



# THE KEY REPORTER

## Philadelphia Will Host Phi Beta Kappa's 39th Triennial Council in October

Delegates from 255 Phi Beta Kappa chapters and more than 50 associations are expected to attend the 39th Council of Phi Beta Kappa on October 19-22 in Philadelphia. The headquarters for the Council will be at the Sheraton Society Hill Hotel.

The first scheduled event is a symposium in the late afternoon of October 19, at which Leroy S. Rouser, professor of philosophy and religion at Boston University, and Catharine R. Stimpson, dean of the Graduate School of the Arts and Sciences at New York University and a ΦBK senator, will speak. That evening, the University of Pennsylvania's Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology will sponsor a reception for delegates. The Delaware Valley ΦBK association will host another reception for delegates on October 20 at Independence Seaport Museum.

The delegates will elect the Society's national leaders for the 2000-03 triennium, vote on the chartering of new chapters, and set the overall policy for the organization. The winner of the triennial Sidney S. Hook Memorial Award will address the Council banquet on October 21, and a special award will be made to a person distinguished for outstanding service to the humanities. Recipients of both awards are selected by the ΦBK Senate from nominations received from chapters, associations, and individual members.



ADAM GORDON

*The University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology will host a reception for Council delegates on October 19.*

### Winston Foundation Underwrites New ΦBK Poetry Competition

Phi Beta Kappa has received a \$75,000 grant from the Joseph and May Winston Foundation of Scarsdale, N.Y., to underwrite a national poetry competition. Awards of up to \$10,000 will be made in December 2000 at the Senate banquet.

Businessman Joseph Winston (ΦBK, CCNY, 1933) was a ΦBK Fellow. He died in 1998, his wife in 1997. The grant provides \$25,000 annually for three years; after that time the foundation will review the project and assess its future participation.

Competition guidelines, to be established by a committee chaired by

### Society Receives \$120,000 Bequest for Visiting Scholar Program

Phi Beta Kappa has received a \$120,000 bequest from the estate of Frank M. Updike (ΦBK, Rutgers University, 1939) to underwrite, through the Society's Visiting Scholar Program, the campus visits each year of a humanities scholar whose specialization is intercultural relations. Anthony Grafton [see page 2] has been designated the ΦBK-Frank M. Updike Scholar for 2000-01.

the *American Scholar's* poetry editor, Robert Farnsworth, will be announced in the *Key Reporter* this summer.

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# Phi Beta Kappa Announces 14 Visiting Scholars for 2000-01

Fourteen professors have accepted appointment as ΦBK Visiting Scholars for the upcoming academic year. The purpose of the program, which began in 1956, is to enrich the intellectual atmosphere of the institutions visited and to enable undergraduates to meet and talk with distinguished scholars in diverse disciplines. Altogether, the Visiting Scholars will travel to approximately 100 universities and colleges that shelter ΦBK chapters. During each two-day campus visit, the Scholar participates in classroom lectures and seminars and presents one address open to the entire academic community.

The 2000-01 Scholars are as follows:

**LAWRENCE D. BOBO**, professor of sociology and Afro-American studies, Harvard University. Former director of the Center for Research on Race, Politics, and Society at UCLA, he is the coauthor of *Racial Attitudes in America*; editor of *Race, Public Opinion, and Society*; and coeditor of *Racialized Politics: The Debate on Racism in America*. He is now writing a book on the sociology of prejudice.

**GREGORY D. BOTHUN**, professor of physics, University of Oregon. Director of the university's Pine Mountain Observatory, he is the author of *Modern Cosmological Observations and Problems* and *Cosmology: Mankind's Grand Investigation*, as well as the scientific editor of the *Astrophysical Journal*. He received the National Science Foundation's Recognition Award for the Integration of Research into Teaching.

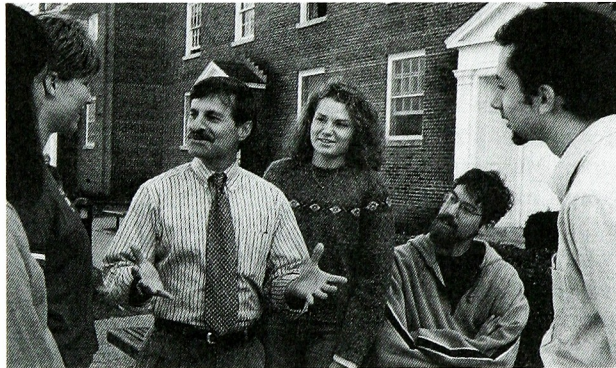
**WALLACE S. BROECKER**, Newberry Professor of Earth and Environmental Sciences, Columbia University. A member of the National Academy of Sciences and a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, he is the author or coauthor of *Chemical Equilibria in the Earth*; *Chemical Oceanography*; *Tracers in the Sea*; *How to Build a Habitable Planet*; *The Glacial World According to Wally*; and *Greenhouse Puzzles*.

**TED COHEN**, professor of philosophy, University of Chicago. He is a recipient of Chicago's Quantrell Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Training. Past president of the American Society for Aesthetics, he is the author of *Jokes* and the coeditor of *Essays in Kant's Aesthetics and Pursuits of Reason*.

**JOAN BRETON CONNELLY**, associate professor of fine arts, New York Univer-

sity. She is director of the Yeronis Island Expedition and Field School and the author of *Votive Sculpture of Hellenistic Cyprus*, as well as of the forthcoming *Women and Ritual: Priestesses in Greek Art and Society* and *Parthenon and Parthenoi: Reinterpretation of the Parthenon and Its Sculptural Program*. She is the recipient of a MacArthur fellowship.

**NANCY FOLBRE**, professor of economics, University of Massachusetts. A MacArthur fellow, she is the author of *Who Pays for the Kids?*; *The Ultimate Field Guide to the U.S. Economy*; and *War on the Poor*, as well as two forthcoming books, *The Invisible Heart: Feminism and Family Values* and *Greed and Lust: A History of Economic Ideas*. She is an associate editor of the *Journal of Feminist Economics*.



David Osbinsky, Board of Governors Professor of History at Rutgers University, chats with students at Western Maryland College on one of his eight visits to campuses as a Visiting Scholar for Phi Beta Kappa in 1999-2000.

**ANTHONY GRAFTON**, Dodge Professor of History, Princeton University. Former director of Princeton's Program in European Cultural Studies and the Davis Center for Historical Research, he is the author of *Forgers and Critics: Defenders of the Text: The Traditions of Humanism in an Age of Science, 1450-1800*; *The Footnote*; *Cardano's Cosmos*; and the coeditor of *The Transmission of Culture in Early Modern Europe*.

**GILES B. GUNN**, professor of English and global and international studies, University of California, Santa Barbara. Former director of the UCSB Dialogues in Human Values and Public Life, he is the author of *The Interpretation of Otherness: Literature, Religion, and the American Imagination*; *The Culture of Criticism and the Criticism of Culture*; and *Thinking Across the American Grain: Ideology, Intellect, and the New Pragmatism*.

**AREND LIJPHART**, Research Professor of Political Science, University of California, San Diego. Past president of the American Political Science Association, he is the author of *Democracy in Plural Societies*; *Democracies*; *Power-Sharing in South Africa*; *Parliamentary versus Presidential Government*; *Electoral Systems and Party Systems*; and *Patterns of Democracy*.

**RICHARD LOSICK**, Maria Moors Cabot Professor of Biology, Harvard University. Recipient of Harvard's Dreyfus Teacher-Scholar Award, he is a member of the National Academy of Sciences and a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He is the coeditor of *Microbial Development*; *RNA Polymerase*; and *Development in Bacteria*.

**KARAL ANN MARLING**, professor of art history and American studies, University of Minnesota. A specialist in popular art and culture, she is the author of *Building Disney's Theme Parks*; *Norman Rockwell*; *Graceland*; *As Seen on TV: The Visual Culture of Everyday Life in the 1950s*; *Edward Hopper*; *George Washington Slept Here: Colonial Revivals and American Culture, 1876-1986*.

**DEBORAH L. RHODE**, McFarland Professor of Law, Stanford University. Director of the Keck Center on Legal Ethics and the Legal Profession and past president of the Association of American Law Schools, she is the author or coauthor of *Professional Responsibility*; *Speaking of Sex: Legal Ethics*; *The Politics of Pregnancy*; *Theoretical Perspectives on Sexual Difference*; and *Justice and Gender*.

**PAUL G. RICHARDS**, Mellon Professor of the Natural Sciences, Columbia University. A fellow of the AAAS and the American Geophysical Union (Macelwane Medal), he is the coauthor of *Quantitative Seismology* and coeditor of *Earthquake Prediction*. Recipient of a MacArthur fellowship, he was twice a Foster fellow/scholar at the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency.

**ELIANA RIVERO**, professor of Spanish, University of Arizona. She is the recipient of four teaching awards from Arizona, as well as grants from the NEH, the NEA, and the Rockefeller Foundation. Her most recent edited works are *Infinite Divisions: An Anthropology of Chicana Literature* and *Siete Poetas*. She has published two books of poetry, *De cal y arena* and *Cuerpos breves*. ■

C. KURT HOLTZER



# A Half-Century Without Nuclear War

By Thomas C. Schelling

It has already been more than five decades since the first, and the last, use of nuclear weapons in warfare. Who could have believed it 50 years ago? These five-plus decades of nonuse are a stunning achievement. They may also represent some stunning good luck.

There has never been any doubt about the military effectiveness or the potential for terror of nuclear weapons, and a large part of the credit for their not having been used must be due to the “taboo” that John Foster Dulles perceived to have attached itself to these weapons as early as 1953—a taboo that he deplored.

The weapons remain under a curse, now a much heavier curse than the one that bothered Dulles in the early 1950s. These weapons are unique, and a large part of their uniqueness derives from their being *perceived* as unique. We call most of the other weapons *conventional*, in the sense of something that arises as if by compact, by agreement, by *convention*. It is an established convention that nuclear weapons are different.

This convention, which took root and grew over the past decades, is an asset. It is not guaranteed to survive; some potential possessors of nuclear weapons may not share the convention. How the inhibition arose; whether it was inevitable; whether it was the result of careful design, luck, or both; and whether we should assess it as robust or vulnerable in the coming decades—these are the issues to be examined here.

## Origins of the Taboo

The first occasion when these weapons might have been used was the Korean War. American and South Korean troops had retreated to a perimeter around the southern coastal city of Pusan and appeared to be in danger of expulsion from the peninsula. The nuclear-weapons issue arose in public discussion in this country and in the British parliament. Prime Minister Clement Attlee flew to Washington to beseech President Truman not to use nuclear weapons in Korea. The visit and its purpose were openly acknowledged. The House of Commons, which viewed its government as having been a partner in the enterprise that produced nuclear weapons, believed that Britain should have a voice in the American decision.

The dramatically successful landing at Inchon made moot the question whether nuclear weapons might have been used if the situation in the Pusan perimeter had become desperate. But at least the question of nuclear use had come up. I know of no evidence that apprehension by the U.S. government or by the U.S. public of the consequences of demonstrating that nuclear weapons were “usable” played an important role in Truman’s deliberations.

Nuclear weapons again went unused in the debacle following the entry of Chinese armies into Korea, and were still unused during the bloody war of attrition that accompanied the Panmunjom negotiations. Whether the threat of nuclear weapons influenced the truce negotiations remains unclear. But the ambiguity in the “role” of nuclear weapons became evident at that time, and during the ensuing years they clearly remained a threat and a deterrent.

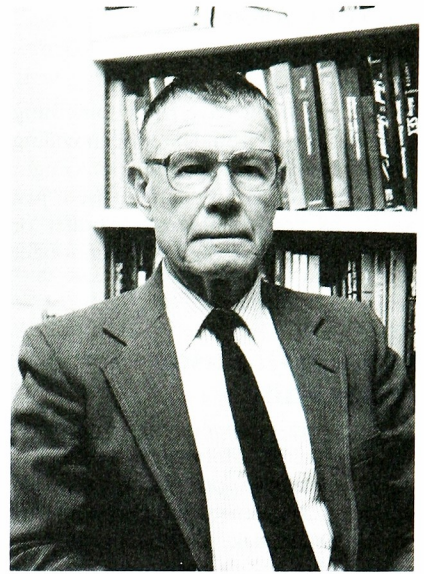
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**The aversion to nuclear weapons . . . can grow in strength and become locked into military doctrine without being fully appreciated or even acknowledged.**

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McGeorge Bundy documented the fascinating story of President Eisenhower and Secretary Dulles and nuclear weapons in his book *Danger and Survival: Choices About the Bomb in the First Fifty Years*. At the National Security Council (NSC) on February 11, 1953, Dulles discussed “the moral problem in the inhibitions on the use of the A-bomb. . . . It was his opinion that we should break down this false distinction.” Evidently the secretary believed that the restraint was real even if the distinction was false, and that the restraint was not to be welcomed.

Again, on October 7, 1953, Dulles said, “Somehow or other we must manage to remove the taboo from the use of these weapons.” Just a few weeks later the President approved, in a Basic National Security Document, the statement, “In the event of hostilities, the United States will consider nuclear weapons to be as available for use as other munitions.” This statement surely has to be read as more



Thomas C. Schelling

rhetorical than factual, even if the NSC considered itself to constitute “the United States.”

Taboos are not easily dispelled by pronouncing them extinct. Six months later, at a restricted NATO meeting, the U.S. position was that nuclear weapons “must now be treated as in fact having become conventional.” But tacit conventions are sometimes harder to destroy than explicit ones, existing in potentially recalcitrant minds rather than on destructible paper.

According to Bundy, the last public statement in this progress of nuclear weapons toward conventional status occurred during the Quemoy crisis. On March 12, 1955, Eisenhower said, in answer to a question, “In any combat where these things can be used on strictly military targets and for strictly military purposes, I see no reason why they shouldn’t be used just exactly as you would use a bullet or anything else.”

Was Ike really ready to use nuclear weapons to defend Quemoy, or Taiwan itself? The conspicuous shipment of nuclear artillery to Taiwan was surely intended as a threat. Bluffing would have been risky from Dulles’s point of view, and leaving nuclear weapons unused while the Chinese conquered Taiwan would have engraved the taboo in granite.

At the same time, Quemoy would have appeared to Dulles as a superb opportunity to dispel the taboo. Using short-range nuclear weapons in a purely defensive mode, solely against offensive troops, especially at sea or on beachheads devoid

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



## NO NUCLEAR WAR

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

of civilians, might have been something that Eisenhower would have been willing to authorize, and nuclear weapons might have proved that they could be used “just exactly as you would use a bullet or anything else.” The Chinese did not offer the opportunity.

### Kennedy-Johnson Policy Shift

The contrast between the Eisenhower and the Kennedy-Johnson attitudes toward nuclear weapons is summarized in a public statement of Johnson’s in September 1964: “Make no mistake. There is no such thing as a conventional nuclear weapon. For 19 peril-filled years no nation has loosed the atom against another. To do so now is a political decision of the highest order.” That statement disposed of the notion that nuclear weapons were to be judged by their military effectiveness. Compare “a political decision of the highest order” with “as available for use as other munitions.”

Johnson implied that for 19 years the United States had resisted any temptation to do what Dulles had wanted the United States to be free to do where nuclear weapons were concerned. Johnson implied that we had an investment, accumulated over 19 years, in the nonuse of nuclear weapons, and that those 19 years of quarantine were part of what would make any decision to use those weapons a political decision of the highest order.

We should consider the literal meaning of “no such thing as a conventional nuclear weapon.” Specifically, why couldn’t a nuclear bomb no larger in energy yield than the largest blockbuster of World War II be considered conventional? Two answers were offered to this question, one mainly instinctive and the other somewhat analytical, but both resting on a belief or a feeling—a feeling somewhat beyond reach by analysis—that nuclear weapons are generically different. The more intuitive response could be formulated, “If you have to ask that question you wouldn’t understand the answer.” The deplorable character of everything nuclear had simply become axiomatic, and analysis was futile.

The other, more analytical, response took its argument from legal reasoning, diplomacy, bargaining theory, and theory of training and discipline, including self-discipline. This argument emphasized bright lines, slippery slopes, salami tactics, well-defined boundaries, and the

stuff of which traditions and implicit conventions are made.

The “neutron bomb” is illustrative. The neutron bomb was designed to emit “prompt neutrons” that can be lethal at a distance at which blast and thermal radiation are comparatively moderate. As advertised, it can kill people without great damage to structures. The issue of producing and deploying this kind of weapon arose during the Carter administration, evoking an antinuclear reaction that caused it to be left on the drawing board.

But the same bomb—at least, the same idea—had been the subject of even more intense debate 15 years earlier, and it was then that the arguments were honed before being used again in the 1970s. The arguments were simple, and surely valid, whether or not they deserved to be decisive: (1) that it was important not to blur the distinction—the firebreak, as it was called—between nuclear and conventional weapons; (2) that either because of its low yield or because of its “benign” kind of lethality, there would be a strong temptation to use this weapon where nuclears were otherwise not allowed; and (3) that the use of neutron weapons would pave the way for nuclear escalation.

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These arguments are not altogether different from those against so-called peaceful nuclear explosions (PNEs). The decisive argument against PNEs was that they would accustom the world to nuclear explosions, undermining the belief that nuclear explosions were inherently evil and reducing the inhibitions on nuclear weapons. The prospect of blasting new river beds in northern Russia, a bypass canal for the waters of the Nile, or harbors in developing countries generated concern about “legitimizing” nuclear explosions.

A revealing demonstration of this antipathy was in the virtually universal rejection by American arms controllers and energy-policy analysts of the prospect of an ecologically clean source of electrical energy, proposed in the 1970s,

that would have detonated tiny “clean” thermonuclear bombs in underground caverns to generate steam. I have seen this idea dismissed without argument, as if the objections were too obvious to require amplification. As far as I could tell, the objection was that even “good” thermonuclear explosions were bad and should be kept that way.

But it is important not to think that nuclear weapons alone are generically different, and independent of quantity or size. For example, gas was not used in World War II.

All-or-none thresholds can be susceptible to undermining. A Dulles who wishes the taboo were not there might not only attempt to get around it when using the bomb seems important, but might apply ingenuity to dissolving the barrier on occasions when it might not matter much, in anticipation of later opportunities when the barrier would be a genuine embarrassment. Bundy suggested that in discussing the possibility of using atomic bombs in defense of Dien Bien Phu (the final French defeat in Indochina), Dulles had in mind not only the local value of such weapons in Indochina but their broader effect in “making the use of atomic bombs internationally acceptable.”

### Soviet Policy

The aversion to nuclear weapons— one might even say the abhorrence of them— can grow in strength and become locked into military doctrine without being fully appreciated or even acknowledged. The Kennedy administration launched an aggressive campaign for conventional defenses in Europe on the ground that nuclear weapons certainly should not be used, and probably would not be used, in the event of a war in Europe. Throughout the 1960s the official Soviet line was to deny the possibility of a nonnuclear engagement in Europe. Yet the Soviets spent great amounts of money developing nonnuclear capabilities in Europe, especially aircraft capable of delivering conventional bombs. This expensive capability would have been of limited value in a nuclear engagement. Deployment of these weapons reflected a tacit Soviet acknowledgment that both sides might be capable of nonnuclear war and that both sides had an interest in keeping war nonnuclear by having the capability of fighting a nonnuclear war.

Arms control is so often identified with limitations on the possession or deployment of weapons that people often overlook the fact that an investment in nonnuclear weapons constitutes a form of



arms control. That the Soviets had absorbed this nuclear inhibition was dramatically demonstrated during their protracted campaign in Afghanistan. I never read or heard public discussion about the possibility that the Soviet Union might shatter the tradition of nonuse to avoid a costly and humiliating defeat in that primitive country. The inhibitions on use of nuclear weapons are such common knowledge, the attitude is so confidently shared, that the use of nuclear weapons in Afghanistan would have been almost universally deplored.

Such a reaction would reflect appreciation that Washington's 19-year nuclear silence had stretched into a fourth and then a fifth decade, and everyone in responsibility was aware that that unbroken tradition was a treasure we held in common. Could that tradition, once broken, have mended itself? If Truman had used nuclear weapons during the Chinese onslaught in Korea, would Johnson have been so inhibited in 1964? And if Nixon had used nuclear weapons, even ever so sparingly, in Vietnam, would the Soviets have eschewed their use in Afghanistan, and would the Israelis have resisted the temptation of use against the Egyptian beachheads north of the Suez Canal in 1973?

We do not know. One possibility is that the horror of Hiroshima and Nagasaki would have repeated itself, and the curse would have descended again with even more weight. The other possibility is that, the long silence broken, nuclear weapons would have emerged as standard weaponry against an adversary who had none. Much might have depended on the care with which weapons were confined to military targets or used in demonstrably "defensive" modes.

## Extension of the Taboo

I have devoted this much attention to the nuclear taboo in the belief that the evolution of that status has been as important as the development of nuclear arsenals. The nonproliferation effort has been more successful than most authorities can claim to have anticipated; the accumulating weight of tradition against nuclear use is no less impressive and no less valuable. We depend on nonproliferation efforts to restrain the production and deployment of weapons by more and more countries; we may depend even more on universally shared inhibitions on nuclear use. Preserving those inhibitions and extending them, if we know how, to cultures and national interests that may

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not currently share those inhibitions will be a crucial part of our nuclear policy.

On the 40th anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Alvin M. Weinberg wrote an editorial in the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* (December 1985) in which he said that he had always been convinced that both American and Japanese lives were saved by the use of the bomb in Japan, and that long-term good might result from the Hiroshima bomb:

Are we witnessing a gradual sanctification of Hiroshima—that is, the elevation of the Hiroshima event to the status of a profoundly mystical event, an event ultimately of the same religious force as biblical events? I cannot prove it, but I am convinced that the 40th Anniversary of Hiroshima, with its vast outpouring of concern, its huge demonstrations, its wide media coverage, bears resemblance to the observance of major religious holidays. . . . This sanctification of Hiroshima is one of the most hopeful developments of the nuclear era.

A crucial question is whether the antinuclear instinct so well expressed by Weinberg is confined to Christian or "Western" culture. As we look to North Korea, Pakistan, Iran, India, or Iraq as potential wielders of nuclear weapons, we cannot be sure that they inherit this tradition with any great force.

Forty years ago, however, we might have thought that the Soviet leadership would be immune to the spirit of Hiroshima as expressed by Weinberg—immune to the popular revulsion toward nuclear weapons, immune to the overhang of all those peril-filled years that awed President Johnson. In any attempt to extrapolate Western nuclear attitudes toward the areas of the world where nuclear proliferation begins to frighten us, the remarkable conformity of Soviet and Western ideology is a reassuring point of departure.

I know of no argument in favor of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which the Senate rejected in 1999, more powerful than the potential of that treaty to enhance the nearly universal revulsion

against nuclear weapons. The symbolic effect of 140 or more nations ratifying this treaty, which is nominally only about testing, would add enormously to the convention that nuclear weapons are not to be used, and that any nation that does use nuclear weapons will be judged the violator of the legacy of Hiroshima. I have never heard that argument made on either side of the debate over the treaty. When the treaty again comes before the Senate, as it certainly will do, this major potential benefit must not go unrecognized. ■

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*Thomas C. Schelling (ΦBK, University of California, Berkeley, 1944), Distinguished University Professor, University of Maryland at College Park, is a past president and distinguished fellow of the American Economic Association and author of numerous books. The topic of this article is one of several on which he lectured as a Phi Beta Kappa Visiting Scholar during the 1999-2000 academic year.*

## THE KEY REPORTER

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*Beate Sirota Gordon (ΦBK, Mills College, 1943) is a woman of accomplishment. Her role in framing the equal-rights provisions in the postwar Japanese constitution remained secret for decades, but in the 1990s she became famous in Japan through a television documentary and biography. The English version of the latter, published under the title *The Only Woman in the Room: A Memoir* (Kodansha, 1997), was described by Publishers Weekly as a “modest, engaging account of a woman who made significant contributions to both Japanese and American culture.” (Her Japanese fan club has printed the equal-rights article of the constitution on silk scarves, and produced a series of picture postcards about her and her family.) Early this year she was the subject of another TV documentary about her experience as an impresario, bringing Asian artists to perform for American audiences.*

*Born in Vienna to Russian Jewish parents, she moved at age 5 to Japan, where her father, concert pianist Leo Sirota, taught at the Imperial Academy of Music. She attended a German school in Ōmori for six years before her parents transferred her to the American school, from which she graduated at age 15. Fluent in German, Japanese, English, French, and Russian, she added Spanish when she attended Mills College. Before graduation she was recruited to work as a translator, first for the CBS Listening Post in San Francisco and subsequently for the Federal Communications Commission’s Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service and the Office of War Information. She went back to Japan after the war to work for the occupation forces.*

*After returning to the United States in 1947, she married a fellow member of the American team that had worked on the Japanese constitution, Lieutenant Joseph Gordon. They have a daughter and a son (Geoffrey Gordon, ΦBK, Columbia University, 1980) and live in New York City.*

**Q. What was it like growing up in Japan as a European child in the pre–World War II era?**

**A.** It was wonderful. The Japanese love children. Since I had curls and looked different from Japanese children, I was a curiosity, and people flocked to look at me. Japanese grownups are very permissive with children under the age of 7 (the age of reason!), and mothers constantly attend to children’s needs, so there is little crying. I was treated very kindly by the families in the neighborhood whose children were my playmates.

**Q. What was it in your background that best prepared you for your work with the occupation forces, and what resources did you consult in drafting the equal-rights provisions of the Japanese constitution?**

**A.** My mother and my governess made me aware of the sorry lot of Japanese women. I also saw, with my own eyes, wives walking behind their husbands on the streets, cooking and serving food to their husbands’ dinner guests but eating in the kitchen with the children. Mills College taught me about the need for women to go out into the workplace and to participate in the political process.

Also, working for *Time* magazine in New York in 1945 opened my eyes regarding discrimination against women in this country. There were some very highly educated, progressive women at *Time*. The best job they could get there was “editorial researcher.” There were only two women executives, the heads of the research department and the cable department. However, *Time* trained me well as a researcher. When assigned to help draft the Japanese constitution, I was the only one who immediately went in search of source materials. I got into a jeep and told my Japanese driver to find any libraries still standing in Tokyo, where I found the constitutions of many countries—German (Weimar), Russian, Scandinavian, French, as well as the U.S.—to serve as examples.

**Q. John Dower, in *Embracing Defeat*, says of your role in the drafting of the constitution: “At various points [Beate Sirota] came down in support of Japanese positions. Subsequently when [the Japanese negotiators came to] the women’s rights clauses Sirota had originally drafted, [U.S. Army Colonel] Kades adroitly and successfully suggested that since she had**

**been nice to them earlier, the Japanese should now be nice to her. Through this friendly reciprocity, one of the strongest equal-rights provisions in modern constitutional law survived.” Tell us about it.**

**A.** Actually, I never “came down in support of Japanese positions.” But the Japanese negotiators didn’t know that I had written the women’s rights provisions; they knew me only as an interpreter. They were favorably inclined toward me because I had interpreted for both sides—and I was very fast. Colonel Kades was psychologically alert, and at 2 a.m. he said, “Look, Miss Sirota has her heart set on the women’s rights provision in the constitution, she has lived in Japan for a long time, why don’t we pass the provision?” They would have had to pass it in the end, but they could have weakened it—this way it more or less stayed the way it had been originally approved by the American committee.

**Q. Did you keep a diary at the time?**

**A.** No. The need for secrecy was so strongly impressed on us that I wouldn’t even have thought of writing a diary at that time, and I didn’t talk to my parents or anybody else about my work for years. In the 1950s some scholars and media people criticized the constitution, and I certainly didn’t want to lend fuel to those who wanted to amend the constitution by letting it be known that some young girl had helped write it. Then, in the mid-1970s, the material was declassified and I gave one or two interviews about it to scholars. It wasn’t until the 50th anniversary of the constitution that Colonel Kades talked about our work.

**Q. *Publishers Weekly* calls your book “quietly feminist.” As a feminist before it was fashionable to be so, you seem to have managed to gain your colleagues’ confidence and respect as some modern-day feminists have not. Does it have to do with your linguistic skills?**

**A.** No, it has to do primarily with my upbringing in Japan, where the culture catered to men a great deal. Through politeness to both men and women, I was able to put across my own views in a way that did not hurt the male ego. And I have never had any problem with powerful women—they have always been good to me, probably because I do not present a threat. There are some women I’m afraid of—a person like Bella Abzug, for example, would intimidate me. Japanese women feel warm toward me because of my knowledge of the Japanese lan-



guage—I'm one of the few foreigners they feel they can communicate with directly in language and feelings.

**Q. In view of the fact that you left college before graduation, how did you make Phi Beta Kappa?**

**A.** We had a very forward-looking woman president at Mills, Aurelia Henry Reinhardt. She wanted women not only to get an education and have a family but also to have a career. She felt that educated people had an obligation to contribute to society. When she found out that the government needed me as a translator (recruiters who came to the campus said that only 60 Caucasians in the United States spoke Japanese, and the Nisei couldn't be used in San Francisco because they had been interned), she gave me permission to complete my degree by exam and term-papers. Because I'd gone to summer school and always taken the maximum number of credits, I needed only 1½ more to graduate.

**Q. How did you get into your career as an impresario?**

**A.** In the 1950s, I began to work part time for the Japan Society, recruiting Japanese musicians and dancers who were in this country to perform in schools. They had to rehearse in the living room of my apartment in New York because the Japan Society's offices were too small! As the requests for performances grew, I received grants to bring in professional performers from abroad.

In the 1970s, when I became full-time director of performing arts for the Asia Society, my goal at first was to bring only the most authentic and traditional classi-



*Beate Sirota Gordon is flanked on the left by playwright James Miki—who wrote “A String of Pearls,” a play about her that will tour Japan in May 2000—and on the right by Akio Fukushima, director of the Young People’s Theater (Seinen Gekijo), the oldest repertory company in Tokyo, which is producing the play.*

cal performers, who were not well known here at the time, and I worked mostly with colleges and universities. I was aware that I had to bring performing arts that would connect with American audiences. One college administrator had told me, “I’m not interested in anything Asian, because I once saw a No drama and it was so static, long, and boring that I don’t ever want to present anything Asian again.”

So I went to Asia myself to find artists and arts that could communicate with American audiences, and I auditioned performers in every Asian country except Bangladesh and Cambodia. I had a travel budget that permitted me to arrange for

performances—ritual dances and festival entertainment—to be put on just for me, out of season. Many of the performers of these arts are not professionals.

It was difficult to find authentic performing arts because the Asians were sure that Westerners wouldn’t appreciate them. They always tried to show me more Westernized renditions. For example, in Burma I was shown a “traditional classical dance” that seemed quite modern and Western to me. After some probing, I found out that the only thing traditional about the performance was the 200-year-old music—the dance had been choreographed only 10 years earlier.

**Q. What sorts of performances proved most successful here?**

**A.** At first the Japanese ones were most popular, because Americans were most familiar with them. Later, performances from other countries became successful too, because we worked very hard to introduce them sensitively. When you’re presenting something new to people who have ballet, modern dance, or Beethoven in their minds, it is important to provide explanatory brochures, posters, and program notes. In New York, I created an “atmosphere” for the performances by setting up photo, art, and handicraft exhibits in the lobby of the Asia Society theater, and by serving samples of the food of the country being represented—sushi or dumplings, for example—so as to appeal to all the senses. As time passed, I began bringing contem-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

**From John W. Dower’s *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (W. W. Norton, 1999):**

*“[Beate] Sirota sat on the subcommittee for civil rights, and her almost serendipitous presence there provided GHQ’s ‘constitutional convention’ with the rare perspective of a young, spirited, idealistic, and remarkably cosmopolitan European Jewish woman who was attuned to both Japanese and American culture and especially sensitive to issues of repression and persecution.” [p. 365]*

*“The section [of the Japanese constitution] enumerating ‘rights and duties of the people’ was, and remains, one of the most liberal guarantees of human rights in the world. Thanks largely to Beate Sirota, it even affirmed ‘the essential equality of the sexes’—a guarantee not explicitly found in the U.S. Constitution.” [p. 369]*

*“[Sirota] and everyone around her strongly believed they were helping to create the less oppressive society that most Japanese desired but could not obtain from their own leaders. In Sirota’s case, the feeling was based on an unusual sense of identity with Japanese women, coupled with personal knowledge of their legal and marital oppression. She also had seen the ‘thought police’ in action, for they had routinely visited her parents’ house to extract information about guests from the servants and kitchen help. . . .” [p. 366]*



porary as well as classical arts—modern works that were more representative of the modern Asia, the Asia that was producing Toyotas.

**Q. Was there any single presentation that you remember best?**

A. I think what touched people most was “Children of the Wind,” an enchanting Japanese children’s entertainment by Japanese mimes. The actors used the traditional Japanese artifacts as props for stories like the “Ugly Duckling,” which is not a Japanese story but which was done in Japanese style, with black-clad actors making giant origami birds fly. The director also used traditional Japanese children’s games to show their universal appeal. At one performance I sat next to a woman who said of some intricate jump-roping on stage, “That is just as we used to do it in Philadelphia!” Incidentally, “Children of the Wind” was so popular in the West that it went to a festival in Vancouver every summer for many years.

**Q. What is your next project?**

A. I plan to write a book that will concentrate on my impresario career, particularly on my adventures in searching for the performing arts of Asia. I was trained in many Western arts and in Japanese dance. At one time I wanted to be a dancer—I studied modern dance at Mills with Marian Van Tuyl, a student of Martha Graham, before I had to switch to folk dance, which is easier on the knees. The training I had received in Tokyo and Oakland, and the constant attendance at concerts and theater performances from the age of 6, gave me a good understanding of the performing arts.

**Q. Given your experience in public and cultural affairs, do you have any special advice for young people graduating from college today?**

A. It seems as though many of today’s youth are apathetic, chiefly interested in making money, going for the MBA, slighting the humanities. I think young people must get involved in society, particularly in politics. They have to vote and work for the party of their choice. They should also work in international organizations that promote peace and understanding among peoples—such as the Peace Corps and Doctors Without Borders—or they won’t have any world to live in. ■

## Johns Hopkins 1999 ΦBK Graduate Describes Teaching Sixth Grade in Oakland

By Molly Ness

I am a first-year teacher of sixth-graders at the Roosevelt Middle School in East Oakland, California. When I graduated from Johns Hopkins University (ΦBK, 1999) with a B.A. in political science, I had several job offers with consulting firms and research organizations, and in the fields of law and politics. I chose to make the commitment to Teach For America because it offered what I considered the ideal combination of education, community service, and working with children.

Teach For America is part of the AmeriCorps service program. Founded 10 years ago, Teach For America places more than 800 college graduates every year in the nation’s 12 most impoverished school districts: in urban areas such as Baltimore, Los Angeles, the Bay Area, and New York and in rural areas such as the Mississippi Delta and the Rio Grande Valley. All members undergo an intensive five-week training program before they take up their assignments.

The training focuses not only on theories of education but also on practical ways of becoming an effective teacher and of holding children to high expectations while seeking to level the playing field for students at schools like mine, who obviously lack the educational opportunities that children from better backgrounds have. Teach For America corps members are warned that the two-year commitment will be challenging, but are encouraged to rely on parents, administrators, fellow teachers, and Teach For America alumni for support and guidance. Corps members are hired directly by the school district, and many complete state credentialing programs during their two years of service.

Roosevelt is an extremely overcrowded school, with an annual teacher retention rate of 60 percent. The student body is 50 percent Asian, 25 percent Latino, and 25 percent African American. Located in a rough area notorious for drug use, the school is plagued by gangs. My students are nonnative English speakers; they speak 10 languages, including Cambodian, Vietnamese, Spanish, Arabic, and Cantonese. Many of my students are recent immigrants, and I am expected to teach them conversational and written English as well as the sixth-grade social studies state-mandated curriculum.

Although I had been told before I began my Teach For America commitment that I was about to experience a harsher reality than anything I had previously known, I nonetheless believed that teaching was a 9-to-3 job, that I could leave my work at school and keep my personal and professional spheres totally separate. I believed that I could bring my students into my classroom, shut the door, and leave all of the problems of the inner-city community at the doorstep. I believed that I could instill the love of learning in my students, and somehow forget all the turmoil they faced in their lives outside school.

I believed that my passion and enthusiasm for my children and for teaching would never diminish. I vowed that I would stay positive and avoid the disillusionment that so many teachers feel. I would go into my classroom every day demonstrating the same energy and passion I started with in September. It wouldn’t matter if it was a gloomy Thursday afternoon in late October, or if I had been battling the flu for the previous two weeks. I believed that I would never become the “worksheet teacher.” Rather than slide grammar worksheets under my students’ noses, I would have them build the Pyramids out of sugar cubes. I set high expectations not only for my students, but for myself as well.

In one swift move, I graduated from college, packed my belongings, and drove cross-country to start life anew in an entirely unfamiliar environment without the comforts of family, friends, and home. I remember thinking at first how exciting all this was—relocating, getting my first real job, and having the responsibilities of adult life. It was a whirlwind of adventure, embarking on a new chapter in my life.

But by early November, the excitement had worn off, and the reality had begun to sink in. I was in a new city, far from my home, from roots to my past. Maintaining a positive learning environment in an otherwise depressing place was an endless challenge—the constant planning, the discipline, the paperwork, the headaches of the district bureaucracy. I felt underappreciated by my administrators and abused by my stu-



dents. I would come home from school, sit on my couch, and think, "I can't go back tomorrow." I felt drained. And gradually I felt I was letting my students down, as though nothing I was doing in my classroom would ever be enough to make life fair for them. I was becoming the worksheet teacher that I had sworn I would never be. I felt I had lost myself in this process of trying to serve my students. I started asking the really hard questions, about myself, my life, and my commitment.

Often I feel that Teach For America is too eager to dismiss the frustrations we teachers inevitably feel about our lives and our jobs. It sometimes seems as if I am just supposed to grin and bear it through two years, until finally I can reflect on my experience and say, "That was an impossibly difficult experience, but I am a richer person because of it."

Given the passion and dedication of most corps members, it seems taboo to question your commitment to Teach For America and to your students, but in fact, I question my commitment almost every day. I have a vivid memory of calling my best friend, also a '99 corps member, who was in Compton, to ask, "Will you quit with me?" At first I thought that doubting my commitment made me a bad person, and that some omniscient Teach For America presence was frowning down on me. In fact, maybe all this questioning of my commitment is actually a positive force that makes me push to achieve more in my classroom.

When I went home for the winter



Molly Ness

break, I didn't know what to tell my friends and family about my Teach For America experience thus far. Should I tell them how I teach 127 students who speak little to no English? Should I tell them how there are never enough markers, or scissors, or even textbooks to go around? Should I tell them that my school has no heat or that we have no nurse? Or maybe I should tell them about my 13-year-old student who cannot spell "dog" because he is a victim of social promotion? Should I tell about how I had a student dragged out of my classroom, in handcuffs, by the Oakland city police? Or maybe I should tell about the time when I decided to call home to talk to Damon's mother about how he swore in my classroom. I assumed that I was being a concerned, nurturing teacher. Instead I discovered that Damon and his mother were in hiding from his father, who had recently tried to murder his mother.

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**Given the passion and dedication of most corps members, it seems taboo to question your commitment to Teach For America and to your students, but in fact I question my commitment almost every day.**

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I slowly realized that any platitudes I would provide would be out of place, and simply untrue. I could barely make sense of the tension of opposites I felt in my life: Did I want to quit, or did I want to devote all of my life and energy to the Teach For America vision?

I began to reflect on my initial impressions of teaching. I remembered feeling overwhelmed upon first entering my classroom. Where did I even begin to teach these children English and social studies? More important, how could I teach them that education would be their way out of poverty and into successful and meaningful futures? How could I teach them to be upstanding citizens and to practice civility in their everyday lives? How could I teach them conflict resolution, responsibility, and self-respect? When I told my father about my worries, he said, "Do your best. You have been handed an impossible situation. All that anybody can ask you to do is your best. Don't beat yourself up over what you cannot accomplish."

The problem is, however, that far too many of our nation's children go to overcrowded schools like mine that cannot provide adequate materials, instruction, or attention. They will receive a sub-par education, which seems to mandate that a cycle of poverty will not soon be broken. And too many teachers are thrown into their classrooms with meager tangible support. Teachers do not receive enough concrete incentives to make teaching a lifelong profession. Our best teachers are often lost before they even start to achieve success in the classroom. It is no secret that teachers are overworked, underpaid, and underappreciated; I am living proof of that.

Lately, I have struggled to make sense of the lessons that I have learned thus far. Here they are:

1. I have learned more about the world in my few months of teaching than I did in four semesters of college.

2. I have learned that children are unbelievably resilient. My students face immeasurable challenges, and tackle them with the courage, grace, and strength that some adults fail to demonstrate.

3. I have learned that many people in the world today would rather ignore school districts like Oakland than to try to solve the problems.

4. I have learned that it is rather easy to be idealistic in thoughts and words, but much harder to keep that idealism in actions and in everyday life. In other words, I have learned the meaning of humility.

5. I have realized that prior to my teaching experience, I had lived a sheltered life. I had always thought that I did my part to make noble contributions to society, but I now realize that those efforts were far too sporadic and minimal.

6. I have realized that too few people in our society today devote their lives to making this world a little better than they found it.

7. And I have learned that although I am only one person, my power as a teacher will extend further than I could have ever guessed.

**Editor's note:** Molly Ness plans to return to Roosevelt next year but has not yet decided whether to teach sixth grade again or to follow her students up to seventh grade "in order to provide some stability for these children, who have very little of it at home."



# Letters to the Editor

## Presidential Evaluator's Musings

Reading "Musings of a Presidential Evaluator" by Alonzo L. Hamby (Winter 1999–2000) was enlightening, especially since the results of the presidential evaluation were released only days prior to the arrival of the *Key Reporter*. Professor Hamby's "musings" gave more depth to the straight listing reported by the popular media. And he certainly proved to my satisfaction that he was an appropriate choice for this evaluation.

However, in discussing the success of presidents in the "equal justice for all" category, he downgraded Lincoln for "affirm[ing] freedom and opportunity but never align[ing] himself with the goal of equality of wealth." And why should Lincoln have considered "equality of wealth" if he affirmed freedom and opportunity? We are each promised "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness." The freedom to *pursue* happiness allows each of us to determine how successful—and wealthy—we become (conceding suitable minimum governmental supports). We have never, to my knowledge in this country, been promised "equality of wealth," other than by the American Communist and Socialist parties, which do not garner widespread acceptance.

Was Professor Hamby inserting another level of interpretation into the evaluation: the personal views on society of the expert evaluators?

*Robert G. LeMay, Downers Grove, Ill.*

## Alonzo Hamby responds:

Sheathe your indignation, Mr. LeMay! How could I downgrade a president I rank as one of the three best ever and describe as "America's greatest moral statesman"? My purpose was simply to show that the past was a different world in which assumptions widely held in today's contemporary discourse were not present. The issue you raise about the nature of "rights" is an important and difficult one that philosophers have grappled with at least since Aristotle. Even a scholar impetuous enough to rank all the presidents should be wary of it.

My own outlook, which you rightly believe influenced my evaluations, is that people should enjoy some sort of right to opportunity and that governments can do useful things to secure it. If you believe that efforts to secure absolute equality of

condition have a tendency to result in totalitarian anti-utopias, I think (after careful consultation with the shades of Lenin, Stalin, and Mao) that you are on to something.

Your Winter 1999–2000 issue is most informative and intellectually stimulating. The book reviews were also very interesting. I particularly enjoyed Professor Hamby's article about the U.S. Presidents—most appropriate for the presidential holiday weekend. I think it would interest many of us to learn which colleges elected our U.S. Presidents as members of Phi Beta Kappa. Could you publish this information in a future issue?

*Marcia Maylatt Smith Fleming, Washington D.C.*

**Members in course:** John Quincy Adams and Theodore Roosevelt, Harvard University; Chester A. Arthur, Union College; William Howard Taft and George H. W. Bush, Yale University; and Bill Clinton, Georgetown University.

**Honorary or alumni members:** Martin Van Buren, Union College; Franklin Pierce, Bowdoin College; Rutherford B. Hayes, Kenyon College; James A. Garfield, Williams College; Grover Cleveland, Princeton University; Woodrow Wilson, Wesleyan University; Calvin Coolidge, Amherst College; Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harvard University; Harry S. Truman, University of Missouri; Dwight D. Eisenhower, Columbia University; and Jimmy Carter, Kansas State University.

Eleanor Roosevelt was elected to honorary membership by the Radcliffe College chapter (1941).

I must say that I was surprised, in a way, that Bill Clinton is a member of this distinguished body. It is not surprising, given his sharp mind; however, in view of the obvious fact that he has a serious moral and ethical deficit, I must declare that I am not proud to be associated with him (even though distantly) through the medium of membership in Phi Beta Kappa. Is there any way his membership can be revoked, in regard to his blatant lying to the entire country? If I lied or cheated to get into Phi Beta Kappa and this were later revealed, would I be removed from membership? If I were

otherwise found so morally deficient, would my membership be revoked? For what do we stand, besides high scholarship in the "liberal arts"?

*Robert O. Gamble, Port Royal, S.C.*

**Editor's note:** Wasn't it the Harvard Club that, in the Depression, posted the sign "Members are advised not to play cards with other members"?

## 'Life Outside Academe'

Thank you for the "Life Outside Academe" feature. I was particularly interested in and inspired by the interview with Shipley Walters (Winter 1999–2000). I have been in academia all my life and have found it difficult to appreciate a role for Phi Beta Kappa in the rest of our culture. The insight I have gained by reading these articles has reinforced my commitment to educating young people in the liberal arts and sciences.

*Loretta Parsons, Saratoga Springs, N.Y.*

## The Neighborhood Key Connection

As I scan your regular feature about multigeneration Phi Beta Kappa families, I am reminded that multiples can pop up in other contexts as well. I recently received an unexpected call from a former longtime neighbor who began reminiscing about our first get-acquainted chat at my back fence when our children were small. She excitedly went on to recall how surprised we were to discover that two of us on the same block of a small Pennsylvania town had Phi Beta membership in common, at Smith and at Gettysburg. Later on, a student in another family on our block was elected to Phi Beta Kappa at Lehigh. Not bad for one very short block, we thought.

Our neighborhood "key" connection may not rank up there with the multigeneration feat, but it seemed unusual to us. Perhaps it happens more often than we think, but we just don't know who the "key" players are. I must add that I am always glad to see the *Key Reporter* in my mailbox. It has evolved into an excellent publication. One of my favorite sections is "Life Outside Academe."

*Phyllis Berger Byrne, North Wales, Penna.*

## More Key Stories

I so enjoyed reading the letters about members' experiences in being elected to Phi Beta Kappa that I thought my experience as a 1951 transfer student from San Diego State College to George Washington University might interest readers.

As I had done well academically at both schools, I was disappointed to learn that



I was not elected to Phi Beta Kappa shortly before graduation in the spring of 1953. Gingerly I went to my international law professor, who advised me to check with the registrar's office. There I was stunned to find out that my A's at San Diego State were credited only as B's at GWU, because the former had a grading system in which 3.0 stood for an A while GWU had a system in which 4.0 stood for an A. The registrar's office suggested I bring this problem to the attention of the president of the ΦBK chapter at GWU. The chapter president sympathized but said I would have to wait until the next January for another election to be held and that I would have to be present at the initiation ceremony.

I explained to my professor that because I was scheduled for summer Reserve Officer Candidate School in the Navy, an ensign's commission, and sea duty, I could not possibly be back at GWU in January. In fact, I said that for all I knew, I might be in Trieste in January, because Tito was at that time threatening the Italian-claimed port city on the Adriatic. My professor, with others, insisted on a special election for the purpose of electing me to Phi Beta Kappa. At the initiation ceremony, I gratefully accepted my key.

By the way, I was in Trieste the next January, but by then the crisis was essentially over.

*Hugh W. Olds Jr., Alexandria, Va.*

In the spring of 1945, I graduated from the University of Georgia, was elected to Phi Beta Kappa, and got married to an airman stationed at Bolling Air Force Base in Washington. When V-J Day arrived in August, we decided to take a bus into downtown Washington and join in the celebration. We managed to get seats, but the bus soon became crowded, with people standing in the aisles. I noticed that a man standing near us had a ΦBK key dangling from a watch fob in his pants pocket. I had just recently received my key, and I excitedly nudged my husband, pointing to the man's key. Just then the man turned his head, saw me, looked worried, and immediately clapped his hand over his pocket. We assumed he thought we were pickpockets.

The noise on the bus was deafening—everyone on the bus was yelling or blowing horns—and so it was impossible to explain anything. The man kept his hand over his pocket all the way downtown, and then quickly got off.

It has occurred to me that the man may, like me, be still around. He may even read this letter. If so, I want to offer him my tardy but sincere apology for causing

him discomfort on that memorable evening in August 1945.

*Molly Baldwin Silliman, Tempe, Ariz.*

I did not get my Phi Beta Kappa key at the same time I got membership in the Society (at the University of Utah, 1967) because Phi Kappa Phi got to me first. I knew nothing of Phi Kappa Phi, but happily paid the \$30 fee for a certificate and key and went to the initiation dinner.

Several weeks later I got a similar invitation from Phi Beta Kappa. I was delighted to join—I had known about Phi Beta Kappa all along—but I didn't have the money for another key. Some months passed before my mother learned about this sequence of events, and she was so determined I should have the ΦBK key that she immediately ordered one for me. I don't wear my key often. I work in a university, but one without a ΦBK chapter. But there are occasions, such as off-campus professional meetings, when I decide to get it out.

*Nancy Gillpatrick Cross, Hamframck, Mich.*

Reading about your member who didn't wear her key on the subway for fear of losing it [*Key Reporter*, Autumn 1999] reminded me of a story my parents told me when I earned my key. They showed me their keys and I noticed that my father had two, one small and one large. He said that, like my mother, he had ordered a small one, which he wore frequently. Many years later he was surprised to receive a large one in the mail. With it was a note saying that Phi Beta Kappa was happy to return his "lost" key. We assume that some nonmember had wanted to impress people by wearing a key and because each key must be engraved with a name, the nonmember had simply chosen a name at random from the

lists. When he lost the key, however, it was returned to the person whose name was engraved on the back.

By the way, I too wear my key when I need that extra bit of self-assurance.

*Margaret M. Cabill, Saxonburg, Penna.*

## A Challenge to Nonacademic Phi Betes

On January 29, 20 members of the Washington, D.C., area association met in my home to discuss the future of Phi Beta Kappa in an era when education is changing faster than we can fathom. Anthony McIvor from the national office and our member Ruth Knee agreed to guide the discussion.

We are concerned about the reports of the decline of liberal arts education and believe that this challenge must be met head on as soon as possible. Only about 5 percent of Phi Betes work in an academic environment, and they see first hand the erosion of liberal arts on many campuses. My question is addressed to the 95 percent of Phi Betes nationwide who do not work in an academic setting: How can we use the rapidly expanding information technology to help young people be productive and dynamic participants in the work force while providing them with the lifelong benefits of a liberal arts education?

As Phi Beta Kappa's triennial Council approaches (October 19-22), ΦBK associations and other Phi Betes outside academe should begin thinking about the long-range impact of information technology on liberal arts education. I encourage you to communicate your thoughts to the Society.

*Christel G. McDonald, president, D.C. area ΦBK association, Arlington, Va.*



*Members of the Washington, D.C., area ΦBK association who gathered for a discussion of whither Phi Beta Kappa and the liberal arts in January.*



# RECOMMENDED READING

BOOK COMMITTEE

**Humanities:** Svetlana Alpers, Michael Griffith,  
Robert P. Sonkowsky, Eugen Weber

**Social Sciences:** Thomas McNaugher, Josephine Pacheco,  
Anna J. Schwartz, Larry J. Zimmerman

**Natural Sciences:** Jay M. Pasachoff, Russell B. Stevens

## Eugen Weber

**Tosca's Rome: The Play and the Opera in Historical Perspective.** Susan Vandiver Nicassio. Univ. of Chicago, 1999. \$45.

*Tosca*, writes Nicassio in her preface to *Tosca's Rome*, is a portmanteau of cultural icons. Her book unpacks the icons and puts them in the contemporary and historical perspective promised in its subtitle, while a running commentary lays out what the city was like in 1800, the date of the opera's action, and in 1900, the date of its first performance. Nicassio also discusses the relationship between Victorien Sardou's 1887 play of that name and Puccini's (re)creation, which replaced most of the original's political references with sentiment and sensationalism spiced by terrific lyrics.

A former opera singer who sang the role of Tosca, Nicassio, now a professor of history, has produced a wonderful combination of opera lover's guide to Rome, history lover's guide to the real world circumstances of 1800 and 1900, and a damned good read.

**Divine Expectations: An American Woman in 19th Century Palestine.** Barbara Kreiger with Shalom Goldman. Univ. of Ohio, 1999. \$39.95; paper, \$16.95.

In the early 1840s, thousands of Americans heard William Miller announce the imminent advent of Christ. In 1844 Miller's prophecies failed, and sent his humiliated followers into an emotional tailspin. Clorinda Strong Minor, wife of a Philadelphia businessman, was one of the millennialists who emerged from this spiritual crisis determined to prepare for an event that would come in God's good time, and to speed it a little, not in America but in Palestine, by redeeming not only the Jews but also their land. The small agricultural settlement that she and her followers established in the 1850s, where Christians, Jews, and Muslims worked side by side, did little to hasten the restoration of the Jews, let alone their conversion, which was supposed to usher in the millennial reign of Christ. It

did, however, introduce the wheelbarrow, the first wheeled agricultural tool that Palestine had seen since Roman days, and the American pitchfork—"a boon during wheat harvest." And it hastened the appointment of an American consul in Jerusalem. One of Mrs. Minor's protégés, the son of friendly Lutheran farmers, the Grossteinbecks, would live to be the grandfather of John Steinbeck, the writer.

Mrs. Minor died of dysentery in 1855, at age 46, and her small farming colony near Jaffa soon died too. But the pioneering work of this "crazy woman" has been recognized as a contribution to Jewish agricultural settlement that began in the 1870s, and claimed as a catalyst for Zionism as well. Kreiger and Goldman's unassuming but fascinating account of obscure doings in faraway places is a tribute to a very American woman's passion and practicality in the service of religious commitment.

**Antichrist: Two Thousand Years of the Human Fascination with Evil.** Bernard McGinn. Columbia Univ., 2000. \$16.50.

The Son of Belial used to hold center stage; now he lurks timidly in the wings. No wonder he's shrunk, when Satan is dead, and one of Satan's obituaries (by Andrew Delbanco) has rightly deplored our culture's loss of symbolic language fit to describe the evil we experience all around. There's no awe left, only interpretation, which becomes explanation. Myth declines into motive, and motive to excuse. Wickedness is psychologized, sociologized, rationalized, infantilized into exculpation. The Man of Perdition is part of this lost symbolism, but the potent figuration of a vigorous force will not go away however much we banalize it.

Banalize and trivialize we do; and despite past decades chockful of speculations about end times, there has been little mention (fundamentalist fiction and market checkout-counter tabloids excepted) of that crucial participant in the scenario of a Second Coming: Antichrist. Omnipresent in traditional Christian discourse until the 18th century and sporadically since then, the Man of Sin, the

Great Denier, has practically dropped off the screen.

McGinn's study recalls his relevance, not just in the past but in our time too, as an indispensable contributor to that great dichotomy under which we labor: the conflict of good and evil. Until McGinn came along, there was no overarching modern survey of this crucial trope: of Antichrist's story(ies); of the role(s) assigned to his figure in history; of his personification of, and the questions raised by, the power of the evil that he represents in a world allegedly made and ruled by God; of the symbolic implications of a figure that stands for Antigood, Antitruith, and ultimate Deception.

No one in our day has delved more deeply into the subject, and no one knows more about it, than McGinn. He has written a lot on the theme, but this is his most compendious short book. It is clear but not easy, engrossing in its ramifications, challenging in its speculations, admirable in thoroughness and plain speaking, and well worth pondering.

## Svetlana Alpers

**Venetian Colour: Marble, Mosaic, Painting and Glass, 1250–1550.** Paul Hills. Yale, 1999. \$55.

Our experience of color is powerful but elusive, tricky to explain and difficult to describe. Renaissance painters and the academies of art that followed put the teaching of it second to the teaching of drawing. Things are visibly known to us, it was rightly assumed, by their firm edges, not by their shifting tints. In the history of European art, Venice is the fabled exception to this view. It was there, in a trading center with old ties to Byzantium, that a series of painters—from Bellini to Titian, to Tintoretto and Veronese—made color a primary interest of their art.

Hills, the author of a remarkable book on the depiction of light in 15th-century Italian painting, has now turned his attention to the phenomenon of color in Venice—phenomena in the plural, really, because he argues for an expansive view. The book takes in everything from the colors of the reflecting waters of the lagoon to the marble of walls, floors, and columns; the patterned tesserae of mosaics; the glass blown in Murano; and all manner of fine fabrics. An interesting section is devoted to the depiction of clothing that is black.

It pays to turn the pages and look through slowly before starting to read. The illustrations, superb in quality and subtle in their arrangement, convey much of the story. Different details of



certain pictures turn up here and there to reinforce the lesson of slow looking. One need not accept all the connections the text proposes between these paintings and this particular society to find the visual juxtapositions convincing: Veronese's painted columns and his painted drapery, columnar in form, juxtaposed with San Marco's real columns, and, more surprising, the curious swirling forms of a Bellini landscape echoing the brown swirls of molten glass in a Murano goblet.

But despite all the material riches of Venice that are on display in the book, it is the color of the paintings that, through illustration and analysis, is made to stand out.

**The Quest for Reality: Subjectivism and the Metaphysics of Colour.** Barry Stroud. Oxford, 1999. \$29.95.

This philosophical essay sets out to dispute the notion that color, because subjectively intuited, is a secondary phenomenon. Like so many books these days, it has a dust jacket that sports an eye-catching painting, in this case a striking *Still-Life with Lemons* by the Spaniard Zurbaran. Neither the painting nor color as such is addressed directly here. But it is the argument of the book that our perception that lemons are yellow has no less reality than does our knowledge of (supposedly) primary qualities dealt with by science, like quarks or the force of gravity.

But color gives Stroud the opportunity to pursue a deeper question: Is there indeed a metaphysical reality prior to our experience of anything? Is the color of lemons any different in this respect from their shape? Perception cannot be prior to thought as Locke, for example, thought, because there is nothing for us outside our propositional thought. It follows that philosophy's quest for a reality that is independent of our understanding of it is problematic indeed. But Stroud defends that quest with the suggestion that human beings aspire to something that finds its expression in philosophy's quest.

This "verbal take" addressed to color offers pleasure that is very different from the visual pleasures of Venice. Many writers are intoxicated with the advantages of blurring boundaries between intellectual disciplines. It is bracing, therefore, to attend to a careful argument made in specialist terms.

**Art Subjects: Making Artists in the American University.** Howard Singerman. Univ. of California, 1999. \$19.95.

This book is odd, but interesting. It seeks to connect something about American art today to the institutional fact that

colleges and universities give degrees in studio art and that many practicing artists in the United States go that route.

The book starts with a problem: The author introduces himself as a master of fine arts in sculpture who has none of the traditional skills of the sculptor—he cannot carve, cast, or weld. He was taught, instead, to think about art. How did this happen? (Singerman is in fact described on the jacket as a professor of art history.)

Many of his findings are interesting. We learn of the explosion in college-taught artists from 60 graduate candidates studying art at 11 institutions at the beginning of the 1940s to the 10,000 M.F.A. degrees awarded between 1990 and 1995. We are reminded of the important 1956 report on the visual arts at Harvard, and learn of the specifically American taste for and transformation of Bauhaus notions of art and its making. The American suspicion of the lone artist in the studio has its roots here, predating Warhol's factory organization. An unstated theme is the institutional problem of training outstanding artists in a democracy.

Singerman's major conclusion about the nature of the art produced by university-trained artists turns out to have been in place from the start—that the kind of postmodern art that has been so successful in America is a result of the American

university training system he is analyzing. But then it might just be true. Maybe the regime of viewing as defined in the writing of Jonathan Crary, the grid of the artwork defined in the writings of Rosalind Krauss, and the theatricality defined and attacked in the writings of Michael Fried are professorial products that suited the new academic artist.

**Girl with a Pearl Earring.** Tracy Chevalier. Dutton, 1999. \$21.95.


It is fun to have a novel turn up among the art books one might review. The genre is not new. Many novels, particularly in the 19th century, have been written about the lives of artists. Simon Schamas's recent book on Rembrandt might be described, at least in part, as a flirtation with the genre. And the late Joseph Heller wrote a curious novel of the life through time of Rembrandt's painting of *Aristotle* imagined as itself a person.

But Vermeer, notoriously elusive in art and in life, presents special problems. Chevalier has written a novel in the first person from the point of view of the young maidservant whom she posits as the sitter for the painting commonly known as *Girl with a Pearl Earring*.

The author has done her homework: We are in mid-17th-century Delft, with its

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## RECOMMENDED READING

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dominant Protestants (the maid's confession) and its Catholics (the faith Vermeer probably converted to on marriage), its canals, its markets, its social practices. Chevalier takes full advantage of recent archival discoveries about the Vermeer household. The scenario includes a rich, art-owning mother-in-law in whose house the artist, his wife, and their 11 children lived; a devoted older maid who fended off an attack made on Vermeer's pregnant wife by her crazed brother; and a devoted collector who apparently contracted to buy most of Vermeer's small output.

For anyone familiar with Vermeer's paintings, a great attraction of the book is to anticipate and then to follow how the author explains their features. One is familiar with the settings, the placing of windows, the tables, the jugs, the musical instruments, the maps, the depicted people. But what were they really like and how did they get into the pictures? And

finally, how did that girl with the poignant face, her head draped with a distinctive turban, her ear bearing the weight of a splendid pearl, come to turn and look out in the way that she does at the painter?

### Anna J. Schwartz

**Globalization and History: the Evolution of a Nineteenth-Century Atlantic Economy.** Kevin H. O'Rourke and Jeffrey G. Williamson. MIT, 1999. \$45.

This study of an earlier example of globalization resonates with applications to current events. It demonstrates that the expansion of international trade, the relative size of international flows of capital, and the migration of people then surpassed these features of globalization since World War II.

A particular interest of the authors is the extent to which worldwide living standards converge. They attribute an impressive convergence in the late 19th century (between poor countries on the European periphery and rich countries in

the European center and in the New World) to open-economy forces of trade and mass migration. Convergence, however, stopped between 1914 and 1950 because of deglobalization.

In the authors' view, the earlier era of globalization planted the seeds of its own destruction because of its effects on the distribution of income, which created a political backlash. In Europe, cheap New World and Ukrainian grain threatened agricultural incomes. In the New World, mass migration from Europe threatened workers' living standards, and European manufactured exports threatened New World infant industries. The political response included European tariffs on New World agricultural exports—the British, Irish, and Danish, however, persisted in keeping free trade in agriculture—and New World escalation of immigration restrictions as well as imposition of protective tariffs on manufactures. In the late 20th century, poor countries have been catching up with the rich, but the authors caution that globalization once again may destroy itself if a political backlash devel-



## More Multigeneration Phi Beta Kappa Families



*(People who have reported having at least three members of Phi Beta Kappa in their family. Note that, because of a substantial backlog, it may take up to two years between receipt of this information and its publication.)*

Four siblings, three at the University of Washington: George Iverson Jr., 1952; Alice Irene Iverson Percival, 1962; and Helen Iverson Carter, 1975; and Mary June Iverson, University of Colorado, 1961; plus Helen's daughter, Laurie Jeanne Carter, University of Washington, 1981.

Two brothers: David Wesley Gast, Carleton College, 1968, and Richard Duncan Gast, Cornell College, 1970; and David's son, Matthew Stuart Gast, Grinnell College, 1997.

Harriet Wilson Burgess, Smith College, 1921; her son, Edward Lincoln Wolf, Swarthmore College, 1958; and Edward's son, Douglas Wakefield Wolf, Stanford University, 1982.

Myron Jacob Luch, Lehigh University, 1902; his daughter, Emily Luch Thorn, Smith College, 1936, and her husband, Ernest Wesley Thorn, Lehigh, 1936; and their grandson, Eric Miller Thorn, Duke University, 1995.

Sandra Legler Tucker, Wellesley College, 1957, and her brother, Mitchell W. Legler, University of North Carolina, 1964; Sandra's children: Wendy C. Tucker, Brown University, 1980, Peter T. Tucker, Duke University, 1981, and Susan C. Tucker, Colgate University, 1983; and the children's paternal grandfather, William E. Tucker, Dartmouth College, 1910.

Nancy Allison Benner, Duke University, 1967, and her children: Aaron Robinson Benner, Gettysburg College, 1990, and Ann Collins Benner, Duke, 1995.

Wilbur Helm, DePauw University, 1899; his children: Stanford Helm, Princeton University, 1931, and Marjorie Helm Swigert, Northwestern University, 1937; and Marjorie's son, Stevenson Helm Swigert, Harvard University, 1963.

Frieda Faiman Eisenberg, Goucher College, 1945; her children: Jonathan Eisenberg, Johns Hopkins University, 1971, and

Ann Eisenberg Shinnar, Goucher, 1974; and Ann's husband, Meir Shinnar, Columbia University, 1974.

Paula Schlesinger and her brother-in-law, Joseph Schlesinger, University of California, Los Angeles, 1974 and 1976; and their niece, Alisa Schlesinger, University of Pennsylvania, 1998.

Arthur Gregg Singer and his brother, Charles Gregg Singer, Haverford College, 1933 and 1943; Charles's daughter, Terri Elizabeth Singer, Agnes Scott College, 1966; and Arthur's children: Margaret Leigh Singer, Emory University, 1987, and Donald Gregg Singer, University of Georgia, 1991.

Polly Anna Philips Harris, Agnes Scott College, 1950; and her sons: David J. Harris Jr. and Frank P. Harris, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1974 and 1977.

Randolph McGuire Bulgin, Davidson College, 1953; his wife, Kathleen Koestler, Sweet Briar College, 1959; and their son, Andrew Carmichael Bulgin, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1993.

Michael L. Rosenzweig, University of Pennsylvania, 1961, and his children: Juli Rosenzweig, University of Arizona, 1987, and Ephron Rosenzweig, University of California, Berkeley, 1992.

George Armstrong Wauchope, alumnus member, Washington and Lee University, 1911; his son, Robert Wauchope, University of South Carolina, 1931; Robert's wife, Elizabeth Brown Wauchope, University of North Carolina, 1941; and their children: Elizabeth Wauchope Bainbridge, Stanford University, 1969, and Kenneth Wauchope, Tulane University, 1971; also, Elizabeth Wauchope's father, Benjamin Franklin Brown, Northwestern University, 1905.



ops against its actual or perceived distributional effects.

**The Real Deal: The History and Future of Social Security.** *Sylvester J. Schieber and John B. Shoven. Yale, 1999. \$45; paper, \$18.95.*

By tracing the origins of the long-term financing problems of Social Security to the Amendments to the Act in 1939, when taxes paid by workers failed to cover the costs of the program, this book lays the groundwork for understanding the issues in the current debates for reform. The original problem was compounded in 1972, when a flawed inflation indexing formula was incorporated in calculating benefits. Amendments in 1977 and 1983 that raised payroll taxes and cut benefits were supposed to fix the system's financing problems for the next 75 years. Although this year's tax payroll receipts will exceed benefit outlays by about \$100 billion, forecasts of the system's operations again show the program to be significantly underfunded for future generations of retirees, as the ratio of beneficiaries to workers is projected to rise from the current ratio of one retiree

for every three workers to one retiree for every two workers by 2030.

The authors review in depth past and current deliberations on how to solve a looming shortfall. Differing views on what to do have been expressed over the decades by economists, program staffers, and political figures. The authors offer dramatic accounts of these controversies and the political decisions that ensued before proposing their own reform plan.

**Unpaid Professionals: Commercialism and Conflict in Big-Time College Sports.** *Andrew Zimbalist. Princeton, 1999. \$24.95.*

The purpose of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) is "to maintain intercollegiate athletics as an integral part of the educational program and the athlete as an integral part of the student body and, by doing so, retain a clear line of demarcation between intercollegiate athletics and professional sports." The contradictions between this statement and what is actually happening led the author to add college sports to a seminar on the economics of professional sports that he taught. This book reports his

findings in investigating basketball and football programs at the top 100 schools in Division I of the NCAA. It describes today's commercialized world of big-time college sports, organized through the NCAA as a cartel that subsidizes other college sports. A star big-time athlete brings in \$1 million or more in revenue, of which his compensation ranges from \$10,000 to \$40,000. The rest is distributed to football and basketball coaches, athletic directors, conference commissioners, and "nonrevenue sports"—sports programs other than men's basketball and football grouped in Divisions II and III that incur substantial financial losses. In addition, the college big-time sports industry is awash in billions of dollars that the NCAA collects from the sale of rights to broadcast playoffs. This commercial juggernaut is the setting for innumerable sports scandals involving violations of NCAA rules by individuals and schools.

Zimbalist proposes a 10-point structural reform program attacking the pressures to raise revenue but restoring the integrity of college team athletics, to which millions of Americans are attached.

**Morgan: American Financier.** *Jean Strouse. Random House, 1999. \$34.95.*

This Bancroft Prize-winner, a blockbuster of a biography, should satisfy the most voracious appetite for information about John Pierpont Morgan. The reader not only learns how he became the preeminent American investment banker of his era, with a genius for solving financial crashes—set against the background of the U.S. 19th-century economic development—but also finds a running narrative of his private pursuits. A living legacy of his passion for the acquisition of art, nurtured during his extensive travels abroad, is housed in the Morgan Library, formerly his residence. He was a prominent figure in the founding of cultural institutions as well as of new industrial firms. A gossipy element pervades the author's sketches of family members, friends, mistresses, and professional colleagues. All in all, this is an engaging book.

**Heaven's Door: Immigration Policy and the American Economy.** *George J. Borjas. Princeton, 1999. \$27.95.*

This provocative study of the differences between the First Great Migration from 1880 to 1924 and the Second Great Migration from 1965 to date argues that the United States should adopt an immigration policy that favors skilled workers and a slight reduction in the number of

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As part of its expanded line of membership items, the Society now offers 10-karat gold signet rings in two styles. Each is engraved with the Phi Beta Kappa insignia on the top. The member's initials and year of election are engraved on the inside. The ring gauge shown at the bottom of the box can be cut out and wrapped around the finger you wish to measure. Ring sizers are also available from Hand & Hammer.



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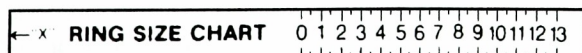
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## RECOMMENDED READING

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immigrants from the nearly 1 million legal and another 300,000 illegal persons who entered each year in the late 1990s.

Borjas, a professor of public policy at the Kennedy School, arrived in this country with his mother in 1962 when he was 11, a refugee from Fidel Castro's Cuba. He notes that his family would not have gained admission under the skills-oriented immigration policy that he advocates. The tone of the book is not defensive even when Borjas rejects alternative interpretations of the evidence he marshals in support of his position.

He builds his case on the precipitous decline in the relative skills of successive immigrant waves in the period since 1965. The waves of immigrants had less schooling than natives, lower starting wages, and lower rates of economic assimilation. He finds that the Second Great Migration had an adverse effect on the economic well-being of less-skilled native workers, natives being defined as U.S. residents whatever the country of their birth. True, other natives gained, principally employers of low-cost, less-skilled immigrants, but Borjas argues that even if there were a net per capita gain in income for the native population, it could be outweighed by the cost of providing social services to immigrants. Moreover, welfare dependence that characterizes a given ethnic environment spills over from one generation to later ones. According to Borjas, geographic concentrations of barrios, ghettos, and enclaves across American cities incubate the intergenerational transmission of social, cul-

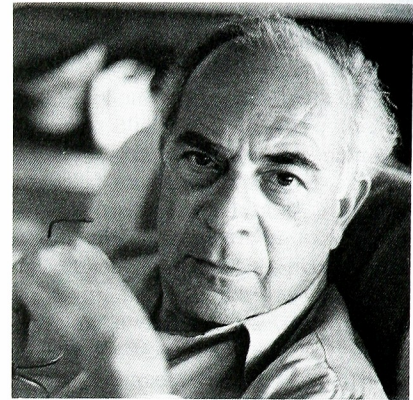
## Frankfurt Delivers Romanell-ΦBK Lectures, Goldman Receives 2000-01 Award

Harry Frankfurt, professor of philosophy at Princeton University and the recipient of the Romanell-Phi Beta Kappa professorship for 1999-2000, presented three lectures at Princeton in March on the theme "Some Thoughts about Norms, Love, and the Goals of Life." The professorship carries a stipend of \$7,500 and a responsibility to deliver a series of lectures at the recipient's home institution. Endowed by a donation from Patrick and Edna Romanell in 1984, the professorship recognizes both distinguished achievement and potential contributions to the public understanding of philosophy.

Alvin I. Goldman (ΦBK, Columbia University, 1960), Regents Professor of Philosophy at the University of Arizona, has been named the Romanell-Phi Beta Kappa Professor of Philosophy for 2000-01.

tural, and economic ties, leading to ethnic segregation.

This is the case that Borjas builds to support his proposal that the United States should institute a skills-based point system that rewards certain socioeconomic factors in the immigration admissions formula, such as age at the time of entry, educational attainment, experience, occupation, and a measure of English proficiency. ■



Harry Frankfurt

## Used Books Requested For Chinese Universities

The Bridge to Asia nonprofit organization has invited Phi Beta Kappa members to donate their used but still useful textbooks, reference books, and collected journals (10 years' run minimum) for shipment to universities in China. The organization's shipping address is Bridge to Asia, Foreign Trade Services, Pier 23, San Francisco, CA 94111. For further details check its Web site (<http://www.bridge.org>) or telephone Joyce Lee at (415) 356-9041. To help her track ΦBK donations, please put ΦBK after your name on your return address label.

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