



THE KEY REPORTER

Welcome to Postculturalism

By Christopher Clausen

WRITING RECENTLY in the *New Republic* about the Internet, Gary Chapman described its adepts as “the intellectual vanguard for an internationalist, libertarian world-view of global, amoral, stateless capitalism” and contrasted this vision with “the nativist, patriotic ‘family values’ apparently ascendant in the American middle class.” Chapman, director of the 21st Century Project at the University of Texas, believes that the increasing use of computer networks has greatly strengthened the first of these outlooks and weakened the “parochialism” of which the second is a rationalization. Politicians, he maintains, have failed to grasp either the “culture” of the Internet or its implications for the politics they practice.

In contrast to societies of the preindustrial past, the contemporary United States has neither one big culture nor a number of smaller ones—only a strange mixture of freedom and nostalgia.

Apart from pointing out the difficulty of regulating cyberspace, Chapman has little to say about what those implications might be. Readers who are not “digerati” may suspect that, like other enthusiasts, he exaggerates the importance of computers to the way most people think or behave. He has, however, neatly encapsulated

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Announcement of New Editor for *American Scholar* Expected in December

Donald Lamm, chairman of W. W. Norton Company and head of a committee to select a new editor of the Society’s journal, the *American Scholar*, announced in October that the committee has nearly completed its work and expects to make its recommendation to the Phi Beta Kappa Senate in December. Joseph Epstein, who has edited the journal since 1975, will leave his position in December 1997, in accordance with a decision reached by the ΦBK Senate last December.

The other members of the search committee are John Bethell, editor, *Harvard Magazine*; Rita F. Dove, professor of English at the University of Virginia; Joseph W. Gordon, dean of undergraduate studies, Yale Uni-

versity; and David Levering Lewis, Martin Luther King Jr. Professor of History, Rutgers University. All except Bethell serve on the Phi Beta Kappa Senate.

“The decision to change editors in two years’ time was perhaps the most difficult one the ΦBK Senate has made since I first became a member of it,” said ΦBK President Charles Blitzer. “It was reached after nearly two days of earnest and occasionally heated debate.”

In an article commenting on the Senate’s decision to end Epstein’s tenure as editor of the *Scholar* next year, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (August 17, 1996) noted that both Epstein and the *Scholar* “have

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Sustaining Memberships, Total Donations Increase

The number of Phi Beta Kappa members who responded to the Society’s annual solicitation letter inviting them to be sustaining members was a record 49,159 in 1995-96, up from 46,384 in 1994-95.

The total amount of money donated in 1995-96 also was a record, \$1,386,899, compared with \$1,366,162 the previous year.

Each year the Society mails a solicitation letter to every member (except very recent graduates) for whom it has a current address, outlining the activities of the Society that depend on the sustaining member contributions of \$25 or more. These contributions help fund the Visiting Scholar and Book Awards programs, underwrite the two Phi Beta Kappa publications (this newsletter and the *American Scholar*), and pay the salaries of the two dozen professional and clerical employees in the Society’s Washington, D.C., headquarters who assist with these activities, maintain the Society’s records, work with the chapters and associations, and take care of the other business of the Society.

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two frames of mind (neither quite systematic enough to be called an ideology) that increasingly dominate political and cultural controversy, not only in the United States but in much of the world.

On one side are libertarians, free traders, optimistic space travelers through the modern world whose lifeblood is "information" in the various senses of that protean buzzword. On the other are neo-isolationists, nationalists, advocates of restricting trade and immigration, religious believers who demand that the state use its power to enforce traditional prohibitions against illegitimacy, abortion, and many forms of incivility. As has often been pointed out, Muslim fundamentalism offers a counterpart to the latter set of positions in much of the non-Western world.

My concern here is not with political controversy as such but with the unfolding cultural history that it dimly reflects. The relationship between cultural change and its expression in politics (whether electoral or academic) is not always what one would expect. For example, a libertarian, internationalist vision of the world ought in theory to be just what the doctors of diversity and multiculturalism ordered. On the Internet or in a world of permeable borders, different cultures should flourish side by side in relationships unmarked by either dominance or submission.

In practice, however, such an environment rapidly breaks down not merely boundaries but cultures themselves. This process began long before computers were invented, and, whether we label it modernity, cultural imperialism, the technological revolution, or the inexorable logic of capitalism, no culture is immune to it. The result is a United States—and increasingly an entire world—fast approaching a condition that can best be described not as multicultural but as postcultural.

Notice that Chapman referred to the "culture" engendered by the Internet. The word *culture*, when used

anthropologically rather than honorifically, refers to the total way of life of a discrete society, its traditions, habits, beliefs, and art—"the systematic body of learned behavior which is transmitted from parents to children," as Margaret Mead summarized it in 1959. For a traditional culture, Ruth Benedict pointed out in her immensely influential *Patterns of Culture* (1934), "outside of the closed group there are no human beings." The culture of Inca Peru or of Anglo-Saxon England varied over time but had certain constant features, including a language, that differentiated it from other cultures in other times or places. A culture is defined by those differences and exclusions.

The "culture" of the Internet is another story altogether and requires a different kind of telling. Used metaphorically, *culture* is everywhere these days. The latest edition of

Most of the time, *culture* is a lazy, trendy substitute for a more specific word. . . . "Culture" can equally be an excuse, a rhetorical device to place some taste or practice beyond criticism.

Books in Print contains three and one-half columns, in minuscule type, of titles such as *The Culture of Ad-diction*, *The Culture of Biomedicine*, *The Culture of Childhood*, . . . of *Complaint*, . . . *Disbelief*, . . . *Pro-test*, . . . *Science*, . . . *the Univer-sity*, and *The Culture of War*. A *New York Times* story last year about a company that makes preppy clothes for a black clientele paraphrases the owner, Charles Walker Jr., to the effect that Ralph Lauren and Tommy Hilfiger "didn't make clothes that reflected blacks' lifestyles or culture," and adds that Walker's new line of gear "allows the wearer both to dress in preppy style and to express cultural pride."

About the same time the news from South Africa included a controversy about whether Zulus should be

allowed to carry such "cultural weapons" as spears and machetes in political demonstrations. Today the press is full of stories about the "culture" of the Defense Department, the Central Intelligence Agency (John Deutch, the new director, is trying to change it), Congress (Speaker Newt Gingrich is said to have already changed it), and any large corporation that happens to be in the news. *GQ* even describes opera as being characterized by "the culture of booing." Has the word *culture* acquired the same cultural status as a cough?

Yes and no. Clearly, most of the time, *culture* is a lazy, trendy substitute for a more specific word. Sometimes the writer really means common attitudes, sometimes fashion, sometimes behavior. The concept of culture carries with it, however, two serious implications in most contemporary usage. First, whatever is cultural is presumed not to be biologically determined, despite the frequent sloppy equation of culture with race. Cultural determinism, together with its corollary cultural relativism, is an entrenched academic

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dogma in the humanities and social sciences, popularized though not invented by such widely read anthropologists as Mead and Benedict. "By the time [a child] can talk," the latter declared memorably, "he is the little creature of his culture, and by the time he is grown and able to take part in its activities, its habits are his habits, its beliefs his beliefs, its impossibilities his impossibilities."

William Connolly reflected this implication of the word, though with a curiously flexible notion of determinism, when he complained in the *New York Times Book Review* about "the cultural demand for heterosexuality." If heterosexuality is only a "cultural demand," not a matter of biology, its normative status ranks as a mere prejudice and can be changed, as Connolly obviously thinks it ought to be. Culture has become a familiar whipping boy, particularly where sex is involved. "I'm no longer willing to call it an illness, the kind of promiscuity I engaged in between 1960 and 1970," Jeffrey Masson recently told the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. "But it was probably cultural."

"Culture" can equally be an excuse, a rhetorical device to place some taste or practice beyond criticism. "The principle of cultural relativism," the eminent anthropologist Alfred Kroeber wrote in *The Nature of Culture* (1952), "has long been standard anthropological doctrine. It holds that any cultural phenomenon must be understood and evaluated in terms of the culture of which it forms part." The Zulus of South Africa feel that their "cultural weapons" should be exempt from bans that apply to other weapons; otherwise their culture is being discriminated against. (Some residents of the American West make the same argument about their favorite firearms but get little sympathy from the news media.)

Cultural is not being used here with the implication that carrying spears, like demanding heterosexuality, is a vestige of less enlightened times and should be discontinued. Quite the opposite. To deprive Zulus of their spears is to attack their culture. And to attack a culture these days will sooner or later inspire a

charge of genocide, another growth stock on the lexical market.

Describing something as the product of culture can therefore imply either of two contradictory things about it: (1) that it is not genetically fixed and can (usually should) be changed, or (2) that it exists in an autonomous realm that, because of the doctrine of cultural relativism, is immune to criticism from outside. In contemporary polemics, what the American Indian activist Russell Means castigates as "Eurocentric male culture" is often attacked from the first perspective (as a collection of prejudices to be overcome), while non-Western or minority "culture" is often defended from the second (as a precious inheritance that should be beyond criticism).

At the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights in 1993, China, Iraq, and other Asian dictatorships invoked cultural relativism to contend that Western complaints about their human-rights abuses represented a form of imperialism. Forcibly suppressing dissenters, the argument went, may violate European and American norms, but the ancient cultures of the East have the right to follow their own customs. In some versions of this defense by the Chinese and Singaporean governments, the modern police state becomes an expression of traditional Confucian morality. Besides the fact that this whole line of argument depends on Western anthropology for its underpinnings, it grossly libels the very cultures it ostensibly defends by implying that individual rights have no place in them.

The claim that every "culture" and all of its expressions should be equally respected is too sentimental for anyone to follow consistently, though it gets a lot of play in the abstract. Even Kroeber felt that his anthropological colleagues were insufficiently attentive to the possibility of "fixed, pan-human, if not absolute,

values." What cultural relativism often means in practice today is that only those aspects of non-European cultures that seem compatible with Western feminism and some minimal notion of human rights are held up as examples of diversity. Few American multiculturalists are enthusiastic about the treatment of women in Saudi

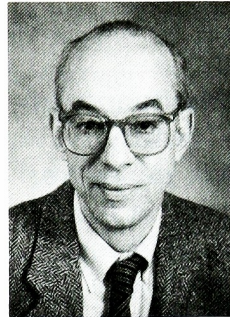
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Arabia (the fact that they aren't allowed to drive cars led to outrage in the media during the Gulf War), while female circumcision in parts of sub-Saharan Africa has lately illuminated another boundary of cultural relativism in the West. Similar criticisms of traditional practices were made by many speakers at the 1995 United Nations Conference on Women held in China.

The multiculturalism festivals held in many American towns and universities are sometimes reduced, like movie travelogues of the 1940s, to celebrating little more than the traditional foods and costumes that third-world peoples haul out on special occasions. Meanwhile the "cultural diversity" practiced in university hiring and admissions has almost nothing to do with culture but offers a justification, in academically familiar language, for affirmative-action categories that are really based on physical characteristics or ancestry.

What these contradictory uses of *culture* suggest is that the objects the word used to identify, which were always more fluid and slippery than many anthropologists liked to admit, are now close to moribund. A culture capable of determining its members' thoughts and behavior to the extent that Ruth Benedict, for example, asserted can do so only by keeping them isolated from countervailing influences. Cultures in that isolated sense, however, have been growing

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Christopher Clausen

POSTCULTURALISM

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rarer for several centuries. When real cultural conflict erupts today, as in Rwanda or the former Yugoslavia, the spectacle is so atavistic and unexpected that the rest of the world is reduced to impotent horror.

The doctrines of cultural relativism and determinism derived from anthropologists' study of tiny, exceptional groups, mostly living on islands in the farther reaches of the Pacific, on Indian reservations in western North America, or in remote parts of Africa. Those cultures were fast losing their distinctness even as they were being studied. The steamship, the telegraph, and the newspaper had already gone a long way toward breaking down cultural separation in most of the world 50 years before the jet plane and nearly a century before the Internet. The result was the first stage of postculturalism, in which technology begins the long process of displacing custom. The spears of the Zulu can be described as "cultural weapons" precisely because they represent quaint survivals from a vanished way of life. If they could be used effectively as weapons in modern warfare, nobody would call them cultural.

In contrast to the now-fading traditional life of the Zulu, the "culture" of the Internet has none of the characteristics of a real culture. It is not a total way of life; it did not evolve among a distinct people; nobody inherited it or was raised in it; it makes no moral demands and produces no art. The same is true, in slightly different ways, of the "culture" of the CIA, the press, or General Motors. The word has come to be used so loosely because those who use it have no organic relationship to a real inherited culture and no clear conception of what such a relationship would be like. Apart from WASPs and the children of immigrants, hardly any Americans grow up knowing their ancestral languages. Intermarriage has given most Americans multiple ancestral languages. Except on the most superficial level, few Americans inherit traditions that

are distinct from the ones that other Americans of different ethnic backgrounds inherit equally.

One result is what Michael Ignatieff aptly calls "the narcissism of minor differences." Many black Americans exaggerate and sentimentalize their connections to a homeland across the sea—Kwanza, after all, was invented in Los Angeles—but Italian Americans and Irish Americans do exactly the same thing. More significantly, in an era when identity is more fluid and elusive than ever before, everyone at a given level of affluence has access to the products (electronic and otherwise) that now help to define it from moment to moment.

Put in its simplest terms, the ideal of multiculturalism is the laudable one that people from drastically different backgrounds should live together in harmony and respect for

The major constituents of real cultures—family, religion, ethics, manners, impersonal criteria for distinguishing between truth and falsehood—have shrunk almost to the vanishing point as authorities over individual behavior.

each other's cultural heritages. Some multiculturalists go further and equate the sacredness of life with the sacredness of culture. In *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, edited by Amy Gutmann (Princeton University Press, 1994), the ecologist Steven Rockefeller expresses this concept at its most grandiose:

It may be argued that human cultures are themselves like life forms. They are the products of natural evolutionary processes of organic growth. Each, in its own distinct fashion, reveals the way the creative energy of the universe, working through human nature in interaction with a distinct environment, has come to a unique focus. Each has its own place in the larger scheme

of things, and each possesses intrinsic value quite apart from whatever value its traditions may have for other cultures.

Problems arise, however, when one examines the assumptions underlying this formulation. First, what is it that one is respecting when one respects the "intrinsic value" of another culture? Something different from one's own inheritance, or an echo of something already familiar? If, like many young people in the 1960s, I find Buddhism admirable because of its emphases on peace and equality, am I embracing something genuinely "other" (a favorite word of multiculturalists) or merely finding confirmation for ideals I already hold? Or is the point of consistent multiculturalism, as Rockefeller implies, to honor those aspects of other cultures that really are "other," such as caste in traditional Hinduism, *Bushido* in pre-1945 Japan?

The deeper question has to do with what features of a culture survive in the kind of society that is described as multicultural. If cultures are like life forms, they must eventually grow old and die, but few advocates of multiculturalism take this possibility into account. On the contrary, the philosopher Susan Wolf, in the same book, describes some of the joys of the new dispensation:

Every time I go to the library with my children, I am presented with an illustration of how generations past have failed to recognize the degree to which our community is multicultural, and of how the politics of recognition can lead, and indeed is leading, to a kind of social progress. My children tend to gravitate toward the section with folk stories and fairy tales. They love many of the same stories that I loved as a child—Rapunzel, the Frog Prince, the Musicians of Bremen—but their favorites also include tales from Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America that were unavailable to me when I was growing up. . . . By having these books and by reading them, we come to recognize ourselves as a

multicultural community, and so to recognize and respect the members of that community in all our diversity.

It goes without saying that the books Wolf has in mind are all in English, all published in England or North America, all written for an audience of English-speaking children. The “culture” that produced these books for its own purposes is Western. As in the stereotypical economy of imperialism, only the raw materials come from Africa, Asia, or another poor region of the globe—fossil souvenirs, at least in the American context, rather than expressions of profound cultural variation.

In the same book Charles Taylor discusses a minority culture in North America that is determined to survive in a more robust sense: French Canada. Whether the government of Quebec can be counted as multicultural, however, is open to doubt.

For instance, Quebec has passed a number of laws in the field of language. One regulates who can send their children to English-language schools (not franco-phones or immigrants); another requires that businesses with more than fifty employees be run in French; a third outlaws commercial signage in any language other than French. In other words, restrictions have been placed on Quebecers by their government, in the name of their collective goal of survival, which in other Canadian communities might easily be disallowed by virtue of the Charter [the Canadian equivalent of the Bill of Rights].

The premise of such legislation is obvious: that without these protections, the French language and the culture it embodies would continue to die out, as French-speaking Canadians join the more numerous and prosperous anglophone civilization on both sides of the 49th parallel. Harmony and mutual respect are seen as a recipe for assimilation; to survive even in its stronghold, French requires exclusivity enforced by law. Whatever one thinks of the Quebec

government’s policies, this analysis is probably correct.

Even these laws to safeguard their language are not enough for many French Canadians, who seek nothing less than an independent state. When a referendum on Quebec sovereignty narrowly lost in October 1995, the

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province’s premier blamed the result on outside money and the “ethnic vote”—a notorious expression of the xenophobia that is probably inseparable from any vigorous effort to preserve much more of a culture than its food and folk tales.

For all but a tiny proportion of the North American population—Viet-

namese or Cuban immigrant families in certain enclaves, religious minorities such as the Old Order Amish or the Lubavitchers, French Canadians in rural districts—the connection with an ancestral culture is now so vestigial that whether to assert or ignore it has become entirely a matter of choice. Taco salad, pizza, stir fry, or a Big Mac? Take your pick. The universal familiarity of these dishes indicates not that many cultures flourish here but that innocuous morsels of each are now part of something else, something that is often called American culture—dynamic, inclusive, a melting pot despite the recent unpopularity of that term—but is not a culture at all in the traditional sense of the word. If it were, it would exclude more, and at the same time take more for granted. In a living culture neither E. D. Hirsch nor anyone else would write a book called *Cultural Literacy*, which tries to teach people things they would already know if they were part of such an organism.

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the American Scholar

Christopher Clausen’s article on the decline of culture, reprinted in this issue of the *Key Reporter*, serves as a fine example of the kind of prose published regularly in the *American Scholar*. If you decide to join our circle of readers, you can look forward to the following articles in the next issue:

- The Kevorkian Epidemic, by Paul R. McHugh
- The Merely Very Good, by Jeremy Bernstein
- Haggin, by William Youngren
- The River and the Road: Fashions in Forgiveness, by Clara Claiborne Park

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E pluribus unum, the motto of the United States, means “Out of many one,” but the one is a wholly different kind of entity from the many, especially since the melting pot became a microwave. This postcultural quality of American life was envisioned as long ago as the 18th century, when universalism was a widely shared ideal and Enlightenment thinkers dismissed any local forces that stood in their way as mere provinciality. If all men are created equal, with certain unalienable rights, and Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, and the golden door remains more or less open, there is not much chance for any culture to preserve its unique qualities by repelling outside influences. Apart from the survival (more or less) of the English language, this loss of distinctiveness applies just as much to the WASP-derived American culture of the 19th century as to more recent immigrant cultures from outside Europe. In contrast to societies of the preindustrial past, the contemporary United States has neither one big culture nor a number of smaller ones—only a strange mixture of freedom and nostalgia.

The American political tradition places individual liberty ahead of nearly every other goal, thereby (among many other benefits) reducing occasions for intergroup conflict. The libertarian universalism that Gary Chapman describes is one of the permanent trends in American life and comes closer to realization with every advance in communications. But the freedom that lies beyond culture may be a mixed blessing—in some respects a liberty that not even John Stuart Mill could love.

The escape from restraint that the Internet represents derives not from an ideal of human fulfillment but from the narcissistic experience of one’s own personality, strengthened by its reflection in the computer screen, as the only significant reality. The major constituents of real cultures—family, religion, ethics, manners, impersonal criteria for dis-

tinguishing between truth and falsehood—have shrunk almost to the vanishing point as authorities over individual behavior.

This inflation of personality at the expense of external reality did not begin with the computer age; Christopher Lasch chronicled its rise in a book titled, naturally, *The Culture of Narcissism* (1978). Computers and their sibling, cable television, have, however, greatly accelerated the process.

One consequence increasingly visible since about 1965 is the almost total subjectivism of American popular and academic “culture” today in matters of value. Contrary to the intentions of the anthropologists who gave it currency, cultural relativism has evolved to the point where the particular claims of all cultures are simply ignored. Western monogamy and traditional Muslim polygamy are morally equal in the eyes of Chapman’s “digerati,” not because their sympathy for other cultures is greater than that of

The problem is not so much competition from other ideals or cultures as the fading away of all normative standards of behavior and achievement, no matter what their source.

previous generations, but because virtually all cultural demands on individual behavior have come to seem equally outdated and meaningless. Why marry at all if you think some other arrangement would suit you better? Nothing is good or true unless it satisfies me at this moment.

The old liberal distinction between self-regarding and other-regarding conduct has little significance if one inhabits a world made up primarily of bytes and images. Like television itself, which exists only to reach the largest possible audience, such a world has no fixed norms; like the Internet, it welcomes virtually any content from any source. Every expression, however violent, pornographic, or merely shallow, is equivalent to all other expressions. “The First Amendment,” proclaims Michael Eisner, chairman of the Walt

Disney Company, “gives you the right to be plastic.”

As it continues to evolve, one can only hope that this expanding postcultural world will become safer for human beings, because the alternatives to it look perilously weak. Family values, as Chapman says, have some salience with Americans today—polls and other evidence suggest that most people regard the breakdown of the family with dismay—but no form of government action is likely to restore that institution’s health. The same applies to other imperatives that used to be central in American life, from politeness to patriotism. The problem is not so much competition from other ideals or cultures as the fading away of all normative standards of behavior and achievement, no matter what their source. In the contested suburbs of social ideology, the multiculturalism of the Left and the authoritative community of the Religious Right are both expressions of longing for a past—differently interpreted, of course—that is probably beyond recall. We seem likely to go on traveling in a postcultural direction for a good while.

“Be not disheartened,” Walt Whitman, the prophet of a libertarian America freed from the historic demands of culture, wrote just before the Civil War, “affection shall solve the problems of freedom yet.” It would be nice to think so. Meanwhile the age-old problems of freedom have been drastically intensified by the decline of culture. A painfully acute question for the early 21st century is whether, once most of the traditional guideposts are gone, individuals who have been freed by technology from everything but their own personalities can rediscover some basis for the harmony and respect that many cultures treasured before anyone dreamed of either computers or multiculturalism. ■

Christopher Clausen is professor of English at Pennsylvania State University and a columnist for the New Leader. This article is reprinted from the Summer 1996 issue of the American Scholar. Clausen’s latest book is My Life with President Kennedy (University of Iowa Press, 1994).

LIFE OUTSIDE ACADEME

Editor's note: Senator Richard G. Lugar (R-Indiana) was interviewed for this department in the Key Reporter in late July, a few months after he had dropped out of the campaign for the GOP presidential nomination. Although known more for his solid achievements than for his charisma, he proved to be a warm and highly articulate interviewee, with a persuasive perspective on America's needs.

Of the dozen Phi Beta Kappa members who serve as U.S. senators in the 104th Congress, Richard Lugar may have the longest and closest ties with the Society—ties that began when, as a high school senior, he received a dictionary from the Indianapolis ΦBK association to mark his graduation as valedictorian. Subsequently, at Denison University, he was one of two students initiated into the Society in their junior year (1953). Moreover, after returning to Indianapolis, he took an active part in the ΦBK association there, helping to select speakers for the annual dinner.

Widely respected by his colleagues for his breadth of experience and thoughtful approach to issues, Lugar is Indiana's first four-term senator. He has first-hand experience in a variety of forums in addition to national politics, from military intelligence to business and agriculture, education, local government, and foreign affairs.

In the late 1950s, after completing his studies at Oxford as a Rhodes scholar, he served three years in the U.S. Navy as an intelligence briefer to Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Arleigh Burke in Washington, D.C. When he returned to Indiana in the 1960s, he helped manage his family's 604-acre farm and small food-machinery manufacturing plant. (Today he chairs the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee.)

Lugar entered politics at the local level when he was invited by neighbors of his plant in Indianapolis to run for the school board. After he was elected, he helped turn the high school he had attended into a successful magnet school. During a busing controversy (which remains, decades later, in the throes of litigation), Lugar was defeated for school board chairman. He was thrust toward municipal government when a local columnist suggested he would make a good mayor.

After winning a close race in the 1967 GOP primary, Lugar won an upset victory in the general election, running on a proposal for unifying city and county government. This success led to his close association with the National League of Cities, which he headed in the early 1970s; he soon became the GOP spokes-

man for the cities at the national level. In 1976 he was elected to the U.S. Senate, where he has been acclaimed as a consensus-builder between the parties and between the executive and legislative branches of government.

As chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee in 1986, he served as an observer of the Philippine elections and has been credited with persuading President Reagan that President Ferdinand Marcos had stolen the election and that Corazon Aquino should be supported as the new president.

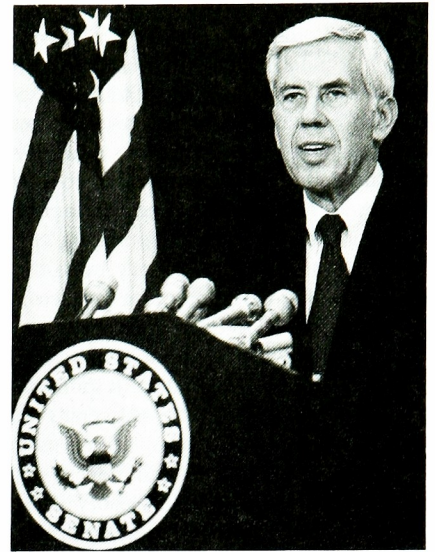
More recently, he and Senator Sam Nunn (D-Georgia) together succeeded in persuading Congress to appropriate funds to help dismantle Russia's nuclear weapons and to collect or destroy the nuclear warheads in Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Belarus. They continue to cooperate in ensuring that the enriched uranium remaining from the process of destruction is accounted for and kept secure from rogue states and terrorists.

Lugar is particularly proud of his contribution to the end of apartheid in South Africa through his proposal of moderate, specific sanctions. Nelson Mandela, then in prison, credits Lugar's bill—the 1986 Anti-Apartheid Act—with providing “the only hope” he could see at the time, and his appreciation translated into a personal relationship that has had great benefit for U.S.–South African relations.

In 1988 Lugar wrote a book titled *Letters to the Next President*. This year he

Other ΦBK Members In U.S. Senate, 104th Congress

Russell D. Feingold (D-Wisconsin), Slade Gorton (R-Washington), Mark O. Hatfield (R-Oregon), Jon Kyl (R-Arizona), Joe Lieberman (D-Connecticut), Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-New York), Larry Pressler (R-South Dakota), Paul Sarbanes (D-Maryland), Paul Simon (D-Illinois), Arlen Specter (R-Pennsylvania), and Paul D. Wellstone (D-Minnesota).



Richard G. Lugar

tried a more direct approach to influence, running for the GOP presidential nomination. He hoped, as he wrote in an analysis of his campaign for the *Washington Post* (July 10, 1996), that although he had raised far less money than most other candidates, his ideas would receive serious scrutiny.

In running for the presidency, Lugar espoused a number of positions “unconventional” among Republicans, including support for the ban on assault weapons (“for which I see no legitimate social purpose”), the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts, the federal school lunch program, and strong environmental and conservation leadership. He also called for abolition of all federal income taxes and the institution of a national sales tax.

To his regret, the media largely ignored his program and concentrated instead on Steve Forbes's flat tax and Pat Buchanan's populism. A Lugar speech on terrorism and the dangers of nuclear theft was labeled the “scare tactics of a desperate candidacy.” And his call for U.S. leadership in Europe and security arrangements in Asia, he says, was “ignored by my rivals and by most potential voters.” Lugar has concluded that “when it comes to important ideas, a presidential campaign is a wasteland.”

Ultimately, money proved the main factor in his withdrawal from the race. Lugar notes that during one hour he watched television before the New Hampshire primary, he counted 17 campaign ads, of which only one was his.

Despite his disappointment in the campaign, Lugar remains enthusiastic about his work in the Senate, which he calls “the most exciting job in the country,” one in which he has “access to anybody

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in the world.” Although he acknowledges that his objectives are circumscribed by the “wants and needs of the other 99 senators,” he views every day in the Senate as a challenge. And, he notes, many of his friends are encouraging him to try again for the presidency, with the understanding that organizing a successful campaign will require an earlier start.

Meanwhile, he retains a strong interest in education. He once taught political science and ethics at the University of Indianapolis, and he now serves as a trustee of that university and of Denison, and as a member of the Advisory Committee at his Oxford college, Pembroke, where he is also an honorary fellow. And he encourages a succession of young interns from around the country, not just

Indiana, to work in his office to gain experience in public service.

Lugar mentioned that he has been following with interest the correspondence in the *Key Reporter* about the Society’s image problem on some campuses, and he regrets that anyone offered membership in Phi Beta Kappa should pass it up, because it is “a signal event in the life of any student.” He wishes he could tell each student invitee how important excellence is in academic and other pursuits:

Excellence has tangible rewards. It does count to try to be the best, to be disciplined, and to research problems thoroughly; the transference between such qualities and public service is significant. And the consequences to legislation, for example, of an absence of such qualities are serious. ■

Letters to the Editor

From the Younger Set

Perhaps I can articulate the feelings of my generation regarding Phi Beta Kappa membership better than some of the young people quoted in the Summer 1996 issue.

I became a member this spring at Earlham College. I do not pretend that membership will be my ticket to a fulfilling and successful life. For that I intend to rely on the support of my family and friends, my own motivation, and the ability to learn that was instilled in me while at college, besides the grace of God.

My generation understands that we will change careers several times during our adult lives. We’ve studied in a world of mammoth corporations that can shut down communities at a moment’s notice. We’ve seen our parents struggle when their jobs fell out from under them. We might have missed some details of early American history or Latin grammar, but instead we’ve studied Asian languages and traveled abroad; we’ve investigated the intricacies of several branches of science at a time, and we’ve seen the current state of social studies by tutoring and building houses in our own college towns.

I joined Phi Beta Kappa because I felt it would help me in the competitive world as an extra piece in the game of success. I take it only as that, not as

lifelong proof of my own worth. Shame on such arrogance!

Phi Beta Kappa needs to learn that even elitism is not enough to impress the world-wary young people of today. Please support my generation, rather than grudgingly granting us admittance to your imaginary castle.

Elizabeth Kimball, Philadelphia, Pa.

As I am a young member of Phi Beta Kappa, I hope that you will publish my letter as proof that the shine has NOT gone off the key for younger scholars. I was horrified to read the news clippings and outraged letters in your Summer 1996 issue because, during my years at the University of Michigan (1986-90, B.A., 1991-94, M.A.) ΦBK was a valued and coveted honor, especially for my peers in the Honors College. I was thrilled to receive my invitation to join; it was an honor on par with winning my National Science Foundation Fellowship, and is a continuing source of pride (my key is worn on the suit-coat to every interview!). Only an absolute fool would reject such proof of hard work and success.

I would love to tell the people who rejected membership IT DOES MATTER. People really do care about your ability to relate to them, talk about various subjects, learn new things, and react to new situations with creativity and open-mindedness. Those behaviors are the mark of

a well-educated, intelligent person, the kind who is hired at good companies, given opportunities, and surrounded by interesting friends. Anyone who is ignorant of the history and stature of ΦBK and unwilling to make cursory investigations, and bases their educational judgments on the most common and accessible popular knowledge will most likely not be judged intelligent in later life.

My parents were not ΦBK members, and they envied their peers who were. I was raised to recognize the cachet of the Society. As a graduate-school applicant looking for a school, M.A.-holder looking for employment in the automotive industry, and working aspiring author, I know that my membership and the skills that earned it have helped me along at each stage. It’s not a free ride, but it is a badge of competence in a world filled with people who “don’t know, don’t care, don’t want to bother to find out” anything.

In rejecting ΦBK membership, those unlucky students have rejected a layer of protection against the reality that a college degree is taken for granted in many organizations, and students simply must have more to offer.

ΦBK is not unknown and unappreciated, and is not irrelevant to its awardees’ life. Think of it this way: maybe there is some status to be found in *not* being comprehended by the masses. Relatively few people read books or play musical instruments today, but no one argues that those pursuits are unworthy. The whole situation is, to me, just another symptom of our collectively lowered expectations and goals. So don’t be hurt, it’s not you, ΦBK. It’s just a sign of the times.

*Marla Schwaller,
Farmington Hills, Mich.*

As a newly inducted member of Phi Beta Kappa, I feel compelled to respond to the letter from Mr. Lawrence Clipper in the Summer 1996 *Key Reporter*. He wrote, “Since standards of excellence . . . have been diluted and held up to scorn by at least three decades of fashionable leveling, why should our students respect excellence . . . and choose to identify themselves with arbiters (old-fashioned, no doubt) such as ΦBK?”

Upon being invited to join the ΦBK chapter at Kalamazoo College in Michigan, I was honored to accept. I am proud to identify myself as a part of this Society which, in my eyes, is not “old-fashioned” but instead a time-honored fixture in the history of the liberal arts.

Mr. Clipper also wrote, in reference to his belief that the Greek letters Φ, Β, and

K mean nothing to today's student, "After all, what are we to expect of students who no longer take foreign languages—let alone the 'dead' classical languages?" At my alma mater, the study of foreign languages is a priority, and we pride ourselves on outstanding language programs. Though I did not personally take advantage of the offerings in our admirable classics department, I did take courses in Kiswahili and Spanish, and graduated with a degree in French language and literature. I was proud to wear my key at our commencement ceremonies, and wherever I find myself in the future, I will endeavor to maintain the standard embodied in the words *philosophia biou kybernetes*, and allow my love of learning to guide me.

*Joy M. Campbell,
Minneapolis, Minn.*

Though a member, I agree with some of the insights of recent graduates who have declined membership in ΦBK. I was invited to join ΦBK at Harvard in 1994, and I never considered declining. I was greatly honored and could easily afford the initiation fee. I figured it was easier, safer, and wiser to join than to spend the rest of my life saying I was accepted but declined for some (probably stupid) reason.

However, I never looked at ΦBK as anything more than a recognition of achievements during college, and I have not been proven wrong. Yes, it looks good on a résumé. But fundamentally, it is a cap to a wonderful four-year period *which is over*. Since graduation, my only connection with the Society has been the *Key Reporter*. It is a fine newsletter, but hardly essential to my reading list. Bluntly, the Society is completely irrelevant to my present life after a mere two years.

That's why I have declined every subsequent fund-raising letter or request to subscribe to the Society's other publication. My participation in ΦBK was essentially a one-time affair, a granting of an award more than an induction into an organization: I was initiated, I received a key, and I received the lifetime privilege to state that "I was ΦBK at Harvard." I paid for this. Since I now get no real benefits out of the Society, I am not motivated to pay anything more. And while I'm sure the Society does some fine charitable and educational work, there are other charities that compel me more.

Ron Fein, Seattle, Wash.

Some Suggestions

I agree with Dorothy Langellier Scott Gibbs's letter in your Summer 1996 issue of the *Key Reporter* (perhaps because I, like Ms. Gibbs, am a Latin teacher). She said we need "to figure out how to reach high school juniors, and perhaps even sixth-graders." Here are a few ideas that might help:

- We could initiate "Phi Beta Kappa Day" at high schools wherever we can find cooperative school boards/administrations. My sisters went to a private day school in New Jersey where the entire school (K-9) is given a day off when one of its graduates makes Phi Beta Kappa in college. In addition, the Phi Beta Kappa initiate's name and framed photo appear in a special Hall of Honor with initiates of previous generations. Our schools do much to honor their athletes; why not our academic heroes as well?

- We could initiate an annual series of grants for high school teachers of humanistic subjects, to be used to buy textbooks or other materials or to support programs that reward students' academic excellence. Awards would be made in every state. I've based this idea loosely on the National Education Association's \$500 mini-grant program.

- In response to Ms. Gibbs's comment that "liberal arts graduates are all too rare in the public schools, and therefore are rarely available as role models for the students," Phi Beta Kappa could create a database of professors or liberal arts students at colleges who would be willing to volunteer some time in local public high schools. We could then circulate the lists at local "partnership" schools. Teachers of Latin, for example, might be able to call upon an art historian to bring in slides on Augustan art. Or visitors from the colleges could outline career options for liberal arts majors, or introduce scholarship information.

Programs like these could not only enhance Phi Beta Kappa's image but also improve the quality of instruction in public schools.

Mary L. Carroll, Elizabeth City, N.C.

... Employers for entry-level jobs do not seem to know about Phi Beta Kappa, which is a disappointment for recent graduates. In several job interviews, I was asked what ΦBK was—apparently the interviewers thought I was very proud of being a "sorority girl." One headhunter even told me to take it off my résumé! (I quickly left this headhunter behind).

I have found, however, that well-educated employers and co-workers who are

at least 40 years old are aware of it. One lawyer, age 50, who hired me lamented that the University of Maryland, College Park, didn't have Phi Beta Kappa when he was a student there and that he had to "settle for" ODK. I believe Phi Beta Kappa helped me get that job. In contrast, a 30-year-old Ivy League lawyer who had hired me previously had no idea of what ΦBK was. In general, men seem more aware than women.

I first learned of Phi Beta Kappa in 1992, when I was a sophomore at the University of Maryland at College Park. The journalism dean sent a letter to the students who might have a chance of getting in, explaining what it was and how we could improve our chances of being invited to join. Many other specialized honor societies received much more publicity, but the College of Journalism made a point of singling out ΦBK from among the mass of honor societies. Perhaps other colleges could follow this example.

I appreciate the newsletter.

Erica Zuba, College Park, Md.

A person who graduates from an institution of higher learning and has never heard of Phi Beta Kappa's long and distinguished history is not an educated person. For an institution to consider that person qualified for membership is an indication that its standards are too low and its values too much awry for it to retain its chapter.

Perhaps Phi Beta Kappa should periodically review chapters to determine if they are upholding the standards of scholarship worthy of membership.

Marjorie L. Smith, Atlanta, Ga.

I've joined the ranks of disbelievers; students are choosing *not* to join PHI BETA KAPPA? . . .

I have always touted my membership [Washington and Lee University, 1974] in this organization (is it still called a *fraternity*?) to good effect, in spite of the fact that I create my living largely outside academia: I am a Phi Beta Kappa blues musician.

I spent six years transcribing and researching a book, published in 1992, on Mississippi blues legend Robert Johnson (23,000 copies sold around the world) and have just shot a teaching video (for Starlicks and Hal Leonard Publishing) on Johnson's guitar techniques and style. I have a new CD that Tom Chapin and I produced, and I have two tracks on Chapin's new live album.

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One anecdote: In 1990 I entered a middle school in eastern North Carolina to present a teaching concert; I was wearing a conspicuous earring in one ear. "Can you see this?" I said, indicating the huge dangling gold earring. Some students said "Yeah," and there was some audible snickering. I went on:

"This is a Phi Beta Kappa key. Phi Beta Kappa is an academic fraternity. The key is given to its members and signifies excellence in academic performance—only 1 percent of college students are qualified to be invited to become members. This is my key. I wore it here this afternoon because I am declaring today 'Academic Excellence Day' and fully expect more than 1 percent of you to be invited to join this fraternity one day."

I then presented my program of ragtime, slide guitar, and Delta blues—singing and playing a vintage metal-bodied National guitar, taking the students on a tour of various regions of the South, and explaining why the music took different paths in different regions.

When I finished, the principal appeared unexpectedly on stage and reinforced the notion of having an Academic Excellence Day. Faculty, students, and administrators came down to thank and congratulate me, . . . adding, "We had no idea that you were a member of PHI BETA KAPPA."

Perhaps we need more "unlikely" members to show their faces and announce their membership to young people. Perhaps we should establish a mentorship program and a presence in the middle or high schools.

With African-American students having to combat the notion that getting good grades is "acting *White*," perhaps we should actively encourage black students to excel and make plain to them, among others, the recent studies which show that every year they stay in high school or college will increase their future wages by 10 percent (Kevin Murphy, University of Chicago, quoted in a recent *New York Times* editorial, "The Undereducated American"), and that the earning gap between high school and college graduates has doubled from a significant 40 percent in the late 1970s to 80 percent in 1994!

The survival of our organization may be linked to the achievements of our most unlikely scholars. Perhaps as we puzzle over the future of Phi Beta Kappa we should ask ourselves, "What can we do for them?" As we know from our own

experiences, great good can come from even small investments.

Scott Ainslie, Durham, N.C.

When I was inducted into the University of Iowa chapter of Phi Beta Kappa in 1938, there was no initiation fee, and even the dinner was free (a big deal in those days). The personal invitation was delivered by a man on a bicycle. I had decided when I was inducted into the high school Honor Society and first heard about Phi Beta Kappa during the ceremony that I would be one, and so I was.

Although I am not among them, surely there are enough prosperous members that there wouldn't have to be an initiation fee. Being charged to join would surely take the shine off the invitation for me. . . .

*Virginia Blanck Moore,
Des Moines, Iowa*

Other Reminiscences

Your articles in the Summer 1996 issue reminded me of my own initiation into ΦBK in 1974. I was attending Florida State University, majoring in library science and English. Having grown up and gone to school previously in Germany, I really did not know what an honor society was. I did know, however, that many students in the high school where my husband used to teach were members of sororities with Greek-letter names. When a letter arrived inviting me to join what I thought was a sorority (at this time I had been married for 12 years, was in my 30s, and had two children!), I politely declined.

Imagine my surprise when I arrived at the elementary school library where I was doing an internship and found on my desk a huge bouquet of flowers; congratulations from the librarians, teachers, and principal; and a copy of the list of students invited to join ΦBK from the local newspaper! Only then did I find out that I had turned down the most prestigious honor society invitation. Needless to say, I reversed my decision and was duly initiated, although in absentia, the next year.

I keep up my affiliation with the local ΦBK association, and each year I volunteer to present the ΦBK Book Award at one or two local high schools. Unfortunately, the university where I am an academic librarian [University of San Diego] does not yet have a chapter, but we are working toward that goal. During graduation exercises each year I proudly wear my ΦBK key.

Margit J. Smith, San Diego, Calif.

Fifty years ago, I was a newly minted Brown graduate with no real career direction when I saw an ad in the *New York Times* that stated, "Advertising Copy Cub Wanted—Phi Beta Kappas Only Need Apply." The advertiser was the now-defunct department store, Gimbels, and the author of the ad was the legendary Bernice Fitz-Gibbon, famed for "Nobody but Nobody but Gimbels has. . . ."

Naturally, I believed that the ad was speaking directly to me, walked in, and actually got the job, which paid the munificent sum of \$25 a week and gave me an opportunity to learn how to write persuasively. That was the start of a very satisfying career that is still going strong. I am now president of my own advertising and public relations firm, Charles & Associates, which serves clients in the food industry and producers of major art exhibits and national fairs.

Certainly my Phi Beta Kappa key was my passkey to an adventure-filled and creative business life. I am grateful for what it accomplished for me and am very proud to be entitled to wear it.

*Judith Korey Charles,
New York, N.Y.*

On Wearing That Key

In the flurry of news about lack of recognition of Phi Beta Kappa, one writer said that she seldom wore her key. I have heard many people say, "I have one, but I never wear it." No wonder it isn't easily recognized!

When I was awarded my key at Wellesley College in 1925, the faculty member said, "If you are ashamed of it, don't take it!" I wear mine every day and am proud to do so, although, truth to tell, few people comment on it. But once in a while a fellow-member gives delighted recognition.

I am 92—what should become of my beloved key?

*Isabell M. Howard,
North Clarendon, Vt.*

With regard to the many stories about Phi Beta Kappa's "Lost Cachet," I am a liberal arts grad [Washington University, 1992] who joined Phi Beta Kappa when the opportunity arose. I regularly wear my key, which is surprisingly rarely recognized.

After graduation, when I was looking for a job and working as a waitress, I used to wear my key, thinking someone might recognize it and bestow a job lead on me. I was never that lucky; people tended to say instead, "If that's your key, why are you working here?"

This comment never failed to gall me. I still cannot believe that an individual who has enough knowledge of Phi Beta Kappa to recognize the key could be so foolish as to assume that it means automatic greatness.

I do wear my key with pride, and no, I am no longer a waitress. But having Phi Beta Kappa on my résumé is more a matter of personal accomplishment to me than a recognition tool. I don't think

it's as respected as it used to be. The chapter at Washington University never did anything but nominate and induct new members. The recognition for being elected to Phi Beta Kappa simply wasn't there.

Jodie Renée Schultz, Chicago, Ill.

I have been following with dismay the reports in the *Key Reporter* regarding the

number of potential members of ΦBK who have turned down membership. I can't believe the \$35 cost is a factor. . . . When I was elected to junior membership at Hunter College in 1942 it was the proudest moment of my life. Here's a story that I hope will make you joyful.

In 1943 after my graduation I went to Knoxville, Tennessee, to be married; my

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More Multigeneration ΦBK Families

[People who have reported three or more generations of Phi Beta Kappa members in their family; in-laws count.]

Horace Ford Parks, Western Reserve University, 1886; his children, L. Beaumont Parks and Lois Parks Turner, University of Michigan, 1924 and 1928; Beaumont's daughter, Carolyn Parks Behr, Middlebury College, 1958; Carolyn's son, Bradford B. Behr, Williams College, 1992; and Lois's son, Richard Parks Turner, Harvard University, 1953.

Gladyce Weil and her daughter, Jean Simmons, University of Nebraska, 1916 and 1941; Jean's daughter, Charlene Wear Simmons, University of California, Davis, 1968; and Charlene's daughter, Dana Jean Simmons, Princeton, 1995.

Stanley R. Greene and his son, Jeffrey A. Greene, Colgate University, 1910 and 1949; Jeffrey's wife, Dorothy A. Greene, Columbia University, 1968; and their daughter, Kim E. Greene, Colgate, 1974.

Robert C. King, University of South Carolina, 1935; his daughter, Jacquelyn Sue King Donegan, Rice University, 1970; and her daughter, Kelly Ann Donegan Cartwright, Trinity University, 1995.

Selma Gintzler Klineberg, Vassar College, 1929; her children, Rosemary Klineberg Coffey, Vassar, 1957, and Stephen Louis Klineberg, Haverford College, 1961; Rosemary's daughter, Megan Forbes Coffey, Haverford, 1989; and Stephen's son, Geoffrey Morris Klineberg, Princeton University, 1985.

Francis Ramaley, University of Minnesota, 1895; his son, David Ramaley, and his grandson, Louis Ramaley, University of Colorado, Boulder, 1932 and 1959; and his great-granddaughter, Caroline E. Ramaley, Middlebury College, 1989.

At the University of Alabama: Belle Montgomery Chenault and her daughter, Alice Adele Chenault, 1940 and 1965; and Belle's father, Jack P. Montgomery, honorary member, 1919, and great-grandfather, Warfield C. Richardson, alumnus member, 1850.

Ralph Hamilton Blodgett, University of Vermont, 1927; his daughter, Sandra E. Blodgett McIntosh, University of Florida, 1961; and a grandson, Stuart Baird McIntosh, University of Missouri, 1992.

Helen Massey Rudd, University of Chicago, 1909; her son, David Rudd Arnold, and David's son, Steven Ferris Arnold, Knox College, 1937 and 1966; and Helen's granddaughter, Alison Arnold, Colorado College, 1982.

Edward Everett Whitford and his twin brother, William Calvin Whitford, Colgate University, 1886; Edward's granddaughter, Mary Whitford Streit, Swarthmore College, 1939; and her sons, Robert Henry Streit, Colgate, 1966, and Andrew Whitford Streit, Middlebury College, 1969.

John Ellsworth Goodrich, Yale University, 1853; his son, Chauncey Marsh Goodrich, University of Vermont, 1898;

Chauncey's daughter, Margot Goodrich Power, University of Michigan, 1937; her son, Thomas G. Power, Carleton College, 1971; and Margot's grandson, Forrest Trepte, Williams College, 1995.

William H. Wheatley and his son, William B. Wheatley, Colgate University, 1907 and 1942; and William B.'s daughter, Barbara J. Wheatley, Ohio Wesleyan University, 1973.

John Slaughter Candler, University of Georgia, 1929; his daughter, Dorothy Candler Hamilton, Sweet Briar College, 1956; and her son, John Candler Hamilton, University of North Carolina, 1982.

Alice Ashley Jack, University of Alabama, alumna member 1933; her daughters, Melissa Jack Hurt and Mary Spencer Jack Craddock, Emory University, 1932 and 1933; Melissa's son, Charles Davis Hurt, Washington and Lee University, 1959; and Charles's children, Alice Ashley Hurt, Washington and Lee, 1991, and W. Grear Hurt, University of Virginia, 1993.

Ralph Robert Lounsbury, University of Michigan, 1916; his daughter, Roberta Lounsbury Warren, Smith College, 1948; and her son, Ralph Lounsbury Warren, Harvard University, 1977.

Alice Sachs Hamburg, University of California, Berkeley, 1927; her daughter, Sonya Hamburg Ruehl, Stanford University, 1957; and her grandson, Theodore S. Ruehl, Princeton University, 1989.

George Wilfrid Hibbert and his daughter, Martha Hibbert Boice, Ohio Wesleyan University, 1918 and 1953; and Martha's daughter, Judith Lynette Boice, Oberlin College, 1984.

Beulah Darlington Pratt, Swarthmore College, alumna member, 1896; her daughter, Marian Pratt Burdick, Swarthmore, 1928; Marian's husband, Edward Douglass Burdick, Wesleyan University, 1926; and their son, John Marshall Burdick, Bucknell University, 1963.

Aaron Freilich and his sons, Gerald and Herbert Freilich, City College of New York, 1915, 1946, and 1952; and Aaron's grandchildren: Arnold Leventhal, City University of New York-Queens College, 1980; and Joyce Freilich Katz and Joshua Freilich, CUNY-Brooklyn College, 1972 and 1990.

Stanley I. Posner and his son, Lawrence D., Amherst College, 1930 and 1959; and Lawrence's daughter, Stephanie J. Posner, Kenyon College, 1992.

Millicent Steer Foster, Oberlin College, 1923; her daughter, Mary Foster Cadbury, Brown University, 1945; and her granddaughter, Vivian Claire Cadbury, University of Illinois at Chicago, 1978.

Ralph V. Landis, University of North Dakota, 1921; his daughter, Marguerite Landis Saecker, and son-in-law, Peter A. Saecker, Lawrence University, 1956 and 1958; and two granddaughters, Ruth Saecker Spolar, Lawrence, 1984, and Mary Saecker, Oberlin College, 1986. ■

future husband was a flying cadet. I was dismayed to learn that at age 19 I needed my parents' consent before the judge would issue a license. (This was not true in New York City.) The judge seemed sympathetic, but the law was the law. He offered to phone my parents but they did not have a telephone.

I asked the judge whether he would reconsider if I could present evidence of my fine character. He appeared puzzled and suspicious at first, but when I pulled my ΦBK key from my purse he was happily surprised and granted us our license, which we used the next day.

We have been happily married for 53 years, and both of us have always been grateful for that wondrous key!

May Pbelosof, Rochester, N.Y.

When Do You Wear Your Key?

From a new member of Phi Beta Kappa:

"I would be interested to know the etiquette of when and where it is proper to wear my key. Is it arrogant to wear it to work? Does it appear insecure of me to wear it to job interviews?"

The *Handbook for New Members* does not address this subject, limiting its advice to this statement: "Because the Phi Beta Kappa key is a symbol of academic achievement, it should be worn only by the recipient." Members are invited to respond to this new member's query.

To illustrate to freshmen the rewards of steady application to studies, Duke University's vice president William Wannamaker used to recount an experience he once had in New York City. Upon arriving at Grand Central Station to catch a train, Wannamaker discovered at the ticket office that he had left his wallet in his hotel room. Fortunately, however, he was wearing a vest and, as was customary in those days, he displayed a ΦBK key on his watch chain.

The attendant immediately volunteered that anyone wearing that key would be good for credit with him, and lent Wannamaker the \$5 for the ticket. It turned out that the attendant had a relative who belonged to Phi Beta Kappa.

*Paul Garner
Tuscaloosa, Ala.*



Phi Beta Kappa in Literature and History



Time was when "You don't have to be a Phi Bete to . . ." or "How many Phi Betes does it take to . . ." inspired instant recognition. In view of the apparent lack of recognition on some campuses today of the Society's uniqueness, we thought it appropriate to launch a new department of literary and historical references to the Society as they come to our attention.

On Babbitt, getting dressed for the day:

Last, he stuck in his lapel the Boosters' Club button. With the conciseness of great art the button displayed two words: "Boosters—Pep!" It made Babbitt feel loyal and important. It associated him with Good Fellows, with men who were nice and human, and important in business circles. It was his V.C., his Legion of Honor ribbon, his Phi Beta Kappa key.

[From "George F. Babbitt Starts the Day," chapter 1 of *Babbitt*, a novel by Sinclair Lewis.]

On an interminable Phi Beta Kappa poem at Harvard:

Oliver [Wendell Holmes] had a wonderful time that Commencement season [1836]. It was Harvard's two hundredth anniversary. At the alumni dinner Oliver, standing on a chair, was immensely surprised to find himself singing a solo. And at the Phi Beta Kappa celebration, Oliver recited a poem he had written for the occasion. It was no mean feat; the recital took an hour and ten minutes. Oliver declaimed the whole from memory, standing on the platform, stretched to his full height of five feet five.

[From *Yankee from Olympus: Justice Holmes and His Family*, by Catherine Drinker Bowen.]

The brouhaha about the Society's "image" brought to mind a story told at my initiation (Wilson College, 1952) by the chapter president and English Department chair, Dr. Lois Montgomery.

Shortly after her own election to Phi Beta Kappa, she went home for a vacation and was stopped by an acquaintance, a young man who had been enrolled at her college until, she said, the administration decided the space he occupied was more valuable than his presence on the campus. "Hey, Lois, I read in the paper you've been elected to Phi Bete. That's great, but before you move into the Phi Bete house, you should find out about the food. I know a girl who pledged the Zetas, and she says the food there is awful."

Sabra Morton, Lexington, Mass.

Thomas Wentworth Higginson's account of his admission to Phi Beta Kappa at Harvard:

In the college journal, the event is thus recorded:

"August, 1840. Φ.B.K. day—the greatest of my life so far. Rushed round till 9 on committee business—having carried the ribbons to Wheeler's room and put on my medal. . . . I went in [to dinner] later than was necessary—Judge Story and the grandees sat at the raised West end. First course I had was roast beef. . . . 2nd, plum pudding and apple pie, then wine, fruit and segars—Passed a charming afternoon, lots of wit—the Judge always ready and always witty, as President."

From an address to the Society years after, Higginson said:

"I was chosen into it at sixteen, for we graduated from college earlier in my time than now; I took active part in later years, under strenuous opposition, in expanding it into a national organization; I was President of this chapter for 3 years and of the national organization at the same time and helped build the latter up when it was so sought after that we had one application from a Southwestern college which said that they had heard of Φ.B.K. and as they already had nine Greek letter societies it would be nice to have ten!"

[From *Thomas Wentworth Higginson: The Story of His Life*, by Mary T. Higginson.]

A Correction

I thought I would write to thank you for running Diane Ravitch's essay ["A Scholar in Washington"] in the Summer 1996 issue. It is sobering to realize how difficult it really is to change something in Washington, and the essay provides arguments for less spending and for more.

I confess, though, that I am impelled to write because of Jean Sudrann's review of the [John Whittier] Treat book [*Writing Ground Zero*]. Unless she is unusually well acquainted with Ibuse Masuji and Ōe Kenzaburō, I find it astonishing that she is on a first-name basis with both and refers to them as "Masuji" and "Kenzaburō."

Marius B. Jansen, Princeton, N.J.

Editor's note: Responsibility for the error is mine, not Jean Sudrann's. She properly referred to them as Ibuse and Ōe.



RECOMMENDED READING

BOOK COMMITTEE

Humanities: *Svetlana Alpers, Frederick J. Crosson, Michael Griffith, Simon McVeigh, Robert P. Sonkowsky, Eugen Weber*
Social Sciences: *Louis R. Harlan, Thomas McNaugber, Catherine E. Rudder, Anna J. Schwartz*
Natural Sciences: *Ronald Geballe, Russell B. Stevens*

Eugen Weber

The Disenchanted Isle. *Charles Dellheim.* Norton, 1995. \$25.

There is, as they say, a strong, well-written book struggling to get out of Dellheim's diffuse, overwritten volume, but its virtues make it engaging. The advantage that British historians have, even when, like Dellheim, they are New Yorkers teaching at Arizona State University, is that they are more literate, witty, and acerbic than our own, so that their writing is more fun to read. Dellheim's is too, and his presentation of Margaret Thatcher's capitalist revolution is animated and readable.

Dellheim describes the waning of the go-getting spirit that once made Britain great, a waning he attributes to go-getters' mimicking their useless social betters once the getting is done. Thatcher tried to reverse the resulting decline, but her revivalism miscarried. She tackled overzealous government intervention, excessive public spending, runaway inflation, and trade union power; she forced Labour to move to the political center. Flagging industrial investment, an insufficiently skilled labor force, and a

persistent genteel bias against profit, productivity, and growth let her down. Thatcher's arrogance and martial personality didn't help, but ingrained cultural values and divisions proved even more of a hindrance.

Dellheim is good on personalities and politics but curiously indifferent to foreign affairs, paying no attention to the Falklands War and offering little explanation of the European imbroglio. His book is oddly organized and balanced, informed but incomplete, incisive but flawed.

Beethoven in German Politics, 1870–1889. *David B. Dennis.* Yale, 1996. \$30.

Cultural politics is vital to national politics, and cultural heroes are crucial to cultural, hence national, pride. Dennis argues that, among 19th-century Germans, classical music was the outstanding source of glory and vainglory, and Beethoven was its major icon. "As Italy has its Naples, France its Revolution, England its Navy," wrote Robert Schumann in the 1840s, "so the Germans have their Beethoven symphonies." Successive generations found in the master's music a mirror of their aspirations and obsessions.

Dennis traces the sociopolitical fate of both music and myth from 1870, when the defeat of France and the founding of the Second Reich coincided with the centennial of the composer's birth, to the exalting days of December 1989, when two great Beethoven concerts celebrated the fall of the Berlin Wall and a second German reunification.

Dennis follows Beethoven's fortunes through rough times and exciting moments, to show how the great composer and his works were used and abused by every party, enlisted in every political cause, tapped in every age (not least that of Hitler) for their multiform symbolism—and how they were endlessly enjoyed and manipulated, but never exhausted. Dennis's persuasive and appetizing account should be read for both profit and pleasure by students of Germany, of politics, and, not least, of music.

Albert Speer: His Battle with Truth. *Gitta Sereny.* Knopf, 1995. \$35.

Dozens of books have been written about Albert Speer, Hitler's architect and, at the last, his minister of armaments and war production. Among a bunch of brutes and intellectually befuddled Hitler groupies, he alone stands out as cultivated, thoughtful, consistently efficient, and willing to accept responsibility for Nazi crimes. How could this attractive man participate in the genocide his organizing talent helped to speed? How much did he know? How little did he care?

A talented and experienced journalist, Sereny addresses these questions and, by the way, the history of the Third Reich as well, in a massive book (720 pages of text) that is sensitive, discriminating, and awesomely informed. A wealth of interviews, with Speer himself and dozens of informants, add life and detail to an inquiry presented in the style of an extended *New Yorker* profile. Complex, personal, and occasionally diffuse, Sereny's treatment proves increasingly absorbing. Once you get into the spirit of it, the reading becomes more fascinating all the time.

Divide and Rule: The Partition of Africa, 1880–1914. *H. L. Wesseling.* Praeger, 1996. \$75; paper, \$29.95.

From 1882 to 1898, Wesseling reminds us in a splendid new book, 70 million Africans were brought under British rule alone, at a cost averaging 15 pence per person. Who could resist such a bargain? During the period Wesseling deals with, most of Africa's 11 million square miles were placed under European rule, although Africa mattered very little to most Europeans, who had bigger fish to fry at home and overseas. But some politicians, some businessmen, and some adventurers could not resist the opportunity of picking up an empire on the cheap; and many appreciated the possibility of exporting conflict and competition to a continent of little importance where they would not, at least not for a while, pose a threat to the tenor of international relations.

Africans who were the object of partitions figured little in actions and decisions peripheral to European politics, and the colonial period following the bickering and bargaining that Wesseling sketches so brilliantly lasted barely a century, after which Africa was set adrift almost as casually as it had been hijacked. Wesseling's account may not be fashionable or politically correct, but it is astringent, convincing, and immensely readable.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

About That Ad

With respect to that "99% of You Aren't Good Enough" ad, volunteered by a New York agency that obviously understood little about Phi Beta Kappa but sought to capitalize on the recent publicity about the Society (the ad, proposed by its creator for campus newspapers, was reproduced for a light touch in the Summer 1996 issue), we have learned not to take our readers' sense of humor for granted. This is to assure everyone who responded seriously to the head "Is This the Answer?" that the query was intended to be facetious.

RECOMMENDED READING

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

Thomas McNaugher

The Strategic Quadrangle: Russia, China, Japan, and the United States in East Asia. Michael Mandelbaum, ed. *Council on Foreign Relations, 1995. \$16.95.*

With the cold war over and East Asia's economy booming, American eyes are shifting from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The authors in this volume, all top-ranked, take us beyond the region's enticing economic dynamism to its daunting and wholly novel strategic challenges. A weak Russia ironically now needs the United States to balance China's growing power and contain Japan. An economically powerful Japan stands unprepared and largely unwilling to tackle a regional or global political role. And a rising, potentially huge China remains unsure of itself, despite the increasingly nationalistic tone of its policy pronouncements, and wary of U.S. attacks on its legitimacy.

All authors agree that the United States has a crucial role to play in maintaining regional security. But they also highlight the difficulties of balancing economic engagement with frustrating trade imbalances, sustaining military involvement in the absence of a major military threat, and justifying the need for political realism alongside a "revolutionary" desire to spread democracy and capitalism. This book is more coherently organized than many edited volumes, and its essays are deep and wise enough to remain useful for some years to come.

American Hegemony: Political Morality in a One-Superpower World. Lea Brilmayer. Yale, 1994. \$30.

America's leaders endlessly remind us that ours is the most powerful country in the world, the one remaining superpower. The practical challenges embedded in this supposedly blessed status are daunting enough, but most Americans also seek a moral justification for their country's international activity, and it is this dimension of the situation that Brilmayer examines in this provocative volume. In contrast to realists who see the international domain as one of power rather than morality, Brilmayer likens U.S. dominance among states to the status of governments within states. She thus seeks to link the norms of U.S. international action to the values of its domestic liberalism. Brilmayer would be the first to admit that the effort is not wholly satisfactory; in some sense, her role here is to clarify the intellectual and normative dif-

iculties of casting the nation's domestic liberalism abroad. These difficulties explain some of the troubles that beset U.S. foreign policy. By dissecting them so carefully, this book may increase the prospects for moral action when there is room for it.

Gods and Generals: A Novel of the Civil War. Jeffrey Shaara. Ballantine, 1996. \$25.

In his classic *Killer Angels* (Ballantine, 1974), Michael Shaara captured in fiction the essentials of the battle of Gettysburg—its meaning, the flow of battle, and key personalities. There is no better introduction to that battle. Now his son, Jeffrey, fictionalizes the decade preceding Gettysburg. There are battles here, Antietam and Fredericksburg in particular, but more lucid and detailed accounts of these lie elsewhere. Instead, what concerns this Shaara is the mood among the key participants—Lee, Jackson, Chamberlain, and Hancock—whose lives he follows from obscure posts in Texas and California (in Chamberlain's case, a secure professorial position in Maine) to the center of Civil War action. This book conveys the overpowering sadness and resignation that gripped such men as they were buffeted by forces largely beyond their control. This theme will resonate especially with readers who see the Civil War as Greek tragedy, and with everyone who longs for a readable excursion into the personal dimension of that conflict.

Russell B. Stevens

At Home in the Universe: The Search for Laws of Self-Organization and Complexity. Stuart Kauffman. Oxford, 1995. \$25.

To profit fully from this material, a reader needs a substantial background in mathematics, evolutionary biology, computer modeling, and economics. Mainly because Kauffman writes in an engagingly breezy style, however, this book can be rewarding to a far larger and less technically experienced readership. His key theses are (1) that organic evolution through natural selection must have been preceded by episodes of self-organization and (2) that insights in this sector offer provocative parallels in the evolution of technology and of political systems.

How Many People Can the Earth Support? Joel Cohen. Norton, 1995. \$30.

The short answer to this question, it turns out, is that nobody knows. Nevertheless, Cohen's excellent volume is a thorough, convincing analysis of the many interacting forces that must be

taken into account and that will, eventually, determine the answer. The book is long and crammed with data, charts, and graphs, yet it is decidedly readable, largely because the author writes in the first person and inserts a number of lighthearted parenthetical remarks. Two specific comments toward the end of the text bear careful consideration. One, his own, emphasizes that "the immense momentum of human population growth resembles the very long stopping time of a fully loaded truck." The other, borrowed from economist Robert Cassen, argues that "virtually everything that needs doing from a population point of view needs doing anyway."

William Bartram: Travels and Other Writings. Thomas P. Slaughter, ed. *Library of America, 1996. \$37.50.*

To appreciate this collection is to move back some two centuries, before DNA, genetic engineering, aerial photography, and motorized transport. It is to recall an age when what came later to be called wildlife biology was about all the biology there was, carried out by a very few dedicated souls. A skilled collector, writer, and artist, William Bartram traveled extensively in the American Southeast and wrote excruciatingly detailed accounts of what he saw and experienced. One can but wonder what drove him to the exertions required for the task, despite the very real discomforts and dangers encountered. At one point in his account he gives, I think, the key when he speaks of being "continually impelled by a restless spirit of curiosity, in pursuit of new productions of nature." Surely, nothing less could possibly have sufficed.

Forest Dreams, Forest Nightmares: The Paradox of Old Growth in the Inland West. Nancy Langston. Univ. of Washington, 1995. \$24.95.

In her introductory chapter, Langston asserts, "This is not a story with a villain (the greedy lumberman) and a hero (the brave environmentalist). Instead, it is a tragedy in which decent people with the best of intentions destroyed what they cared for most." To her great credit, Langston lives up to that promise throughout this highly readable, detailed account of the events—including the roles played by the lumber industry, farmers, and ranchers—that took place during several decades of Forest Service management of the national forests of the Blue Mountains of eastern Oregon and Washington. In the end, as she notes, "Forest management led to a dizzying series of unexpected consequences. Ev-

ery time a manager tried to fix one problem, the solution created a worse problem elsewhere."

The Lawn: A History of an American Obsession. *Virginia Scott Jenkins. Smithsonian, 1994. \$14.95.*

There are similarities between this work and the one by Bormann et al. reviewed in the Summer 1996 *Key Reporter*, yet they reflect substantially different emphases. Whereas *Redesigning the American Lawn* sought above all to make a case for shifting from current practice to a multispecies, or "Freedom," lawn, Jenkins devotes much more attention to a historical account of the factors and institutions that, over time, brought about the current scene. In so doing she recounts the important roles of golfing enthusiasts and of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, as well as the roles of the producers of lawn chemicals and of mechanical equipment. Whether the term "obsession" is fully justified is debatable—with some it is apt, but surely there must be a substantial number of us who go but little beyond occasionally simply mowing whatever is there.

Krakatau: The Destruction and Reassembly of an Island Ecosystem. *Ian Thornton. Harvard, 1996. \$39.95.*

New Guinea: An Island Apart. *Neil Nightingale. BBC Books, 1993. \$29.95.*

In style and content these two works could scarcely be less alike. *Krakatau* is a detailed, almost encyclopedic, account of the reestablishment of vegetation and other life on the island after its total destruction in 1883 as the result of an incredibly violent volcanic eruption. It is not necessary to be a specialist to get the general picture of what the author chooses to call the "reassembly" of the ecosystem. By contrast, *New Guinea: An Island Apart*, which was prepared in connection with a BBC television series, is a nontechnical, profusely illustrated account of what is to be found on an as yet comparatively untouched land. Yet the two books are alike in that they document the incredibly complex interrelations of organic life with a comparably diverse physical substrate.

Frederick Crosson

Isaiah Berlin. *John Gray. Princeton, 1996. \$19.95.*

Berlin is one of Britain's most eminent intellectuals, but he is less well known in the United States. This excellent discussion and critical analysis of perhaps his central conviction, that the human goods

among which we choose are objective but incommensurably plural, draws out its implications for defenses of liberal democracy. Himself a champion of liberalism, Berlin nonetheless argues not only that fundamental values like liberty and equality may conflict but also that there is no rational ground for giving one or the other priority, because such values are irreducibly pluriform. It would follow that the attempt of classical liberal thinkers to defend the priority of political liberty over differing conceptions of the human good cannot succeed. Crisply written and thought-provoking.

Postmodern Platos. *Catherine H. Zuckert. Univ. of Chicago, 1996. \$56; paper, \$19.95.*

Nietzsche, and Heidegger following him, maintained that philosophy had exhausted its possibilities and had come to the end of the path it has been following since Plato made the division between the real world of unchanging, eternal beings and the shadowlike world of changing, temporal things. Finding themselves at the end, both philosophers returned to reflect on Plato and why the path he inaugurated should have led to a dead end. Zuckert's first-rate study starts from Nietzsche and Heidegger, but focuses on three students of the latter—Gadamer, Strauss, and Derrida—who followed him back to Plato but who assessed Plato and the present limit-situation in different ways. Marked by clear exposition and judicious analysis.

Encounters with Kierkegaard. *Ed. by Bruce H. Kimmse. Princeton, 1996. \$35.*
William James Remembered. *Ed. by Linda Simon. Univ. of Nebraska, 1996. \$30.*

Neither thinker left memoirs or an autobiography, so these glimpses of how each of them appeared to contemporaries are the more interesting. Kimmse has collected and annotated all the eyewitness accounts of Kierkegaard, including those of his one-time fiancée and of some of his passionate opponents. The two dozen or so remembrances of James, by contrast, although some of them disagree with his ideas, tend to be positive about him as brother, teacher, colleague, friend. (Of course, one might also think that James was more approachable and likeable than Kierkegaard, which is probably true.) Both collections inevitably reflect the fact that, as one of Kierkegaard's opponents put it, "I am in danger of remembering that scene [with K.] with an admixture of knowledge from a later period." Still, one does get some vivid glimpses of the sort of

person each was from the various descriptions and the anecdotes about their habits, idiosyncrasies, and manner of life.

Living High and Letting Die. *Peter Unger. Oxford, 1996. \$35.*

Unger is struck (to put it mildly) by the fact that each year millions of children in the third world die of illnesses (like dehydrating diarrhea) when they could be saved by the cost of a Big Mac meal, and yet very few people send money to UNICEF, say, for such a purpose. His book is a discussion of the question of moral philosophy that arises for him from observing that most people in our society think that while not sending money isn't exemplary, it's not very bad either. According to Unger, that common belief is not in accord with our own basic values but arises from the obscuring of crucially relevant factors by psychological habits of perceiving and thinking about the factors relevant to moral assessment. So he devises test cases to exhibit those exclusionary habits of mind and to lead us to rethink the moral issues involved.

Serene Compassion. *Denise L. and John T. Carmody. Oxford, 1996. \$22.*

For interreligious dialogue to be profitable, it requires something to be learned by both (or several) participants—so each must stand for something, have a sense of identity—and the desire to learn from the path the other has followed. This small (130 pp.) exploration of the Buddhist way from a Christian standpoint is a model of such an appreciation and appropriation of the Buddha's teaching. Exploring the place of meditation, of morality, of community, and of the Buddha himself in the life of his followers, this book is a fine example of "crossing over and coming back."

Integrity. *Stephen Carter. Basic Books, 1996. \$24.*

This is a book by an academic—a professor of law at Yale—but it is not a contribution to scholarship: it is, rather, a reflection addressed to any reader who is willing to think about just what it is that is at issue when we praise a person's integrity and why that foundational element of character seems harder and harder to discern in our public life, whether in politics, the media, sports, or courts of law. Carter analyzes the components of integrity, discusses current examples from these fields of public life, and thinks about how we might teach it or foster it. The style is thoughtful and conversational rather than declarative, and the examples make one think about one's self and about our common life. ■

NEW SCHOLAR EDITOR

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

many fans," but that many scholars viewed the journal as "hostile toward new trends in the humanities."

Blitzer commented:

While the *Chronicle* is correct in reporting that issues such as "new trends in the humanities" and "the culture wars" were raised during that debate, these were by no means the only questions considered by the Senate. I believe, for example, that the simple proposition that 22 years is quite a long time and that a periodic change of editors could bring new points of view and fresh ideas to the *Scholar* determined the votes of a number of my colleagues.

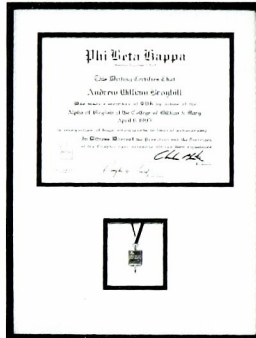
Like his predecessor, Hiram Hayden, Joe Epstein is a brilliant editor, a brilliant essayist, and a man of strong convictions. Because he chose not to make the *Scholar* a bland and timid publication that avoided controversy, he earned both ardent admirers and severe critics, both amply represented in the Senate of Phi Beta Kappa and, I am sure, among the Society's 600,000 members.

I am hopeful that our distinguished and diligent search committee, and ultimately the Senate, will choose someone worthy to succeed him, which is no easy task.

New Lapel Pins, Popular Wall Display Offered

The Society is now offering small new lapel pins, in addition to the standard keys and key pins that have long been available. The new pin is suitable for wearing on a jacket lapel or as a tie tack. Pictured here in actual size, the pin is engraved with the member's name and chapter on the back.

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