Starting with Beginnings

The Outset of Formative Ideas from Evolutionism to Creationism and Beyond:
How did we come to be and why do such topics remain important?

The Dance of Life, the Image of Humankind and the Metaphysics of Poetry:
Choreography kicks around the conception of things while artwork visualizes it and verse reaches for the stars

A “Common Experience” for a Campus and a Community:
San Diego State University celebrates the bicentennial of Charles Darwin's birth

Planting a Seed: National headquarters cultivates its green thumb
Why Evolution Is the Organizing Principle for Biology
Evolution ties together biology and integrates science.

BY MICHAEL ZIMMERMANN

Morality and the Irrationality of an Evolutionary Worldview
Biblical creationism provides a conception of right and wrong.

BY GEORGIA PURDUM AND JASON LISLE

When Evolution and Creationism Are on the American Docket, The Verdict Winds Up Far from Unanimous
What to do about evolution in public education has filled up case law.

BY PERRY A. ZIRKEL

Envisioning Origins
Artists create works to explore how humanity formed.

BY JOE HOUSTON
Society members who are at the top of their class or successful in and be challenged, and these qualities befit the bright, ambitious one of whose common denominators might best be summed up as attracts an intelligent and diverse audience, Phi Kappa Phi Forum

One way to do this is to be timely, to include material that has

In another permutation, the description of the magazine and how it
trends. And email addresses have been added in case readers want to
And the new Poetic Pause page restores poetry to the magazine through
of “Starting with Beginnings” such as takes that encompass fine art,
it’s important to remember that the spring 2009 issue is not intended to
more than one type of belief system against another. (Nor does the magazine
So consider the spring 2009 issue a platform on formations: starting with beginnings.
The editor, he has worked for the Houston Chronicle and the LongIsland News-Journal, among others, and his writing credits include the Houston Chronicle, Houston Press and Indianapolis Star, to name a few.

Rest assured, to make efforts to meet the standards its readers expect – and deserve.

The magazine strives for pieces that are compelling in what they say and in how they are written: “Starting with Beginnings” as the theme of the spring 2009 edition.

So consider the spring 2009 issue a platform on formations: starting with beginnings.

The editors of the spring 2009 issue have edited 250 letters to the editor, 60 of which appeared in the last year. Why? Because letters may be the best way to get a sense of how the magazine is doing.

Letters to the Editor

A theme that unites this spring 2009 issue of Phi Kappa Phi Forum is the notion of transition – of birth and rebirth, of examination and reconception, of conception and reformation. Starting with beginnings

I have not read Dr. Laura Lorentzen’s column, “Why We Must Teach Evolution in the Classroom,” but have read enough to know it is in the fall 2008 edition. I’m not a trained scientist but I’m still appalled at what I’m reading about evolution in the classroom.

To those who want intelligent design taught “side by side” with evolution, I would suggest that the two are not scientifically equivalent. Contrary to many assertions in the fall 2008 edition, evolution via natural selection and random variation is in fact scientific in that it has been observed and tested on the basis of evidence, not only in fossil records but even today in the resistance of bacteria to antibiotics, resistance of insects to DDT, and, most currently, resistance of HIV to antiviral drugs.

Phi Kappa Phi Forum publishes appropriately written letters to the editor every issue when submitted. Such letters should be no more than 500 words. We reserve the right to edit for content and length.

I am appalled at the selection of letters to the editor regarding Lorentzen’s column on teaching evolution. Not a single letter published demonstrated the slightest understanding of the scientific process. Was this really the best that you had to choose from? I hope that your future “examination” of creationism vs. evolution will at least point out that creationism/intelligent design has every opportunity to develop its own testable hypotheses, test them and submit the subsequent articles for peer review. They don’t, at least to date, because these are religious beliefs, not scientific thoughts. While they surely have a place in philosophy classes as well as comparative religious classes, at their current state of development, they have no place in the scientific world and should never be mentioned in any public schools.

Stanley K. Jackson

Editor’s note: to read all letters to the editor about evolution, creationism and related matters, visit http://www.phikappaphi.org/Web/Publications/Forum/letters-special

The existence of God is rightly beyond the scope of science.

Darwin, his theories and his writings have been controversial. Some people take issue with the notion that evolution is a scientific process. Others believe that evolution contradicts religious beliefs. I believe that both perspectives are valid, and both should be represented in public discourse.

The editor of the spring 2009 issue of Phi Kappa Phi Forum is Peter Szatmary. He is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame and has more than 15 years of experience in writing and editing. He has written for the New York Times, the Washington Post, and the Los Angeles Times, among other publications.

I am pleased to introduce Peter Szatmary, who will be joining us as the new editor of Phi Kappa Phi Forum. Peter has a strong background in journalism and editing, and he brings a fresh perspective to the magazine.

As the new editor, Peter will work closely with our editorial team to ensure that the magazine remains relevant and engaging to our readers. He will be responsible for selecting and editing content, and he will work with our cover designer to create visually appealing and engaging covers.

I would like to thank our current editor, Robert R. Rogow, for his dedication and hard work. Under his leadership, Phi Kappa Phi Forum has grown in scope and reach, and we have seen a significant increase in the number of letters to the editor.

Robert Rogow will be stepping down as editor of Phi Kappa Phi Forum at the end of the year, and I am excited to welcome Peter Szatmary to the team. I am confident that Peter will bring new energy and ideas to the magazine, and I look forward to seeing the continued growth and success of Phi Kappa Phi Forum.

President’s Page

Robert R. Rogow

Phi Kappa Phi Forum Spring 2009

Letters to the Editor

The Debate over Laura Lorentzen’s Summer 2008 Column Evolves

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Phi Kappa Phi Forum

American pride around the anniversary of the 9/11 attacks will be expressed. Numerous problems plague the United States. The country is mired in a recession; we’re fighting two wars; many nations have lost the kind of stability, the obesity epidemic continues to jeopardize our citizens, millions of Americans are unemployed and the care for the elderly has never been better. It is a time to reflect and honor those who have served our country.

The theme of the edition will be analytical, historical, philosophical, sociological, not ideological. Articles will span numerous disciplines.

For letters to the editor about other topics, visit http://phikappaphi.org/Web/Publications/Forum/letters.html

Phi Kappa Phi Forum

Phi Kappa Phi Forum Spring 2009

By Robert R. Rogow

With this issue of the Phi Kappa Phi Forum, we welcome our new editor Peter Szatmary. Pete joins the Phi Kappa Phi editorial staff from Southeast Texas. He has many years of experience as both a full-time journalist and freelance writer for print and online publications. As the new editor, he has worked for the Houston Chronicle and the LongIsland News-Journal, among others, and his writing credits include the Houston Chronicle, Houston Press and Indianapolis Star, to name a few.

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Why Evolution Is the Organizing Principle for Biology

BY MICHAEL ZIMMERMANN

It is commonly accepted that when Charles Darwin published On the Origin of Species in 1859, he did for humankind what Copernicus did for the earth when the astronomer published De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium (On the Revolutions of the Cephalic Spheres) in 1543.

Where Copernicus made it clear that our planet was not the center of the universe and, indeed, that the earth revolved around the sun, Darwin articulated a vision that showed humans to be a part of nature rather than above it.

In both cases, we lost what some saw as a privileged status. It was this repositioning that encouraged many opponents, both within the Church and beyond its walls, to attack the ideas promoted by these two great thinkers.

Darwin consolidated biology

But Darwin, by explaining the role of natural selection in evolution, did something even more important than defining humans as a part of nature and, accordingly, taking away our privileged status.

The scientific genius — born 200 years ago (birth Feb. 12, 1809; death: April 19, 1882) — created the central unifying principle of science rather than above it.

Darwin consolidated biology

But Darwin, by explaining the role of natural selection in evolution, did something even more important than defining humans as a part of nature and, accordingly, taking away our privileged status.

Natural selection, both as outlined by Darwin and as understood today, is simple and noncontroversial. It means that those organisms best able to acquire limited resources and convert them to offspring will leave the most descendents and the genes controlling their behavior will increase in frequency.

When the scientist and philosopher Thomas Huxley first heard about natural selection, he reportedly said, “How extremely stupid not to have thought of that!”

No wonder Huxley became known as Darwin’s Bulldog for his impassioned defense of Darwin’s ideas.

The evolution of evolution took a winding path

What is essential to remember, however, is that genes had not yet been discovered when Darwin first proposed the concept of natural selection. So it was not at all clear what was being passed along from successful parent to offspring in response to interactions with the environment. Nonetheless, Darwin’s insightful reasoning and the wealth of data he presented made for a compelling argument that some hereditary factor was being passed along.

Today, natural selection is regularly measured in both the field and the laboratory by assessing the frequency of alternative forms of genes (alleles). In fact, as important as natural selection is, today we realize that it is but one of a number of evolutionary mechanisms biologists measure and understand. Also of critical importance are mutation, migration, nonrandom mating and the effects of population size.

Again, the impact of all of these factors is regularly measured in both the field and the laboratory.

Evolution took on much of its modern shape in the first half of the 20th century when it became clear that all of these factors played a role in shaping the diversity of life on Earth. The term accepted for this robust, integrated vision of evolution was the “modern evolutionary synthesis” or neo-Darwinian theory, first articulated by Julian Huxley in his 1942 book entitled Evolution: The Modern Synthesis. Through this lens, evolution is defined incredibly simply as a change in allele frequencies in a population over time.

Although there is nothing controversial about this idea, it is a very powerful concept that allows scientists to explain and predict a great deal.

In his classic article entitled “Nothing in Biology Makes Sense Except in the Light of Evolution,” the great population geneticist and a primary architect of the modern evolutionary synthesis, Theodosius Dobzhansky, made this point succinctly: “Seen in the light of evolution, biology is, perhaps, intellectually the most satisfying and inspiring science. Without that light it becomes a pile of sundry facts — some of them interesting or curious but making no meaningful picture as a whole.”

Interestingly, Dobzhansky’s use of the evocative phrase “light of evolution” came out from a scientist but from a religious leader, the Jesuit priest, paleontologist, biologist and philosopher Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955).

Evolution is both theory and fact

This discussion raises the question of whether evolution is a fact or a theory. (See a related article on p. 20.) The National Academy of Sciences and the Institute of Medicine has answered this question in no uncertain terms in its 2008 book entitled Science, Evolution, and Creationism: “It is both. But that answer requires looking more deeply at the meanings of the words ‘theory’ and ‘fact.’”

As evolutionary biologist T. Ryan Gregory recently pointed out, the meaning of theory is “almost diametrically opposite in scientific vs. vernacular settings. This has been a source of both honest confusion and intentional obfuscation in discussions of science, especially with regard to evolution — which has, with the full thrust of equivocation, been misleadingly labeled as ‘just a theory’ by opponents for decades.”

Within the scientific community, a theory is an idea that has broad explanatory and predictive power that has been well supported by experimental and observational evidence. In common parlance, however, a theory is simply equivalent to a thought, any thought.

Within the scientific community, it takes a huge amount of evidence and documentation to permit an idea to rise to the level of theory. And evolutionary theory has reached this point because of the thousands of peer-reviewed manuscripts published each year testing and extending its framework.

In science, a fact, on the other hand, is an observation or measurement that can be expected to occur in the same manner repeatedly.

The venerable evolutionary biologist Stephen Jay Gould explained the situation straightforwardly:
Facts and theories are different things, not rungs in a hierarchy of increasing certainty. Facts are the world’s data. Theories are structures of ideas that explain and interpret facts. Facts do not go away when scientists debate rival theories to explain them. Evolutionists can lead a spiritual life in the sense of religion that is utterly unnecessary. Religion and evolution need not be mutually exclusive alternatives as some vocal advocates have asserted.

The terrible sad part of the ongoing attack on evolution in the name of increasing certainty, the world has seen what can happen when a society turns its back on evolution. The consequences of falsely pitting evolution against religion or a particular philosophical worldview can be great. Indeed, the world has seen what can happen when a society turns its back on evolution.

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Morality and the Irrationality of an Evolutionary Worldview

BY GEORGIA PURDOM AND JASON LISLE

M orality is a very difficult problem for the evolutionary worldview. This is not to say that evolutionists are somehow less moral than biblical creationists—or anyone else. Most evolutionists adhere to a moral code and believe in the concept of right and wrong. But evolutionists have no rational reason for this position. Thus, only creationists have a rational, logical and consistent reason for morality.

The foundation of morality

Even though most people do not acknowledge it, the morality and rules that most humans adhere to have their basis in God. God means by “good,” or by what standard does the unbeliever determine what counts as “good” (so that “evil” is accordingly defined or identified)? What are the presuppositions in terms of which the unbeliever makes any moral judgments whatsoever? Although unbelievers may classify actions as good or evil, they do not have an ultimate foundation for defining what is good and evil.

In fact, many evolutionists are quite clear that evolution does not provide a basis for morality. William Provine, evolutionist and biology professor at Cornell University, states in referring to the implications of Darwinism, “No ultimate foundations for ethics exist, no ultimate meaning in life exists, and free will is merely a human myth.” Thus, if evolution is true, then there can be no ultimate moral code that all people should adhere to.

And Nobel Laureate Steven Weinberg, evolutionist and physics professor at the University of Texas, states, “I think that part of the historical mission of science has been to teach us that we are not the playthings of supernatural intervention, that we can make our own way in the universe, and that we have to find our own sense of morality.”

Again, if morality is determined by our own sense, then a universal moral code that all people should follow cannot be justified.

Why murder is wrong

Muder is an obvious example of immoral behavior. The basis for this comes from Genesis 1:27, which states that human beings are made in God’s image and are different from the animals. Murder is condemned in Genesis 4, where God punishes the first murderer, Cain, for killing his brother Abel. God’s condemnation of murder is further established in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:13). Death and suffering were not part of God’s original creation as exhibited by God’s command to Adam and Eve and the animals to eat only plants (Genesis 1:29-30). God states in Genesis 1:31 that His creation was “very good.” Thus, morality simply does not make sense in an evolutionary universe. Bahnsen states, “Such indignation requires recourse to the absolute, unchanging, and good character of God in order to make philosophical sense.”

Majority rule or God’s rules?

Some evolutionists have claimed that morality is what the majority decides it to be. This shifts an unjustified opinion from one person to a group of people; it is arbitrary and leads to absurd conclusions. Bahnsen writes, “Perhaps the unbeliever takes “good” to be whatever evokes public approval. However, on that basis the statement, “The vast majority of the community heinly approved of and willingly joined in the evil deed,” could never make sense. The fact that a large number of people feel a certain way does not (or should not rationally) convince anybody that this feeling (about the goodness or evil of something) is correct.”

Hitler was able to convince a majority of his people that his actions were right, but that does not really make them right.

Without the biblical God and literal Genesis, right and wrong become personal preferences such that “murder is wrong” is equivalent to “blue is my favorite color.” Both are personal opinions and provide no basis for arguing with someone who has a different opinion.

But the question, logically speaking, is how the unbeliever can make sense of taking evil seriously — not simply as something inconvenient, or unpleasant, or contrary to his or her desires. What philosophy of value or morality can the unbeliever offer which will render it meaningful to condemn some atomistic as objectively evil? The moral indignation which is expressed by unbelievers when they encounter the wicked things...
The belief that God’s act of creating the universe and life on earth lasted billions of years. The days of creation mentioned in Genesis are interpreted as being vast (and possibly overlapping) ages. Some supporters believe that God may have used evolutionary processes to create living things, others deny this.

Gap theory: The belief that there is a great gap in time (billions of years) between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2. Billions of years ago, God created the earth and all living things (interpreted from Genesis 1:1 and sources outside of the Bible) that were subsequently destroyed by a catastrophic event and then re-created by God as described beginning in Genesis 1:2. God did not use evolutionary processes to create living things.

Framework hypothesis: The belief that the days in Genesis 1 are “a literary framework using evolutionary processes?” This belief is inconsistent with their own worldview.

Intelligent design: The belief that “certain features of the universe and life transcends the origin from simple prebiotic molecules.”

Evolution: The belief that “life is a continuous process of change over time, then how can people have any genuine choice in what they do? If the decisions people make are simply the result of evolutionary processes?”

The identity of the intelligent designer, the age of the earth and the role of evolutionary processes are not addressed in this belief system.

Origins: Some Key Belief Systems

BY GEORGE PURDOM AND JASON LISLE

Evolution: The belief that all life on earth has come about through descent with modification from a single-celled common ancestor over millions of years.

Biblical creation (or young-earth creation): The belief that Genesis is literal history based on the literal reading of the Bible and the days in Genesis 1 are “literary frameworks.”

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When Evolution and Creationism Are on the American Docket, the Verdict Winds up Far from Unanimous

The appropriateness of the subjects in the classroom has fueled an ongoing legal battle in our country for generations

BY PERRY A. ZIRKEL

The American dilemma over church-state issues and the more specific quandary over the role of evolution in public education are reflected in the crucible of the courts.

The story starts with the legal equivalent of the Bible: the Constitution. The first of the constitutional commandments, or the First of the Amendments, is the mandate that the government not establish a national religion and yet not infringe on either the free exercise of religion or freedom of expression. These First Amendment directives — the Establishment Clause, the Free Exercise Clause, and Freedom of Expression — initially applied to the federal government and, after the Fourteenth Amendment, to state governments and, thereby, the public schools.

The subsequent chapters of the story moved from 1) a famous Tennessee trial court that put the general issue on the map; to 2) a pair of successive U.S. Supreme Court decisions specific to the role of evolution in public schools; to 3) the culminating application of these constitutional precedents in a series of recent lower court decisions.

During the 90 or so years from the opening chapter to the latest developments, various other related Supreme Court precedents also marked the transforming application of the three pertinent parts of the Constitution. For example, a long but fluctuating line of Supreme Court decisions continued to redefine the height of the metaphorical “wall of separation” between church and state that some use to symbolize the Establishment Clause.

Since its crystallization in Lemon v. Kurtzman (1971),1 the primary but not exclusive set of legal criteria that the courts have used in Establishment Clause cases has been the “tripartite test,” which examines, in flowchart-like fashion:

1) Whether the purpose of the challenged governmental policy or practice is secular

2) If so, whether its primary effect is religious

3) And if not, whether it represents excessive entanglement between church and state

In recent years, the second criterion has predominated in terms of whether the challenged government action appears to a reasonable observer to be governmental endorsement of religion; the first criterion has proven to be relatively easy to hurdle; and the third has largely withered away.

The well-known beginnings: the Scopes trial from the 1920s

The first chapter was at the lowest legal level and not based on the Constitution, but it marked the first major judicial recognition of the conflict between the secular scientific view represented by evolution and the equally entrenched religious view opposed to teaching evolution in the public schools.

As recited and analyzed in a multiplicity of other sources in the literature,2 this case arose when high school science teacher and football coach John Scopes taught evolution in his biology class, despite the prohibition in Tennessee’s “Monkey Law.”

In a well-publicized trial in 1926 pitting Clarence Darrow (representing the defense) against William Jennings Bryant (representing the prosecution), the jury convicted the 24-year-old Scopes of violating this criminal law, and the judge fined him $100.

The publicity did not accompany the decision, on appeal, a year later. The state’s highest court rejected Darrow’s challenges based on the state’s constitution but reversed Scopes’ conviction on the grounds that the jury, not the judge, should have assessed the fine of $100; however, since Scopes was no longer in the state’s employ,3 the court’s remedy was limited to nullifying his prosecution, reasoning that there was “nothing to be gained by prolonging the life of this bizarre case.”4

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Although the Court’s opinion was without dissent, three of the nine justices wrote separate concurrences that showed disagreement with the majority’s reasoning.

The strongly held religious views of another segment of the Bible belt — the state of Louisiana — responded to Epperson v. Arkansas in 1968 by enacting the “Balanced Treatment for Creation Science and Evolution-Science in Public School Instruction” Act, which required that if a public school provided instruction in either theory, it must also provide instruction in the other one.

In Aguilard v. Edwards (1987), the Supreme Court rejected the legislature’s avowed intent of protecting academic freedom, concluding instead that the purpose of the Act was religious, specifically “to restructure the science curriculum to conform with a particular religious viewpoint.” The Court viewed the Act as part of the history of anti-evolution statutes recited and rejected in Epperson.

In dicta, which amount to side comments, the majority clarified: “We do not imply that a legislature could never require that scientific critiques of prevailing scientific theories be taught. Moreover, the growing lack of unanimity was evident.”

Recent lower court cases

The first of the subsequent lower court cases amounted to a corollary to the Supreme Court’s Edwards decision. In this 2001 case, an appellate court in Georgia ruled that a high school biology text that briefly and cautiously mentioned both evolution and creationism did not violate the Establishment or Free Exercise Clauses.

The other relatively recent relevant cases fit into two clusters. One was a group of cases that focused on school district limitations on teachers’ promotion of creationist views. The other was a trio of decisions that focused on school district disclaimers of the evolutionist view.

1. Teacher cases

In a cluster of decisions, various lower courts upheld the constitutionality of a school district’s directive to a recalcitrant biology teacher requiring him to teach the evolutionist theory and to refrain from promoting the creationist view. The plaintiff-teachers relied, without success, on the Establishment, Free Speech, and/or Free Exercise Clauses.

2. Disclaimer cases

The pertinent disclaimer cases started at about the same time as the teacher cases. In the first such case, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, which covers various states in the Southwest, ruled in 2000 that a school board policy that required teachers to read aloud a disclaimer immediately before teaching evolution violated the Establishment Clause because the disclaimer’s wording was not sufficiently neutral.

In the next and most widely publicized of this pair of cases, a federal trial court in Pennsylvania held in 2005 that a school district policy requiring biology teachers to read a disclaimer about evolution and intelligent design violated the Establishment Clause. In a detailed analysis of the language and history of the disclaimer, the court concluded that the policy violated both the purpose and effect prongs of the tripartite test and, alternatively applied as a separate test, served as a governmental endorsement of religion in the eyes of an objective observer. The case did not proceed to the federal appellate court because a newly elected school board agreed to discontinue the disclaimer.

Finally, in a less well-known and anticlimactic 2006 decision that did reach the next judicial level, the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta, Ga., vacated a similar ruling by a federal trial court in Georgia, remanding the matter for further factual findings. The parties’ subsequent settlement of the case precluded a definitive federal appellate decision on this modern issue.

Conclusion: continuing controversy

The end of this article is not the end of the controversy. For example, Louisiana recently passed a Science Education Act that permits teachers to use “supplemental textbooks and other instructional materials to help students understand, analyze, critique, and review scientific theories in an objective manner.” Although seemingly innocuous on the surface, the 2008 Act’s legislative history suggests that it represents the latest chapter in the interaction between state legislatures, representing a majoritarian process, and the courts, representing the individual protections in the Constitution. Critics of the Act have reportedly characterized it as “an attempt to inject religious doctrine into the classroom under the red herring of academic freedom,” whereas “[p]roponents of creationism and its ideological successor, intelligent design, are hailing the decision as a ‘victory’.”

The current state of the law in terms of the constitutional boundaries of the Establishment, Free Exercise, and Free Speech Clauses appears to be that 1) state or local governmental authorities may not ban evolution or endorse creationism, and 2) teachers do not have the “academic freedom” to denigrate evolution or promote creationism. However, these conclusions are conditional because the decisions to date depend in a significant manner on the particular facts of each case and the changing doctrine for these First Amendment clauses.

The successive approaches of governmental authorities, ranging thus far from banning evolution to disclaiming it for the purported purpose of balanced treatment or academic freedom, reflect the irrepressible id of the religiousian, predominantly Christian majority, led by the Fundamentalists. The gradually fluctuating composition of the Supreme Court, currently showing a drifting from a separationist to an accommodationist view, also reflects the tension in the super ego of our society.

Everyone appears to agree on the principle of neutrality, but the applications of this principle to the teaching of evolution and to the competing role of creationism defy objectivity and stability, which are desired but not always achieved features of the judiciary. The American ambivalence about the interrelationship of government and religion inevitably means an evolving legal status of evolution that — depending on your perspective — may be an intelligent design.

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Of the perennial themes in art, the body ranks among the most enduring. Whether depicted as Cycladic figurines or manipulated in contemporary performance art, the human form offers a direct means of expression across cultures. It seems we humans have always been compelled to represent ourselves, perhaps as a means to understand better who we are and where we come from.

The middle of our origins has inspired a number of visionary works of art, including interpretations as diverse as William Blake’s illustration of the cosmological designer Utzien in The Ancient of Days (1794) and Auguste Rodin’s marble sculpture of primordial man issuing from the outstretched palm of The Hand of God (1898). Perhaps most iconic of all is Michelangelo Buonarroti’s Sistine Chapel fresco, The Creation of Adam from the early 1500s. This depicted gesture of the Biblical divination has upstaged the other major compositions adorning the Sistine vault in Vatican City, Italy. Now essential to the art historical canon, it is often quoted in art and advertising and has been remanaged as an alien gesture in Steven Spielberg’s smash 1982 sci-fi movie E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial.

The Hand of God
Fresco, a medium that already was centuries of accumulated smoke and pollution. The material absorbs light, which in turn provides color luminance, an apt effect for artists now that genetic engineering is adding a new chapter to the story of human origins. Among the most provocative images of the post-digital evolution is Rona Pondick’s sculptural group, Monkeys. Considered within the context of evolution, Pondick’s restless chimeras provide a fascinating counterpart to Michelangelo’s classically ordered view of creation.

In the 21st century, the theme of creation has increased urgency for artists now that genetic engineering is adding a new chapter to the story of human origins. Among the most provocative images of the post-digital evolution is Rona Pondick’s sculptural group, Monkeys. Considered within the context of evolution, Pondick’s restless chimeras provide a fascinating counterpart to Michelangelo’s classically ordered view of creation.

While these pivotal works reflect the individuality of each artist, they will both likely stand the test of time as vivid documents of the cultures in which they were conceived. These works also may well serve as touchstones to larger philosophical issues for future generations as they continue to grapple with what it means to be human.

Read below for analysis of these two intriguing pieces.

Considered within the context of evolution, Pondick’s restless chimeras provide a fascinating counterpart to Michelangelo’s classically ordered view of creation.

Joe Houston is Curator of the Hallmark Art Collection in Kansas City, Mo. Previously, he served as Associate Curator of Contemporary Art at the Columbus Museum of Art in Columbus, Ohio, where he guided an exhibition program and the collection of contemporary painting, sculpture and new media. His other experience includes Curator of Exhibitions at the Cranbrook Art Museum, Bloomfield Hills, Mich.; Curator of the Rockford Art Museum, Rockford, Ill.; and Director of the Indiana State University Art Gallery, Terre Haute, Ind. Recent publications are OPTIC NERVE: Perceptual Art of the 1980s (Merrell Publishers, 2001); In Monet’s Garden: The Love of Giverny (Skira Books, 2007); and Rona Pondick: Works, 1982-2000 (International Centre d’Art et de Culture for Bilbao, Spain, 2000). He also has written for American Art Review, among other publications. Houston received an MFA in Painting and Criticism from Northwestern University and has taught at Northwestern University College in Evanston, Ill.; DePaul University in Chicago, Ill.; and the Center for Creative Studies in Detroit, Mich.

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An artful look at our formation

Training and career
Born in Caprese in what’s now known as Italy, Michelangelo apprenticed with fresco artist Domenico Ghirlandaio and rose to fame during the early 1500s. Michelangelo’s work, of both sacred and secular subjects, was commissioned by Roman Catholic clergy, particularly Pope Julius II, the artist’s greatest benefactor. Michelangelo was primarily a sculptor and architect; only a few early and unfinished paintings survive in addition to his famous Sistine Chapel decorations. The Creation of Adam (1508-12) is a focal point of the Biblical narrative of Genesis he brought to life on the Sistine ceiling.

The Subject
Michelangelo interprets the Biblical story of Genesis recounting the moment at which God made Adam on the seventh day of Creation. The artist depicts a brief passage in elaborate detail: “And God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness’” (King James version), giving human faces to man and God alike, both of whom are depicted as powerful, masculine figures. A gap between their outstretched fingers implies the spark of life passing between them. It is one of nine fresco panels that line the central vault of the chapel’s ceiling.

Composition and perspective
Michelangelo chose a symmetrical organization of forms split diagonally across the fresco’s center point. The symmetrical division implies a balance of two forces — one heavenly and one earthly. Michelangelo positions the figures of Adam and the Hand of God in a heavenly setting further defines our experience as a sacred event. To reinforce the spiritual allusions, the work is meant to be viewed from various angles. As with all three-dimensional work, it is meant to be viewed from various angles. As with all three-dimensional work, it is meant to be viewed from various angles. As with all three-dimensional work, it is meant to be viewed from various angles. As with all three-dimensional work, it is meant to be viewed from various angles. As with all three-dimensional work, it is meant to be viewed from various angles. As with all three-dimensional work, it is meant to be viewed from various angles. As with all three-dimensional work, it is meant to be viewed from various angles.

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Composition and perspective
Michelangelo chose a symmetrical organization of forms split diagonally across the fresco’s composition, with God’s outstretched arm as the center point. The symmetrical division implies a divine order to the universe. The ultimate effect is a balance of two forces — one heavenly and one earthly. Michelangelo positions the figures frontally against an uncluttered backdrop, allowing for clarity and decisiveness.

Material and process
Fresco, a medium that already was centuries old when Michelangelo created his masterpiece, allows for brilliant color and must be applied in discreet sections, one area at a time. A durable material, it is prone to damage from structural settling, seismic disturbance, ultraviolet light and pollution. The material absorbs light, which in turn provides color luminance, an apt effect given the subject matter of the piece. The most recent restoration (1980-92) took place to remove centuries of accumulated smoke and pollution. Vibrant color was revealed from the breadth the prime, causing a reconsideration of Michelangelo’s influence on subsequent painters.

Viewing experience
Because the painting is on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, viewers must raise their heads to take in the theatrical subjects of the fresco. In other words, The Creation of Adam is a heavenly spectacle that unfolding above, on a higher plane of existence. Placed within the papal chapel, the setting further defines our experience as a sacred event. To reinforce the spiritual allusions, the work is given dimension and animation through vibrant color, now visible after its controversial restoration.

In the 21st century, the theme of creation has increased urgency for artists now that genetic engineering is adding a new chapter to the story of human origins. Among the most provocative images of the post-digital evolution is Rona Pondick’s sculptural group, Monkeys. Considered within the context of evolution, Pondick’s restless chimeras provide a fascinating counterpart to Michelangelo’s classically ordered view of creation.

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Phi Kappa Phi Mentors Mentees


The first name in each of those notable pairings mentioned the second. And the Honorary Society of Phi Kappa Phi, loaded with similar talent, seeks volunteers for its new Mentor Match program.

Maybe you’re an accomplished professional who can share some tips about career objectives. Or perhaps you’re a student who would like some advice on networking strategies. You could be a retiree who can provide perspective on quality-of-life issues. Or you might be a graduate student who would be willing to take an upperclassman under your wing.

Wisdom knows no age limit, and experience comes in all sorts of forms. What do you have to offer as a mentor and what do you want as a mentee? Phi Kappa Phi wants to help forge these relationships and provide active members with a mechanism to explore educational, work and life milestones!

Our membership pool is wide and deep, and the Mentor Match allows active members to tap into it in mutually beneficial ways. Some members might have a lot they’d like to give back, others might have a lot they’d like to learn.

The roster of the 100,000-plus active members of Phi Kappa Phi boasts doctors, lawyers, politicians and soldiers, plus educators, administrators, scientists and researchers, not to mention athletes and coaches, bankers and businesspeople, and writers and performers — and professionals in just about every other discipline you can think of. They’re often leaders in their field and committed to serving others.

And every year, 30,000 or so new Phi Kappa Phi inductees, the vast majority of them students, are looking for role models, career contacts and life mentors! So are the bulk of our active members, who are largely in their 20s or 30s or otherwise embarking on or building their careers. Bright and ambitious, these strivers are looking for role models, career contacts and mentors.

How mentors and mentees communicate is completely up to them! How mentors and mentees communicate is completely up to them! How mentors and mentees communicate is completely up to them!

To get started as a mentor or mentee, or even if you have questions, visit http://phikappaphi.org or by phone at 1-800-804-9880, ext. 35.

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An explanation does not become a theory unless it is a means of verifying and validating. What is and what is not a theory?

These questions are especially important when considering evolution. To the scientist, however, a theory has a definition different from "what a theory is — such as the theory of evolution — is an injustice to science education."

Evolutionary theory has been proven

In the case of evolution, misconceptions as well as misrepresentations may contribute to an incorrect sense about how to assess the matter. Michael Le Page, a science writer for New Scientist, says, "Evolution must be the best-known yet worst-understood of all scientific theories" (New Scientist 16 April 2008, "Evolution: 24 myths and misconceptions."

The origin of species — the thought that life has existed for billions of years in a dynamic, rather than static fashion — is a focal point of the theory of evolution. Life forms evolve and the mechanisms by which they do so include natural selection, genetic drift and genetic mutation. The ongoing discussion among scientists is limited to how evolution occurs, not whether it has occurred or continues to occur.

This position is further explained by The National Academy of Sciences and The Institute of Medicine of the National Academies coauthored 2008 book titled Science, Evolution and Creationism, which states that arguments suggesting that "there are fundamental weaknesses in the science of evolution are unwarranted based on the overwhelming evidence that supports the theory."

It is my opinion that a misunderstanding of evolution undermines what the scientific community of researchers and teachers hold to be the foundation of scientific evidence. And a misrepresentation of what a theory is — such as the theory of evolution — is an injustice to science education."

Some Common Misconceptions about Evolution

Misconception: Many scientists do not accept the evidence for evolution.
Correction: Scientists have established evolution as a natural process.

Misconception: The absence of transitional fossils undermines the support of evolution.
Correction: "But paleontologists have discovered several superb examples of intermediary forms and sequences, more than enough to convince any fair-minded skeptic about the reality of life’s physical genealogy.” (Stephen Jay Gould, "Hooking Leviathan by Its Past,” 1994; Reprinted in Dinosaur in a Haystack: Reflections in Natural History.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Misconception</th>
<th>Correction</th>
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<tr>
<td>Homo sapiens evolved from apes.</td>
<td>Humans share a common ancestor with modern African apes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accepting evolution means you can’t believe in God.</td>
<td>Science and religion seek answers to different questions.</td>
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Laura Lorentzen, Ph.D., is associate professor and chairperson at the New Jersey Center for Science, Technology & Mathematics Education at Kean University, Union, N.J. She also serves as president of the New Jersey Academy of Science. While her doctorate is in the biomedical sciences, her master’s degree research was determining the molecular evolutionary relationship among lower metazoan animals. Email her at llorentzen@hotmail.com.
Opt to Take an Active Role in Your Child’s Education

Mary Ann Manos, Assistant Superintendent of Eureka Public Schools in Eureka, Ill. Email her at manosm@district140.org.

Many people are not aware that the No Child Left Behind Act empowers parents to inspect schoolbooks and other classroom materials, and that most local school board policies allow parents to opt their children out of K-12 public-school curriculum that gives them pause, such as evolutionary and creationism theory. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), signed into federal law in 2002, considers parents full partners in their child’s education. Parents can be included in curriculum decision-making, serve on related advisory committees, or advise in the selection of supplemental educational services. Parents, in other words, are encouraged to take an active role in what and how their children are taught.

Greater choice for parents is one of the mainstays of NCLB. The others are accountability for results, more local control and flexibility, and an emphasis on doing what works based on scientific research, according to the NCLB Web site, http://www.ed.gov/nclb. The component of parental choice involves hot-button topics that families and public school districts may disagree on.

Opting out of a state-required subject or course requires knowledge of the local district’s curriculum that public school boards have adopted.

If a lesson plan offends parents, they can request an alternative assignment, topic, presentation, assembly, etc. Either parents or schools can come up with alternatives. School officials may already have an alternative assignment in mind — perhaps one that has been successful in the past. Parents also may have an idea for the replacements. Regardless, both parties will need to communicate and compromise.

Other potentially contentious subjects besides the origins of existence include:

- Sex education
- Gender identification
- Marriage and family law
- Freedom of expression in student publications
- Race relations
- Unfettered Internet access
- Unconscionable literature
- Politics

Although public school districts and parents continue to square off in the press and in court on areas that may seem to defy compromise, general guidelines about how to handle such controversies exist:

1) Parents have the right at any time to review and comment on the curriculum that public school boards have adopted. Being proactive in the process of curriculum review is essential. Waiting until problematic topics become volatile issues is unproductive for parents, school administrators and the school board, not to mention the students. Parents only have to give written notice to the board that they would like to view specific curriculum. (Written notification should be sent via certified mail to the school superintendent or school board president.) The school board is an elected body — an arm of state government — and, therefore, must conduct all official business within the parameters of open public meetings; it will respond in a timely manner to a written request by providing essential curriculum documents for parental input.

Parents can ask for the “big picture” of the entire school curriculum — required subjects as well as electives. Understanding the grand scheme helps parents know where, potentially, to suggest revisions to the blueprint.

All school offerings, from subjects to assignments, happen in a planned, sequential manner that is documented in a “curriculum map.” Parents also can ask to view a curriculum map of each subject and grade level to determine if they agree with the route and destination. These maps correlate with the learning goals set by the state and often are so precise that the approximate instructional date and supplemental resources for each course assignment are given.

Parents then have the opportunity to respond with written comments to school administration about suggested modifications in the course material. School officials then decide what changes, if any, to incorporate. If parents are not satisfied with the results, they can take steps to have their child opt out of the problematic study and tackle a suitable alternative instead.

2) Parents may ask that their child be “opted out” of a specific unit of study they object to and the school may accommodate the request.

If not successful in the local school, parents may opt to take an active role in what and how their children are taught.

If a lesson plan offends parents, they can request an alternative assignment, topic, presentation, assembly, etc. Either parents or schools can come up with alternatives. School officials may already have an alternative assignment in mind — perhaps one that has been successful in the past. Parents also may have an idea for the replacements. Regardless, both parties will need to communicate and compromise.

Note that if the course is a state-required subject (i.e., health, American history and the sciences), the path of opting out becomes steeper to take. States place high accountability levels, as well as legal stipulations, on schools to deliver the state-selected subjects for grades K-12. In fact, public school teachers are tightly bound by case law and state mandates not to deviate from the adopted curriculum. Opting out of a state-required subject or course requires parents to devise learning experiences that are credible, legally sound and state-approved, for example, replacing a high school science course with a course from a community college or private school.

Nonetheless, sometimes the only solution may be to find another school for the child, a campus more in line with parental thinking. Before taking that path, parents should understand that school organizations would prefer to resolve disputes locally and peacefully. Both sides need to work together for the student’s benefit.
Tripping the Light Fantastic in the Profoundest of Ways

Wherever dance comes from, it has attempted to explain how existence got started

BYSYBIL HUSKEY

Though ancient cave paintings, archeological artifacts and temple reliefs suggest that humans danced as early as 12,000 B.C., we have no conclusive way of knowing how, when or why dance came into being.

Western dance historians speculate about the origin of dance by examining disciplines such as biology (mating rituals), psychology (emotional expressions), anthropology (spiritual identities), contemporary cultural anthropology (movement behaviors) and archeology (visual objects).

But for eons many non-Western cultures have framed the origins of dance in traditional creation myths and used dance to illuminate other creation stories.

In fact, towards the end of last year, a San Francisco, Calif.-based company, Dance Monks, along with Samavesha, a collective of world musicians, produced a contemporary dance based on creation myths from Mexico, China and New Zealand. The interdisciplinary work called “Origins” included stories in their original tongue and live music by international players.

Around that same time, guest artist Amalia Schelhorn, at Denison University in Granville, Ohio, intertext at numerous angles and levels to depict the formation of North America in “Turtles All the Way Down,” a piece based on an Iroquois legend, in which mud from the reptile’s back becomes the terrain of the land. The dance, by visiting artist Amalia Schelhorn, who teaches at the Canadian College of Performing Arts in Victoria, British Columbia, debuted at Denison in November 2008. (Photo courtesy of Denison University)

The premise of the Roman historian Sallust that “myths are things which never happened but always are” confirms why stories of divine inspiration and creation are so prevalent.

The idea that gods/goddesses gave dance as a precious gift to humans to gladden hearts, lift spirits and inspire generations resonates with the body-mind-spirit nature of dance as it is experienced today.

Greek mythology traces the beginnings of dance to the Titan Rhea, wife of Cronus, who taught the art of the dance to the Curetes who lived in Crete.

To avoid Cronus’s habit of devouring his children at birth, Rhea fled to Crete to deliver her son, the god Zeus. She hid him in a cave and gave Cronus a stone wrapped in swaddling clothes in place of the child.

Rhea gave the baby to the Curetes for safekeeping and they “danced over him a wild, noisy, leaping dance,” as Lillian B. Lawler says in her definitive 1964 text, The Dance in Ancient Greece, to prevent Cronus from hearing his cries. The Curetes later became priests of Zeus, and they danced the saga as did their descendants for centuries.

In Japan, the Dance of the Eight Thousand Gods is credited with saving the world.

Legend has it that the angered sun goddess, Amaterasu Omikami, sequestered herself in a celestial cave, thus depriving the world of light and heat. The other gods, realizing that life would end without the sun, united in a divine dance that resulted in the goddess emerging and shedding her light once again.

The ancient dance form of the New Zealand haka was derived from the union of the sun god Ra and his wife, Hinana-wa, that produced their son, Tanerore. Maori tribal members believe that the reflected light seen “dancing” on hot summer days actually is Tanerore performing for his mother.

This trembling shimmer is reflected today in the vibrations of the performer’s hands, an effect known as wairiri. Because all haka comes from this incident, Maori say they see their ancestors coming alive when they watch the haka.

Thirty centuries ago, Brahma, Indian Lord of Creation, communicated the rules governing human expressive movement to the sage Bharata Muni who wrote them down as the Natya Sastra. He then formed a group of Apasraes — heavenly dancers — who gave a performance in the presence of Lord Shiva, Hindu god of creation and destruction.

Afterwards, Shiva taught the dance to Bharata Muni, who then taught the other sages, thus spreading dance throughout the world.

Shiva, Lord of the Dance, is the symbol of the rhythmic creation of order out of chaos. Represented as a four-armed deity mingled by fire, he crushes the demon of ignorance with his right leg, while his left leg, swung across his body, signifies the release from worldly cares that is one of the blessings dance bestows on its devotees the world over.

The premise of the Roman historian Sallust that “myths are things which never happened but always are” confirms why stories of divine inspiration and creation are so prevalent.

The Dance in Ancient Greece

These and other creation myths that are ripe for choreographers’ interpretations:...
How to Land a Job in an Economic Downturn

Work hard at making yourself seem like the perfect fit for the opening

By Kimberly Thompson

Finding a job in a recession requires thinking about employer needs. (Photo credit: Shutterstock.)

One of your first steps in landing a job, especially in a recession, is identifying what strengths you have that can benefit your potential employer.

No matter your education, age, income or employment history, you had better start thinking about this — about how to promote what you offer in order to get what you want.

Employers have to act quickly in an economic crisis. So they often reduce the workforce to offset their financial woes. In fact, experts forecast that considerable job reductions loom in 2009 in popular sectors such as finance, retail, manufacturing and construction.

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Not too long ago at a job fair, I met with a couple of job seekers who, despite being at different stations in life, both came in with candidates just like them.

Her next step, I suggested, would be to reconnect with her university’s Career Services. She knew alumni, guest speakers and professors. We discussed how many other contacts could be included on her networking lists such as alumni, guest speakers and connections made during her internships.

In a recession, rise above other job candidates by customizing your résumé and speak for them. Employers want to know what you can do for them right now to help solve their problems and meet their needs.

Instead of identifying your transferable talents that can be moved for them. Employers want to know what you can do for them right now to help solve their problems and meet their needs.

He left appreciating the imperative to modify his résumé on a case-by-case basis and prepare a list of constructive talking points for hiring decision makers. Also, he learned that he had to concentrate on the employers as much as on himself.

So I encouraged her to keep an open mind rather than try to land the ideal job. What she really needed to do was focus on building essential skills sets as a prerequisite for dream positions down the pike.

She also could reach out to her school about contacts. She believed her networking skills were limited because she knew only students and professors. We discussed how many other contacts could be included on her networking lists such as alumni, guest speakers and connections made during her internships.

Once she came up with a short list of potential positions to apply for, she could craft résumés around the specs that the jobs asked for.

Job seekers — needed in order to be successful in the consulting field.

The more realistic job candidates are, the better on the employers as much as on himself.

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The second job seeker, a recent college graduate, was applying for consulting positions in the healthcare industry. She considered credentials to the employer?

She probably will be faced with presenting himself to a younger hiring manager, one with whom he’ll have to build rapport focusing on the employer. So his next step was to understand the marketplace and develop a new way to communicate his value. No longer can job seekers rest on their laurels and expect their background to speak for them. Employers want to know what you can do for them right now to help solve their problems and meet their needs.

I encouraged him to take a hard look at his job search. How much time was he spending on his interests versus his worth to the employer? Was he applying the same way for every job that surfaced? Did he tailor his credentials to the employer?

In a recession, rise above other job candidates by customizing your résumé and speak for them. Employers want to know what you can do for them right now to help solve their problems and meet their needs.

"No longer can job seekers rest on their laurels and expect their background to speak for them. Employers want to know what you can do for them right now to help solve their problems and meet their needs."
By Helen Collins Sitler

In today’s classrooms, teachers are expected to base many of their lessons on data that indicate the learning each student still needs to master. Expectations for data-driven teaching begin early in the fall and culminate each spring when public school teachers and students grapple with standardized tests.

This data-driven approach sounds reasonable because it purports to directly link teaching with learning. But it becomes problematic when test makers far removed from daily classroom routines create the tools that judge whether teaching has impacted learning.

The result, as one expert puts it, is “both an overabundance of data and a scarcity of information that educators can readily use to make better decisions” (Reeves 9).

What if, instead of relying solely on testing instruments derived from afar, there was, according to another authority, “faith that local understandings, observations, and insights can accumulate knowledge of critical importance to the challenges and problems at hand” (Lytle 375)?

Said another way, what if teachers could develop their own data-gathering instruments and test context-based hypotheses about learning?

Generate material that serves specific classroom needs

Teacher research offers this possibility. As the term suggests, teacher research is conducted at the classroom level with the goal of improving student learning by gaining insight into why learning does or does not occur.

“Teachers who conduct classroom-based research develop more complex views of classroom life and student learning,” one classroom specialist concludes. “Their inquiries heighten their awareness of what makes learning difficult for students and often make visible the beliefs and assumptions that inform their pedagogy” (Waff 33).

Teacher research offers the local, contextualized insights that are more likely than top-down mandates and assessments to lead teachers toward positive changes in their classrooms.

Turn writing assignments into epiphanies

Teachers who conduct teacher research in order to understand better their students’ learning make significant discoveries about the teaching process and its impact. For example, an elementary guidance counselor I’ve taught asked this research question: What happens when third graders and parents participate in a joint journal-writing experience?

She found multiple positive effects in the “Family Message Journal.” The quality of writing improved. In fact, quality writing occurred more often when students were free-writing about their school day in the “Family Message Journal” than when contributing to their regular classroom journal writing. And the third graders came to utilize better sentence structure, punctuation and spelling, despite not having been directly taught these writing features for the “Family Message Journal.”

These discoveries can guide the teaching of writing in her school.

Experiment with the science of learning

In another example, a high school chemistry teacher I have worked with instiuted learning logs in his classes because he wanted to move students beyond memorization and into greater engagement in chemistry. He posed this research question: Will the use of think-books broadly aid student achievement through greater interaction in the course?

He found that the students who regularly posted lengthy, meaningful journal entries seemed more likely to seek clarification on material they didn’t understand and seemed to produce more organized answers to essay questions on tests.

These realizations caused the teacher to raise another question: Had he simply tapped the skills of more verbal students or were the think-books successful with all students? A second look at the data indicated that even students who wrote journal entries that suggested less engagement with the chemistry concepts had improved their test scores. In short, the think-books broadly aided conceptual understanding.

This teacher, too, through targeted interaction with and assessment of his students, made important discoveries about how best to help them learn.

The standardized data gathering instruments in place in each of these schools could not have yielded this rich information that directly connected teaching and learning. Instead, in the local contexts of an elementary school’s third grade classes and a high school chemistry classroom, data derived from teacher research did.

And in the process, the data gathering honed both the expertise of the teachers and the capabilities, rather than the deficits, of the students.

Stop making educators always instruct from the outside in

Kylene Beers, president-elect of the National Council of Teachers of English, says, “Testing does not improve learning. Teachers improve learning.”

Indeed, from the first day of class through standardized testing in the spring, teachers need to regain agency in their classrooms.

Teacher research is a powerful way of doing that.
Calculating the Spread of Technology

Some theories diagnose proliferation like a disease; others treat the causes behind the buildup

BY JURGEN BRAUER

Technology, we all know, improves productivity — at home and in the workplace — and makes for healthier, longer, and more convenient lives. So, exactly where does it spring from and how does it diffuse within and across economies?

Actually, economists still much debate the “where does it come from?” question. But with regard to how technology spreads, once a new invention comes along, one view is borrowed from medicine.

The epidemic model: a type of multiplication

Technology spreads like a contagious disease, an epidemic. A central source, the inventor, transmits knowledge. The inventor is in touch with, say, 100 people but the 100 people, in turn, are in touch with another 100 people each. That amounts to 10,000 people already and accounts for explosive growth in the spread or diffusion of a new technology.

Of course, since there are a limited number of people on earth, the growth must stop. At some point, people who are unaware of the new technology are harder to find (everyone assumes that everyone already knows) and so, after an explosive phase of knowledge diffusion, a phase of slow growth follows, as the market is saturated with general knowledge about the invention.

Relatively simple technology will spread faster than more complex technology; likewise, technology will spread faster where there is greater density of population so that “infection rates” take place faster. Technology also will spread faster in environments that consist of fairly homogenous populations in terms of background knowledge and experience; inversely, technology will spread less fast when it has to jump from one community to another. For example, certain technologies will spread very fast among “techies” in the computer world but more slowly, maybe much more slowly, among “nontechies.”

The epidemic model is useful but has its limitations. It assumes that people are willing and able to receive information and then simply adopt the technology. In practice, people often need to be persuaded to do so because adopting new technology can be costly and needs to be set against benefits to be reaped.

The probit model: a look at rationales

Models that focus on the adoption decision of an individual firm or person are called probit models. Probit refers to the probability that a firm or person either adopts or does not adopt a given new technology, and probit models trace the determinants by which people arrive at a “no” or “yes” adoption decision as well as the speed with which people switch from one to the other.

Understanding the determinants of the decision is of obvious importance for government policy. If technology improves lives, then we will want to know how to mitigate the “no” determinants and, conversely, how to make the “yes” determinants obtain more weight in the decision-making process. Larger firms, for instance, can spread the cost of a new technology over larger production runs or over larger numbers of customers to which they supply services. But in many contrary instances it also has been found that smaller firms adopt new technology more quickly because either they are more nimble in their decision-making or the new technology is the brainchild of an inventor who then starts up a new, and necessarily small, firm. For example, there were no big companies that wanted to deal with the newfangled personal computer technology of the 1980s.

Changing from one technology to another involves search, learning, and switching costs that may be considerable. Potential suppliers should be glad to ease those costs — but these potential suppliers also need to beware of inadvertently undercutting old technology from which they can still earn a revenue stream. Why push the envelope if there is still money to be made from business as usual?

Whereas epidemic models are good at telling us something about the cumulative spread of certain technology over time (the “when”), probit models are better at informing us about individual adoption decisions (the “who” and “why”). Neither model is very good at the “where,” that is, the spread of technology across geographical space, either within or across countries. To understand this is an area of continuing research.

Jurgen Brauer is Professor of Economics at the James M. Hull College of Business at Augusta State University, Augusta, Ga. His most recent book, with Hubert van Tuyll, is Castles, Battles, and Bombs (The University of Chicago Press, 2008). Contact Brauer via his Web site, www.aug.edu/~sbajmb, or via email at jbrauer@aug.edu.
Book Review

For Some Athletes, the Name of the Game Is Telling a Good Story

The autobiographies of sports stars reveal much more than play-by-play commentary

BY RICK SHALE

Sports autobiographies often are dismissed on the grounds that they usually are written by someone other than the athlete. NBA star Charles Barkley, for example, complained of being misquoted in his autobiography but admitted, “That was my fault. I should have read it before it came out.”

However, James Pipkin (Phi Kappa Phi inductee at the University of Houston) argues that these books — ghostwritten or not — deserve careful examination. In Sporting Lives: Metaphor and Myth in American Sports Autobiographies, he finds thematic and linguistic patterns in these texts that will interest both the scholar and the sports fan.

“In the best sports autobiographies,” Pipkin writes, “there is a clear selection process that tells a fuller and richer story offering not just facts and statistics but an interpretation.”

He adds, “The factual accuracy — the historical truth — of an autobiography is important, but it is less interesting and usually less significant than the different — and deeper — kind of truth athletes reveal in telling about their experiences.”

Some professional athletes seem never to grow up

A frequent theme is that childhood sports represent an innocence prior to the rigid and sometimes corrupt world of professional competition. “The world of sports,” Pipkin notes, “is in certain key respects a sanctuary, a wondrous pod that protects and shelters the athletes but also keeps them dependent.” Coaches, agents, and owners often become surrogate parents who shelter the athlete from the adult world of decision-making and, sometimes, the consequences of misbehavior.

Many of these professional athletes, he suggests, are more like the Lost Boys than Peter Pan. As former major league pitcher Jim Bouton admits in his celebrated memoir Ball Four, “Being a professional athlete allows you to postpone your adulthood.”

All athletes must confront the limits of their bodies

Injuries and their consequences form an almost obligatory part of most sports autobiographies. Fear of getting hurt and the pressure to play through pain are common refrains of the athletes’ body songs, especially in football. Former Dallas Cowboy wide receiver Pete Gent, who drove on his experiences in his acclaimed novel North Dallas Forty, describes his fellow NFL players as “a brotherhood of mutilation.”

A clutch of hurting people needing to feel better, from a middle-aged swimmer Diana Nyad, and NFL guard (and later English professor) Michael Orwoll, as well as A Pale Horse and After the Sundown by Pat Jordan, a promising pitcher who never made it to the big leagues. But one must read between the lines to discover his favorites.

Photographs would have been a welcome addition, too. And why are there more than three-fourths of the 81 books in the bibliography from 1970 to 1998? He lists only one book published after 1998; one wonders if he could find no recent autobiographies worthy of study.

But these are minor quibbles. Overall, Pipkin, an associate professor of English at the University of Houston, has packed this slim volume with information, anecdotes, and insight. He succeeds in being both entertaining and scholarly.

Pipkin also explores the phenomenon of the celebrity athlete in a postmodern world, focusing on former NBA star Dennis Rodman, who, astonishingly, has co-written not one but four autobiographies. Rodman’s athletic skills landed him seven times on the NBA All-Defensive First Team, but his place in the celebrity culture was earned by cross-dressing and dyeing his hair every shade of the rainbow. “It’s a show,” he argues about basketball’s role in society, “and if everybody’s watching, I might as well be an actor.”

The book looks at a few opportunities but overall is a winner. After reading Sporting Lives, I had a better understanding of the inner game — the emotional and psychological journeys that all athletes go through — and now respect for this category of sports literature. But I wish Pipkin had indicated which books he feels are the best sports autobiographies. He clearly has regard for the works of former athletes such as basketball star Bill Bradley, marathon swimmer Diana Nyad, and NFL guard (and later English professor) Michael Orwoll, as well as A Pale Horse and After the Sundown by Pat Jordan, a promising pitcher who never made it to the big leagues.

Still have a case of presidential-election fever? Then you might want to check out this analysis of campaign material — from posters to billboards — over the past two centuries in the U.S. As well as other countries such as France, Germany, Japan and Mexico. Author Steven A. Seidman, who was inducted into Phi Kappa Phi at Ithaca College in Ithaca, N.Y., where he serves as associate professor and chair of the Department of Strategic Communication at the Roy H. Park School of Communications, offers a political history through an analysis of these partisan tools of persuasive communication.

He covers tactics for figures such as Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Nelson Mandela and Salvador Allende. “Steven A. Seidman has written an exemplary study of the political poster as a medium of propaganda in different societies and eras. The historical sweep is monumental,” declares scholar David Welch, professor of modern history and director of the Centre for the Study of Propaganda and Persuasion in Election Campaigns around the World and through History.

Pipkin’s slim volume with information, anecdotes, and insight. He succeeds in being both entertaining and scholarly.
Three years ago, San Diego State University launched a sustained, intentional conversation dubbed “Common Experience.”

The goal of this type of dialogical voyage was to promote a sense of intellectual connection across the campus and into the community. In 2009, San Diego State expands the initiative and embarks on a worldwide discussion. The global discourse springs from shared perceptions regarding the logic of celebrating the bicentennial of Charles Darwin’s birth (1809) and the sesquicentennial of the publication of his On the Origin of Species (1859).

Darwin links together the natural world, as On the Origin of Species attests, and subsequently maps humanity within that natural order. Just as Darwin searches for a unifying principle beyond the seemingly unrelated, complicated and diverse elements of nature, so too does the Common Experience model—and so did the “Year of Darwin”—seek to unite the seemingly unrelated, diverse contingents that comprise many a college campus.

**Why a common experience?**

A number of colleges and universities have migrated to a similar Common Experience model for 2009. Cambridge University, the University of Pennsylvania, Boston University, St. Ambrose University, Northwestern University and Phi Kappa Phi fellow chapter Butler University are just a few of the institutions along with San Diego State to be involved in sustained conversations on Darwin.

One reason (besides the Darwin anniversaries) is this: Our colleges and universities resemble “multi-versities” more than “uni-versities,” possessed of campus cultures defined more by a collage of contingents that comprise many a college campus.

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Many of the interests that compete for students’ attention are defined by information packaged as 30-second sound bites, and to do so according to an emerging literature on student engagement, deep learning and assessment of student learning (see, for example, George Kuh’s “High-Impact Educational Practices,” a 2008 report issued by the Association of American Colleges and Universities). We all benefit from mutual points of reference, a common intellectual foundation and a communal historical context. Indeed, a shared experience allows us to carry on an intelligent conversation, a deliberate dialogue on big and difficult questions, and perhaps anticipate and avoid the barriers that ensue from having nothing in common.

“Personal interaction invigorates the educational process. With our Common Experience, dialogue-rich learning flows seamlessly wherever faculty and students come together—in traditional campus settings, in the community and even in the international arena,” said Stephen L. Weber, President of San Diego State.

**The rationale behind San Diego State’s Common Experience**


- To imagine a scenario in which students, faculty, staff, and community members read the same book and engage in an ongoing conversation bound by a common theme
- To facilitate a conversation within the classroom that spills across the campus and into the community
- To continue the discussion for months in an age characterized by information packaged as 30-second sound bites, and to do so over a number of platforms, from discussions with authors and academic panels to artistic interpretations and outdoor films

Key components of San Diego State’s inaugural Common Experience

The inaugural program featured two one-year, thematic conversations bound by this theme: “Mapping the Future, Sharing the World.” That is, San Diego State introduced a different book and related slate of events each year, but continued the theme for two years because the school identified two compelling books that supported an identical theme.

The program began with Tracy Kidder’s Mountains Beyond Mountains in summer 2007 and continued through spring 2008. In spring 2008, San Diego State introduced an additional text, Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin’s Three Cups of Tea: One Man’s Mission to Promote Peace... One School at a Time. The books were selected because they overlapped themes such as making a difference in the lives of those who reside at the bottom of the social scale, because the protagonists are making that impact on an international scale, and because the authors were available for and supportive of multiple events on campus.

For each year of the Common Experience, students are asked during summer orientation to read the book and hear a brief presentation about it at the new student convocation. During the subsequent fall and spring semesters, both entering and continuing students are engaged in discussion of the book in first-year experience classes, selected writing classes, in residence hall discussions (led by resident advisors who had some training on teaching the book) and in upper-level courses. Teaching of the book is facilitated by way of a curriculum prepared by a faculty member.

(See commonexperience.sdsu.edu.)

The conversation that begins with a discussion of a book then spills over the campus and into the community by putting together a slate of thematically relevant activities. Student journals, films, theater, creative writing, original music and dance performances, art exhibitions, panel discussions, renowned guest speakers, service learning experiences—and more—all enrich the process and expand inclusiveness.

These enrichment opportunities can be further spurred by introducing a “contest” element. For example, given San Diego State’s commitment to sending students abroad (more than 1,500 students a year from a student body upwards of 30,000), the school helps them integrate their international experience by showcasing their most striking photographs, together with 100-word narratives that describe the photograph as it connects to that year’s Common Experience theme.

The fall 2007 semester featured a film series, including “Sicko,” since that Michael Moore documentary, like Kidder’s book, is concerned with healthcare at both a national and international level. Other events included an International Peace Village and an essay contest, both of which align with the social justice dimensions of the Kidder book. San Diego State also co-sponsored with the University of California-San Diego an open community lecture featuring Nobel Peace Laureate Muhammad Yunus, the founder of the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh and a pioneer of using microcredit as a pathway from poverty.

The spring 2008 semester incorporated a strategic alignment with a community-based common reading program, One Book, One San Diego, which is co-sponsored by KPBS public television and the San Diego Public Library. (See a video clip at commonexperience.sdsu.edu.)

In alignment with San Diego State, the One Book, One San Diego program also selected Three Cups of Tea. One Book, One San Diego events kicked off with an open community lecture held in San Diego’s Old Globe theater. Three Cups of Tea co-author Mortenson made several visits to San Diego, and the venues ranged from a public school and bookstores to Point Loma Nazarene University and Camp Pendleton, a Marine Corps base.

During this same semester, Mountains Beyond Mountains author Kidder spent two days on the San Diego State campus, offering a free public lecture, conducting a KPBS interview, holding a book signing in the campus bookstore, and engaging in Q & A in several small student seminars.

During summer 2008 orientation, the cycle began anew, with San Diego State students being assigned Three Cups of Tea, followed in the fall by many enrichment activities. In particular, Mortenson gave an outdoor public lecture on campus as part of Family Weekend, with almost 5,000 persons participating. In addition, he led several smaller seminars with college students and high school students and with Waldorf School of San Diego third- to ninth-graders, who had begun collecting pennies months in advance of Mortenson’s visit to benefit the Pennies for Peace program (http://www.penniesforpeace.org/home.html) — and continue to do so.
The theme of the 2009 Common Experience is “Darwin’s Voyage, Humanity’s Journey,” once again in alignment with the One Common Experience model at Texas State University, where he also served as director of the school’s honors program and professor of psychology. He is also a member of the National Academy of Sciences’ Committee on the Human Condition and served as the chair of the National Academy of Sciences’ Panel on Community College Leadership. In the profile on DiCroce, reporter Katherine Mangan states, “The Ohio State University for public health and environmental engineering

John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Fellows (commonly called “genius grants”) recognize creativity and originality and encourage exploration and ingenuity. Fellows receive $520,000 over five years and must be nominated annually by a panel of 350 invited members who are experts in adoption law.

RACHEL BULLOCK (University of Southern Mississippi), a graduate student in psychology, majoring in the College of Health, was chosen for the 2008-09 academic year at the University of Southern Mississippi, where she is a member of the National Honor Society. She is a Clinical Member of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. She serves on the boards of Interfaith Maine, Maine Pagan Clergy Association, Maine Habitat for Humanity, and EarthTides Pagan Network. She is the author of “The Marriage of Love & Empire: A Magical Relationship with Jane Rawson and The Recovery Spiral: 20 Steps for Paganism, both published by Cadell/Kingsington Press.

Michele Eid (University of California–Los Angeles) is the first Elon student to receive a Truman Scholarship. A psychology major, she plans to attend graduate school in political science and is interested in political campaign finance.

The theme of the 2009 Common Experience is “Darwin’s Voyage, Human...
Member News

DANIEL MARCIAL-ROIG (University of Texas at Austin) has been named to the Latin America Region chapter of the Association of Business Travel Consulting, a business travel consulting company headquartered in Austin, Texas. An experienced travel advisor, Marcial-Roig will help provide travel and expense management programs in Latin America. Fluent in Spanish, English, Portuguese and French, the native Argentinian has held leadership roles and is senior consultant for more than 12 years and is a named partner of the firm.

BRIAN FREEMAN (Columbia College Chicago) was one of 15 finalists for the 2008 National College Football Hall of Fame college football’s most sought after and competitive awards, and was the best college football player in the country. Freeman, a 1995 graduate, has spent more than two decades in federal civil service. Before that, he was in the U.S. Army, serving as a lieutenant colonel. Freeman earned his bachelor’s degree at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

SUSANNE LYNH CAMPELL (University of Minnesota), a district attorney assistant for Hennepin County, M.N., has been named a Distinguished Government Official by the American Legion Post 32 at the University of Minnesota. Campbell at the University of Minnesota servicio. Before that, she was in the U.S. Army, serving as a lieutenant colonel. Freeman earned his bachelor’s degree at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

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Phi Kappa Phi Continues to Grow its Garden, Thanks to a Generous Donor

By Editor Peter Szatmary

Phi Kappa Phi enhanced the grounds of its national headquarters in November 2008 with the addition of the Wolfe Gardens, a 2,500-square-foot spread that includes annuals and perennials and other greenery. The undertaking was possible only by the largesse of the late William J. Wolfe of Tucson, Ariz.

The gardens are the latest example of money at work from funds contributed to Phi Kappa Phi’s first capital campaign. “I’m sure he was proud to be a member of Phi Kappa Phi,” by editor Peter Szatmary, the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi.

First-floor storage room and the remodeling of the shipping room. Phi Kappa Phi took occupancy of the building on Goodwood Boulevard in December 2006 after purchasing it in May 2006 for $800,000. Phi Kappa Phi headquarters previously had been at Louisiana State University since 1978. The Goodwood location doubled the usable space that was available at LSU — to approximately 6,100 square feet for the staff of 21.

The $1 million capital campaign was launched at the (August) 2007 Triennial Convention in Orlando, Fla. As of press deadline, the campaign has reached upwards of $500,000 of the goal.

Donations are tax deductible and qualify for corporate matching gifts. To find out more about donations, contact Phi Kappa Phi Executive Director Perry Snyder at (800) 804-9880 ext. 21 or email him at psnyder@phikappaphi.org.

Wolfe Gardens, donated by William J. Wolfe, beautifies Phi Kappa Phi’s national headquarters. (Photo: Jeremey Garland, The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi.)

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Footnotes

1 193 U.S. 97 (1968).
2 Id. at 97.
3 Id. at 100. Although not relying on them, the Court cited in footnotes various secondary sources, including Clarence Darrow’s biography, various scholarly books and articles on academic freedom, and selected items in Little Rock’s newspaper showing the state’s political climate leading to the Act.
5 The Court reason in part that “the goal of providing a more comprehensive science curriculum is not furthered either by outlawing the teaching of evolution or by requiring the teaching of creation science.” Id. at 586. As another part, the Court cited the testimony of the Louisiana Science Teachers Association that “[a]lthough scientific concept that’s based on established fact can be included in our curriculum already, and no legislation allowing this is necessary.” Id. at 587.
6 Id. at 595.
7 Id. at 599.

One of the concurring Justices went along with the majority, but with a reservation or condition — “[w]e are to reconsider the Court’s decisions interpreting the Establishment Clause.” Id. at 609 (White, J., concurring). Moreover, then Chief Justice Rehnquist joined Justice Scalia’s dissent, deferring to the express purpose of the statute and criticizing the majority for “disposing of [the Act’s constitutionality] on the gallop, by impugning the motive of its supporters.” Id. at 610.

8 Meador v. Schulte, 225 F.3d 811 (8th Cir. 2000).
9 In this case, the plaintiff was a student who claimed that the challenged portions of the test denigrated her belief in creationism, presumably by not giving it commensurate credence with her religious views.
11 Weiler v. Tangipahoa Parish Bd. of Educ., 201 F.3d 603 (5th Cir. 2000).
13 Salom v. Cobb County Sch. Dist., 499 F.3d 1310 (11th Cir. 2008). Both sides appealed the lower court’s ruling. The appellate court concluded that the record in the case was not sufficient to rule on the plaintiff parents’ claim that the trial court was wrong in concluding that the purpose of the policy was secular; and 2) the defendant district’s claim that the trial court was wrong in concluding that the primary effect of the disclaimer was religious. More specifically, the appeals court pointed to “fact-findings unsupported by evidence in the record and rampant confusion about what evidence was before the [trial] court.” Id. at 1319.

Bibliography

Study up on How to Teach in a Data-Driven Classroom, p. 28

Lytle, Susan L. “Practitioner Inquiry and the Practice of Teaching: Some Thoughts on ‘Better.’” Study up on How to Teach in a Data-Driven Classroom, p. 28

Poetic Pause

“The astral” can relate to the stars as well as to the supernatural, and in “Astrals,” Robert Lima draws from his title’s two primary definitions. By evoking both the scientific and the miraculous, this meditative poem suggests these concepts to be not opposites but rather a single continuous thread of which the human and universal conditions are woven. Through the meditative poem’s resonating final image of the body’s desire for a return to its origin, to a place among the stars, Lima integrates the beginnings of the universe and humankind, even as the entire poem shows how much we long to, and fail to, understand fully the nature of that most primal connection.— Sandra Meek, poetry editor

Editor’s note: The new Phi Kappa Phi Forum poetry contest is open only to active Society members, published or unpublished. Submissions — one per entrant per issue — should be up to 40 lines long and must reflect the theme of the issue. One original, previously unpublished poem is selected from all entries to appear in the printed version of the magazine as a complement to the scholarly articles. Runners-up may be chosen to appear online. The theme of the summer issue is American pride. The deadline to submit material is noon CST Friday, March 13, 2009. Entries will only be accepted by e-mail at poetry@phikappaphi.org. Poet, Berry College professor and PKP member Sandra Meek serves as the poetry editor and judge in consultation with Society management. For complete details and rules, visit www PhiKappaPhi.org/News/ newsroom/news_article.html?articleID=78.

Robert Lima (Pennsylvania State University) began writing poetry as an undergraduate at Villanova, was a Greenwich Village poet in the early 60s and has published six books of poetry as well as numerous books of criticism, biography and bibliography. He is Professor Emeritus of Spanish and Comparative Literature, and Fellow Emeritus, Institute for the Arts and Humanistic Studies, at Penn State. He was named Knight Commander in the Order of Queen Isabel of Spain by His Majesty Juan Carlos I. He is Academician of the North American Academy of the Spanish Language and Corresponding Member of the Royal Spanish Academy. Visit his homepage at http://www.personal.psu.edu/rld/ and email him at rld@psu.edu

Sandra Meek is the author of three books of poems, Nomadic Foundations (2002), Burn (2005), and her most recent, Biogeography, the 2006 winner of the Dorothy Award (Tupelo Press, November 2008), as well as a chapbook, The Circumference of Arrival (2006). She also is the editor of an anthology, Deep Travel: Contemporary American Poets Abroad (2007), which was awarded a 2008 Independent Publisher Book Award Gold Medal. Her poems have appeared in Agni, The Kenyon Review, Poetry, Conjunctions, Green Mountains Review and The Iowa Review, among others, and she has twice been awarded Georgia Author of the Year, in 2005 for Burn, and in 2007 for Nomadic Foundations, which also was awarded the Peace Corps Writers Award in Poetry. Meek served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Mariposa, Bolivia (1990-91). An active PKP member since her induction in 1986 at Colorado State University, she is a founding editor of Newark Press, Director of the Georgia Poetry Circuit and Professor of English, Rhetoric, and Writing at Berry College in Mount Berry, Ga.

Submissions

1 If you are an author and would like your work to be considered for inclusion in the “Bookshelf” segment of Member Focus, please send two copies of the book, contact information, and a one-page synopsis to Phi Kappa Phi Bookshelf, The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi 7536 Goodwood Blvd. Baton Rouge, LA 70806 editor@phikappaphi.org All submitted works will be added to the Phi Kappa Phi Library, housed at the Society Headquarters.

2 To submit a recent honor/achievement or current career news, e-mail (editor@phikappaphi.org) or mail a brief write-up and picture (if available) to: Member News The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi 7536 Goodwood Blvd. Baton Rouge, LA 70806 Please include your name, member number, chapter in which you were initiated, and your e-mail address and telephone numbers. Any items submitted cannot be returned, and not all submissions may be included.

“we are such stuff as dreams are made on.” — Shakespeare

We have been taught our bodies came from dust, to dust, then, would return at death.

Tonight, I learned that only half a truth was told for wise astronomers, as one, now state that stardust was the matrix of which all things were ultimately made when, primally, a Supernova burst and sprinkled its cosmic across the far-flung galaxy that’s our abode.

Since then, our bodies, made of astral dust, are longing to locate themselves once more among the womb of stars.

By Robert Lima

An astral. (Photo credit: Shutterstock.)

Phi Kappa Phi Forum Spring 2009
Matthew Henry Hall is a cartoonist and writer who lives and sings in the wilds of northern Arizona. His work has appeared in many publications, including The Missouri Review, The Chronicle of Higher Education, and Reader's Digest. Visit his Web site at www.matthewhenryhall.com, and email him at stumpystars@matthewhenryhall.com.

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