National
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for
Science
Education



# REPORTS

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Creationism Hits the Fan in Abbotsford, British Columbia

# Creationists in Canada

Scott Goodman Editor, OASIS Newsletter Vancouver, BC, Canada

CSE called me to ask, "Would you get in touch with Mark Zingarelli of Stanwood, Washington? Mark received a call from someone in Abbotsford, British Columbia who sounded quite upset about problems there."

Mark had been involved in a local controversy with creationists who controlled the Stanwood school board and had engineered a campaign that eventually saw the creationist majority on the Board overturned. He had written a comic book style account of his experience which had appeared in the magazine Mother Jones. The person in B.C. had read the article and wanted to know how he could get help in dealing with the creationists in Abbotsford.

Since taking over *OASIS* Newsletter from J. Richard Wakefield earlier in the year (1994), I had been in contact with the NCSE quite often and had volunteered to help out in any way I could should anyone

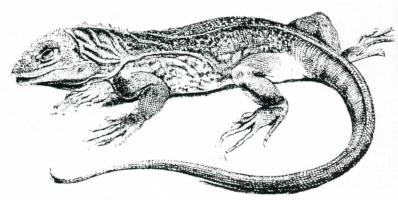
in the Pacific Northwest need help dealing with creationism. Despite some initial concerns about an overly enthusiastic new recruit, the office asked me to look into the situation.

That was over eight months ago. Today, there is a Civil Liberties court case about to be announced, and a local committee of correspondence is in place in Abbotsford. With a great deal of favorable press coverage and editorial comment, including national television coverage here in Canada, NCSE's Molleen Matsumura suggested that it would be useful to let NCSE members know how I went about attacking the problem so that others might be able to use

a similar approach in their community.

Abbotsford is a well-known fundamentalist Christian enclave located in the rural Fraser Valley in southwestern British Columbia east of Vancouver. For years, local politics have been dominated by church issues. Political success depended, and still does, on which church a candidate attends. In 1983, the school board of the day passed an "equal time" policy for creation and evolution which is still on the books. In the mid 1980's, it required a Civil Liberties Association lawsuit to force the board to comply with a federal law forbidding

Canada continued on p. 10



Amblyrynchus Demarlii A species of Lizard found on some of the Islands of the Galapayos Archipelayo

#### EDITOR'S DESK.

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Page 1, 22: Galapagos engravings from *The Voyage of the Beagle*, by Charles Darwin. (1909 Collier & Son edition)

pril 1st the NCSE Board met in Oakland, CA at the site of the annual meeting of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists. Teresa Kim, Molleen Matsumura, Erik Wheaton and I and a couple of volunteers took turns staffing an exhibit table at that 4day meeting of scholars. We peddled NCSE brochures and information, bumperstickers, books and pins. Business was terrific, and we rapidly sold out of some items and then took mail orders to fill later. In the process we demonstrated varying degrees of manual and mental dexterity as we tried to calculate sales taxes, operate complex machinery (ballpoint pens, etc.) and extol the virtues of NCSE, all at the same time. Sales were brisk, and sometimes the dialogue was, too. A few people made fun of us for wasting our time on a supposedly dead issue, but most of the clientele seemed interested; time and again one professor or another would tell us how wonderful it was that "someone is dealing with this." At which point I of course would ask, "So are you a member yet?" (Replies varied from yes to "Are you kidding? I'm trying to get by on a professor's income!") A thoroughly nonscientific sampling on my part suggests that the people most interested in what we had to offer—and most interested in telling us about their specific problems recently with antievolutionists-were people whose nametags indicated they worked at community colleges or precollege schools. This is not altogether news, but it is sometimes reassuring to have one's ideas confirmed! People in closest touch with public schools are

most in touch with the problem and feeling the most threatened. A couple of times minor arguments erupted spontaneously when one or another university researcher commented that the problem was over and another passerby heard this and told about her recent troubles in the trenches! A lot of the meeting attendees seemed not to know of NCSE's activities (although we have written them before and spoken at meetings), so "showing the flag" was especially useful.

In addition, NCSE presented a well-attended plenary session early that Thursday evening. Organized by Board Members Andrew Petto and Laurie Godfrey, the "show" was a scary yet hilarious "docudrama" in which a real college department chairperson from the audience was brought in to deal with a supposed student complaining about one of his professors teaching "intelligent design theory." The professor was played by Bob Steiner-NCSE's accountant and pastpresident of the American Society of Magicians, and the slightly dim student with a backwards baseball cap and skateboard was brilliantly impersonated by new NCSE President, Berkeley paleontologist Kevin Padian. Genie Scott moderated, and after a while opened the show up to audience members. The demonstration was, I thought, extremely effective and wellreceived. Rather than lecturing about an abstract problem, the cast demonstrated how real problems develop and can be very tricky to deal with.

John Cole

# NH Vote Rebuffs Creationists

John Cole

errimack, NH voters in early May repudiated two religious right school board candidates in a record turnout. Christian Coalition still hold a 3-2 majority, but it had hoped to gain unanimous control, according to the *Boston Globe*.

Former board chairman Kenneth Coleman, a moderate defeated last Spring, was re-elected by a landslide. The biggest winner was a Nashua, NH high school biology teacher, Brenda Grady, who had campaigned against teaching creationism in her Merrimack home town schools.

A local New England Christian Coalition spokesman was quoted by the Globe as saying he knew nothing about the election, but national Coalition leader Ralph Reed had recently campaigned in area churches, urging people to get out the vote for conservative candidates. Two board members recently missed a board meeting in order to attend a Christian Coalition meeting, stirring local anger. In February the conservative majority left a board meeting under police escort after a raucous meeting. A local pastor who had demanded inclusion of creationism in the school curriculum later withdrew his proposal while tempers cooled. The campaign for creationism remains tabled, but the "moment of silence" requirement for schools which was voted in last Fall remains in effect. Similar meditation requirements have been enacted in many jurisdictions. Massachusetts, for example, has long had a state-mandated "moment of silence" required of all schools, although it is only sporadically enforced. As we reported earlier (*Reports* 14(4):1), Merrimack, a Boston suburb, is one of the few New England school districts which has entertained a creationism requirement recently, to our knowledge, although NCSE hears of widespread pressures to downplay or eliminate evolution from curricula.

NCSE has been active in supplying Merrimack-area members with information. While the debate is far from over, local supporters of science education deserve hearty congratulations for their successful efforts, so far!



# **End to National Education Standards?**

John Cole

he US House of Representatives in an early May voice vote to kill the national commission on education standards let it be known that "education reform" would be a major part of the new Republican agenda. Killing the presidentially appointed council was only the first step, promised Rep. William Goodling, R-Pa., chairman of the Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities. Among billions of dollars in other cuts, he aims to abolish the Education Department and a host of federal education programs, including special help for non-English speaking and homeless children.

"While I recognize that many of my colleagues would like to go much further in limiting federal involvement in education, I want to assure them that they will have the opportunity as our committee considers broader education reform legislation," Goodling said during the brief debate on the standards bill.

Conservatives, who want education matters left under state and local control, had feared that the National Education Standards and Improvement Council would become a sort of national school board, mandating curriculum. The conservative Family Research Council at a House committee meeting likened Goals 2000 to federal coercion by "government nannies" who threaten school autonomy.

The Goals 2000 Educate America Act aims to certify national standards on educational content and student performance and to help states develop their own standards. White House sources cited by the Associated Press indicated they would not fight to retain the program which had been set in motion by GOP President Bush.

Goodling called national standards "vague and fuzzy attempts to shape students' attitudes and values—matters that should be left to parents." This, of course, is also the language consistently used to oppose evolution education. Many NCSE members and Supporters have been active in developing Goals 2000 science education standards.

Education Secretary Richard Riley vows to fight elimination of his department, calling it "extreme and shortsighted."

Standards
"should be
left to
parents"



# Alabama: The Eagle Forum Has Landed

#### Molleen Matsumura

labama creationists scored a significant victory on March 9, 1995. Under pressure from the state affiliate of Phyllis Schlafly's "Eagle Forum," the state Board of Education adopted science curriculum guidelines riddled with loopholes that will make it easier to push for creationism at the local level in Alabama.

Tactics The Eagle Forum began by mounting a very broad attack on the Course of Study: Science (COSS) that had been developed by the Department of Education's professional staff. In an "action alert" to their own members, organizers claimed that the COSS "pursues a social agenda." objected that memorization was "treated negatively," and complained that describing a teacher as a "facilitator" "changes the traditional role." They hinted that the COSS drafters' use of sources like Benchmarks for Science Literacy and the draft National Standards for Science Education was some sort of conspiracy, saying it "Links Alabama to a national program planned to last until the year 2061." They disapprovingly cited statements that in fact cannot even be found in Benchmarks for Scientific Literacy.

In a letter to science teachers, Alabama Eagle Forum's president, Eunie Smith, asserted that the COSS "treats debatable issues [read: "evolution"] as not debatable," and that a problem-solving approach would make students feel "frustrated and insecure." Smith even argued that keeping the old guidelines would save

money by making it possible to keep old textbooks (never mind how worn out or dated!)

The day before the Board of Education convened to hear public testimony, it scheduled a working meeting with the COSS Committee. When Eagle Forum representatives appeared, Committee's Chair told them it was a closed meeting, but the newlyelected Governor insisted that the Committee meet with Eagle Forum separately from the Board. There, they made changes in the COSS draft that had already been issued for public comment. The next day, although lists of changes had not been publicly released or distributed to everyone who came to testify, the Board adopted the revisions and an addendum that said in part, "Explanations of the origins of life and major groups of plants and animals, including humans, shall be treated as theory and not as fact." When the revised COSS was finally released, it was clear that, despite the variety of objections the Eagle Forum had made, they had homed in on two targets: any material related to teaching evolution and any material suggesting that scientific investigation may help in solving ethical problems.

Seemingly minor changes in wording will have a major impact. For example, the eighth grade requirement to "Trace progressive complexity of circulatory and nervous systems in earthworms, frogs, and humans." was changed to "Compare the complexity...;" while "progressive" is a poor word choice to evolutionists, it implies an element of change over time to

which creationists objected. Instead, "comparison" could be made of static systems unchanged since they were specially created.

"Evaluate evidence that supports the theory of natural selection," was changed to "Evaluate the theory." While the requirement to present evidence is eliminated, the way is opened for "criticisms of evolution."

New Challenges The creationist victory in Alabama is not decisive. More battles will come as
the COSS is applied at the local
level and textbooks are adopted.
But the creationists' job will be
easier now, and there are greater
challenges facing NCSE activists
who must educate their fellow
citizens, establish good working
relationships with education officials, and build alliances with
other organizations concerned
about the issues.

In other states, the challenge is to learn from the Alabama experience and avert new creationist victories. John Frandsen, Chair of the Committee on Science and Public Policy of the Alabama Academy of Science, and Scott Brande, Professor of Geology at the University of Alabama, actively supported COSS and helped NCSE develop these suggestions:

Contact local and state Boards of Education and learn how to follow their schedule for considering changes in science curricula. Then you will have the lead time you need to prepare testimony and gather support.

Evidence
for
evolution
no longer
required—
and
"criticisms
of
evolution"
added to
the
curriculum

 $\blacktriangle$ 

- Contact other organizations, such as civil liberties organizations, that would be concerned about the issue. Inform them about opportunities to publicly support evolution, and share relevant information.
- Work with religious leaders who share your views. Many denominations support evolution education or oppose tax-supported religious indoctrination. Yet, Dr. Frandsen noted, only one religious spokesman addressed the Alabama Board of Education in favor of evolution, and the Eagle Forum's moralistic criticisms of COSS were unchallenged. Religious leaders can also be helpful in educational efforts if they are drawn into the debate and kept informed.
- Learn about the national science reform effort. Claims that reforms are an attempt to use the federal government to suppress local control or impose a "new world order" can be highly emotional and effective. Yet, as Dr. Brande points out, important resources like Benchmarks for Scientific Literacy are the work of independent organizations like the National Academy of Sciences. Also, they are the work of a diverse team of scientists and educators in many states. The truth about the movement towards national standards in science is that they demonstrate an educational consensus in favor of stronger science education-including teaching of evolution.

Alabama is only one of many states that periodically review and update curriculum frameworks that guide classroom content and textbook adoptions.

Because the November 1994 elections increased the number of "Religious Right" school board members and the influence of organizations like Eagle Forum and the Christian Coalition, we can expect intensified efforts to force creationism into public schools or evolution out of them. Both the political tactics that were used in Alabama, and the specific changes in the Course of Study: Science that resulted, are examples of what defenders of evolution (and good science education generally) can expect to face in other states.

National standards an attempt to impose "a new world order?"



# The Piltdown Man

John Cole

reationists are fond of claiming that the famous fraud, "Piltdown Man," is a weak link in evolution education. The implication is that evolutionists either continue to use fraudulent evidence or somehow cover it up. Since Piltdown seems to be an excellent example of selfcorrecting science operating well, this seems like a poor choice for attack. It is common to hear that "No one takes that claim seriously!" muttered in exasperation. But as Jim Lippard points out in the Talk.Origins newsgroup, someone does take it seriously: Piltdown is still a part of Scientology training.

The late L. Ron Hubbard's 1952 book, *The History of Man*, is still used as a training text by the movement. Scientology teaches

that people have a sort of built-up collective unconscious which needs to be understood and cleaned out, and the personal behavior traits of Piltdown (the supposed ancestor, not the fraud case!) are outlined in amazing detail.

"Man's first real Manhood is found in the Piltdown, a creature not an ape, yet not entirely a Man. . . . The Piltdown contains freakish acts of strange 'logic,' of . . . eating one's wife, and other somewhat illogical activities. The Piltdown teeth were enormous and he was quite careless as to whom and what he bit and often very much surprised at the resulting damage. . . . Obsessions about biting, efforts to hide the mouth and early familial troubles can be found in the Piltdown."

This pseudopsychoanalysis is all the more remarkable, considering the patient is a prehistoric creature who never even existed, let alone slightly illogically bit his wife! Let's support Scientology's goal of purging putative racial memories of this . . . and of other false memories and delusions.

#### **Planned Giving**

When drafting or revising your will or life insurance, please consider making a bequest to NCSE, Inc., a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) non-profit educational organization under IRS rules. For more information, contact NCSE, PO Box 9477, Berkeley, CA 94709 (510-526-1674).

# **Dr. Quinn Prescribes Evolution**

#### **Kevin Padian**

Museum of Paleontology University of California-Berkeley and NCSE President

he item in the newspaper caught my attention. The plot teaser for Dr. Quinn Medicine Woman said that the townsfolk were getting upset because Dr. Quinn was teaching evolution to the schoolchildren. Now, given that CBS is the network that aired the show on "mysteries of the Bible," where they spent a whole lot of time trying to show that Noah really could fit all those animals on the Ark, and even more time staring at a pile of rocks on Mt. Ararat that was supposed to be the remains of the Ark (hasn't anybody there heard of helicopters or telephoto lenses?), how would CBS handle this sensitive subject on one of its toprated shows?

It turns out that the clowns in the quality control department were as asleep at the wheel that day as they had been months ago when they let the "mysteries of the Bible" slip past. Only this time, it was in a different direction. The episode of "Dr. Quinn" was handled honestly, if hokily, but that's television. A fairly honest representation of evolution, 1870s-style, was the basis of the show.

The premise was that the town Reverend, who usually teaches school, takes a few days' sick leave on account of an impacted wisdom tooth. Dr. Quinn, who has just been reading Darwin's Descent of Man, wastes no time pointing out the evolutionary lesson to the afflicted Reverend, who is none too eager to hear it. And, of course, most of the townsfolk think she's nuts and

anti-Christian—especially the troglodytes on the town council. So Dr. Quinn takes over teaching school for the Reverend, and what do you think is the first thing she teaches the children? Oh, so you were in the audience, too.

An interesting sub-plot concerned the treatment of a little girl, befriended by Dr. Quinn's son, who was evidently abused by her guardian, a headstrong and unstable, ill-kempt farmer. (In contrast, Dr. Quinn's consort, who wears immaculate fringed buckskin, keeps the company of a wolflike dog, freeloads at her house and seems to have no visible means of support, looks like he just emerged from a week at Club Med.) Though the little girl is unwashed, unfed, and suffering from fever induced by rat bites, the townsfolk can do nothing about it: the law will protect animals from abuse by their owners, but not children from abuse by their guardians. Until, mirabile dictu, Dr. Quinn gets the bright idea to argue at the town council meeting that the child is an animal, and therefore deserves at least equally humane treatment. For her support, she reads not only from Darwin, but from the Bible (Ecclesiastes 3:19-you can look it up, as Casev Stengel said). The town council is shamed into agreeing with her. The world may be no safer for evolution, but even the hypocrites recognize its situational value!

What did the show resolve? Maybe nothing, but what can be expected when more than 125 years of further scientific validation haven't brought us any closer to social understanding? To its credit, the terms of the debate were handled sensitively, and most importantly, the

heroine—Dr. Quinn, family idol of millions, firmly advocated evolution as a reasonable scientific hypothesis, consistent with empirical evidence. Moreover, she argued with the Reverend that people need to understand scientific theory to be informed and educated. She reprimanded the Reverend for labeling Darwin's work as sinful, while assigning students to report on scientists like Galileo, who in his time was considered a heretic, but later was validated by science as well as the Church.

A supporting cast member (a woman who always seems to be on the verge of tears, but tends the general store and takes minutes at meetings) chimed in when the menfolk are discussing what a flake Dr. Quinn is to believe this monkey stuff. The woman offered the view that she thought children weren't supposed to be taught what to think, but how to think. She was, of course, told to shut up by the menfolk, who can vote and hold property and so presumably have higher cerebral powers. But the point was made. Overall, evolution was made to seem eminently reasonable-just change through time, which is inevitable—and perhaps this reasonableness, in contrast with the inflammatory slogans and high-handedness of the reactionaries, did as much to advance the cause of evolution in the public eve as most news reports and school textbooks

If you did not see this episode, watch for a rerun; if you did, and thought the issue was well handled, why not let CBS know? They will no doubt hear from those who feel that evolution has no place in the public schools, and who will never trust Dr. Quinn's medicine again.

A good example of the 19th

century view

 $\blacksquare$ 

# **Texas: No Pandas for Plano**

#### Molleen Matsumura

he creationist textbook Of Pandas and People has been rejected again, this time in Plano, Texas, not far from Richardson, home of the book's publisher, the Foundation for Thought and Ethics.

In a pattern that is becoming familiar all over the country, a newly elected school board began a variety of changes associated with the "religious right" agenda. In August, 1994, alert citizens contacted NCSE after hearing a rumor that the board was considering purchase of Pandas. By the time board member Tom Wilds had publicly announced his plan to purchase thirty copies of the book to distribute to science teachers, promising to buy as many additional copies as teachers might request, his opposition had organized. "Keep Quality In Plano Schools" (KQUIPS) was founded not only to oppose the purchase, but to monitor school board actions and candidates, and address any issue concerning the quality of education in their community.

In the following months, there was intense discussion of the issue. Not only Plano newspapers, but the nearest metropolitan daily, The Dallas Morning Sun, covered every aspect of the problem, from the scientific and educational issues to the religious motivations of the publishers of Pandas. A local radio station broadcast KOUIPS founder Evelvn Peelle's interview of Tom Wilds. NCSE's resource center. and our state liaison provided KQUIPS spokespeople with detailed scientific critiques of Pandas, information on the legality of teaching "creation science," and help in contacting other concerned organizations.

Concern for a variety of educational issues was a key ingredient of KQUIPS' eventual success. Because their newsletter addressed a variety of issues, from zoning to graduation requirements to the cost of "Take Your Daughter to Work Day," they could not be accused, as opponents of *Pandas* sometimes are, of narrow-mindedly persecuting alternate views. They reached out



to many members of the community. Their ranks included scientists who could explain what is wrong with *Pandas* and religious people who could counter letters to the editor falsely equating evolution and atheism. Also, when KQUIPS objected to introducing a textbook that had not been subject to normal review processes, they expressed a concern that could apply to any book.

Cooperation with other groups was another key to success; the North Texas Skeptics were especially helpful in collecting and distributing information, and planning strategy for addressing the School Board when it formally considered Wilds' proposal to purchase *Pandas*. When the Board met on February 7, there was a large, determined audience. Joe Voelkering of the North Texas Skeptics told

NCSE, "We brought a box full of anti-Pandas badges-a red circle and slash superimposed over a black and white drawing of a panda. Every badge was taken. When the Board looked out at the room, they could see nearly everyone there was opposed [to the book]." ACLU attorneys in the audience reminded the Board that teaching creationism was illegal. Others—despite attempts to silence them-insisted on reprimanding the Board for considering an action that could cost thousands of dollars to defend in court.

The opposition was so overwhelming that the Board decided that day not to purchase Pandas. Still, the story isn't over. While the Board determined that none of them will re-open the subject of adopting Pandas themselves, they will reconsider at the request of school district staff (they didn't define "staff," and it seems any employee, from playground supervisor or cafeteria worker to science teacher, could make the request). Also, if local school control comes to pass, as advocated by Texas' new governor George Bush, we can expect creationism to be proposed again in Plano and many other communities in the state.

It's a good thing KQUIPS is there for the long haul. Working with groups like these is NCSE's best tactic in defending evolution. It's been said that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty; it may be the price of a good science education as well.

[Thanks to Evelyn Peelle of KQUIPS, and Joe Voelkering and Mike Sullivan of the North Texas Skeptics, for information used in this story.]

Cooperation with other groups was key to success



# ICR "Accredited"

John Cole

ICR's

reputation no

deterrent

he Institute for Creation Research Graduate School has been certified for reaccreditation by TRACS, the "Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools." TRACS was founded in 1979 by ICR founder Henry Morris and others as an alternative to the "secular" regional accreditation groups and state agencies which had questioned ICR Grad School's standards and resources. The renewal is for an additional ten years, but the exact effect of this is unclear, pending resolution of the California political battle over school licensing. TRACS is not recognized as a legitimate accreditation organization by the state of California.

Founded as part of Christian Heritage College, in 1980 the ICR "research division" was renamed the Graduate School and spun off to independent status in order to protect Christian Heritage College's

accreditation by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), a recognized accrediting body. There were reservations about the ICR's limited facilities and rigid doctrinal statement requiring absolute belief in creationist conclusions to questions allegedly being researched. Christian Heritage College, founded in 1973 by Henry Morris and Tim LaHaye (co-founder of the Moral Majority), is a conservative, fundamentalist institution which was already reportedly receiving criticism from WASC for its own dogmatism. Splitting off the ICR Grad School was considered a good way to distinguish its program from the even more dogmatic ICR agenda.

Henry Morris stepped down from the TRACS Board and its Chairmanship in 1994 after 15 years. He was succeeded on the Board by ICR Administrative Vice President Larry Vardiman. The new Chairman is Dr. Gene Williams, Chancellor of Luther Rice

Seminary in Atlanta. TRACS was approved as an accrediting body by the federal government, despite opposition by state officials and both Reagan and Bush Education Department leaders. Approval by TRACS requires meeting "Foundational Standards" (doctrinal, philosophical, moral and financial, including commitment to strict creationism and Biblical inerrant authority) plus "Operating Standards" of academic quality, according to the November 1994 Acts and Facts. Anyone wanting more information from TRACS may write to 2114 Arrow Court, Murfreesboro, TN 37130, their national headquarters, or call (615) 890-8384. TRACS itself is up for recertification. Congressional hearings will be held at the end of May. At the same time, the House has voted to eliminate the entire Department of Education, so Departmental certification policies could become a moot issue.

## Ken Ham at Large

John Cole

en Ham, the Aussie evangelist who seemed to be the ICR heir-apparent to Duane Gish for a while, has embarked on his own ministry. He still participates in joint appearances with the ICR, so we assume the parting was relatively amicable. Unlike most ICR staffers, Ham never claimed to be a scientist, although he has always been enamored with "scientific creationism."

Ham now heads "Answers in Genesis!" This is an organization

providing a monthly newsletter of the same title. It is sent quarterly to people on its general mailing list and monthly to subscribers to *Creation* magazine (formerly *Creation ex nihilo*), the glossy Australian creationist magazine) or to donors to Answers in Genesis, "a nonprofit ministry, and all gifts are tax-deductible." AIG promises each month to deliver articles from Dr. Carl Wieland, former ICR Prof. Gary Parker, and others on "the forefront of 'creation evangelism.'"

Ham has always been very overtly Christian-evangelistic,

slightly contrary to the mainstream image the Institute for Creation Research has tried to cultivate for itself and its positions. Critics have appreciated Ham's advocacy of clearcut Christian evangelism, although they have also been repelled by his Ham-handed, uncompromising fire and brimstone tactics.

Ham's newsletter consists very largely of ads for ICR books.

As the saying goes, seeds (and nuts) never fall too far from the tree.

# Christian Coalition Gears up for Iowa Presidential Race

#### John Cole

owa holds symbolically important caucuses to elect delegates to presidential nominating conventions. Their first in the nation caucuses, along with New Hampshire's traditional earliest primary election, means that two culturally conservative states have great influence on the nominating process. The caucus system, which relies upon stalwart volunteers with strong bladders who can attend a meeting and stay two, four, six or how ever many hours it takes, rewards "true believers."

The Christian Coalition now dominates the Iowa Republican Party, and news reports indicate that it is already organizing for the 2,500 February 1996 caucuses. Last year they succeeded temporarily in getting the industrialized city of Waterloo to adopt an equal time for creationism school requirement. Ridicule from the *Des Moines Register* and the active involvement of NCSE members managed to repeal that policy before it could be enforced.

Reports indicate that a former Pat Robertson organizer in Iowa has endorsed Patrick Buchanan, this time around. Other CC leaders are considering Senator Bob Dole and Senator Phil Gramm, both of whom are considered too soft on the social issues. Both are leaning heavily towards "local control" and "parental control" of schoolscode words for school prayer and possible creationism gambits. All three have endorsed forms of legalized school prayer, already. None has spoken out on anti-evolutionism, preferring so far to skirt an embarrassing topic by deferring meekly to "local control." Conservative commentators are pressuring them to more openly endorse the Christian Coalition social agenda or risk losing a crucial 40% of the national Republican primary vote, while more liberal critics are hoping they do just that. By embracing Pat Robertson's agenda, they may at some point have to start defending ideas they personally dislike—what columnist Anthony Lewis recently labelled the "crack-pot factor" in American populism.

President Clinton seems so far to have no challengers in the Democratic campaign for Iowa.

#### **Asking Marilyn Again**

Parade Magazine columnist Marilyn vos Savant recently responded to a questioner worried about whether evolutionary theory excludes God. Scientists, she wrote, would not exclude God or any other possibility, if they are open minded. "[T]he first scientist who proves that God exists would be revered all over the planet." She does not note that most scientists work on other topics, although she writes that "...no scientist wants to spend his or her precious time on Earth formulating worthless theories."

#### **Evolution Online**

#### John Cole

n addition to an electronic mail address, soon we'll be able to announce an electronic "home page" address for NCSE; volunteers at Berkeley are developing such a site on the World Wide Web-the hottest new trend on the Information Highway. We have often noted Cleveland Freenet, where some NCSE publications are already uploaded by Page Stephens and Jim Kutz in the "Skeptics" group or SIG (Special Interest Group). Other volunteers have offered to load NCSE data on their own bulletin boards, or, like Jeff Lowder, to develop an NCSE subsite at their locations, but we have chosen to develop our own site-a bit slowed due to lack of time and computer resources, frankly.

A few of the *UseNet* forums of interest include "talk.origins,"

"bit.skeptics," "sci.anthro," and "alt.Darwin." If you are a computer user, you probably know some other electronic bulletin boards, forums on CompuServe, Prodigy, America OnLine, etc., and Usenet and Internet addresses which deal with evolution and science education. Can you share the results of your explorations? Send info to the editor at c/o ncse@crl.com so we can publish a good long list in a forthcoming issue.

#### Robert Dietz Dies at 80

Next issue will include an obituary for the extraordinary NCSE Supporter, Bob Dietz, who died when this issue was going to press.

# Canada continued from p. 1

prayer in public schools. [In Canada, we do not have a Constituanti-establishment provision. We do have freedom of religion, of course, which amounts to the same thing. But it is harder to argue in court.] There had been an attempt in 1990 by a local college professor to run for school board on an "academic integrity" platform which included removing creationism from the schools. He was crucified (no pun intended). The local churches organized against him. A flyer circulated supporting his opponents that read "Keep God on the School Board, vote for ... " This gives a sense of the sentiments in the community.

My contact in Abbotsford, whose identity even now must be kept confidential, began by telling me of these events and relating the stories of several of his friends and acquaintances in the community who had suffered at the hands of local creationists.

It is very important to understand the nasty reaction of many in this community whenever someone challenges the religious views held by what seems to be a majority of the people there. They do not simply disagree with you in a polite or civil way. Instead, one can find oneself ostracized at work. Job promotions and pay raises might become problematical issues. If you are in business, you can see your trade decline drastically. Your children suddenly develop "discipline problems" at school that they never had before. Criticizing creationism in Abbotsford, B.C. is no joke. It is deadly serious. You are laying your happiness, success and comfort in the community on the line to do it.

Realizing the gravity of the situation and that the religious ideologues running the community were firmly entrenched, I knew that it was going to be a long, hard fight to even begin to dislodge them. They are still in control even as I write this, though their days are now numbered.

In a situation like this, it is very important to have several things in place before you should even consider any sort of showdown. You must first have support within the community concerned. Without this, you are lost. Local people know the history and can provide the detail (and evidence, if need be) that are vital if you hope to succeed. In Abbotsford, dealing with the fear and intimidation of people opposing the religious majority has also been a major problem.

Once you have local contacts established, the next thing is to get the relevant authorities on the record regarding the issue. In this case, I did several things. I wrote to the Ministry of Education and provided them with a detailed file on

#### Galápagos Again!

The February Galápagos Island trip was a great success, so the organizers would like to conduct another one as soon as this summer. You should have heard in the mail about it already, and that-and this-will probably be the only communiques available before a July departure. So if you are interested, don't delay! CALL NCSE ASAP-1-800-290-6006 for information and reservations.

creationism; what it is, its legal history, why it is sectarian (*very* important!), and why teaching it is damaging to a student's education. Based on earlier correspondence, I already had an idea of what the reply would be, and I was not surprised when I received it.

Even though the B.C. School Act expressly forbids teaching sectarian dogmas or creeds and specifies that public schools are to be conducted on a strictly secular basis, the Ministry took the position that Divine creation is not a religious idea for purposes of the Act; that even if it was, I would have to show that it was being taught in the classroom; that even if I did, it was a local school board matter and if the local board wouldn't respond, well. I was welcome to take the matter to court. Prophetic words. They will come back to haunt them.

Having established this paper trail, I made my first contact with the press. There is little point in contacting the electronic media at first. other than to let them know who you are and what you are up to. They are only interested in controversial events that can be quickly covered in a thirty second news item. Instead, I got in touch with columnists at the Vancouver Sun, the leading B.C. newspaper, whom I knew would be sympathetic to the cause. A few phone calls and some mailed background information was all that I did at first.

Next, I contacted several organizations. I provided complete files to the B.C. Civil Liberties Association, the Human Rights Council (a Provincial human rights watchdog), and the B.C. Ombudsman's Office, an arm's length government-established public advocacy organization. With two out of three, I hit pay-

Efforts to remove creationism from public schools

▲

two members of the Abbotsford NCSE's Dr. Eugenie Scott and ing columnists. I appeared with ried opinion pieces by their lead-Province, as well as the Sun carletters. The other major paper, the local papers carried articles and Board to rescind the policy. The Minister of Education to force the botsford Board and called on the efforts, condemned the Abeditorial strongly supported my ver Sun. The next day's lead spected newspaper, the Vancoufeature article in B.C.'s most reerland. This was followed by a the Abbotsford Board, John Suthtalk show along with the Chair of vited me to appear on a morning

As a result of all of this, the Abbotsford Board was now under considerable pressure. The Minister of Education wrote to me to say that he agrees with my position, although he still maintained that he was powerless to do anything about it.

Board on a local radio talk show.

scientists!"

sn ind

"Nobody here

Finally, in May, the Minister directed the local school board to follow the law—and to report to him specifically how they were doing it!

May I 5th, the board met—and decided to follow the tactic of claiming they are just being fair and teaching all sides of a scientific isue ("Mobody here but us scientistes!"). I had already helped supply information to the Provincial Ministry, so the Minister will not be surprised by the newest tactic. He bas the power in B.C. to dismiss the school board or take other actions school board or take other actions

The "next" shoe will drop when the local committee of correspondence goes public and holds a press conference. This will be coordinated with the announcement of the Civil Liberties Association court chaltenge, and this will become a national news story local authorities will be hard-put to ignore.

to enforce the law.

#### Darwin On Intelligent Design

It is so easy to hide our ignorance under such expressions as the "plan of creation," "unity of design," &c., and to think that we give an explanation when we only re-state a fact. Any one whose disposition leads him to attach more weight to unexplained difficulties than to the explanation of a certain number of facts will certainly reject the theory [of evolution by natural selecterolulian selecterolulian selecterolulian selecterolulian selecterolu

uon].
—Charles Darwin, Origin of Species, 6th edition, 1872, p. 180.

Mext, I asked for the opportunity to make a presentation to the Board as a public advocate on the issue. I provided extensive docutions of those in the community opposed to the policy. I was told I would get no more than five minutes to make my presentation.

On the appointed evening, when my turn came, I got up and made my five minute appeal. For the next twenty five minute appeal. For the next among themselves about the policy, my objections, and whether to send the policy to committee for teview. In the end, it was tabled to the following week for discussion. At that later meeting, the creationist majority killed the motion for review, but it was already too late. It had now become a news story.

First, a Vancouver radio station broke the story in the electronic media. Then, my earlier press contacts paid off. CBC Radio (part of Canada's national broadcasting network) phoned and in-

Abbotstord.

dirt. The Ombudsman's office is currently taking the Ministry of Education to task for refusing to investigate or enforce a reported breach of the School Act. The Orivil Liberties Association opened a file and has since upgraded it to the point where a lawgraded it to the point where a lawgraded it is imminent. Recently the Education Ministry has also responded directly.

It was time to face them directly. Board right where I wanted them. ture of the policy. I now had the any doubt about the sectarian navideo list. There could no longer be Creation Research's book and tained was right off the Institute for to support the policy. The list I obhave on hand "teaching materials" LRC and the school libraries to struck gold! Their policy directs the Resource Center. And here, I really botsford School District's Learning an afterthought, I contacted the Abhad been made. Finally, almost as still in effect and that no changes itself and to be certain that it was the Board office to see the policy back over ten years. I had gone to sonal correspondence file going extensive press clipping and pernity had been compiling an stead, my contacts in the commudealings with them whatsoever. Intime, I had deliberately not had any to be crucial for success. Up to this botsford, an activity that has proven bers of the school board in Abhistorical intelligence on the mem-In the meantime, I was gathering

In November, by coincidence, there was a by-election to fill some vacant city council seats and one school board seat. I attended the only all-candidates meeting and publicly challenged the creationism policy. All but one of the candidates (an Indoone of the candidates (an Indoers of the policy. Interestingly, the ers of the policy. Interestingly, the winning candidate subsequently became the new chairperson of the Board.

### · RESOURCES ·

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Berra, Evolution and the Myth of Creationism	8.95	7.00	McCollister, ed., Voices for Evolution	10.00	8.00
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Clark, Evolution and Cultural Literacy	7.00	5.60	Shows Why the Creationists Are Wrong	18.95	15.25
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Dietz & Holden, Creation/Evolution			Newell, Creation and Evolution: Myth or		
Satiricon	12.95	10.25	Reality?	12.95	10.35
Diamond, The Third Chimpanzee	13.00	10.40	Numbers, The Creationists	*27.00	21.50
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#### . RESOURCES .

Listing items here or offering to distribute them does not imply NCSE endorsement; annotations are by the editor or various contributors.

These listings often include items available from NCSE, but the list changes each issue. Consult back issues for other resources—they are still in our files and available for distribution even if we can't keep listing them!

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#### **New Newsletter**

Ed Babinski writes to tell of his new newsletter. Cretinism or Evilution? The first issue is 18 pages long and contains several pieces including: The 27 Best Things Ever Said in Favor of Human Evolution. The Revised Quote Book: Looking at How Creationists Quote Evolutionists, etc. Subscriptions are \$15.00 per year. ("Which includes at least two thick issues, containing as many pages of articles and reponses that I can stuff into them without going over budget for the year.") A single "trial" issue is \$2.50. Address all inquiries and make checks payable to E.T. Babinski, 109 Burwood Dr., Simpsonville, SC 29681-5216.

Farney, Dennis. 1995. Dole's Presidential Bid Will Face Hurdle of Move in the Kansas GOP Toward the Religious Right. *Wall Street Journal* 10 April, p. A20. Analysis of how and whether Dole can win support among antievolutionists.

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Mascarenhas, Desmond. 1994. A Vital Interest: Science Education and the Biotechnology Industry. *Bio/Technology* July. Why business must get involved in biology education improvement.

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Shermer, Michael. 1995. A Gentlemanly Arrangement. *Skeptic* 3(2):80-89. How Darwin and Wallace worked out their strong agreement.

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#### **NEW BOOKS**

#### Darwin's Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the Meaning of Life

Daniel C. Dennett

A philosopher defends evolution against academic and other critics.

#### The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Human Evolution

Steve Jones, Robert Martin, and David Pilbeam

Now in Paperback! Definitive source of information on primates, genetics, fossils, social behavior, ecology—the works, by Pilbeam, Gingerich, Delson, Wood, Stringer, etc.

#### The Book of Life

Stephen Jay Gould, ed.

Beautifully-illustrated coffee-table format book traces the past from prokaryotes to humans. Chapters by Sepkoski, Benton, Janis, Andrews and Stringer. hardback.

#### The Institute for Pi

Classic 1981 videotape revealing the absurd science practiced in the infamous Institute for Pi Research, dedicated to proving the truth of the Biblical dictum that Pi = 3.0. Long an underground classic. 25 minute videotape.

#### **Evolution** Simulation

#### Carl Bajema

Embark on

the Beagle

An interactive "evolution through time" computer simulation is now available on CD-ROM.

Within the last year or so, the California Academy of Sciences put on a fairly big exhibit called "Life Through Time: the Evidence for Evolution." The exhibit included several interactive demonstrations of physical aspects of evolution, with less modeling of modern human behavior. The interactive parts of the exhibit are now out on CD-ROM. For information about this new software, contact the Academy at their web server address: http://www.calacademy.org

#### Darwin: \$80 from NCSE!

#### **Butler Crittendon** San Francisco

D-ROM Darwin is a first class addition to the library of anyone interested in the serious study of evolution or who just likes to read original sources with original graphics. The sounds, of course are new-some 100 Megabytes of the 308 or so on Darwin, and only possible due to the multimedia capabilities of CD-ROM. The disk includes the complete text and computer replications of the original illustrations of Charles Darwin's The Voyage of the Beagle (final ed.). Origin of Species (6th/final ed.), The Descent of Man (final ed.), Darwin's and Wallace's 1859 manuscript outlining the theory of evolution, Michael Ghiselin's Triumph of the Darwinian Method, a Darwin timeline, a 1000+ item bibliography, and a brief introduction by Goldie and Ghiselin.

Darwin includes some 650 illustrations, including original maps, birds and other animals, geological data, plants, photos and portraits of the key players and how they lived, sketches such as the layout of the Beagle, and much more. Many of the images represent the first republication since the 1800s, and some of the material by distinguished naturalists has never before been published. The natural sound recordings come from the Cornell University Laboratory of Ornithology.

Darwin, Multi-media CD-ROM for MACs and PCs, created by Pete Goldie and Michael Ghiselin. (\$99.95 from Lightbinders, Inc., San Francisco). Requires 640 K RAM with 500 K available; SuperVGA, 512 K on video board: Microsoft CD-ROM extension versions 2.0 or later.

[Note: Specify Mac or PC version when ordering from NCSE]

#### NCSE Books for Sale

CSE offers a number of books for sale in order to raise money and to provide a service to members-access to books many cannot find in a local store and discount prices. If we cannot get a reasonable discount from a publisher, we usually cannot offer the book for sale, for obvious financial reasons. Thus some academic or university press-type books, for example, may not be on our list.

On the other hand, we try not to list too many titles at one time so we can add to the list; a title may still be available even if it has seemingly disappeared from our centerfold-if we're down to our last copy we'll still be happy to get it into your hands, so ask about the availability of items from older lists and help us clean out inventory!

Let us know if there is a title you think we should carry, and also let us know if you have written one-in either case we can at least mention the book, even if we cannot sell it ourselves.

Finally, if you will be teaching a class assigning one or more of the books we distribute, consider using NCSE as your bookstore. Call to work out details for such an order. We might be able to save your students some money and make a bit to pay for NCSE activities, as well.

#### Quayle Astronomy

"Mars is essentially in the same orbit . . . somewhat the same distance from the Sun, which is very important. We have seen pictures where there are canals, we believe, and water. If there is water, that means there is oxygen. If oxygen, that means we can breathe."

-Vice President Dan Quayle, when head of the National Space Council

#### Office Biz

#### Erik Wheaton NCSE Office Manager

Defective Publications If you receive a journal or newsletter with blank or missing pages, let me know so we can rectify the problem. Chances are, artistic white space or jumbled pages are a printing error, not an NCSE dabble with avant garde style. (Ditto occasional non-self-addressed-after-all envelopes.)

Renewals There have been some bugs in our new system for mailings. Some of you who had already renewed got renewal notices, and others got LAST IS-SUE erroneously imprinted on their NCSE Reports. We apologize for this confusion. The bugs in the system have all been squashed for now (we hope!).

Contacting the Office Feel free to call, write, or e-mail us anytime. We will endeavor to answer your question quickly and personally. This is a small enough organization that we can listen to, respond, and treat you like the unique wonderful person you are!

Business reply envelopes. Do use them. And if you can, put stamps on them to save us a nickel or two (actually, 7 additional cents per letter *beyond* the 32 cents First Class postage). No need to mark out the business reply markings. Just a stamp on it gives us credit at the post office.

Temporarily Away? Please use the post office "mail hold" service, if available. It is a handy thing for those who go on extended trips and what not. If you simply tell the post office to suspend delivery, mail often gets sent back to us postage due! There is also no way to know when you get back. We end up sending and getting items returned until you come back. If you know that you will be going away for a long time, please call or write a quick note, and we can hold materials for you. The cost to us of a call on our toll free line (1-800-290-6006) is far less than the cost of just one returned item! If someone has other suggestions to alleviate this problem please contact me.

Mailing Delays NCSE ships books "book rate" in order to save you money; this can slow things down, though. If you are ordering for a class or are otherwise in a rush, call us to arrange faster shipment possibilities. Similarly, publications are sent "Bulk Rate," saving a fortune but causing occasionally frustrating delays. Again, if you encounter particular problems, let me know.

Canadian and Other Non-US Orders Partially because of American banks' provincialism and partly because of the daily fluctuation in exchange rates, orders from other countries should be sent in US funds drawn on a US bank. Otherwise, we are charged \$15-\$25 by our bank as a currency-changing fee. (I know, I know-your country doesn't do this to foreigners who walk in with a dollar bill or traveller's cheque!) This also applies to Canadian money orders supposedly in US dollars-banks here treat them like foreign cheques. By far the easiest form of Canadian or other non-US payment is via VISA or MasterCard.

Thanks for your help.

#### Life Memberships in NCSE

The NCSE office has often been asked about the availability of life or multi-year memberships. Frankly, we have always been a bit too young and poor to offer them, since we need the annual cash flow to keep going. Now, however, a possibly limited-time offer is available: Life Memberships for \$500 each. We think it's a safe bet we'll be around for the long term (and/or an unhappy prediction that we will need to be!), and an infusion of Life Membership dues will finance the membership expansion we need to accelerate.

SO—buy your life membership for \$500 now and help insure that NCSE's life continues and that it continues to expand its influence! Dues are bound to go up in the future, but you can avoid any such increases. A one-time payment will also save both you and NCSE a lot of unnecessary postage and busywork in years to come.

Life members will help NCSE make the transition from dependence upon occasional grants to real selfsufficiency, so we hope you will help start a trend!

CBS ADDRESS. Beth Sullivan and Carl Binder, executive producer and writer of the *Dr. Quinn* program praised on p. 6, can be reached c/o that show at 4024 Bradford, Studio City, CA 91604. (Thanks to Dr. Philip Appleman for the tip.)

# Public Relations: How to Combat a Creationist Assault

Scott Goodman Vancouver, BC, Canada

he bottom line is this: If you are intending to go after a creationist policy adoption and if you are asked, as I was, to assist others in their fight, there are some things you can do to help insure that you get the issue into the public eye as favorably as possible.

First, you have to gather background information and write letters to officials to get them on the record. You have to document past creationist activities and the current efforts that they are making to further their aims. Above all, you must lay the groundwork with the press.

Seek out columnists and reporters who are known to be favorable to proper education practice and who support sensible democratic principles. I did all the leg work for one reporter's story. He used my research to write the story. It was the next best thing to writing it myself.

Next, ping-pong the press coverage. Use your credibility from one report to interest the next media outlet. This is particularly effective when it is a different medium. For example, use a print media report to get the story on to television. Be careful, though. The press has their own agenda and the story may not be covered exactly the way you would like it. If this happens, don't be discouraged. There is no such thing as bad publicity.

If you appear on a call-in show, project reason and moderation. You will look good in comparison to many flaming callers! Also, people on your own side should call in, and they may well make harsher statements than you, and once again, your position will look more reasonable while some of the more specific charges still get aired.

Finally, be very prepared to discuss the issue publicly. Creationist defenders will pull out all the stops. They will use the "equal time" for "both" theories and the "most people don't believe in evolution" arguments. They will declare that there are "two major theories" and that teaching "only one" is unfair. You must have quick, concise answers to these arguments. You must also be able to quickly deal with any assertions that the issue is one of believers vs. non-believers.

You should avoid discussing creationist scientific claims if possible (they're usually too long and boring) by simply stating that the scientific community has looked at the claims and found them to be scientifically worthless. Educators have found them to be unacceptable religious advocacy, as have the courts. But be prepared to deal with the science, however, if, for example, a radio talk show host insists on exploring creationist claims. One particularly good argument to have up your sleeve is the one used by Dr. Langdon Gilkev at the Arkansas trial. If the creationist tries to claim that creation is not necessarily religious, ask them if they realize that by suggesting that there is some other creator than God that they are committing one of the oldest Christian heresies.

the denial of monotheism. Watch the jaws drop.

Turn the tables. Don't defend science. Point out that creationists are the ones who need to prove their case, not scientists. The evidence of the success of science is all around us. Demand that the creationist produce the research results, cite the refereed articles. and reveal the scientific achievement awards that "creation scientists" have won. They can't, since such things don't exist. Let the audience know that creationists reject all of science, not just evolution. If they want to air some of their more ludicrous-claims and arguments, encourage themeven other creationists laugh at Henry Morris's idea that the Moon's craters are the result of an artillery battle between the angels of God and Lucifer! Let them try and defend their claims after that. Never let a creationist put you on the defensive.

There is, of course, no guarantee of success. In the end, as it would appear will be the case in B.C., the issue may have to go to court. But your efforts will pay off in community awareness and support. Regardless of what you personally believe, you can fight this battle knowing that to defend non-sectarian public education is to defend the basic democratic principle of freedom of religious conscience. It serves notice to those who would foist their views on others that they will not have their way. It is the defense of rationality and reason in the face of dogma and ignorance. Never give up.

# "Economy of Miracles"

John G. Fletcher Livermore, CA

t often has been observed that creationists typically expend most of their energy in attacking evolution, rather than in detailing their own theory and arguing its merits. In speculation as to why this is so, the most frequent conclusion is that creationists falsely assume that there are only two competing views, creationism and evolution, and therefore that by successfully debunking the latter they will necessarily establish the former. My purpose here is to present a somewhat different interpretation of their behavior.

The creationist view explicitly demands miracles, that is, occurrences that do not conform to natural laws of the kind that are adduced by science: God supernaturally intervened to bring the universe into existence, to populate the earth with each of its various "kinds" of creatures (including humans), to effect a mighty inundation that left only a single shipload of survivors, etc. Why then do creationists spend so much effort in trying to harmonize their views with scientific understanding? Why do they not simply say that God performed however many miracles are required, not only by the Biblical record, but also to account for the observations of geology, paleontology, biology, etc.? Why do they seem to feel a need to keep the number of miracles to a minimum, that is, to suppose that God seeks an "economy

of miracles" (as creationist John C. Whitcomb expressed it in *The World that Perished*)?

I suggest that the answer is that they fear (probably correctly) that miracles that are too numerous will not "sell," that those whom they are trying to convince will throw up their hands and say that so many miracles are too much to be believed. They may even fear that they themselves might begin to entertain doubts. So they find that, although their view necessarily includes miracles, the number of them should be small. But, if only a few miracles are good, are not fewer even better, and is not none best of all? I further suggest that creationists understand the force of this argument. Therefore, they know that their view can triumph only if it can be shown that one can account for the facts known to science only if one relies on miracles.

Evolutionists claim to have explained the facts using no miracles at all. So the creationist attacks on evolution are an attempt to clear from the field the only known rival that postulates no miracles. Furthermore, success in this effort would be expected to indicate strongly that miracles are necessary to any theory of origins. In effect the subject would then be removed from the realm of science to one where the creationists (rightly or wrongly) believe that they can prevail against competing theologies. In brief, to explain the behavior of creationists, one need not suppose that they believe that successful debunking of evolution is sufficient to establish their case. One need only suppose that they understand that such is the necessary first step.

# **Evolutionists Thwaites** and Awbrey Honored

Biologists Jim Awbrey and Bill Thwaites will be honored at the May meeting of the American Humanist Association in Phoenix-Scottsdale, AZ. The meeting's over-all theme is "Humanism, Science and the Arts." Thwaites and Awbrey will receive an AHA award for their long-time teaching and public advocacy of evolution.

Both men are familiar as contributors to NCSE publications. Many readers will also recognize them as frequent and frequently successful debaters who have taken on Duane Gish and others from the Institute for Creation Research. (Recently Thwaites published in C/E his explanation of why their latest foray was also going to be their last!) Perhaps less well-known is the fact that they were among the small group of founders of Creation/Evolution journal first edited by Fred Edwords and Phil Osmon-they have been in the fray for 15+ years. At San Diego State, they even co-taught a popular course on the creationism controversy where Duane Gish and other ICR staffers gave half the lectures. In other words, they managed the difficult task of keeping channels of communication open without giving any quarter. Professor Thwaites has also appeared before various professional and educational society audiences impersonating a creationist in a mock debate format confronting opponents such as Charlene Darwin-a performance also distributed on videotape by NCSE (Science Showdown, \$20).

Volume 15: 1

# The Neo-Aristotelian Assault on Science

#### Dennis L. Feucht

Editor, *Perspectives on Science* and *Religion*, American Scientific Affiliation

n the nineteenth century, An-

drew White and John Draper

Galileo
persecution
by the
church a
"myth"

▲

published influential books arguing that the relationship between science and religion was one of warfare and conflict. These books promoted what is now a popular myth in the scientific community, based on polemical oversimplification of history. One of the favorite stories of this distortion is that the Galileo affair was "science versus the Church." The pope of the time, a friend of Galileo's, was eventually persuaded by the schoolmen to oppose him, though the Church Condemnation of 1277 a couple of centuries earlier, issued by the bishop of Paris, Etienne Tempier, condemned Aristotelian assertions, with their consequential stagnation of ideas in natural philosophy. By Galileo's time, the universities were rife with Aristotelian thought and were the real opposition of science.

Materialist science—
a form of religion?

 $\blacksquare$ 

What was the conflict between medieval Aristotelianism and the Church? The Christian belief in a created and contingent universe clashed with the eternal and necessary universe of Aristotle. Contingency means that the universe does not necessarily have to be the way it is; it could have been created differently. For science, this means that the facts of nature are not merely the products of logical deduction but instead supply essential empirical guidance for theories. The human imagination is fertile in contriving numerous plausible theories. One lesson of the scientific tradition is that most rationally appealing theories are wrong. Theories must be verified through rigorous experimental methods.

If some scientists and philosophers insist upon the discredited warfare model of the relationship between science and religion. then such a model should also include the current attack of Aristotelianism on science. The Galileo dispute occurred among Christians who differed in their theological interpretations. Similarly, now within science is an infestation of new-Aristotelians (such as Carl Sagan and Richard Dawkins, for example) who believe in an eternal universe (materialism), and theorizers such as Stephen Hawking, whose quest is a necessitarian "theory of everything." If the universe is eternal, then there could only be a single, logically necessary universe.

Aristotelianism is recurring, but this time much of the scientific community, instead of recognizing it as medievalism in modern guise, is caught off guard. The guard is down (warfare model, again) because of the following typical reasoning: Aristotelianism in science is being used to oppose Christianity; Christianity is opposed to science (warfare model and historical myths assumed here); therefore, new-Aristotelianism supports science! But a co-belligerent is not necessarily a friend.

Another similarity of our time with Galileo's is that it too does not simplify into two cleanly separated camps of Christians defending science against Aristotelianism versus

pagan materialists advancing it. Many young-earth advocates within Christian Fundamentalism also are basically medieval in their beliefs, in denying the weight of empirical evidence against youngearth geology, for instance, and in attempting to rationally construct science from scripture. In both cases, the common element is a cause to be advanced. For youngearth Fundamentalists, it is a particular biblical understanding; for pagan scientists, it is a particular materialist philosophy. Both are religions, of sorts, and motivate a return to medieval thinking, yet they are poles apart in what they specifically assert.

Consequently, it is not religion per se that corrupts science, but the motivation to make science conform to a particular religious view. The relative disinterest of the historic Church toward science might be used to support the criticism that Christianity does not advance the cause of science; but it equally argues for the lack of interest among Christians generally to advance science for Christian causes. Unfortunately, it cannot be said that most recent popularizers of science lack interest in advancing their materialist-even Aristotelian-religion in the name of science.

[Note: Comments are invited! This is not an NCSE "majority opinion," but we publish it for readers to evaluate and as a handy way to illustrate an ASA position.]

It's ten o'clock—Do you know where your creationists are?

# **More Patter of Little Pandas**

John Cole

eports readers will by now be familiar with the "intelligent design" book, Of Pandas and People. We have reported ongoing efforts to introduce the book into public schools as an alternative to naturalistic evolution. Sometimes the significance of this book probably gets lost (it is, after all, just one book, so why should we care about it?).

Michael Woodruff, a lawyer writing for the creationist "Center for Law and Religious Freedom" in Falls Church, Va., makes clear in a cover letter and annotations of the 1987 Supreme Court decision Edwards v. Aguillard that Pandas is a carefully constructed ruse to get around legal objections to antievolutionism. "[The book] is not creation science as the court defined that term. It does not support evolutionary theory grounded in naturalism...[and] that there are phenomenon [sic] that don't fit

the evolutionary theory but do fit a theory of intelligent design. ... Members of school boards and local authorities that consider the enrichment of curriculum should not be concerned that this particular book violates standards set forth by the Supreme Court in any way because it is a careful and scientific presentation of facts that might not otherwise be considered."

There follows an eleven-page "legal scrutiny" of *Of Pandas and People* which goes through 37 major statements in the Court decision and explains how *Pandas* handles each clause. Woodruff outlines how the book is tailored to meet specific objections while introducing the "intelligent design" alternative to evolution. He also quotes Justice Scalia's dissenting opinion, when useful to his case.

Woodruff adds that "Intelligent Design is a more modest and general position than Creation Science, one that rests on inferences from empirical observations of nature...not on revelation or holy books." He probably offends creationists by arguing simultaneously that "Intelligent Design" (which he capitalizes) is fairly trivial and that it can be usefully substituted for creationism in the science classroom. In other words, he argues that it is a valid place-holder for creationism in the curriculum despite its being supposedly innocuous. For example, Intelligent Design "makes no attempt to identify the intelligent agent," he writes. "While it is a fact that many people identify the intelligent agent with the traditional God of the Bible in their own minds. Pandas in no way teaches or encourages the teaching that this private mental conclusion is scientific knowledge." Some creationists as well as most evolutionists surely find this a rather sophistic (as opposed to sophisticated) argument.

A book tailored to get around the Supreme Court decision, line by line

### Memorials and Gifts

#### Jack Friedman

Past President, NCSE

I've said it before. Especially when a loved one dies, but also if there's a graduation, promotion, get well wishes, or any such congratulatory message that you want sent, NCSE can provide you with a tax-deductible choice demonstrating your good wishes.

A contribution to NCSE can be a useful salute to whomever you wish to honor or remember. For example, a recent death in the family of one NCSE member resulted in over two dozen gifts to NCSE. He says that responses to

his request that memorial gifts be sent were very touching and meaningful. A gift need not be large to be of value. At the local card shop \$5.00 cards are no longer uncommon, he notes, and at least for him a memorial gift is more lasting in value.

When you arrange for NCSE to be a memorial recipient, we will notify the designated person or family that you have sent a gift to NCSE in their name. We will also send you a receipt for your records to show the tax man and to make clear that the matter was handled promptly. A donation envelope is enclosed with occa-

sional issues of *Reports*; use it, or if you don't need it at the time, stash it away and use it soon. Or just send your memorial to NCSE c/o 23 Chelsea Drive, Syosset, NY 11791, making sure you tell us whom we should notify about your gift. A \$5 gift will be treated like a \$1000 gift—with respect for your sympathies, not the dollar amount.

And all donations are tax-deductible.

If you have any questions or would like donation envelopes, please call me at (516) 921-5522.

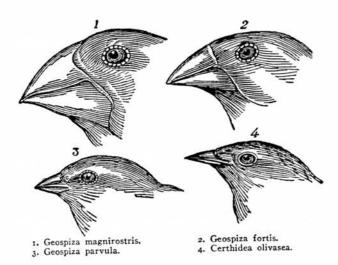


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#### · LETTERS ·

## Origin Facsimile Edition now available

■ Thank you for the tribute you paid me in the Winter issue of Reports. I can assure you that my writing on evolutionary biology continues undiminished. On page 19 you say of the first edition of the Origin that "it is usually not in print." To be sure, the first printing of the book went out of print on 24 November 1859, when it was published, but there is now an excellent facsimile edition with all pages photo offset copied from the original edition, which I have edited and which is published by Harvard University. How badly a facsimile edition was needed is documented by the fact that it sells about 2500 copies annually. A copy of the original printing, by the way, now sells for about \$5000.

Sincerely yours, Ernst Mayr Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard Univ.

[Ed: What I meant to say was that the 6th edition is the one most often reprinted, despite the fact that scholars often call the first edition the best one!]

#### PA Creation Museum

■ Creationism is alive and well in Lancaster County, PA, and the area is rife with fundamentalist churches which make it interesting to teach a comprehensive high school biological science program, but we manage well. Every so often a letter writing "debate" will spring up in the editorials with emphasis on what should and should not be taught in our public schools. We also now have our very own Creation

Museum and Institute for Scientific and Biblical Research in Lancaster; I hope they do not aspire to become an East Coast counterpart to the ICR!.

Robert H. Hertzler Landisville, PA

#### **NCSE Appreciated**

This is simply a letter to express the gratitude and appreciation of the Alabama Academy of Science and its Committee on Science and Public Policy for the continuing assistance [NCSE], especially in the person of Molleen Matsumura, renders us in our efforts to maintain and improve the quality of science education in the public schools of Alabama. As a resource for information on groups and individuals striving to denature science education through the introduction of religious material, and on [their] tactics, your Center is of unique value. You provide us with advice when it is sorely needed. You give us support when we are weary of the fray. You provide us honest and accurate criticism when it is warranted. If NCSE didn't exist, we would have to invent it! May your kind become legion. - John C. Frandsen, Ph.D., Chair, Committee on Science and Public Policy, Alabama Academy of Science, Inc.

# Some Great Internet Addresses for Cybernauts

John Cole

omputer users are probably already familiar with the talk.origins forum on Usenet. Its *archives* of FAQs or "Frequently Asked Questions" about evolution and creationism are located at the "World Wide Web" site: http://rumba.ics.uci.edu:8080/origins. ("Http" in an address indicates a Web rather than a Gopher site.) There are dozens of topics covered by many writers.

http://www.rtis.com/nat/user/elsberry/evosci/sc\_misq.html is a site *seeking* to catalogue creationist misquotations of evolutionists. Run by Wesley R. Elsberry, who requests examples.

Many museums are going online in big ways with photo, sound and video tours, and a leader is the Berkeley Museum of Palaeontology at http://ucmp1.berkeley.edu.

Hawaii Community College will give you a tour of NYC's American Museum of Natural History dinosaur exhibits at http://www.hcc.hawaii.edu.paleontology.

Harvard offers one of many relevant academic Web sites at http://glgi.harvard.edu/biopages/evolution/htmlLook.

Artificial, computer intelligence evolution fans can contact: http://alife.santafe.edu.

http://webcrawler.cs.washington.edu/cgi-bin/WebQuery or webcrawler@webcrawler.cs.washington.edu can be reached by internet and used to search the WWW via key word searches.

NCSE can't guarantee any of these sites' contents or availability, obviously; some we have not even checked directly. Let us know about sites you discover, and any changes of addresses, so we can share them! Full WWW access includes graphics, sound, photos, and even motion video, but text-only access is possible if you have any kind of Internet access.

Happy hunting!

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