



PHI BETA KAPPA

THE KEY REPORTER

FALL 2007

New Membership Benefits
Discounts, Special Offers and More from
Colonial Williamsburg & Encyclopaedia Britannica

ΦBK Petition to
U.S. Department of Education
Sign to Support the Liberal Arts and Sciences





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The spring and fall issues are mailed to every ΦBK member for whom the membership records office has an address. Newly initiated members receive all four issues for one year.

The Humanities in American Life

In 1964, Phi Beta Kappa, along with the American Council of Learned Societies and the Council of Graduate Schools, sponsored a distinguished Commission on the Humanities, whose report led directly into the creation of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

After strong beginnings, both agencies fell under political attack in the early 1980s. Their funding was, essentially, halved. Then in the mid 1990s, an unsympathetic Congressional majority drastically cut their funding yet again. In the intervening decade there has been little recovery, with the result that the NEH now operates at about 40 percent of its 1980 level.

In Canada the nearest equivalent to the NEH is the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). Precise comparisons are difficult, but it is indisputable that the Canadian expenditures are greater in absolute terms — \$306 million (Canadian) versus \$141 million (U.S.).

Comparing at current rates, Canada spends about twice as much as the U.S. on humanities and adjunct social sciences. In per capita terms the picture is, of course, even more dismal. Canadians devote about \$9 per annum to the SSHRC for every Canadian. In the U.S. annual per capita expenditures through the NEH amount to 47 cents for each American.

So what if Canada spends more on the humanities. Why should America worry? This language from the legislation that founded the NEH and the NEA will explain:

An advanced civilization must not limit its efforts to science and technology alone, but must give full value and support to the other great branches of scholarly and cultural activity in order to achieve a better understanding of the past, a better analysis of the present, and a better view of the future. ...

The world leadership which has come to the United States cannot rest solely upon superior power, wealth and technology, but must be solidly founded upon worldwide respect and admiration for the Nation's high qualities as a leader in the realm of ideas and of the spirit. ...

Democracy demands wisdom and vision in its citizens. It must therefore foster and support a form of education, and access to the arts and the humanities, designed to make people of all backgrounds and wherever located masters of their technology and not its unthinking servants.

In the spirit of these declarations from the original legislation, Phi Beta Kappa is again in a lead role, under the aegis of the National Humanities Alliance (NHA), in an effort to develop a national agenda to support the humanities more adequately.

It was my privilege, as president of the NHA, to testify this past spring before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, on behalf of increased funding for the humanities. The NHA has now undertaken a project to develop a national agenda addressing the need for greater support for the humanities.

Phi Beta Kappa's presence in this effort is a resumption of a historic role, one our Society is perhaps uniquely positioned to play.

We take it as axiomatic that the country's well-being depends not only upon defense against foreign threats but also on the people's vocational and professional excellence, their capacities as citizens, their understanding of the world, and their critical appropriation of their cultural heritages. We aim to make the case, therefore, that engagement with the humanities leads to these ends, and that a culture neglectful of them is consuming its cultural capital.

I invite you to read my Congressional testimony on the Society's home page at www.pbk.org. I would be pleased to hear from you and invite you to write to me or to send your letters to the editor of *The Key Reporter*.

John Churchill
Secretary



In running any business you are, at a certain level, called upon to understand how the world works. I know of no better preparation for that formidable task than a liberal arts education informed by the values of excellence, open inquiry, and creativity that are embraced by Phi Beta Kappa.

— Peter Thiel

Peter Thiel is the founder and president of Clarium Capital Management LLC, a global macro hedge fund managing \$2 billion in assets and which has returned 240 percent since its inception in October 2002. In 2005, Clarium was honored by both MARHedge and Absolute Return as the global macro fund of the year.

Thiel is most widely known as the co-founder and CEO of PayPal, the dominant online payment service, which today has over 130 million users in 103 countries. In 2002, immediately prior to forming Clarium, Thiel sold PayPal to eBay for \$1.5 billion; the PayPal unit has been among eBay's most profitable ever since.

In addition to managing Clarium, Thiel is a partner in The Founders Fund, a venture capital firm he started in 2005. He has launched and provided the initial capital for several notable technology start-ups, including LinkedIn, Palantir Technologies and Facebook, which over the last two years has become the sixth most trafficked site in the U.S.

A frequent financial commentator, Thiel's market insights, opinions and articles have been featured in *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, the *Financial Times*, *Barron's*, *Bloomberg Markets*, NPR, PBS, the BBC, CNBC and the hedge fund press, and he has been profiled on *The Charlie Rose Show* and as part of an NHK Special. He also is the subject of a chapter in Steven Drobny's

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ON THE COVER

A student at Hope College in Holland, Mich., enjoys reading in a grove near the chapel. Hope College was one of the sites selected for “Deliberation about Things that Matter,” funded by a grant to ΦBK from the Teagle Foundation. Check for updated information about program sites and their events on the Web at www.pbk.org.

Response to the Spellings Report

Next year will mark 50 years since I was invited to join Phi Beta Kappa. Twenty-one of those years I spent as Commissioner of Higher Education for Texas, where we considered institutional autonomy, faculty governance, academic freedom, and broad institutional representation as fundamental to forming sound educational policy.

I fully support our 41st Council's stand on the myopia of the Secretary of Education's efforts to interfere in the future of American higher education, a stand now appropriately followed by the MLA.

The essence of a liberal education is the ability to see connections, relationships and consequences. How we must all wish that Secretary Margaret Spellings were among our members. For she would then, from a humanities education, possess the critical-thinking and problem-solving skills to have avoided the deficiencies of her narrowly conceived policies.

Kenneth Ashworth
University of Texas at Austin and
Texas A&M University

Nice Nihilism?

Responding to the Romanell-ΦBK lectures of Alex Rosenberg described in the summer issue of *The Key Reporter*, I found the use of the second law of thermodynamics in defense of a Darwinian world-view curious. The latter posits adaptation from simple to complex — a “molecules to man”

argument. The former, which as a law has not been empirically contradicted, recognizes that the universe is breaking down, going from greater to lesser complexity. It seems to me that using the second law to support Darwinism is really begging the question: What mechanism or engine is suddenly turning the second law on its head?

As for “nice nihilism,” one only needs to read *The New York Times* or listen to NPR to know that the cited “strong selection for cooperation and altruism; strong concern for children, the weak and their welfare; and an emotionally charged commitment to equality and justice” cannot be supported by the evidence. In fact, I would argue that a social Darwinian world-view is producing outcomes contrary to those the author cites, namely increased acceptance of euthanasia, abortion, exploitation of the weak, a coarsening of the culture and a cheapening of life.

John E. Sircy
Paducah, Ky.

The Law of the Jungle

Referring to Alex Rosenberg's third lecture, “Naturalism's Nice Nihilism?” in which the principles of Darwinian evolution are applied to social evolution and the existence of altruism and cooperation in human groups, let me add one other factor — the kind of animals we are.

Like the wolf, the monkey, the chimpanzee and many species, we are

classic pack animals. Among such animal societies there is competition within to establish leaders and ranking but solidarity without against other packs and species. There is exhibited “altruistic” care of the young and cooperative hunting, gathering and defense. The evolutionary advantages are to the pack more than to the individual, but in the end, both pack and individual members benefit.

Our packs have enlarged in size to comprise states, nations and alliances, but packs they remain in essence. Vestiges are seen, for example, in sports, wherein cities vie vicariously and with much emotion.

Rudyard Kipling expressed it well in *The Jungle Book*:

“Now this is the law of the Jungle — as old and as true as the sky: And the Wolf that shall keep it shall prosper, but the Wolf that shall break it must die. As the creeper that girdles the tree-trunk the Law runneth forward and back — For the strength of the Pack is the Wolf, and the Strength of the Wolf is the Pack.”

Paul B. Ross
Great Neck, N.Y.

The Key Reporter welcomes the submission of letters. Those that are published may be condensed. Please send letters by e-mail to keyreporter@pbk.org, by fax to (202) 986-1601 or by postal mail to the Phi Beta Kappa Society.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The Phi Beta Kappa Society is pleased to open nominations for the two awards to be given during the Council of 2009 in Austin, Texas.

The **Award for Distinguished Service to the Humanities**, a cash prize of \$2,500 and a medal, is given in each triennium to recognize individuals who have made significant contributions in the humanities. The award is underwritten by a gift in 1970 from Mr. and Mrs. William B. Jaffe. Mr. Jaffe was a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Union College. The 2006 recipient was Gerald Early of Washington University.

Established in 1991 in memory of the distinguished American philosopher Sidney Hook (1902–1989), who was elected to Phi Beta Kappa at City College of New York, the **Sidney Hook Memorial Award** recognizes national distinction by a single scholar in each of three endeavors — scholarship, undergraduate teaching and leadership in the cause of liberal arts education. The award of \$7,500 has been presented five times in conjunction with council meetings. The 2006 recipient was Charles Tilly of Columbia University.

More information on these awards

may be found at www.pbk.org/awards.

Submissions must include a letter of nomination written by someone familiar with the nominee's scholarly work, the nominee's curriculum vitae, and contact information for the nominee. Please mail all materials to:

Awards Coordinator
The Phi Beta Kappa Society
1606 New Hampshire Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20009

Direct questions to Sam Esquith, awards coordinator, at awards@pbk.org or (202) 745-3235.

New Membership Benefits from Colonial Williamsburg & Encyclopaedia Britannica

Starting this fall, Phi Beta Kappa's partnerships with Colonial Williamsburg and Encyclopaedia Britannica will provide a series of new benefits to our members as they continue to pursue the ideals of the Society beyond the classroom.



Where the Future Learns from the Past

Phi Beta Kappa was founded in 1776 by five students at the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, Va., who wished to meet to discuss important ideas of the day. Now Phi Beta Kappans will be able to participate in the Society's Revolutionary past like never before.

ΦBK members will be able to receive a 20 percent discount at Colonial Williamsburg Hotels, a 20 percent discount on passes to the Historic Area, and a 15 percent discount on Williamsburg merchandise.

These discounts will also be made available to immediate family so long as they are accompanied by their ΦBK family member.

The world's largest living history museum, Colonial Williamsburg is the restored 18th-century capital of Britain's largest, wealthiest, and most populous outpost of empire in the New World. It is here that The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation interprets the origins of the idea of America, conceived decades before the American Revolution.

Hundreds of restored, reconstructed and historically furnished buildings occupy the 301-acre Historic Area. Costumed interpreters tell the stories of the men and women of the 18th-century city. Revolutionary City®, Colonial Williamsburg's newest interactive program, invites you to take part in the momentous events that helped create a nation.

Throughout the Historic Area, you'll meet, in the persons of gifted character interpreters, George Washington, Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson, Gowan Pamphlet and scores of others, who bequeathed to us a

country. You'll walk on the ground where independence was proposed. You'll participate in the debate in the city's streets and shops. And you will stand in the room where the victory at Yorktown was planned.

To learn more about Colonial Williamsburg and to plan your next Revolutionary adventure, visit www.ColonialWilliamsburg.com. Some restrictions apply.



Worldwide Leader in Reference, Education and Learning

Members who are inducted into the Society this fall will receive a free one-year subscription to Encyclopaedia Britannica online and a 25 percent discount on Britannica merchandise from store.britannica.com.

In addition, all Phi Beta Kappans are eligible for a 50 percent discount on the annual subscription rate and continued discounts in Britannica's online store.

One of the first purposes of the Society was to provide an occasion for members to gather and talk about issues that were of vital interest to them and to the age in which they lived. Following in that spirit of meaningful deliberation and fellowship, all ΦBK members are invited to join the discussions at the Britannica Blog located at blogs.britannica.com, a place for smart, lively conversations about a broad range of topics such as art, science, history, sports and current events. Britannica's diverse roster of bloggers includes Pulitzer Prize-winning biographer Joseph Ellis, U.S. Ambassador Edward Walker, and former major league baseball pitcher Denny McLain, among some 60 other writers.

Encyclopaedia Britannica, the oldest continuously published and revised reference work in the English language, was born in 18th-century Scotland amid the great intellectual ferment known as the Scottish Enlightenment.

Today Britannica is primarily an

online publisher with a wide range of Internet sites and digital products. In fact, Britannica invented the multimedia encyclopedia in 1989 and published the first encyclopedia on the Internet in 1994. It has been a leader in electronic publishing ever since.

For a preview of all that Encyclopaedia Britannica has to offer, go to www.britannica.com.

Login at ΦBK for Information and Access to Benefits

To take advantage of these exciting new benefits and review the full details, members will need to login at www.pbk.org.

You will be asked for your login, which is your Member ID, the six- or seven-digit number that appears next to your name on your *Key Reporter* address label.

Your password consists of your first and last names and the last two digits of the year you were elected to ΦBK, with no spaces in between.

For example, if your name is Mary Jones and you were elected in 2001, your password is maryjones01. If your last name is hyphenated, include the hyphen.

Have a problem logging in? Write to membership@pbk.org or call (202) 745-3242. ■

The Leon Edgar Truesdell Fund

The Leon Edgar Truesdell Fund was established in 2007 upon the death of Miriam H. Truesdell (Mount Holyoke, 1946). The bequest of one third of the residual value of the Truesdell trust is made to honor her late father. The purpose of the bequest is to establish a permanent fund within the foundation in the name of Leon Edgar Truesdell (Brown, 1907), A.B., A.M., Sc.D., Ph.D., with the income from the fund to be used in an unrestricted manner. Phi Beta Kappa received the first interim distribution of \$300,000 in July. Income from the bequest will go to support ΦBK programs.

To discuss including ΦBK in your estate plan, contact Jared Hughes, director of legacy planning, at jhughes@pbk.org or (202) 745-3234. ■



“By 2006 most necessities in life were secure for me: home, family, grandchildren. When the invitation to join the Secretary’s Circle came in the mail, I realized that I wanted to re-join conversations about big ideas in a place like Washington, D.C., and at the same time, though with a very small amount of money, somehow endow ΦBK in a modest way to foster the mission, the preservation of anything that nurtures the life of the mind.”

— Sherrie Ford

Sherrie Ford completed her Ph.D. in English at the University of Georgia in 1982 where she wrote a dissertation on French literary theory. She always loved “big ideas” and literature, art of all kinds, but somehow wound up saving jobs in America by facilitating deep workculture change in factories across America ... using the templates of French literary ideas. She started Change Partners, LLC, in 1996, an organizational consulting firm that helps workcultures adapt to change. Bringing the values of humanism and “big ideas” to a factory workplace may be an uncommon deployment of the skills of a ΦBK member, but not if you know Sherrie.

Join the Secretary’s Circle.

Join the conversation.

secretarycircle@pbk.org

ΦBK Members Asked to Sign Petition to U.S. Department of Education in Support of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Phi Beta Kappa members are among the most prominent people in America. Your opinion has weight when it comes to matters of public policy relating to higher education.

For most of its history, ΦBK has focused on advancing its goals through academic channels, working through local chapters, fellowships, lectures, publications, and other scholarly programs.

Of course, the Society will continue those vital efforts, but because the threats to liberal education are greater than ever, the Council of 2006 boldly moved to comment on issues relating to national education.

In September 2006, U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings accepted a report from a specially appointed Commission on the Future of Higher Education, and she very quickly laid out an action plan to pursue its recommendations.

The report is not all bad, but there is a critical missing link in the report and the action plan: There is no mention of the importance of the liberal arts and science in higher education.

The Society believes that the influence of its membership, now nearly 600,000 strong, will make a difference in Washington’s corridors of power.

It is time for Phi Beta Kappans to let their collective voice be heard to prevent further erosion of the education values that have made American higher education, in the commonly heard phrase, “the envy of the world.”

That’s why the Society is asking its members to sign a petition to the U.S. Department of Education.

Your name will be added to those of thousands of other Phi Beta Kappans and presented to Secretary Spellings.

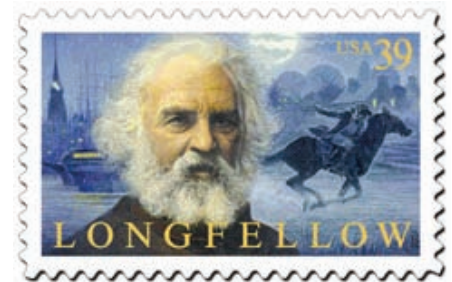
The petition is located on the ΦBK homepage at www.pbk.org. Select the link at the right side of the page for “ΦBK Petition to U.S. Department of Education.” Then print, sign and return your copy to the national office:

The Phi Beta Kappa Society
1606 New Hampshire Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20009 ■

ΦBK Member Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Honored by New “Literary Legends” Postage Stamp

The U.S. Postal Service celebrated the 200th birthday of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow March 15 with the issuance of a 39-cent stamp in his honor. Longfellow is the 23rd author in the popular Literary Arts commemorative stamp series. He joins other honored literary legends including Ernest Hemingway, T.S. Eliot, Herman Melville and John Steinbeck.

The stamp art by Kazuhiko Sano features a portrait of Longfellow based on a circa 1876 photograph. Background art evokes scenes from “Paul Revere’s Ride.” Behind the ships’ masts is a glimpse of the steeple of the Old North Church, where “a second lamp in the belfry burns” to indicate the arrival of the British by sea. To the right of the stamp, Paul Revere rides through the moonlit night, as dramatized by Longfellow’s poem.



“Longfellow was a giant in his time, and he is a model for our time, a scholar and poet who loved his family, his nation, his fellow human beings, and the pursuit of excellence throughout his life,” said Katherine Tobin of the U.S. Postal Service Board of Governors. ■

Penn State Partnership Inspires ΦBK Traveling Exhibit

Penn State University and Lambda of Pennsylvania hosted a Phi Beta Kappa exhibit featuring images and artifacts from the Society's national office and Penn State University Archives. The exhibit was on display in the Pattee Library March 7-May 11 at Penn State University, University Park.

Based on the success of this partnership, Phi Beta Kappa would like to pilot the project as a traveling exhibit at other colleges and universities where its chapters are located.

"We were looking for a way to increase awareness of the Society on campus and, hopefully, boost our acceptance rates," said Catherine Grigor, manager of public relations and marketing for University Libraries and ΦBK chapter treasurer.

"The Society's rich history is a compelling subject," Grigor explained, "but we thought that displaying newspaper articles and photos from the 1930s documenting our struggle to secure a chapter, and the importance of Phi Beta Kappa to the liberal arts community, would show students how prestigious it really is to have Phi Beta Kappa at Penn State."

The exhibit combined the story of

Phi Beta Kappa, the nation's oldest academic honor society, with that of the local chapter, founded in 1937.

The national office contributed a variety of contemporary and historic images, including a portrait of the founding president, John Heath, and a copy of the original 1779 charter for a chapter at Yale University bearing the signature of Elisha Parmele.

Lambda of Pennsylvania and the university's archives supplied artifacts and images from their Phi Beta Kappa collection, including a parchment scroll illustrated and inscribed in the illuminated style of a medieval manuscript recording the names of early inductees, photographs and stories documenting the struggle undertaken by ΦBK faculty to secure a chapter, and photographs of the chapter's founding members and induction ceremonies.

Portraits of some of the Society's prominent members, past and present, complemented the display.

The exhibit occupied space in a main thoroughfare of the library, which is visited, on average, by more than 5,000 students per day. Phi Beta Kappa brochures and a current issue of *The Key Reporter*, featuring an image from



A portrait of John Heath, ΦBK's founding president, was among the images on display at Penn State University.

the exhibit on its cover, were distributed on site to provide students with additional information.

If your chapter is interested in hosting a Phi Beta Kappa exhibit, please contact Kelly Gerald, director of public relations, at kgerald@pbk.org or (202) 745-3239. ■

Love of Wisdom ... and the Correct Time at Ohio University

Phi Beta Kappa is a landmark on the Ohio University campus, in more ways than one.

The new Phi Beta Kappa clock, featuring the Greek initials of the Society and its motto, will serve as a reminder of academic excellence, and the correct time, at Ohio University's new student center.

The 183,300-square-foot Baker University Center, which opened in January, is named for Ohio's 14th president, John Calhoun Baker.

The new landmark was donated to Ohio University by Lambda of Ohio, which is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year.

"We said, 'We would like to do something for this campus that would honor academic achievement and be useful on campus,'" says Mark Lucas, associate professor of physics and president of the chapter. "Phi Beta Kappa emphasizes a strong liberal arts education. Its members are committed

to the belief that a broad education is very important for our students."

The clock was purchased through the support of more than 180 ΦBK members, with a significant contribution from the family of Evelyn Underwood Holden, who was inducted into the Ohio University chapter in 1931.

"Among the most significant aspects of campus life for years and years are honor societies and honoraries," says Dean of Students Terry Hogan. "Ohio University has a rich history in this area." ■

This article is derived, in part, from "Center Complements University's Academic Mission" by Mary Reed, Ohio University Outlook, Nov. 2, 2006. The full story is available at www.ohio.edu/outlook/06-07/November/137f-067.cfm.



Lambda of Ohio donated this clock to Ohio University for the school's new student center. The clock bears the Society's Greek initials and motto.

Madam C.J. Walker Honored

by Louisiana Black History Hall of Fame

by Carol Anne Blitzer

The story of Madam C.J. Walker reads like the script of a melodrama.

A poor black woman, the daughter of slaves, grows up as an orphan on a Louisiana plantation, moves to “the big city,” starts her own business, becomes a millionaire and dies at her massive estate, where she has entertained some of the most important people in the country as well as European nobility.

An unlikely story, but it is true.

Walker was born Sarah Breedlove in 1867 on a cotton plantation in the town of Delta, outside Tallulah, La. She was orphaned at 6, married at 14, a mother at 17 and widowed at 20. At her death in 1919 at her mansion on the Hudson River in New York, she was the sole owner of a major company that manufactured and sold hair products for African-American women. Contemporary news reports called her the country’s first black woman millionaire.

Her obituary in *The New York Times* described “the unusual story of how she rose in 12 years from a washerwoman making only \$1.50 a day to a position of wealth and influence among members of her race.”

On June 23, the Louisiana Black History Hall of Fame and the Martin Luther King Community Center hosted an induction ceremony to posthumously present Walker with the 2007 Torches of Life Award. Her great-great-granddaughter, A’Lelia Bundles of Washington, D.C., a Phi Beta Kappa member and graduate of Harvard University, accepted the award on her behalf.

Bundles has done extensive research on Walker and has collected many of her papers, which are now housed in the William Henry Smith Memorial Library of the Indiana Historical Society in Indianapolis. In 2002, she published a biography of

Walker, *On Her Own Ground: The Life and Times of Madam C.J. Walker*.

“I used a lot of her letters and collected articles from newspapers about her travels all over the country,” Bundles said. “I used the black newspapers because at that time the white newspapers were not writing about her visits.”

Walker died more than 30 years before Bundles was born, but she was able to connect with her great-great-grandmother through her grandfather, Marion Rowland Perry Jr., an attorney



Madam C.J. Walker posthumously received the Torches of Life Award from the Louisiana Black History Hall of Fame. Walker’s great-great-granddaughter, A’Lelia Bundles, a Phi Beta Kappa member and author of *On Her Own Ground: The Life and Times of Madam C.J. Walker* (Scribner, 2002), accepted the honor on her behalf.

Photo Credit: A’Lelia Bundles/Walker Family Collection/insmadamcjwalker.com

and World War I Army officer.

“My grandfather was the one person that I knew who was most connected to Madam Walker,” Bundles said. She was also able to talk with Violet Davis Reynolds, who had worked as a secretary for the Walker Co. beginning in 1915.

“As an adult, I really came to understand Madam Walker’s life, her journey,” Bundles said.

That journey to success began with Walker’s move to St. Louis, where she worked as a laundress and saved enough money to provide her daughter, A’Lelia Walker Robinson, with a college education.

In 1905, Walker moved to Denver and with two dollars in savings and help from her third husband, Charles Walker, she established the Walker Co. to produce a full line of hair-care products for black women. She later moved to Indianapolis, where she built a factory and established a beauty school along with beauty schools in several other cities.

The products were sold through agents who educated their customers on beauty and hygiene. Walker traveled the country promoting her products and speaking on the importance of maintaining a good personal appearance.

As the business prospered, Walker purchased property all over the country, including two houses in Harlem which were remodeled for a beauty parlor and school. Biographical materials among the Walker papers suggest that Booker T. Washington attended the opening of the facility.

Around 1916, Walker purchased a 400-acre estate at Irvington-on-Hudson, N.Y., and hired a black architect, Vertner W. Tandy, to design and build a \$350,000 mansion with a formal Italian garden and swimming pool. She called the mansion Villa Lewaro, a name created from the

initials of her daughter, A’Lelia Walker Robinson.

The Walker papers indicate that Madam Walker was a major donor to African-American charities in Indianapolis and throughout the United States. She contributed to the Tuskegee Institute, Mary McLeod Bethune’s Daytona Educational and Industrial School for Negro Girls in Florida, the Black YMCA and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. She was an activist who encouraged black people to take pride in their heritage and a fighter for the rights of her people. During World War I, she was a member of a delega-

tion to President Woodrow Wilson to protest segregation in the military.

One of Walker's greatest goals was to encourage black women to be financially independent. In a speech to the National Negro Business League in 1913, she said, "... I want to say to every Negro woman present, don't sit down and wait for the opportunities to come. ... Get up and make them."

At her death in 1919, Walker's business included the factory in Indianapolis; more than 20,000 agents selling a full line of beauty products across the United States, in Central America and in the Caribbean; and several beauty schools in different parts of the country.

For years, Walker's daughter, A'Lelia Walker Robinson, was active in the business, as were other members of Madam Walker's family. Much of Robinson's business advice came from her mother's longtime attorney, Freeman B. Ransom, a native of Grenada, Miss., who became general manager and attorney for the Walker Manufacturing Co.

Over time, Robinson became less active in the business and divided her time between her townhouse in Harlem and Villa Lewaro. She was a noted hostess during the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s, entertaining black intellectuals such as W.E.B. DuBois, Countee Cullen, Langston Hughes, Alberta Hunter and Walter White as well as white writers and European nobility.

She adopted a daughter, Mae Walker Robinson Perry, who in 1923 married Dr. Henry Gordon Jackson in

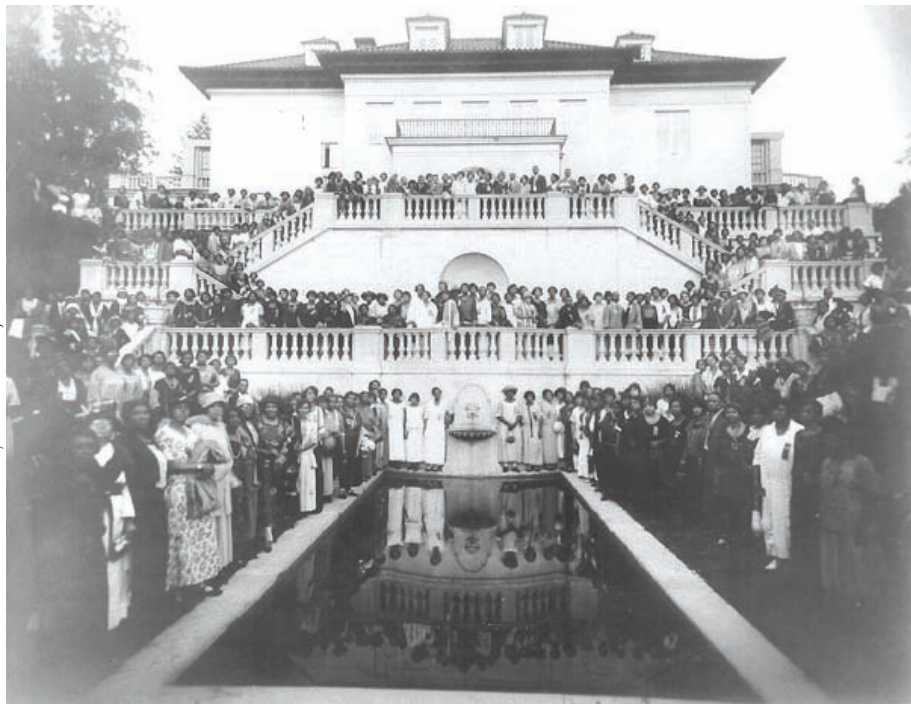


Photo Credit: A'Lelia Bundles Walker Family Collection/madamcjwalker.com

Walker Co. agents and beauty culturists gather during a convention in 1924 at Villa Lewaro, the mansion Madam C.J. Walker had built at Irvington-on-Hudson, N.Y. They were photographed on the Italianate terrace of the back of the house.

an elaborate wedding at St. Philip's Episcopal Church in Harlem. "It was a wedding such as Harlem never saw, and may never see again, for there was but one granddaughter of Mme. Walker ... reputed to have made more than a million dollars out of her hair stimulator," wrote *The New York Times* in a lengthy article Nov. 25, 1923. "It was a wedding that rolled into one all the ceremonial of a royal, a military and an ordinary marriage."

The article describes eight days of

parties, many hosted by members of the Debutantes' Club; beautiful furs and jewelry worn by wedding guests; the elaborate dresses, all handmade for the wedding party; the bride's mother's "gown of gold metal cloth, designed and made in Paris;" and magnificent gifts given to members of the wedding party as well as the bride and groom.

However, Robinson's high living led to financial problems. The company had expanded and built an expen-

Continued on 10



A'Lelia Bundles

My liberal arts education helped sharpen my curiosity and prepared me for the kind of historical writing I am doing now. Learning to conduct research, to dig deeply and to write clearly are skills that have been invaluable. While I had great fun as a jazz deejay in college, it really was in the stacks of Widener Library at Harvard and on research trips for my undergraduate thesis when I felt most focused and tingly with the anticipation of intellectual discovery.

A few years later at Columbia's Graduate School of Journalism, as I was discussing possible topics for my master's paper with my advisor, Phyllis Garland, I suggested what must have been trite and clichéd topics. Phyl, who was the only black woman tenured faculty member at the time, listened patiently, then asked, "Your name is A'Lelia. Do you have any connection to Madam Walker or A'Lelia Walker?" Almost reluctantly, I answered, "Yes, they're my great-great-grandmother and great-grandmother." Phyl, who was familiar with the Walker women because of her years at *The Pittsburgh Courier*, a well-known black weekly, and *Ebony* magazine, immediately replied, "Well, that's your topic!" Had I had any other advisor, I doubt that would have been the response.

Although there is a tremendous amount of important scholarship now being done about 19th and early 20th century African-American women, major publish-

Continued on 11

WALKER *Continued from 9*

sive new factory in Indianapolis. When sales slumped during the Great Depression, Robinson was forced to sell some of the properties including Villa Lewaro.

At Robinson's death in 1931, she left half of her stock in the company to her daughter, Mae Walker Perry, and the other half to Ransom. Mae Walker Perry became president of the company; Ransom continued to serve as general manager.

At Mae Walker Perry's death, her daughter, A'Lelia Mae Perry Bundles, became president of the company while she was still a chemistry student at Howard University. After several lawsuits and conflicts over governance of the company, A'Lelia Mae Perry Bundles became vice president and remained active with the company until her death in 1976. In 1985, the company was sold to Indianapolis businessman Ray Randolph. The products in the line developed by Madam Walker are no longer available.

A'Lelia Bundles is the daughter of A'Lelia Mae Perry Bundles. She followed a career route as an author, journalist and network news executive. She recently ended a 30-year career in network television news with her last position as director of talent development for ABC News in Washington, D.C., and New York. From 1989-1996, she was a producer with ABC's "World News Tonight with Peter Jennings." She has a master's degree in journalism from Columbia University and an undergraduate degree from Harvard, where she was inducted into Phi Beta



Madam C.J. Walker poses with her niece and two Walker Co. employees in 1912 in her Model T Ford in front of her home in Indianapolis.

Kappa.

In 1998, the U.S. Postal Service issued a commemorative stamp honoring Madam Walker in its Black Heritage series.

Brenda Perry, founder of the Louisiana Black History Hall of Fame, said that Madam Walker was chosen to receive the Torches of Life Award so that her "legacy to this state and nation will be honored where she began, here in Louisiana."

Brenda Perry is working with a group to build a permanent museum so "visitors from across the state and nation will come to Baton Rouge to learn of state, national and international contributions and achievements of successful African Americans," she said.

Members of the board of the

Louisiana Black History Hall of Fame unveiled architectural renderings of the museum design and layout at the induction ceremonies.

Bundles is delighted that her great-great-grandmother is being honored in Louisiana.

"She's still very much a part of Louisiana," Bundles said. "It's so important for young people — black kids, white kids, Asian kids, all kids — to have the inspiration to succeed, to overcome obstacles." ■

Carol Anne Blitzner is a staff writer for The Advocate. This article originally appeared on June 11 and is reprinted here with permission from The Advocate.

Thiel *Continued from 3*

book, *Inside the House of Money: Top Hedge Fund Traders on Profiting in the Global Markets* (Wiley, 2006).

In addition to finance, Thiel is active in a variety of academic, philanthropic and cultural pursuits. He serves on the boards of several think tanks, including the Hoover Institution, Pacific Research Institute, and the Singularity Institute for Artificial

Intelligence, which studies the tremendous benefits and dangers of that technology. He also has served on Stanford Law School's Board of Visitors and taught *Globalization, Sovereignty and Technological Change* at Stanford Law School in 2004.

In 2005, Thiel co-produced the film, *Thank You for Smoking*, based on the eponymous Christopher Buckley novel. He also is a U.S.-rated chess master.

This year, Thiel has been honored as a Young Global Leader, an award bestowed by the World Economic Forum to recognize the world's 250 most distinguished leaders age 40 and under.

Thiel received a B.A. in philosophy from Stanford University in 1989 and a J.D. from Stanford Law School in 1992. ■

ΦBK in the News

♦ U.S. Secretary of State **Condoleezza Rice** (University of Denver, 1974) named **Nina V. Fedoroff** (Syracuse University, 1966), to be her new science and technology adviser. Fedoroff is the Willaman Professor of Life Sciences and Evan Pugh Professor in the Biology Department and the Huck Institutes of the Life Sciences, Penn State University. (State Department Documents and Publications 18 July 2007 Press Release www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2007/88640.htm)

♦ President Bush announced May 30 that **Bob Zoellick** (Swarthmore College, 1975), former U.S. Deputy Secretary of State and U.S. Trade Representative, would replace **Paul Wolfowitz** (Cornell University, 1964) as World Bank President. ("Bush Taps Zoellick To Be Next President of the

World Bank" by Jeannie Aversa Associated Press World Stream 30 May 2007.)

♦ Morehouse College graduate and noted theologian **Robert Michael Franklin Jr.** (Morehouse College, 1975) has become the 10th president of Morehouse. He replaces **Walter E. Massey** (Morehouse College, 1980), who retired June 30. ("Morehouse College Appoints New President" *Atlanta Business Chronicle* online 1 May 2007 <http://washington.bizjournals.com/atlanta/stories/2007/04/30/daily7.html>)

ΦBK in Popular Culture

♦ **Rivers Cuomo** (Harvard University, 2006) is the enigmatic lead singer of Weezer, a band known for its cult-like fanbase and acclaimed *Blue Album* (Geffen Records, 1994), featuring hit songs "Undone — The Sweater Song"

and "Buddy Holly." They have made many successful records following, and sources say a new album will be released in early 2008. (WEEZER 21 July 2007 www.weezer.com). Submitted by *Cara Engel* (*Lehigh University, 2002*), Washington, D.C. ■

BUNDLES *Continued from 9*

ers had little interest in 1976 when I was in graduate school. Thankfully, Phyl's validation of the story put me on a journey that has allowed me to research and write about the lives and times of six generations of women in my family. Through their experiences — as free women of color, as daughters of Revolutionary War soldiers, as enslaved women, as women who survived Jim Crow era violence, as 19th century college graduates, as entrepreneurs, as Harlem Renaissance patrons of the arts, as philanthropists — I have taken as my mission the retelling of American history from a perspective that had long been overlooked.

I enjoyed a wonderful 30 year career at NBC News and ABC News as a producer and as an executive, but I am convinced that all the storytelling and traveling skills I learned from those jobs were simply preparing me for what I am doing now as I approach my 35th college reunion.

As I reflect, I also realize that my college experiences were so positive for me that I have continued to stay connected through alumni activities. I still love the feeling of walking onto campus, of knowing an intellectually stimulating conversation is just moments away, of seeing young people with so much intelligence and promise. For years I've been involved in alumni activities at Harvard and Radcliffe (as president of the Radcliffe College Alumni Association, as a director of the Harvard Alumni Association, as a Radcliffe Trustee and most recently as a member of the Dean's Council of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study.) At Columbia, I am chairing a task force that is revamping the Journalism School Alumni Association. In September I will become a Trustee of Columbia University.

— A'Lelia Bundles

New Phi Beta Kappa Membership Items



Phi Beta Kappa's distinctive key design, the symbol of membership in the Society, is featured on two new additions to the collection of member items. The new Jefferson Cup and traditional Julep Cup are made in solid polished pewter and engraved with the Phi Beta Kappa insignia. The Jefferson Cup is 2 1/2 inches high and the Julep Cup measures four inches.

Also available is the handsome brass key ring with the Society's emblem on the front and the member's name, year of election, and chapter on the reverse. The popular membership display includes a personalized certificate and a large gold-electroplated key, double-matted in an attractive 12 x 16 inch walnut frame.



To order, complete the form below and mail it with your payment and a copy of your mailing label from the back cover showing your membership number to Hand & Hammer, 2610 Morse Lane, Woodbridge, VA 22192. You can also place an order or request the complete product brochure by calling (703) 491-4866 or by faxing (703) 491-2031. You can also order on line at www.hand-hammer.com. A three dollar shipping and handling fee is added to each order.

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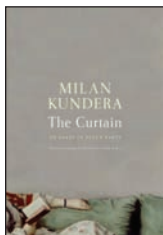
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From Our Book Critics

By Rick Eden



The Curtain: An Essay in Seven Parts. Milan Kundera. Translated from the French by Linda Asher. Harper Collins, 2006. 168 pages. \$22.95

The Curtain is Milan Kundera's brilliant sequel to *The Art of the Novel*, published in 1986. The essay is digressive more than expository, and its seven parts decompose into over 70 short pieces that read like entries in a master novelist's notebook.

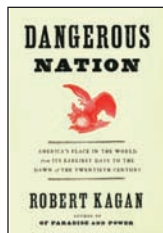
Halfway through *The Curtain*, Kundera describes his intent: "A novelist talking about the art of the novel ... will talk about himself, even more about other people, about novels of theirs that he loves and that have a secret presence in his own work. ... He will trace out for you the whole past of the novel's history and ... will give you some sense of his own poetics of the novel ... So you will feel you are moving in amazement down into History's hold where the novel's future is being decided."

Following Henry Fielding, Kundera believes that the novel is "novel" as an art in two respects. First, the purpose of a novel is to gain a new understanding of an aspect of human nature: "All we can do in the face of the ineluctable defeat called life is to try to understand it. That — that is the *raison d'être* of the art of the novel." Because of its subject, human nature, the novel is necessarily prosaic and necessarily comic, or at least ironic. Moreover, it is analytic and cannot be limited to narrative only; indeed, it can incorporate all literary forms within its bounds.

This expansive, open architecture is the second "novel" aspect of novels: each novel must take its own innovative form. There is nothing comparable in the history of the novel to established poetic forms such as the sonnet. A novel's "form arises in a freedom that no one can delimit and whose evolution will be a perpetual surprise."

The title may suggest that Kundera considers *The Curtain* to be his final statement on the art of the novel. Yet a curtain is a soft, impermanent boundary that the reader is invited to pass through and move beyond. As Kundera makes clear, the history of the novel is

"always present, always with us constantly being challenged, defended, judged, and judged again."



Dangerous Nation. Robert Kagan. Alfred A. Knopf, 2006. 527 pages. \$30.00

Dangerous Nation looks as formidable as its title: a full ream of paper that is only vol-

ume one of a proposed two-volume history of American foreign policy. But it is a surprisingly readable and often fascinating book that helps to illuminate how America has become embroiled in a complex war in Iraq to end a despotic regime and install a democratic republic.

According to Kagan, America is a dangerous nation for three reasons. Foremost is the liberal, revolutionary and universalist ideology stated in America's first foreign policy document — the Declaration of Independence. Among the founding fathers, John Adams described the American threat clearly: "Our pure, virtuous, public-spirited, federative republic will last forever, govern the globe, and introduce the perfection of man."

The second source of danger is the economic and military power that enabled the ideologically aggressive young nation to compete with the leading powers of the world. The third source is psychological, an inability or unwillingness of the United States to see itself as dangerous: "This self-image survives, despite four hundred years of steady expansion and an ever-deepening involvement in world affairs, and despite innumerable wars, interventions, and prolonged occupations in foreign lands."

Kagan's chapters on slavery and on the Civil War are particularly strong. He notes with irony that it was under a liberal Republican leadership that the U.S. first attempted to occupy and reconstruct a country: "The Civil War was America's first experiment in ideological conquest ... and what followed was America's first experiment in 'nation-building.'"

Kagan ends *Dangerous Nation* with the U.S. poised to enter the Spanish-American War in order to free Cuba from Spain. Like the current war in

Iraq, that war with Spain has been difficult for some to understand or justify. But Kagan's systematic analysis of the ideological roots of American foreign policy makes both wars seem logical, coherent and almost inevitable.



The Occupation of Iraq: Winning the War, Losing the Peace. Ali A. Allawi. Yale University Press, 2007. 518 pages. \$28.00

The Occupation of Iraq is an important and unique contribution to our understanding of the war in Iraq. Allawi is the scion of a distinguished family that went into exile after the fall of the monarchy. Educated in Great Britain and the United States, he returned to Iraq following the overthrow of Saddam Hussein to serve as the minister of defense on the Governing Council appointed under the Coalition Provisional Authority and as the minister of finance in the Transitional National Government. He offers us an Iraqi insider's view of the process of installing a democratically elected government in Iraq — a process that resembles the refurbishment of state-rooms on a steadily sinking ship.

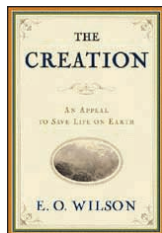
Interestingly, Allawi argues that the U.S. might have quickly suppressed the insurgency if it had made better decisions. But his list of "if's" is long: *If* the U.S. had fielded sufficient troops. *If* it had not dissolved the Iraqi military. *If* it had secured the stockpiles of conventional weapons. *If* it had not flooded the country with cash. The list goes on.

Allawi does not make the same claim for the civil strife playing out now across ethnic, tribal, regional and sectarian divides. These conflicts appear to have been unavoidable. He quotes King Faisal I's telling assessment of Iraq as a new nation: "It is my belief that there is no Iraqi people inside Iraq ... only diverse groups with no national sentiments."

Despite Allawi's scholarly tone, as an Iraqi he cannot mask his feelings of anguish, resentment, bewilderment and anger that his adopted countries could have treated his native one so poorly: "The catalogue of errors — in planning, judgment, understanding and execution — was so wide-ranging as to

border on the inexplicably negligent.”

By William F. Gilly



The Creation: An Appeal to Save Life on Earth. *E.O. Wilson.* W.W. Norton, 2006. 160 pages. \$21.95

Combining the mighty forces of science and religion in order to halt the increasingly rapid degradation of earth — ALL of earth — may sound like wishful thinking, but *The Creation* develops this thesis in a forceful, eloquent and realistic manner. Man’s ascendancy from nature rather than to it, Wilson reminds us, is a phenomenon that started with the Neolithic revolution that swept in agriculture, urbanization and industrialization, all at the expense of a rich, natural world that was in place long before humans appeared. This is not a new idea, but Wilson takes it in a bold direction by stating that it does not matter whether the destruction wreaked by man started 6,000 years ago in the Garden of Eden or a million years ago on the African savannah. Rather, we must transcend theological and scientific intellectualism about origins and such issues and focus on what really matters to our survival on this planet. To Wilson, the supreme naturalist and evolutionary biologist, this means halting the staggering ongoing loss of biological diversity that he equates with the Creation. This, he points out, is demanded by both biblical imperative and basic science (as well as sound economic policy), and it is the duty of all of us “to grasp and discuss on common ground this principle: because we are part of it, the fate of the Creation is the fate of humanity.”

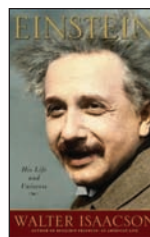
These are strong words, to be sure, but they resonate in today’s troubled and divided world. For this he is to be commended, and in this general way the book triumphs. But in another way, it will leave some readers at a point only halfway to the Promised Land. For example, Wilson bemoans the inadequacy of biological education, which is certainly a valid point. But perhaps more biologists and their children, most of whom do not share his Southern Baptist roots, would also do well to try and become more familiar

with positions of faith based on biblical philosophy. Bidirectional acceptance based on knowledge is what is really needed, and clearly this is a huge challenge. Regrettably, in the end, Wilson seems to neglect his own “forget the differences” precept and takes on the origin of life and the argument of evolution versus intelligent design. This does not feel like the common ground that he calls for. Indeed, such arguments really do need to be shelved until the called-for rapprochement of science and religion has matured.

Although not perfect, this short and eminently readable work is terribly important and should be reflected on by anyone who cares about the future of life on Earth. Perhaps the greatest endorsement comes from a broadly increasing public concern about the impact of climate change on the world’s biota, including man. In January 2006, “Climate Change: An Evangelical Call to Action” appeared on the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) Web site and articulated concern for the treasure of the Creation. Indeed, at a meeting sponsored by this organization only months after publication of *The Creation*, Wilson and other scientists met with evangelical leaders. At this meeting, Rev. Richard Cizik, vice president for governmental affairs of NAE, stated that “[g]reat scientists are people of imagination. So are people of great faith. We dare to imagine a world in which science and religion cooperate, minimizing our differences about how Creation got started, to work together to reverse its degradation. ... When we die, God will not ask us how He created the earth, but what we did with what He created.”

Again, strong words in a troubled time — but Wilson’s thesis just might be able to guide us on the path to saving what is left of His Creation. Reading this powerful book may be the first step for many.

By Jay Pasachoff



Einstein: His Life and Universe. *Walter Isaacson.* Simon & Schuster, 2007. 704 pages. \$32.00

“Einstein’s discovery of special relativity involved an intuition based on a decade of intellectual as well as personal experiences. The most important and obvious, I think ... ” writes Walter Isaacson in his new biography of Einstein. Who is Isaacson to make the evaluation? This former managing editor of *TIME Magazine* has become a noted biographer, following his study of Benjamin Franklin with this one of Albert Einstein. This massive book, over 550 pages in length before the end notes and index, is written in a readable style accessible to all, combining Einstein’s personal story with interspersed discussion of the science.

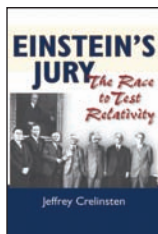
The book has been vetted scientifically by a Who’s Who of major scientists, showing the ability of Isaacson to command assistance from a level of expertise available to few. So, one can learn with confidence about the content of Einstein’s set of 1905 papers that led to our belief in quanta of energy, that explained the motion of small particles suspended in liquid, and that, most famously, led to the explanation of motion near the speed of light, the idea that physical laws are invariant in steadily moving frames, and, as a corollary, with the idea that energy and mass are equivalent with the relation in Einstein’s original notation, $M=L/V^2$. With the more modern notation of E instead of L for energy and c instead of V for the speed of light, we find Einstein’s brief note revealing that $E=mc^2$.

Isaacson’s book is touted as the first major Einstein biography since the release of a trove of letters that, most notably, shows his relation with his first wife. The discoveries have been widely reported in newspapers, so I didn’t notice material that hasn’t been available over the last few years, but the story is nonetheless a good one. Isaacson concludes, “From all the evidence, Maric was a sounding board. ... She also helped check his math, though there is no evidence that she came up

with any of the mathematical concepts. ... It would be fun if we could go further than this. But instead, we must follow the less exciting course of being confined to the evidence ... the courage that Maric displayed by entering and competing in the male-dominated world of physics and math is what should earn her an admired spot in the annals of scientific history. This she deserves without inflating the importance of her collaboration on the special theory of relativity."

The drama of Einstein's race with David Hilbert to fix our hero's earlier version of general relativity is told well, and we cheer not only Arthur Stanley Eddington's scientific result but also his attempt at international amity between England and Germany. The book is too rich in stories to summarize, so let me merely mention the discussions of Einstein's coming to the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, N.J., and his life there along with the founder's attempt to keep Einstein away from publicity, in part because of fear of raising anti-Semitism, by keeping from him an invitation from President Franklin D. Roosevelt to the White House.

If each generation indeed gets the Einstein that it deserves, then ours is a worthy one.



Einstein's Jury: The Race to Test Relativity. Jeffrey Crelinsten. Princeton University Press, 2006. 428 pages. \$35.00.

Einstein himself may have claimed not to need observational verification, given his widely cited response to a question about his reaction if the eclipse results had disagreed with his theory: "Then I would have been sorry for the dear Lord; the theory is correct." But scientists in general did need such verification, and the somewhat ambiguous results of the 1919 eclipse expeditions left room for improvement. Jeffrey Crelinsten gives the philosophy of science aspects of the acceptance and spread of Einstein's general theory of relativity, with discussions both pre- and post-eclipse results.

Crelinsten's book provides a correction for the mistaken view held by many people that testing general relativity is still a major reason for studying eclipses, even though the last major effort was apparently impeded by desert sandstorms in 1973. (I have some amateur results from the 2006 total eclipse viewed from the Libyan desert on my desk in case I find time to

help with the data reduction.) The capability of eclipses for testing GR, as general relativity is known, has long been surpassed by radio observations as quasars are occulted by the sun. Searching for small deviations from Einstein's general theory is the purpose of the billion-dollar Gravity Probe B, launched by NASA, which has confirmed one relativistic effect but for whose final results we are now awaiting even in the face of complications that degrade its capabilities.

Crelinsten discusses other tests of general relativity besides the deflection of light, notably the gravitational redshift detected in white dwarfs, especially originally Sirius B, the faint companion to the sky's brightest star. Einstein could not have anticipated the many ways in which we currently see the results of his theory. Nowadays, we see beautiful blue arcs surrounding clusters of galaxies in certain Hubble Space Telescope images as the result of gravitational lensing, with a few "Einstein rings" of lensed different galaxies also visible. Microlensing, the deflection and focusing of light by gravitating objects, has even led to the discovery of an extrasolar planet.

We live in Einsteinian space, and it is fascinating to learn how we came to appreciate it and to believe in it.

Browsability

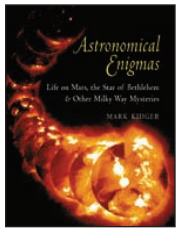
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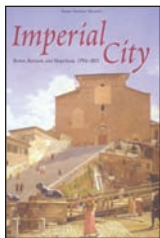


Astronomical Enigmas: Life on Mars, the Star of Bethlehem & Other Milky Way Mysteries. Mark Kidger. Johns Hopkins, 2005. 368 pages. \$29.95

Mark Kidger, having looked into interesting nooks and crannies of astronomy, has brought a dozen topics he found there to the general public. The discussions often deal with historical or statistical aspects of astronomy. For example, how worried should we be that an asteroid will kill us all by hitting the Earth? Why has Pluto long been known as odd among planets? What is the chance that there is life on Mars? What might have led to reports of the “Star of Bethlehem” (though he admits to the idea that it may have been a rhetorical device, with no actual corresponding astronomical event)? Where do the elements come from, phrased as “are we stardust”?

I will look forward to his sequel, *Cosmological Enigmas: Pulsars, Quasars, and Other Deep-Space Questions*, now in press.

By Eugen Weber



Imperial City: Rome, Romans and Napoleon, 1795-1815. Susan Vandiver Nicassio. Ravenhall Books, 2005. 240 pages. \$34.95

After *Tosca's Rome*, Susan Nicassio now presents the lively spectacle of that “Imperial City” — not between 1796-1815 as advertised, but as far back as needed to visualize that grubby effervescent, exhilarating, passionate, malodorous, tumultuous capital as prize in a tug of war between France, Naples and the papacy. If you want to know if you will like the book, glance at the “Cast of Characters” on pages 9-11 for a taste of the author’s style and wit, then plunge into the pageant that follows: social history etched with a buoyant pen and unobtrusive scholarship.

Napoleon Bonaparte seriously considered moving the pope and his court to Paris, but never got around to

it, any more than he ever got around to visiting his second capital. Samuel Taylor Coleridge tells us that General Bonaparte thought all Italians were robbers. A lady before whom he expressed this view replied: not all, but the most part, “... *ma buona parte*.” If not Bonaparte himself, his French twice plundered Rome, as their museums testify. But war and politics are secondary to the lives, doings and dreams that are the stuff of Nicassio’s narrative, as of the great city saturated with churches, teeming with guilt and filth, overflowing with beggars, robbers, riches and pomp.

The candles of shrines in and on the walls provided the only street lights: *madonelle* and *altarini* the more numerous, the rougher the neighborhood. Raffles and lotteries were as frequent as riots and violence. Astrologers, cabalists, magicians or monks could steer gamblers to a winning ticket; but the papal treasury was the biggest winner, and income from lotteries subsidized public works, hospitals and churches. Street markets and theaters, preachers and charlatans, cockfights, dogfights, puppets, cattle slaughtered and criminals executed in the street, balloon flights (imported from France), public letter writers, vendors selling munchies, agitated, stimulated and entertained.

Colorful and engrossing, Nicassio’s narrative does justice to all this and more; so that, like Henry James reeling his way through Roman streets, we learn at last what the picturesque is.

Editor’s Note: This review was among the last Eugen Weber submitted to The Key Reporter before his death on May 17.

Weber had been a member of the faculty at the University of California, Los Angeles since 1956, dean of the College of Letters and Science from 1977 to 1982, and held the university’s endowed chair in modern European history, which is now named for him.

Students may remember him for his 1971 book A Modern History of Europe that became a standard text in college courses across the country. Many more may remember him as the host for “The Western Tradition,” the 52-part PBS documentary series on Western civilization that first aired in the late 1980s.

Phi Beta Kappans will remember

him not only for his colorful, witty and omnifarious reviews but also, perhaps, for his book Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914, winner of Phi Beta Kappa’s Ralph Waldo Emerson Award in 1977. This marked the beginning of a relationship with the Society that lasted the rest of his life.

In 1978 he was inducted as an honorary member at UCLA. He served on the Phi Beta Kappa Senate from 1991-1994, and in 1997, he became a book critic for The Key Reporter, where his reviews have been published for the last 20 years.

In a 1999 interview with the Toronto Star, Weber said: “I don’t think you can be a scholar without the wild desire to want to pass on (what you’ve learned).” The Society is grateful to him for having shared some of his passion and his wisdom with us.

Our critics select books for review and are not limited to ΦBK authors. Members are welcome to send review copies of their books to the editor of *The Key Reporter*. They will be forwarded to the most appropriate reviewer for consideration.

Keys, Please



Harvard 1823

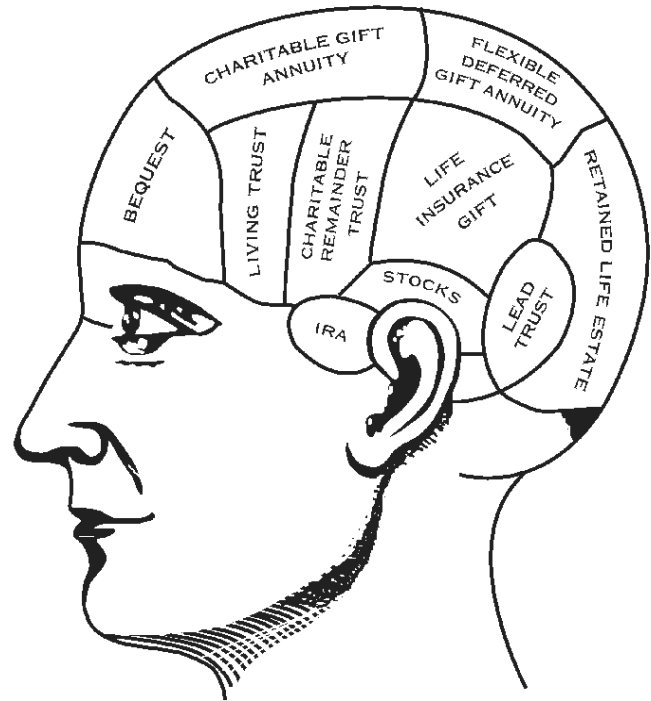
John S. Carbone (William & Mary, 1984) is researching and documenting the evolution of Phi Beta Kappa keys in order to expand upon the work of William T. Hastings in *The Insignia of Phi Beta Kappa*, the primary work on keys published in 1964. Pre-1912 keys are particularly desirable for Carbone’s research. If you or a family member have an early or unique ΦBK key, please write to:

John S. Carbone
208 Martins Point Place
Cary, NC 27519

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