by Don Nigrone on page 12 of the January 2011 Phactum.

<http://www.thereporteronline.com/articles/2011/10/30/news/doc4eacb77fe80b5744260337.txt>

Hopefully, a much more detailed account of Bruce's research into the photo will someday appear in Phactum!



exists outside our planet, or that an extraterrestrial presence has contacted or engaged any member of the human race," Phil Larson from the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy reported on the WhiteHouse.gov website. "In addition, there is no credible information to suggest that any evidence is being hidden from the public's eye."

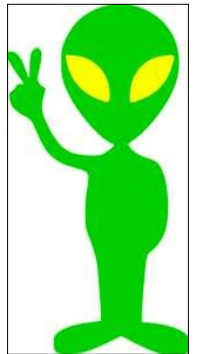
http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/45176460/ns/technology_and_science

The White House response to this petition is at:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/petitions#!/response/searching-et-no-evidence-yet>

We are pleased that the White House thinks that no space aliens are running around our planet, but it appears that one of the petitioners, Paradigm Research Group, does not agree and will submit a new petition. Unfortunately the rules for petitions to the White House have changed and a new threshold of 25,000 signatures will replace the current requirement of 5,000. The Paradigm Research Group website may be found at:

<http://paradigmresearchgroup.org/main.html>



Domestic Medicine

Domestic Medicine was first published in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1769. It was meant to be a household guide to the diagnosis and treatment of various diseases written in language accessible to the layman. This book was well received and had a long life span being occasionally reprinted by a variety of printers until its last printing in Boston in 1913.

The principal author of this work was William Buchan, M.D., born in Ancrum, Roxburghshire, Scotland in 1729. He was educated at a local grammar school and eventually attended University of Edinburgh with the intent of entering the Ministry. Buchan's interests changed and he transferred his studies to medicine dropping theological studies. Buchan's philosophy in writing this book was to condemn the use of Latin that supposedly blurred the distinction between quacks and qualified physicians.

In the two previous editions of Phactum there has been some brief discussion of the concept of "infection" as it might have been understood in the 18th Century. In Chapter IX of *Domestic Medicine* Buchan, although lacking a proven "germ theory", did write on the nature of infection. On the matter of those in attendance of the sick he had this to say:

SUCH as wait upon the sick in infectious diseases, run very great hazard. They should stuff their noses with tobacco, or some other strong smelling herb, as rue, tansy, or the like. They ought likewise to keep the patient very clean, to sprinkle the room where he lies with vinegar, or other strong acids, frequently to admit a stream of fresh air into it, and to avoid the smell

White House: There Is No UFO Cover-up

Get a load of this! MSNBC has reported the White House has responded to two petitions asking the U.S. government to acknowledge formally that aliens have visited Earth and to disclose any intentional withholding of government interactions with extraterrestrial beings.



"The U.S. government has no evidence that any life

of his breath as much as they can. They ought never to go into company without having changed their clothes and washed their hands; otherwise, if the disease be infectious, they will in all probability carry the contagion along with them. There is reason to believe that infection is often conveyed from one place to another by the carelessness of the faculty themselves. Many physicians affect a familiar way of sitting upon the patient's bedside, and holding his arm for a considerable time. If the patient has the small-pox, or any other infectious disease, there is no doubt but the doctor's hands, clothes, &c. will carry away some of the infection; and, if he goes directly to visit another patient without washing his hands, changing his clothes, or being exposed to the open air, which is not seldom the case, is it any wonder that he should carry the disease along with him? Physicians not only endanger others, but also themselves, by this practice. And, indeed, they sometimes suffer for their want of care.

Buchan did touch upon the psychological aspects of disease including Anger, Fear, Grief, Love, and Religion. Of religion he had this to say:

Of Religious Melancholy.

MANY persons of a religious turn of mind behave as if they thought it a crime to be cheerful. They imag-

ine the whole of religion consists in certain mortifications, or denying themselves the smallest indulgence, even of the most innocent amusements. A perpetual gloom hangs upon their countenances, while the deepest melancholy preys upon their minds. At length the fairest prospects vanish, every thing puts on a dismal appearance, and those very objects which ought to give delight afford nothing but disgust. Life itself becomes a burden, and the unhappy wretch, persuaded that no evil can equal what he feels, often puts an end to his own miserable existence.

IT is great pity that ever religion should be so far perverted, as to become the cause of those very evils which it is defined to cure. Nothing can be better calculated than True Religion, to raise and support the mind of its votaries under every affliction that can befall them. It teaches them, that even the sufferings of this life are preparatory to the happiness of the next; and that all who persist in a course of virtue shall at length arrive at complete felicity.

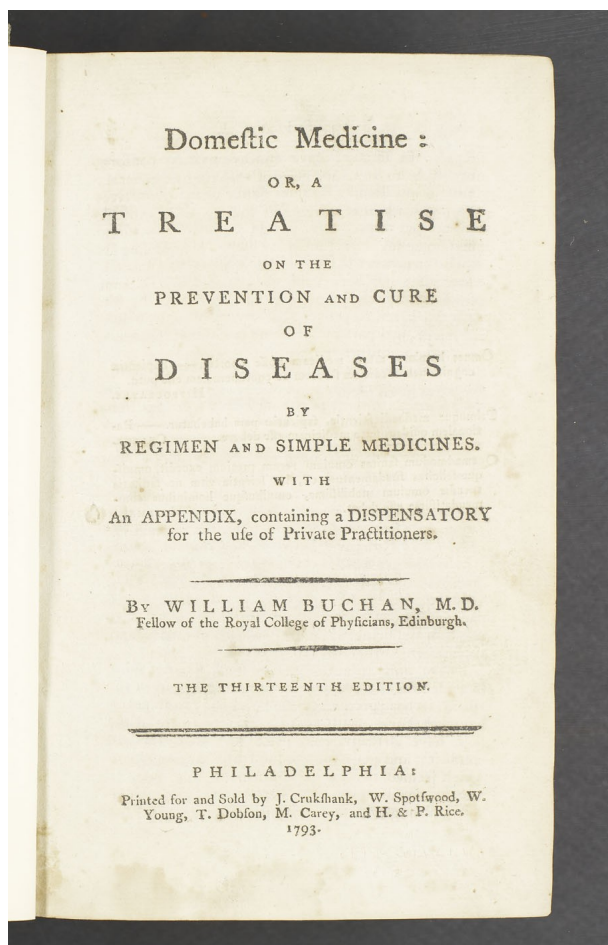
PERSONS whose business it is to recommend religion to others, should beware of dwelling too much on gloomy subjects. That peace and tranquillity of mind, which true religion is calculated to inspire, is a more powerful argument in its favour, than all the terrors that can be uttered. Terror may indeed deter men from outward acts of wickedness; but can never inspire them with that love of God, and real goodness of heart, in which alone true religion consist.

In Chapter L Buchan discusses surgery. He very quickly gets into the matter of bleeding as an important and often misunderstood surgery. He had this to say:

OF BLEEDING.

NO operation of surgery is so frequently necessary as bleeding; it ought therefore to be very generally understood. But though practiced by Midwives, Gardeners, Blacksmiths, &c. We have reason to believe that very few know when it is proper. Even physicians themselves have been so much the dupes of theory in this article, as to render it the subject of ridicule. It is, however, an operation of great importance, and must, when seasonably and properly performed, be of singular service to those in distress.

BLEEDING is proper at the beginning of all inflammatory fevers, as pleurisies, peripneumonies, &c. It is likewise proper in all topical inflammations, as those of the intestines, womb, bladder, stomach, kidneys, throat, eyes, &c. as also in the asthma, sciatic pains, coughs, head-achs, rheumatisms, the apoplexy, epilepsy, and bloody flux. After falls, blows, bruises, or any violent hurt received either externally or internally, bleeding is necessary. It is likewise necessary for persons who have had the misfortune to be stran-



gled, drowned, suffocated with foul air, the fumes of metal, or the like. In a word, whenever the vital motions have been suddenly stopt from any cause whatever, except in swoonings, occasioned by mere weakness or hysteric affections, it is proper to open a vein. But in all disorders proceeding from a relaxation of the solids and an impoverished state of the blood, as dropsies, cacochymies, &c. bleeding is improper.

Buchan goes on in Chapter L to discuss treatment of severe burns where he recommends bleeding:

WHEN the burn is violent, or has occasioned a high degree of inflammation, and there is reason to fear a gangrene or mortification, the same means must be used to prevent it as are recommended in other violent inflammations. The patient, in this case, must live low, and drink freely of weak diluting liquors. He must likewise be bled, and have his body kept open. But if the burnt parts should become livid or black,

with other symptoms of mortification, it will be necessary to bathe them frequently with warm camphorated spirits of wine, tincture of myrrh, or other antiseptics, mixed with a decoction of the bark. In this case the bark must likewise be taken internally, and the patient's diet must be more generous.

William Buchan died in 1805 and was buried in Westminster Abbey. Three years later, in 1808 when the mutineers from the Bounty were discovered on Pitcairn Island, it was found that they had kept a copy of Buchan's book with them, wrapped in sail cloth.

Buchan's *Domestic Medicine* is a most interesting view of 18th Century medicine as understood in Europe and the American Colonies. It may be found online at:

<http://americanrevolution.org/medicine.html>

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



Calling all Nerds

Nerd Nite has arrived in Philadelphia. It is a rollicking science café type of event which has for the past several months been meeting at various bars and restaurants in Philadelphia. Philly Nerd Nite seems to have found a base at Frankford Hall, a nifty beer garden with good food and gourmet beer in the Northern Liberties area of Philadelphia.

The November meeting featured three short lectures with Q & A sessions; two by scientists and the third by an acupuncturist which would likely have been a bit of controversial red meat for many skeptics. Musical entertainment was by the Philadelphia String Quartet, a light hearted group of musicians:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hTsd8YBZMU>

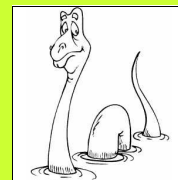
The December Nerd Nite will be at Frankford Hall but the exact date and program is not yet decided but will likely be on December 7th — Pearl Harbor Day.

The Philly Nerd Nite website is:

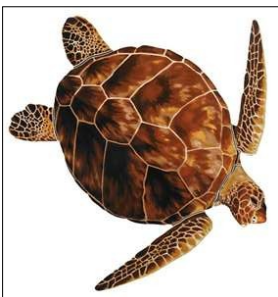
<http://philadelphia.nerdnite.com/updates/>

The Delaware Bay Sea Monster

By Don Nigroni



While the alleged monsters in Loch Ness, Nessie, and the Chesapeake Bay, Chessie, are world famous, a reported monster in the Delaware Bay, who should have surely been dubbed Delsea, has faded into obscurity. An article entitled **Queer Monster Caught** appeared in the April 30, 1896 issue of The Philadelphia Inquirer. This item stated that on



April 29, 1896 sturgeon fishermen had killed a strange creature off Pennsgrove, New Jersey and towed it to shore. The beast seemed "to be a cross between a monster turtle and a sea serpent." The article noted that:

The monster measures fifteen feet in length, two feet and a half around the body and weighs

about 600 pounds. It is a light steel gray in color and has a coat of bony plates covering the entire body. The head is over two feet long and looks like the head of the rhinoceros, having a bone growing from the nose. The large mouth is full of long curved teeth. The eyes are small and are set well up on the head. The pupils of the eyes are elongated like a shark's eyes. The body tapers to the tail, which is very long and broad.

The beast was "supposed to be the same monster that has been seen in the Delaware Bay every spring for the last ten or twelve years, making trips up the river as far as Fort Delaware."

According to an August 17, 1896 article entitled King of Turtles in The Boston Daily Globe, Boston, Massachusetts, a similar incident occurred shortly afterwards off Provincetown, Massachusetts, on August 16, 1896. The wheelman and lookout of the fishing schooner Minnehaha shouted, "The sea serpent!" The wheelman had seen "a long, black, huge snakelike head thrust four or five feet out of the water". The creature was "undulating in the water". The thought of capturing "the sea serpent that has kept the North shore in a state bordering on nervous prostration all summer" filled skipper "Dick" Horton with dreams "of imperishable renown". However, when trying to capture it, they realized that it was really just "a gigantic sea turtle". The description in the newspaper was:

He measures 12 feet from the tip of his nose to his tail, 10 feet from tip to tip of his flippers and nearly seven feet around the largest part of his body. The wisecracks about the wharf estimated his weight at very nearly a ton.

The article mentioned that the turtle was "known as a loggerhead, is black on top and black and white mottled underneath the body and fins."

Roger Conant and Joseph T. Collins in A Field Guide to Reptiles & Amphibians: Eastern and Central North America (1991) noted that loggerheads are reddish brown, reach 31 to 45 inches long, record over 48 inches, and can weigh 170 to 350 pounds, record over 500 pounds. They noted that measurements and weights for the larger sea turtles "are often unreliable because of the difficulty of lifting and maneuvering such huge animals" and that "estimates which, although sheer guesswork when made, get mellowed by time and repetition and are finally accepted as truth." The range of loggerheads includes the Western Atlantic and they nest "regularly north to the beaches of the Carolinas and (rarely) to Md. and N.J."

According to Conant and Collins, the leatherback sea turtle reaches 53 to 70 inches long, record 74 ¼ inches, and can weigh 650 to 1,200 pounds, record 2,016 pounds, the largest of all extant turtles. However, the leatherback's shell, unlike the loggerhead's shell of bony plates, is covered by skin. The loggerhead's small eyes are set high on its head. Its eyelids are tilted which could create the impression that its pupils "are elongated like a shark's eyes." It has a large horny beak but no teeth. Nonetheless, James R. Spotila in Sea Turtles (2004) stated that a sea turtle has "hundreds of long, closely packed, cone-shaped structures called papillae" lining its esophagus which "are about an inch long" and "point backward toward the stomach." Adult male sea turtles, unlike females, have long tails, but they are not broad. However, Spotila noted that the flippers of sea turtles "are vulnerable to attack by predators, and it is not unusual to find a turtle with a flipper wound or a missing limb." The lone rear flipper of a loggerhead could be mistaken for a tail that is not only very long but also broad.

Thus, fishermen apparently did think that they saw sea monsters off Cape Cod and in the Delaware Bay in the late 19th century but the critters seen were evidently just enormous loggerhead sea turtles.

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.

PhACT Meeting Report - October 15, 2011

By Karl Weiss

Karl Weiss is a student of Dr. David Cattell at Philadelphia Community College

American Civil War Medicine

Presented by Robert D. Hicks, Ph.D., Director of the Mutter Museum at the College of Physicians of Philadelphia.

In WWII medicinal practices from the civil war were still in use. This emphasizes the fact of the closeness and relevancy of the occurrences of the Civil War. At the start of the war both sides were ill-prepared medicinally for combat. A war of such magnitude was just simply a new phenomenon. However, when comparing both sides, the North was much more capable of treating the infirm.

During the war much data was compiled in many fields of medicine, ergo the creation of the Mutter Museum (founded in 1863). It was originally a highly revered medical data base, as time passed and online sources were established it became one of the best historical medical libraries in the United States.

From the civil war sprouted many systems of healthcare. From field stations and fixed bed health care to long term care facilities. Institutions such as the Mower General Hospital were established due to the magnitude of the infirm. A trend that started to become popular during the time was that in many hospitals they not only tended to the wounds of an individual; they created an emotionally gratifying environment, in some cases even creating art programs for patients. In the long term care facilities they had special diet kitchens as well as the creation of the triage management system. During the war there was no general method of ambulating wounded soldiers. People were evacuated on trains and sometimes just left in hopes of coming back for the wounded or dead. Near the end of the war this process was being refined but it wasn't until WWII that it was streamlined.

Another major accomplishment of the civil war with respect to medicine was the introduction of women into the hospitals to take on many roles, mostly nursing positions. Women also played an important role in the creation of relief agencies.

Because of the war several advances were made in medicine. Surgical procedures were made more efficient, orthopedic medicine was instituted, prosthesis, and nerve injury treatment as well as neuroscience were developed. What was once one general field began to branch into a variety of specialties. In fact nerve injuries were often sent to a specialized care facility in Philadelphia known as Turner's Lane Hospital. Documentation of injuries during the war was taken very seriously. This was done for the expansion of the field and for teaching purposes. Scientific data was finally being accumulated. Surgeon General William A Hammond played a key roll in the bureaucratic assembly of the data.

Some important names of surgeons who played a key roll in the expansion of medical science included Silas Weir

Mitchell MD, a renowned neurologist and author of a clever short story, combining physiological and psychological problems, entitled "The Case of George Dedlow". Another giant of the time was William W. Keen, one of the first brain surgeons in the United States. He also saw Franklin Delano Roosevelt when his paralytic illness struck, and worked closely with six American presidents.

Some of the medical tools included in the civil war and sometimes reused in WWII were the thermoelectric disks used for measuring skin surface temperature and a hand cranked electric therapy "nerve vactivator", which produced AC and DC currents. Interestingly, some drugs that were used as sedatives included acetylene and morphine.

Many nerve-related ailments were discovered during the civil war. Some of these include Causalgia and Phantom Limbs. In fact, during the compilation of data many surveyed soldiers were asked to report their status much later in their lives. Some of the documented cases included a certain Mr. H who reported in a letter that he suffered from Phantom Limb experiences in his sleep. He reported that the pain he dreamt emanating from amputated parts of his body were strong enough to wake him.

Although the pains of our Civil War still haunt Americans to this day, many leaps in science were accomplished in the process.

Dr. William Williams Keen (1837 - 1932)

Keen was born in Philadelphia in 1837. He attended Philadelphia Central High School and studied at Brown University, where he graduated in 1859. He graduated in medicine in Philadelphia at Jefferson Medical College in 1862. Keen was a member of the Jefferson Medical College faculty from 1866 to 1907.



Keen gained worldwide attention for his innovative procedures including drainage of the cerebral ventricles and several successful removals of large brain tumors. Keen is also known for having assisted in the now famous secret operation performed on then-President Grover Cleveland in 1893. While the operation was initially undertaken without the public's knowledge, in 1917 Keen wrote a detailed description of the procedures used on Cleveland.

After his 1907 retirement from Jefferson, Keen remained active in the medical field as emeritus Professor of Surgery and as a spokesperson for various causes including the theory of evolution and the importance of animal experimentation.

William W. Keen died in Philadelphia in 1932 at the age of 95.

December 1 - 3, 2011

At American Philosophical Society



SYMPOSIUM December 1 - 3, 2011

**OF PICTURES & SPECIMENS:
Natural History in Post-Revolutionary and Restoration France**

Of Pictures & Specimens: Natural History in Post-Revolutionary and Restoration France is organized by the APS Museum in conjunction with its current exhibition, *Of Elephants & Roses: Encounters with French Natural History, 1790 – 1830*. It will bring together scholars from the United States and France. Included are presentations on topics related to natural history, from the role of artists and gardeners in botanical science and the representations of a giraffe's African keepers to the influence of natural history on Balzac's writing and on the birth of the social sciences. Participants bring interdisciplinary perspectives from material culture, the histories of art and science, visual studies, botany, decorative arts, and cultural history.

Of Pictures & Specimens is free of charge. Register online at <http://www.apsmuseum.org/registration/> on or before Monday, November 28, 2011.

All events will take place in the APS's Benjamin Franklin Hall, 427 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106.

To download a PDF flyer about the symposium, For more information and to register: [apsmuseum.org/symposium](http://www.apsmuseum.org/symposium)

"Can Minds Really Be Changed?"

by Paul Schlueter III

As Critical Thinkers, we are perhaps already primed to question certain sorts of claims. For many of us, we are also inclined to try to convince those who make such questionable claims that their presumptions, biases, misconceptions, or even outright ignorance have led them to misconstrue facts and/or reach erroneous conclusions. Recent science may indicate that such an approach is unlikely to succeed.

An article published in Mother Jones, May/June 2011, pp. 40-45, (and excerpted in The Week, May 20, 2011, pp. 48-49) details the findings of Leon Festinger, a psychologist at Stanford University. He and his colleagues infiltrated a religious cult called the Seekers, located near Chicago, and studied their particular brand of belief. They held that aliens would destroy the Earth on December 21, 1954.

When that event didn't happen as prophesied, Festinger hoped to observe how the cult's beliefs would adapt to disconfirmation by the facts. As it turned out, a leader of that group, Dorothy Martin (a student of Dianetics), "received" interstellar messages addressed to the group via "automatic writing" (a "psychic power" in which the receiver is "possessed" by an intellect which controls their writing hand for purposes of leaving messages.) The Seekers, by sitting in wait the whole night, had so pleased the aliens that the prophesied destruction of Earth was forestalled! Their faith had not been disproved by the lack of destruction; it was instead reinforced by the declaration that it had saved the Earth FROM destruction! This apparently convinced many members to actually become assertively evangelical as well.

More recently, we observed no evidence of the Rapture on 5/21/11, yet I've heard not one report of a true Christian's dissuasion. When questioned on the point, every Christian I know claims ignorance of the prophecy, or declares its source a "false prophet." Cherry picking prophecies after

they've come due is always an useful strategy!

According to the Mother Jones article, "We Can't Handle the Truth," by Chris Mooney, a human tendency called "motivated reasoning" lies behind such insistence upon finding justification to hold onto pre-established beliefs.

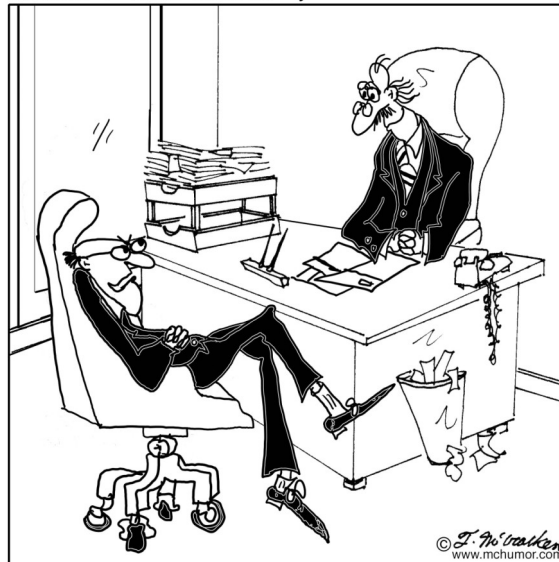
"...New discoveries in psychology and neuroscience ha[ve] further demonstrated how our preexisting beliefs, far more than any new facts, can skew our thoughts and even color what we consider our most dispassionate and logical conclusions," writes Mooney.

That's a rather scary proposition for this particular rationalist to consider. The sword of such a statement cuts both ways; not only are the credulous stubbornly foolish in refusing to accept reality, but perhaps we who are in possession of the facts are equally stubborn about clinging to our own a priori beliefs! I've often been forced to admit that I don't have actual expertise in such fields as evolutionary development (heck, I nearly failed High School Biology!), and that I have chosen to believe second-hand reports of the scientific findings of others in accepting that evolution is real and factual. Even in electronics or mechanics, where I have some professional level knowledge and

experience, there are aspects of underlying theory which I take on good faith from others with more specific knowledge. Yes, I used the "f-word".

Research seems to indicate that our brains respond to information first on an emotional level, which occurs within milliseconds. Our conscious reasoning about incoming information takes much longer, and it seems that our emotional biases channel or divert incoming information into our habitual and comforting frames of reference, be those scientific, religious, or something else entirely. It isn't hard to envision that a psychologically impaired person can take incoming sensory information and distort it into psychotic beliefs and reactions. Why, then, wouldn't it also be

MCHUMOR.com by T. McCracken



"We consult those with whom we agree,
which is why I rarely consult my conscience."

Cartoon by T. McCracken
<http://www.mchumor.com/>
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reasonable that our normal brain functions are pre-sorted through our psychological dispositions? After all, the line separating psychosis from healthy mentation is relatively arbitrary, located somewhere upon a spectrum of mental states, rather than within a dramatic "space" setting up distant distinctions between "normal" and "psychotic" states.

There are many shades of grey between black and white, and we all fit at least a few of the symptoms of various psychological disorders.

Political scientists have come to some interesting findings on why people react as they do to such messages as are set forward by political parties. If one is comfortable in a conservative Republican mindset, then some issues will be filtered through a conservative Republican mindset; these might include biases regarding tax cuts, welfare spending, the regulation of commerce, and/or the teaching of Evolution in Science classes at public schools. Liberal Democrats, on the other hand, will filter exactly the same incoming information through a substantially different set of mental filters, even before consciously processing it.

The MJ article states that Yale Law School professor Dan Kahan has found that "people's deep-seated views about morality, and about the way society should be ordered, strongly predict whom they consider to be a legitimate scientific expert in the first place." So, if I don't acknowledge the competence of your experts, and you don't acknowledge the competence of mine, yet we are each willing to accept what our own experts say without challenge, then when could we possibly find any common "factual" foundation upon which to build any sort of compromise?

Kahan's research has labeled people in four groups that overlap somewhat; "individualists," "communitarians," "hierarchical," and "egalitarian." He found that such groups are predictably divided on which fictitious "experts" they will trust, based on key phrases that trigger emotional reactions, such as "anthropogenic climate change," "nuclear waste storage," and so on. "...People rejected the validity of a scientific source because its conclusion contradicted their deeply held views," writes Mooney.

Science is not taken as an independent source; we tend to evaluate it in light of what we already WANT TO BELIEVE. So, some people will accept a study that "proves" the efficacy of intercessory prayer, while others will doubt its validity even before they actually review the report, evaluate its methodology, or analyze its evidence for themselves. I once showed a chart of the stages of radioactive decay of Uranium (published here in Phactum) to an educated technology professional, only to see him reject it out-of-hand because it looked like something that might suggest the authenticity of radiocarbon dating, which in turn might have challenged his personal beliefs in young Earth creationism. He was unwilling to consider ANY information on

radioactive decay, because he didn't want his cherished beliefs to be weakened by even that peripheral factual counter-indication.

The MJ article describes studies that involved the "birther" phenomenon; also, the question of whether Saddam Hussein possessed WMDs before the invasion; whether the Imam behind the Islamic Cultural Center near Ground Zero was a terrorist sympathizer; and, whether or not President Obama is a Muslim. Time and again, the results seem to indicate that study subjects' preexisting beliefs predict their willingness to accept new factual information (whether those facts support or contradict their beliefs, they tend to FOLLOW their beliefs in accepting or rejecting the facts they receive.)

Surprisingly, one finding indicates that, while Democrats are more likely to accept scientific findings if they are better educated than average, Republicans with better educations are more likely than average to REJECT scientific findings! This comes from analysis of a 2008 Pew survey on whether global warming is due to human causes or natural periodic swings.

I warn my fellow leftist liberals not to get their heads all swollen! Some of us have our own stupid belief, it seems. Where do you stand on the issue of childhood immunizations against Measles, Rubella and the Mumps, vs. their risk of possibly causing autism? It turns out that the Huffington Post (sympathetic to the cause) and Whole Foods (a hangout for like-minded believers) are magnets for Democrats who go

for the whole thimerosal controversy, even though that chemical has been removed from vaccines long ago, and the autism rate still continues to climb without its presence. "Vaccine deniers created their own partisan media, such as the website 'Age of Autism'," offering plenty of support

for true believers who seek it.

As Mooney begins to wrap up his case, he concludes, "If you want to make someone accept new evidence, make sure to present it to them in a context that doesn't trigger a defensive, emotional reaction." It just so happens that this advise coincides with PhACT's general advice that members should try to avoid confrontational argumentative tactics, but rather approach others with our views from a relatively neutral and non-oppositional position.

According to Mooney: "In other words, paradoxically, you don't lead with the facts in order to convince. You lead with the values - so as to give the facts a fighting chance."

**We would rather be ruined than changed;
We would rather die in our dread
Than climb the cross of the moment
And let our illusions die.**

~W.H. Auden

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"The Stages of Our Lives"

by Paul Schlueter III

It can be proposed that we progress through our lives in stages. These stages may not necessarily be identical for everyone, and there probably is no clear biological clock that registers the passage from one stage into the next. However, I think it's fair to say that most of us look back upon our lives (and plan for our futures) in distinct stages of various length.

I think the most common stage we use in day-to-day thought is that of decades. We live as children until we are ten, then as teens until we turn 20, then progress through our 30s, our 40s, etc. We come to identify ourselves by the decade in which we "came of age," and plan our lives such that we expect this or that to come along in our 50s, our 60s, and so on. Careers revolve around our decades, our lifestyle choices are (somewhat) dictated by social expectations based on our decades, and so it continues.

The critical aspect of thinking I'd like to apply here is to challenge the decade concept. Do decades REALLY best represent the stages we pass through in modern life, or would some other period serve more effectively?

Let's look at stages of 15 years. Almost everyone is comfortable with considering one a "youth" until around age 15. The next 15-year period would take us to our thirtieth birthday, the third such stage to our 45th, etc. If you figure a typical modern life to extend to 75 years, or to 90 years, then it breaks nicely into 5 or 6 stages, respectively. The third stage, 30-45, might set well with many people's thinking as the "prime" period of life, when one is established, has one's own family and career, and has not yet begun to feel the creaks and aches of age coming on. 45-60 might well be seen as the age of sitting atop one's world; the kids move out, you're a respected and experienced leader in the workplace, you earn what may be the highest wages of your life, and you seriously begin planning for the decline that will begin in earnest, after age 60. From 60-75, you'll ease into retirement, and begin to live off the stores of wealth and knowledge you've accumulated thus far. You're viewed as one living in the age of wisdom, yet you have not yet become "old" or dependent. Your health begins to make itself one of the primary issues of concern. From 75-90, you'll begin to wrap up life, you may again become dependent on others, and perhaps find yourself

largely home-bound; it marks an age in which you seem to mirror childhood in reverse, growing out of life instead of into it.

Another potential period is one of 20 years per stage. To consider the first twenty years your beginning, 20-40 as the age of rearing a family, 40-60 as that of filling out your career, and of 60-80 as the period of decline, does have a simplistic sort of appeal. The ages would be nice and long, but perhaps they are too long for practical use. Too much happens in twenty years, and you go through too many personal changes. I think we'd feel like we can't fit ourselves into 20-year ages very well. The period is handy for calculating human generations, but it doesn't seem to really fit into the natural divisions of human life in many other ways.

Actually, I think decades are too short to be useful, and 15-year stages seem to be just a bit too long. Let's split the difference (however arbitrary that may seem) and consider stages of 12 1/2 years each.

Look at childhood. Until one is about 12 1/2, one is physically immature, and it's not until that age that puberty and its hormonal changes really set in. That's a good biological marker there, wouldn't you say? The age of young adulthood (what better term for it?) would then be 12 1/2 to 25; in the field of cognitive development, the age of 25 has pretty much become a standard marker for having completed one's development. In childhood, one receives elementary education; during young adulthood, one receives secondary education, might continue with post-secondary education, experiments with and settles upon lifestyle choices and life partners, and takes on the first tentative jobs and apartments. Who do you know, of whom you could really say that they have self-knowledge and reliable maturity, until they have reached age 25? I suggest that the age of 25 marks the completion of life's second age.

From 25 to 37 1/2, one is quite likely to make a good parent, and to be a reliable provider for a family, while establishing oneself in their chosen/suited career field. For the most part, formal education has been completed, and now one begins to certainly LIVE one's life.

Father Time is not always a hard parent, and, though he tarries for none of his children, often lays his hand lightly upon those who have used him well; making them old men and women inexorably enough, but leaving their hearts and spirits young and in full vigour. With such people the grey head is but the impression of the old fellow's hand in giving them his blessing, and every wrinkle but a notch in the quiet calendar of a well-spent life. ~ Charles Dickens

At 37 1/2, you might not necessarily think you've passed any specific milestone in life, but I wonder if that's just an artifact of our habit of thinking in decades? Doesn't a man begin to lose his intensity and drive, and begin to appreciate the pleasures of a quiet evening with his spouse? Doesn't a woman begin to "feel her biological clock ticking" (if she's put off childbearing this long)? And if she's had kids already, doesn't she begin to appreciate that they are now becoming old enough to take on more and more of the responsibility for their own care? Don't the bodies of BOTH genders have a natural tendency to begin to soften and put on weight, right around 37 1/2? Don't afternoon naps turn out to be a luxury we appreciate, starting at around that age? I think our bodies tell us, in many ways, that we're entering the next stage of our lives at around this point, if we only take a moment to listen.

From 37 1/2 to age 50, the 4th stage of this life, we are at the peak of our careers, knowledgeable and experienced, yet still having the energy and stamina to follow through with our work. Yet, right around age 50, the creaks and aches begin to point out where we'll be encountering them for the remainder of our lives. Age 50 is a better point in life than either 40 or 60; I say this with the absolute certainty of someone just getting there himself, so feel free to believe me without question.

The 5th stage of this life, from age 50 to age 62 1/2, marks the wind down of one's working life. Children are out of the home, and probably done with college and living and supporting themselves. Well, hopefully... in these economic times, maybe the rule isn't holding so true! This is the age of one's greatest economic security; one still earns wages, and now has what is often called "disposable income" with which to indulge in some of the passions that were out of reach in earlier years. If you've planned appropriately, and luck has been with you, you finish paying off your home, and now you're squirreling away the retirement nest egg. Retirement at 62 1/2 - isn't that like almost a national standard, these days?

The stage from 62 1/2 to 75 fits very well into the modern, Western lifestyle as the age of retirement, during which one pursues leisurely hobbies, travels, enjoys the spoiling of grandchildren and often makes considerable contributions to the greater community. Someone in this age stage might well be making close acquaintance with their

doctor for the first time in their life, but overall, most people can report fairly good health and independence at least to the age of 75. Many people in this 6th stage of life would fit well into the roles of teachers, mentors, or counselors, whether dealing with career development, social skills, or life choices. Think of whom you've turned to in search of beneficent guidance your whole life - doesn't the mental image of a kindly, white-haired elder pop into your mind?

The declining age then becomes that of 75 to 87 1/2, and in all reasonable accuracy, doesn't that seem to fit? Insurance statistics will show that this is a tipping point on the life expectancy charts, and in the geriatrics field, the infirmities begin to show up as chronic issues. It's fairly uncommon to find people past the age of 87 who are still living fully-independent lives.

For those lucky enough to survive the first seven stages of life, the eighth (age 87 1/2 - 100) is almost inevitably an age of nursing and nearly constant medical intervention. Very few people have provided for their own lives to extend beyond this point, but our society still maintains a safety net for the support of the needs of those who do so. Only in the most unusual cases are such people

still actively involved in any sort of public life; most are undoubtedly home-bound and find it difficult to get around even there. Even the mental life of such extreme elders is often diminishing quickly, though there are of course many examples of people who remain sharp-witted to age 100, and even beyond.

I happen to think that counting the stages of our lives in increments of 12.5 years fits the biological and social experience most of us face today, more meaningfully than any of the other suggestions I've mentioned. Granted it's sure a lot tougher than just saying "I'm in my 50s," and because of that I doubt anyone in our society is likely to advocate changing the way we think about the stages of our lives. But honestly... doesn't it give you something to think about which you haven't really considered before? That's how I submit this essay, then; just for the fun of it!

Paul Schlueter III is serving Life in Prison in NE Pennsylvania. His supporters have created a website about him. www.jaylbird.org

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FOR YOU TO GET A JOB AND START THINKING
ABOUT YOUR FUTURE

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PHACT CALENDAR

PhACT Events

Dr. David Cattell, Chairman of the Physics Department of Community College of Philadelphia hosts meetings of PhACT - at 2:00 PM on the third Saturday of most months at Community College of Philadelphia.., Parking is easily available and costs \$4.00 for all day. Enter the college parking lot on 17th Street which is one way south bound. This meeting site is handicap accessible. **PhACT Meetings are Free and open to the public unless otherwise noted.**



Saturday, November 19, 2011 - The Fracking Controversy

Roland Wall, Director of the Center for Environmental Policy at the Academy of Natural Sciences, will discuss the controversial issue of “fracking”.

Hydraulic fracturing, more commonly known as “fracking” is a controversial way to free up natural gas from deep deposits of shale rock that appear in far more than half of the state of Pennsylvania. It involves drilling down about a mile (far below the water table) and then sideways as much as another mile. Highly pressurized water, sand, and various chemicals are injected into rock fractures causing the fractures to expand thus allowing embedded gas to seep out. For more information see Page 1.

Saturday, January 21, 2012 - TBA

Saturday, February 18, 2012 - TBA

Monday, November 7, 2011 at 7:00 PM in the Montgomery Auditorium, located in basement of the Free Library of Philadelphia 1901 Vine Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

“**Preachers who are not believers**” is a study published by Dr. Daniel Dennett and Linda LaScola. **The Freethought Society** is pleased to host **Linda LaScola** as our speaker. Her talk will highlight the findings of this small pilot study of five Protestant preachers. LaScola will discuss how the study was conceived and executed. LaScola will include a discussion of a continuing larger study which is currently in progress and information about “The Clergy Project” (a private, confidential website, supported by The Richard Dawkins Foundation). Dan Barker (Freedom From Religion Foundation Co-President) moderates the forum which provides an online meeting place for current and former nonbelieving clergy.

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

Free and open to the General Public.

Monday, November 7, and Wednesday, November 9, 2011, 7-9 pm both nights at The Academy of Natural Sciences, 1900 Benjamin Franklin Parkway, Philadelphia, PA 19103
www.ansp.org/environmental/

Millipedes, Moths, and Macro Photography

Doug Wechsler, the Academy’s Director of VIREO, shows you the basic



Azalea caterpillar, *Datana major*
Photo by Doug Wechsler/ ANSP

techniques of macro photography inside our amazing Butterflies! exhibit. This 2-part class features the Academy’s live butterflies and invertebrate collection from a different perspective...close-up!

\$45 members/ \$50 nonmembers, Maximum 12 participants

Teachers can earn two (2) Act 48 credits

Call 215-299-1060 to register.

Tuesday, November 8, 2011 to 1:00 PM - Brown Bag Lunch at the Chemical Heritage Foundation, 315 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106

Brendan Matz, “Wilbur Atwater, Respiration Calorimetry, and the Science of Nutrition in the United States”

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

Wednesday, November 9, 2011 at 7:00PM-9:00PM at the Franklin Institute

<http://www2.fi.edu/visitor-guide/events/special-events.php#climate>

Climate, changed: Extreme weather and the need to take action

For years, climate scientists have warned that climate change would bring more weather extremes, and this year our region has had life-altering extreme weather events. But it's not too late to take action to avoid worsening impacts of our changing climate, and it's not too early to take action to adapt to this new normal.

Join Dr. Heidi M. Cullen, Vice President for External Communications for Climate Central; Dr. Howard Kunreuther, James G. Dinan Professor; Professor of Decision Sciences & Public Policy and Co-Director Risk Management and Decision Processes Center at Wharton School; and the City of Philadelphia Director of Sustainability Katherine Gajewski at PennFuture's annual southeastern Pennsylvania Global Warming Conference, in partnership with The Franklin Institute.

Tickets are FREE for TFI Members and PennFuture Members

\$10 per person / \$5 for seniors & students

FOR TICKETS: <http://my.pennfuture.org/site/Calendar?id=108341&view=Detail>

Wednesday, November 9, 2011 | 6:30PM at College of Physicians of Philadelphia, 19 South Twenty-Second Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103, (215) 563-3737 x304

Comparative Responses to the Outbreak of Deadly Epidemics from the Revolutionary Era to Today

Bring Out Your Dead (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993) is a classic study of the 1793 yellow fever epidemic and the massive impact it left on Philadelphia. Join us as the three co-authors of the introduction (**Anne Coxe Toogood, Kenneth R. Foster, PhD, PE, and Mary F. Jenkins**) to

Bring Out Your Dead compare the response of the medical community to the 1793 yellow fever epidemic to that of contemporary responses to HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis A and B and other viruses. The speakers will set the social, demographic, geographic, and rudimentary medical context for the outbreak of this epidemic in 1793.

Joining the discussion will be College Fellow and Trustee **Patrick J. Brennan, MD, FCPP**, Chief Medical Officer for the Penn Health System, and an expert in the field of health care epidemiology and infection control, who will review contemporary strategies to handle outbreaks of deadly epidemics and other highly

infectious diseases.

Speakers:

- **Patrick J. Brennan, MD, FCPP**, Chief Medical Officer for the Penn Health System

- **Anne Coxe Toogood**, Park Historian of Independence National Historic Park

- **Kenneth R. Foster, PhD, PE**, Professor of Bioengineering, University of Pennsylvania

SOCRATES CAFE is moderated by: Lewis Mifsud, Ph.D., P.E., a member of PhACT and of The American Academy of Forensic Sciences. At 7:00 PM every Monday evening except holidays (on Tuesdays after a Monday holiday) at the Springfield Township Public Library (215-836-5300) at 1600 Papermill Mill Road, Wyndmoor, PA. 19038. This philosophical discussions group is free and open to the public. Join us and share your critical thinking, questions and opinions.



- **Mary F. Jenkins**, Supervisory Park Ranger and Supervisor of the Dolley Todd Madison House and Visitor Center at Independence National Historical Park

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

Free and Open to the Public. Register at: <http://www.collphyphil.org>

Wednesday, November 9, 2011 at the Franklin Institute.

The Rittenhouse Astronomical Society meets the second Wednesday of the month.

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

Wednesday, November 9th at 7:30 pm at Frankford Hall in Fishtown/Northern Liberties at 1210 Frankford Avenue.

Philadelphia Nerd Night.

Jay Parrish will speak on using imaging technology to uncover deception in fine art. **Caroline Ashurst** will talk about the physics and metaphysics of acupuncture. **Rocky Parker** will tell us how snakes make with the sex!

The **Philadelphia String Quartet** will perform.

<http://philadelphia.nerdnite.com/updates/>

Thursday, November 10, 2011 at 11am at 7:00 PM at Laurel Hill Cemetery, 3822 Ridge Avenue, Philadelphia, PA19132. 215-228-8200

<http://www.thelaurelhillemetery.org>

KIA: Honoring our Heroes Killed in Action - A Veterans' Day Tour

This tour will visit the final resting places of the heroes who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. Learn about the people who died in battle in the Revolutionary War, the Indian Wars, the War of 1812, the Mexican War, the Civil War, the Spanish American War, World War I, World War II, in Korea, and in Vietnam. Their heroic exploits will be relived and honored.

FREE

Thursday, November 10, 2011 - 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Chemical Heritage Foundation, 315 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106

This installment of the Joseph Priestley Society (JPS) lecture series will include a keynote address by **R. P. "Skip" Volante**, vice president and global leader, Process Chemistry, Merck Research Laboratories.

Schedule:

11:30 a.m. Networking reception

12:15 p.m. Lunch

1:00 p.m. Keynote speaker

2:00 p.m. Meeting adjourns

For more information about this event, please contact Laura Naden, advancement and events administrator, at 215.873.8276 or

lnaden@chemheritage.org

This meeting is Open to the Public but registration is required.

Fee: \$25.00 includes lunch.

<http://www.chemheritage.org>

Friday, November 11, 2011 -- Delaware Valley MENSA General Membership is generally on the 2nd Friday of the month. Check the

MENSA calendar at:

http://dvm.us.mensa.org/calendar.shtml#gm_meeting

Monday, November 14, 2011 at National Mechanics, 22 S. Third Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106

Science on Tap is a monthly gathering that features a brief, informal presentation by a scientist or other expert followed by lively conversation.

"Supermassive skeleton skillfully secured from South America"

Jason C. Poole, Manager of the Fossil Prep Lab at the Academy of Natural Sciences

Over the course of three field seasons in Argentina, a multi-organization team excavated a super-massive dinosaur fossil that is approximately 66 million years old. The fossil preparation process for its 400 bones began last August and continues today in the Academy's Fossil Prep Lab in partnership with Drexel University's Dr. Ken Lacovara.

In between sips of beer, Fossil Prep Lab Manager Jason C. Poole will talk about what a "dig" is like, how the fossils got to the Academy, and what happens next. His stories will surely remind you how much you REALLY wanted to be a paleontologist when you grew up. Presented by the Academy of Natural Sciences

For more information see: <http://www.chemheritage.org/visit/events/public-events/2011-09-12-sot.aspx>

Free and Open to the Public but you must be 21+

Tuesday, November 15, 2011 Noon to 1:00 PM - Brown Bag Lunch at the Chemical Heritage Foundation, 315 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106

Sarah Everts, "A History of Sweat Science, Followed by a Detour to Science behind the Berlin Wall"

Tuesday, November 15, 2011 at 7:30PM at Free Library of Philadelphia, 1901 Vine Street, 19103

Claire Tomalin | Charles Dickens: A Life

At his death in 1870, Charles Dickens was a beloved writer and public figure, having achieved much literary and popular success during his lifetime with tales like *The Adventures of Oliver Twist*, *Great Expectations*, and *A Christmas Carol*. Acclaimed biographer Claire Tomalin (*Thomas Hardy and Samuel Pepys: The Unequalled Self*) examines Charles Dickens's extraordinary life in her new book, painting the rich and complex portrait of a man who was seen as the public champion of household harmony as he tore his own family apart.



Charles Dickens
1812 - 1870

The Free Library's Rare Book Department is proud to be home to the largest collection of Charles Dickens's manuscripts, letters, and other ephemera outside the United Kingdom. The Free Library will be celebrating the bicentenary of Dickens's birth throughout 2012 with special events, literary

salons, and more!

FREE. No tickets required. For Info: 215-567-4341.

Wednesday, November 16, 2011 | 12:00n – 1:00PM at College of Physicians of Philadelphia, 19 South Twenty-Second Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103, (215) 563-3737 x304

Food & Thought: "The Arts & Government: Should They Be Cohabiting?"

With so much turmoil surrounding government support for the arts, is it wise for arts organizations to depend upon government for any sustainable support in the future? What are the risks of such a strategy and are they outweighed by the potential benefits? **Diane Dalto Woosnam, FCPP** will speak about the history of government support for the arts, the differing experiences of American and European arts organizations and the similar circumstances in which they find themselves, despite their very different relationships with government. Ms. Woosnam will also discuss the current situation of several arts organizations in Philadelphia, and share her thoughts and concerns about the future of support for the arts, whether from government, foundations or individuals.

Speaker: **Diane Dalto Woosnam, FCPP**, former Chairman of The Pennsylvania Council on the Arts

Cost \$12.50 includes lunch. Open to the Public. Register at: <http://www.collphyl.org>

Wednesday, November 16, 2011 at 6:00 pm at University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archeology and Anthropology

Film: Charlie Chan in Egypt, 1935

The Secret Cinema is known for presenting classic films of all genres-from B-films to mega-budget Hollywood classics to obscure shorts, always in 16mm film-never video! Jay Schwartz, founder of Secret Cinema, curates a special series of films specifically for the Penn Museum in 2011-2012. Join us for what promises to be unique adventures in foreign lands, and free popcorn!



Swedish-born Warner Oland stars in this evocative early entry in the long-lived Charlie Chan series, which finds the proverb-quoting Chinese sleuth travelling to Cairo (via airplane and mule). There he investigates missing ancient treasures and a murdered archeologist whose body is discovered inside a sarcophagus. The film effectively combines mystery and horror genre elements, and its plot about stolen antiquities landing in European museums touches on the then little-discussed subject of museum ethics. Conversely, the film is rich in dated depictions of race, most strikingly so in the character of Chan's slow-paced comic sidekick, played by notorious black character actor Stepin Fetchit. Film historian William K. Everson wrote that Charlie Chan in Egypt was "easily the best" in the Chan series: "Effective use of background music, good set design, and superb camerawork created some genuinely nightmarish sequences which are still chilling today." Oland did not use makeup to appear Asian, and attributed his appearance to Mongolian blood in his heritage, passed through his Russian mother. It was said that Chinese often mistook him for one of their own.

Free with Museum admission. Free with your PennCard.

Thursday, November 17, 2011 - Networking reception: 6–6:30 pm, Program: 6:30–8:30 pm at the Academy of Natural Sciences, 1900 Benjamin Franklin Parkway, Philadelphia, PA 19103

www.ansp.org/environmental/

The Delaware River and Bay: Rebirth of a Natural Treasure (An Urban Sustainability Forum)

Register at delawareriverbay.eventbrite.com/

At this Urban Sustainability Forum, hear an overview of the ecological history of the Delaware Estuary. Learn more about how human activity has threatened life in the Estuary, and find out about current efforts to enhance and rebuild its living resources.

Featuring: Jonathan H. Sharp, School of Marine Science and Policy, University of Delaware

More on the Delaware Estuary: Five million people, including the residents of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Camden, New Jersey; and Wilmington, Delaware, rely on the Delaware Estuary for drinking water, industry, food production, and recreation. The Estuary includes all of the Delaware Bay and the tidal reaches of the Delaware River. The area contains the largest freshwater port in the world, the second-largest petrochemical port, and five of the largest East Coast refineries, with over 42 million gallons of crude transported on the Delaware River daily.

Also a haven for a variety of plants and animals, the Estuary is home to more than 130 species of finfish, as well as clams, oysters, and crabs. Here you'll find the largest population of spawning horseshoe crabs in the world. The area also hosts the second largest concentration of migrating shorebirds in the Western Hemisphere and is a habitat for 15 different species of waterfowl.

Friday, November 18-20, 2011 - Philadelphia Science Fiction Society (PSFS) presents **PHILCON 2011** - Philadelphia's annual conference of Science Fiction. at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Cherry Hill NJ. On line registration is available at www.philcon.org.

PhACT Event

Saturday, November 19, 2011 at 2 PM --- Roland Wall, Director of the Center for Environmental Policy at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia will discuss the "Fracking Controversy". See Page 1 for more information.

Saturday, November 19, 2011 at 2pm at 7:00 PM at Laurel Hill Cemetery, 3822 Ridge Avenue, Philadelphia, PA19132. 215-228-8200 <http://www.thelaurehillcemetery.org>

Philanthropic Philadelphians: In the Spirit of Thanks and Giving

Those familiar with the Philadelphia region are likely to recognize the names of Rittenhouse, Clothier, Gratz and Elkins, among many others. What few realize, however, is that each of these places and institutions can be traced to the legacies of real people: individuals and families who made their fortunes in developing and industrializing the city of Philadelphia. Nonetheless, greatness can be—and indeed should be—measured in more ways than one.

While these early Philadelphians may most often be remembered for their keen business sense, unrivaled success and accumulated wealth, it is ultimately how they chose to utilize their influence and share their fortunes that measured their true greatness. They have surely earned their peaceful rest at Laurel Hill. Learn about the benevolent deeds of these do-gooders with big wallets and bigger hearts in Philanthropic Philadelphians, a walking tour.

Saturday, November 19, 2011 Remembrance Day in Gettysburg

Generals Meade & U.S. Regulars Monument Dedication Ceremonies during the Remembrance Day Observance.

Please meet at the US Regulars Monument on Hancock Ave. at 10:00am; then proceed to the Meade Equestrian Monument at 10:30am for traditional honor ceremonies and wreath layings.

To register, call: 215-848-7753 or Jerry McCormick gedwinmc@msn.com

Sunday, November 20, 2011 at 7:00 AM at Laurel Hill Cemetery, 3822 Ridge Avenue, Philadelphia, PA19132. 215-228-8200

<http://www.thelaurehillcemetery.org>

Laurel Hill Cemetery - Philadelphia Marathon Cheer Zone Join Laurel Hill Cemetery as they cheer on runners during the Philadelphia Marathon!

Our action-packed Cheer Zone, at the corner of Hunting Park Avenue and Kelly Drive, falls on the 17th and 23rd miles of the Marathon. At this prime location, spectators can experience the full impact of the Marathon atmosphere and demonstrate their support of their favorite runners! Enjoy music and complimentary refreshments as we cheer on the thousands of runners as they race up and back on Kelly Drive. Afterwards, explore the grounds, monuments and architecture of historic Laurel Hill, while enjoying the view from high above the race course.

To access the Cheer Zone, drive or walk through the main entrance of Laurel Hill at 3822 Ridge Avenue, Philadelphia. Free Parking is available inside the Cemetery. After parking, exit Laurel Hill's Hunting Park Avenue gate, and turn right onto Kelly Drive.
FREE. Free Parking

Monday, December 1 to Wednesday, December 3, 2011 at 8:00 PM at the American Philosophical Society -

APS Museum, 104 S. 5th Street, Philadelphia PA 19106

SYMPOSIUM Of Pictures & Specimens: Natural History in Post-Revolutionary and Restoration France

<http://www.amphilsoc.org/events/3097>

<http://www.apsmuseum.org/registration/>

See Page 11 for more details.

Saturday, December 3, 2011 at 2pm at Laurel Hill Cemetery, 3822

Ridge Avenue, Philadelphia, PA19132. 215-228-8200

<http://www.thelaurehillcemetery.org>

What are those Victorians up to now?

Close your eyes and imagine yourself on a December day, walking beneath the old, majestic trees of the Joseph Sim's estate, Laurel Hill, now the North section of the cemetery. You may see the Victorian Era as a time of propriety and manners and indeed, there are many floating cherubs and even a marriage bed. But that is where your walk on the tamer side ends. This tour explores unanswered questions, quirky places and strange stories including the Billy the Kid Outlaw Wars, 918 human skulls and plenty of marble women. Think about this old saying---The first generation makes the money, the second spends it and the third loses it. Did we mention the Taliban and Al-Qaida? If you think you know the Victorians, you have no idea.

Admission: \$15.00

Tuesday, December 6, 2011 Noon to 1:00 PM - Brown Bag Lunch at the Chemical Heritage Foundation, 315 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106

Helen Curry, "Breeding Resistance: Genetics Research and Efforts to Restore the American Chestnut Tree, 1950-2000"

Tuesday, December 6, 2011 at 7:30PM at the Free Library of Philadelphia, 1901 Vine Street, 19103

Paul Farmer | Haiti After the Earthquake

A recipient of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's Genius Award, Dr. Paul Farmer is the U.N. Deputy Special Envoy for Haiti and Chair of the Department of Global Health and Social Medicine at Harvard Medical School. He is also the co-founder of Partners In Health, a nonprofit organization that addresses the healthcare needs of the developing world by pioneering locally driven solutions. In Haiti After the Earthquake, Dr. Farmer—who has worked in Haiti for nearly 30 years—examines the devastating aftermath of the 2010 quake and explores the complex social issues that make the impoverished nation especially vulnerable to natural disaster.

FREE. No tickets required. For Info: 215-567-4341.

Tuesday, December 6, 2011 at 7:30PM at Free Library of Philadelphia, 1901 Vine Street, 19103
215-686-5322

Paul Farmer | Haiti After the Earthquake

A recipient of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's Genius Award, Dr. Paul Farmer is the U.N. Deputy Special Envoy for Haiti and Chair of the Department of Global Health and Social Medicine at Harvard Medical School. He is also the co-founder of Partners In Health, a nonprofit organization that addresses the healthcare needs of the developing world by pioneering locally driven solutions. In Haiti After the Earthquake, Dr. Farmer—who has worked in Haiti for nearly 30 years—examines the devastating aftermath of the 2010 quake and explores the complex social issues that make the impoverished nation especially vulnerable to natural disaster.

Cost: FREE

No tickets required. For Info: 215-567-4341.

December 7, 2011 at 06:00 PM at University of Pennsylvania Museum, 3260 South Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104

<http://www.penn.museum/events-calendar>

Great Riddles in Archaeology Lecture Series

Merlin's Magic Circles: Stonehenge and the use of the Preseli Bluestones

Stonehenge in central southern England is known the world over as an iconic symbol of Europe's prehistoric past. In this lecture Professor Timothy Darvill of Bournemouth University, UK, will show that while Stonehenge's origins as a ceremonial monument were conventional enough its later history was exceptional. Key to the transformation was the arrival of about 80 pillars of Bluestone rock brought a distance of around 250km from the Preseli Hills of southwest Wales to Salisbury Plain. But why



were these stones important? And what did they mean to Neolithic people? Using archaeological evidence from Stonehenge itself and from recent work in the Preseli Hills, and folklore and oral tradition dating back to the 13th century AD, a new picture of Stonehenge is emerging in which the stones themselves can be seen to have perceived magical properties connected with healing. Their re-use in later and ever more elaborate structures at Stonehenge show something of their power and significance and illustrate how the landscape of the Preseli Hills is constructed in microcosm at Stonehenge. People were attracted to the area from continental Europe, and what started out as a local focus became a celebrated place for prehistoric pilgrimage.

Admission: \$10 at the door; \$5 with advance registration; free for Penn Museum members with advance registration.

Wednesday, December 7, 2011 at 7:30 pm at Frankford Hall in Fishtown/Northern Liberties at 1210 Frankford Avenue.

Philadelphia Nerd Night. Be sure to check the website for this event.

<http://philadelphia.nerdnite.com/updates/>

Friday, December 9, 2011 -- Delaware Valley MENSA General Membership is generally on the 2nd Friday of the month. Check the MENSA calendar at:

http://dvm.us.mensa.org/calendar.shtml#gm_meeting

Sunday, December 11, 2011 at 2:00 pm at Laurel Hill Cemetery, 3822 Ridge Avenue, Philadelphia, PA19132. 215-228-8200

<http://www.thelaurehillcemetery.org>

Unearthing Laurel Hill: The Hot Spots and Storied Plots

An informative overview of Laurel Hill's long and colorful history, this tour will include all of the highlights, hot spots and notable stories that afford the cemetery its WOW factor. This is the ultimate tour for first-time visitors to Laurel Hill, and anyone else who likes beautiful art, stimulating history, and just enjoying life...even amongst the dead.

Admission: \$15.00

Monday, December 12, 2011 at National Mechanics, 22 S. Third Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106

Science on Tap is a monthly gathering that features a brief, informal presentation by a scientist or other expert followed by lively conversation.

Topic TBA

Presented by the Mütter Museum of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia

For more information see: <http://www.chemheritage.org/visit/events/public-events/2011-09-12-sot.aspx>

Free and Open to the Public but you must be 21+

Tuesday, December 13, 2011 Noon to 1:00 PM - Brown Bag Lunch at the Chemical Heritage Foundation, 315 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106

<http://www.chemheritage.org/visit/events/public-events/2011-12-13-bbl-raymundo.aspx>

J. Emmanuel Raymundo, "When Was Leprosy? The Case of the Culion Leper Colony in the U.S.-Occupied Philippines, 1902-1941"

Certain facts are known about leprosy: it is a bacterial disease that attacks nerve endings. Certain facts are known about leprosy in the U.S.-occupied Philippines during the first half of the 20th century. In 1902 the Philippines Commission Report recommended establishing a leper colony. In 1906 Culion, a verdant island in the northern tip of Palawan, took in its first 302 residents. These facts can be taken as the "start" of leprosy in the Philippines under U.S. colonial rule. For nearly 40 years Culion was at the experimental intersection of medical, scientific, and colonial civic governance. What remains unanswered, however, is when and how leprosy ended. How did a disease that was made a focus of public-health efforts on the part of U.S. colonial administrators disappear? What were the epidemiological, historical, and philosophical imperatives that contributed to the end of leprosy? Along with examining leprosy as medical evidence and as scientific data, this talk will orient leprosy around time.

J. Emmanuel Raymundo is an assistant professor of Critical Race Theory and Postcolonial Studies in the Department of Communication at

Tulane University. During the 2011-2012 academic year, he is the Sidney M. Edelstein Postdoctoral Fellow at the Chemical Heritage Foundation and the Department of History and Sociology of Science at the University of Pennsylvania. He previously served as a postdoctoral research associate and lecturer at the Center for African American Studies and Program in American Studies at Princeton University. He earned his Ph.D. from the Joint Program in American Studies and African American Studies at Yale University.

Free.

Tuesday, December 13, 2011 at 7:30 PM at the Free Library of Philadelphia, 1901 Vine Street, 19103

Edward J. Larson | An Empire of Ice: Scott, Shackleton, and the Heroic Age of Antarctic Science

Offering a fresh perspective on the Antarctic expeditions of the early



Roald Amundsen at the South Pole
December 14, 1911

20th century, Edward J. Larson's *An Empire of Ice* illuminates the stories of Robert F. Scott and Roald Amundsen by framing the two explorers' race to the South Pole within a larger scientific, social, and political context. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for his book, *Summer for the Gods: The Scopes Trial and America's Continuing Debate over Science and Religion*, Larson is currently the Hugh and Hazel Darling Chair in Law and a University Professor of History at Pepperdine

University. December 14, 2011 is the centenary of the first expedition to reach the geographic South Pole.

FREE. No tickets required. For Info: 215-567-4341

Wednesday, December 14, 2011 at the Franklin Institute.

The Rittenhouse Astronomical Society meets the second Wednesday of the month.

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

Wednesday, December 14, 2011 at 6:00 PM at the American Philosophical Society -

Benjamin Franklin Hall, 427 Chestnut St., Philadelphia 19106

Celebrate the Tenth Anniversary of the APS Museum with ADAM GOPNIK

The APS Museum celebrates its tenth anniversary this year with an evening lecture by art historian, cultural critic, and New Yorker writer Adam Gopnik. Fans of Gopnik's diverse contributions to the magazine know that his interests range from John Stuart Mill to Babar, and from Darwin to dogs. His lecture will link his new book, *The Table Comes First: Family, France and the Meaning of Food*, to the museum's exhibition, *Of Elephants and Roses*. The book's journey through gastronomic history begins with the same Post-Revolutionary period that is examined in the show. The lecture is at 6 p.m. followed by wine pairings with hors-d'oeuvres. The exhibition will be open for viewing beginning at 4:30 p.m.

Please RSVP via email to museum@amphilsoc.org

Wednesday, December 21, 2011 | 12:00n - 1:00PM at College of Physicians of Philadelphia, 19 South Twenty-Second Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103, (215) 563-3737 x304

Food & Thought: "Memoirs of a Retired Foundation Director, or Will They Still Call After They Take the Checkbook Away?"

Philadelphia has been described as a city whose civic and political decision-making takes place, not behind a few closed doors, but in "a thousand rooms - with few connecting doors." The metaphor speaks to the

city's many tight-knit neighborhoods with strong traditions, its many non-profit human service organizations, its myriad cultural organizations, and the diversity of advocacy organizations that shape the civic debate. These factors all influence the diverse, complex urban environment that we treasure, but they can also interfere with the creation of consensus on critical public issues. How can we, as citizens, contribute to the progress of the region?

Speaker: **Feather Houstoun, FCPP**, former President of the William Penn Foundation

Cost \$12.50 includes lunch. Open to the Public. Register at: <http://www.collphyphil.org>

Saturday, December 31, 2011 at Laurel Hill Cemetery will mark the 196th anniversary of the birth of General George G. Meade, heroic commander of the victorious Union army at the Battle of Gettysburg. The General Meade Society of Philadelphia will celebrate his birthday at Historic Laurel Hill Cemetery, 3822 Ridge Ave., Philadelphia where the noble hero is interred.

The military parade and ceremony will commence at 12 noon. Visitors and participants are asked to gather at the Gatehouse of Laurel Hill at 11:30AM. The parade of Civil War reenactment units, civilians in period attire, heritage groups, and participants will process to the final resting place of the Victor of Gettysburg and memorialize his services to the nation.

A champagne toast and reception will follow the program. A tour of the historic cemetery will be offered (weather permitting). This year marks the 21st anniversary of the Meade birthday celebration by the General Meade Society.

For directions, call: 215-228-8200 Laurel Hill Cemetery. For information and registration call Dr. Andy Waskie at 215-204-5452.

Monday, January 9, 2012 at National Mechanics, 22 S. Third Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106

Science on Tap is a monthly gathering that features a brief, informal presentation by a scientist or other expert followed by lively conversation.

Topic TBA

For more information see: <http://www.chemheritage.org/visit/events/public-events/2011-09-12-sot.aspx>

Free and Open to the Public but you must be 21+

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

Friday, January 13, 2012 -- Delaware Valley MENSA General Membership is generally on the 2nd Friday of the month. Check the MENSA calendar at: http://dvm.us.mensa.org/calendar.shtml#gm_meeting

Wednesday, January 19, 2012, 6:00 pm at University of Pennsylvania Museum, 3260 South Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104

<http://www.penn.museum/events-calendar>

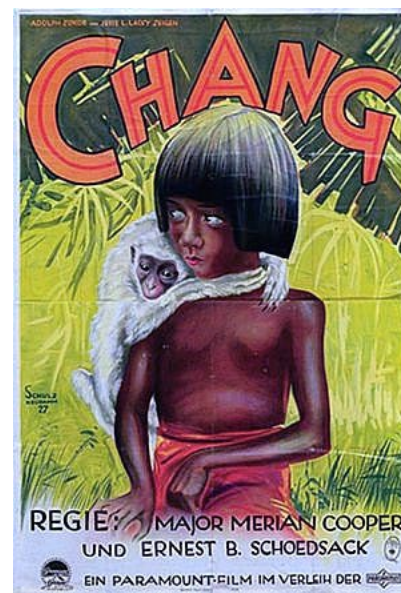
Film: **Chang: A Drama of the Wilderness, 1927**

The Secret Cinema is known for presenting classic films of all genres from B-films to mega-budget Hollywood classics to obscure shorts, always in 16mm film-never video! Jay Schwartz, founder of Secret Cinema, curates a special series of films specifically for the Penn Museum in 2011-2012. Join us for what promises to be unique adventures in foreign lands, and free popcorn!

Before they dreamed up that oversized ape, King Kong's creators Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack filmed this amazing semi-documentary film, which was, along with the team's earlier *Grass*, an early example of the adventure-exploration movie. *Chang* is not only the obvious prototype for their later masterpiece, *King Kong*, but a terrifically entertaining film in its own right. Shot entirely on location in Siam under dangerous conditions, the film tells the story of a farmer and his family who have settled a small patch of land on the edge of the jungle. Their

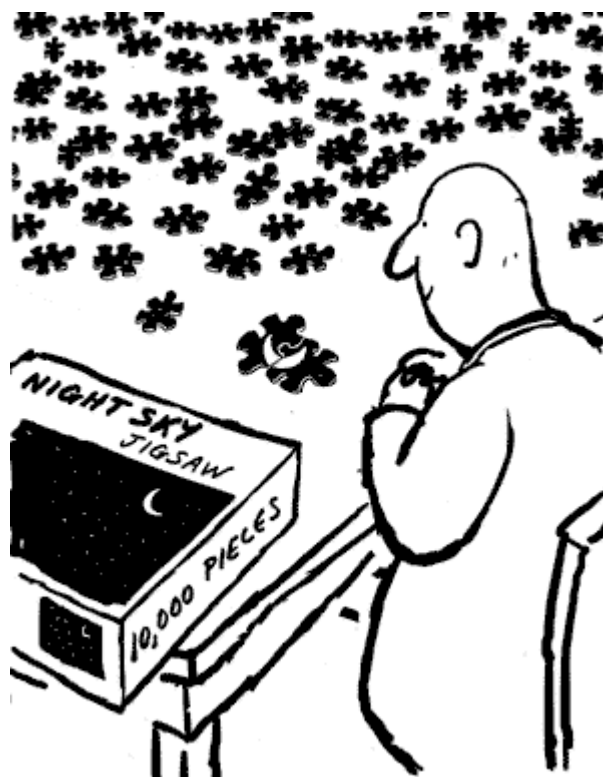
existence is a constant struggle against the many wild animals around them bear, tigers, and even changs! The climactic elephant stampede remains one of the most **exciting scenes in cinema history**.

Free with Museum admission.



PhACT Event

Saturday, January 21, 2011 at 2 PM --- PhACT Lecture TBA



Cartoon by Chris Madden
<http://www.chrismadden.co.uk>
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I support the aims of PhACT and would like to join/rejoin for the next year. The annual membership is \$15 and \$10 for students which includes e-mail delivery of Phactum.

If you wish **US Mail delivery annual membership is \$25.** Checks should be payable to **PhACT.**

Membership dues of \$ _____ enclosed to pay for _____ years of membership.

Donation of \$ _____ enclosed for additional support
Donation of \$ _____ dedicated for High School Science Fair prizes

Mail checks to:
PhACT
653 Garden Road
Glenside, PA 19038

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E_mail _____

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

PhACT's High School Science Fair Student Prize Funds

Prizes awarded in 2010	= \$ 300.00
Prizes awarded in 2011	= \$ 500.00
Leftover prize from 2011 prizes	= \$ 28.00
New donations	= \$ 28.00
Total 2012 Prize Fund	= \$ 56.00

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

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

Phactum is, in theory, distributed 6 times a year and is the main propaganda organ for the Philadelphia Association for Critical Thinking.

If you are not a supporting member/subscriber we invite you to become one. \$15 for a one year membership to PhACT with email Phactum subscription. \$25 for US Mail subscription. \$10 for students, email only. Donations are welcome.

Send letters of rebuttal, ideas, short essays, poetry, opinion pieces, complaints, and lavish praise to Ray Haupt, Phactum editor, at phactpublicity@aol.com.

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Phactum Editor, Ray Haupt
phactpublicity@aol.com

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