University of Chicago Lecturer Wins ΦBK's 1989-90 Sibley Award

Stephanie Anne Nelson, who is working on a dissertation for the Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago, has been awarded Phi Beta Kappa's Sibley Fellowship for the academic year 1989-90. She proposes to examine Hesiod’s vision of farming as the correct or ideal life, the relationship between farming and justice, and Hesiod’s vision of a divinely based natural order.

A 1983 graduate of St. John’s College, Annapolis, the new Sibley fellow is spending the summer in Ireland. She is the 41st winner of the award, which was established with funds bequeathed to Phi Beta Kappa in the will of Isabelle Stone.

Next year, the Sibley Fellowship, which carries a $7,000 stipend, will be offered for studies in French language or literature. Candidates must be unmarried women between 25 and 35 years of age who hold the doctorate or who have fulfilled the requirements for the doctorate except the dissertation. They must be planning to devote full-time work to research during the fellowship year that begins September 1, 1990.

Further information and application forms may be obtained by writing to the Sibley Fellowship Committee, Phi Beta Kappa Society, 1811 Q St., N.W., Washington, DC 20009.

Welcome to New ΦBK Members

With this issue, The Key Reporter welcomes an estimated 12,900 new members of Phi Beta Kappa, selected by 240 chapters nationwide, including the three new chapters approved by the triennial Council last autumn. In 1988, a total of 12,719 new members were selected by 237 chapters.

We hope you will read and enjoy this publication, which you will receive free as long as you keep us informed of your address. We invite your comments as well as change-of-address notices.

A Composer's Challenge
The Educated Person versus the Fine Arts
By Samuel H. Adler

Leonard Bernstein, probably the most noted of all those celebrities who have tried to straddle the fence between the popular and the serious culture, once wrote, “The main function of the artist is to preserve the history of mankind as if it were in a time capsule.” Today we are indeed obsessed with the image of our time and absorbed in guessing what future generations will know and feel about us; yet do we realize our responsibility to build this image so that the future will want to know us?

The American poet William Merwin, in “The River of Bees,” put the matter beautifully: “We are the echo of the future.” Our culture, our civilization, matters greatly in deciding not only the time-capsule content of today, but the kind of world we will bequeath to future generations.

Our educational system is much maligned these days. From the secretary of education up and down we hear statistics about how we are failing and how, if we would only read the basic 50 books of classic Western literature—the number 50 is purely hypothetical—we would all be better educated and hence better prepared for life.

Education is our greatest and most successful export. . .
We can train anyone to do anything and to be anybody.

Then come the critics of this plan who suggest that these basic 50 books should include more books by women, more by minorities, more on non-Western subjects. And then the argument extends to how much scientific knowledge the average educated person should have, how many artistic names that person should recognize, and so on. I hope you have all played the Cultural Trivia game in E. D. Hirsch’s Cultural Literacy. It’s fun, but does a high score prove that one is educated or cultured, or does it show only what a good memory a person possesses?

Without in the least minimizing the seriousness of this subject or belittling the equally sincere solutions offered by many people who are more qualified than I to pass judgment on how to educate our nation more effectively, I want to suggest here another solution to this problem.

I believe that our expert educators, by being so negative about our current educational system and so certain that their solutions are foolproof, are missing the point of the discussion, which is, how can education create a whole person—one whose education will not only open the door to a trade or profession but also nurture growth throughout the person’s life?

I think American colleges are the most effective educational institutions ever imagined. Education is our greatest and most successful export. Now that our manufacturing capabilities have passed their peak, our service industry, led by

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take you and make you obsolete. Then when you do have some leisure time, join a health club, watch a mindless show on television, and do not forget to take an aspirin every day. When you have reached the apex of your profession, you will have time to attend to your cultural and spiritual needs—these are frills you cannot bother with until you have reached your professional goal.

At the end of the 18th century, John Adams wrote to his wife, Abigail, “I must study politics and war, that my sons may have liberty to study mathematics and philosophy, geography, natural history and law, Navigation, commerce, and agriculture, in order to give their children a right to study painting, poetry, music, architecture, statuary, tapestry, and porcelain.” Unfortunately, this letter backfired and has become an edict for America for at least 200 years now: one step at a time. But the fallacy is that we get stuck for a long time on each step and never progress to those subjects Adams would like to have had his grandchildren study. It is high time we began to cultivate the arts, which are not yet recognized as the last of our three inalienable rights.

People used to grow out of the state of puberty, and, although students listened to and enjoyed pop music in college, neither the better ballads nor the great pop singers became subjects of college courses.

Instead of moving toward Adams’s goal, we are being increasingly deflected from it, for we are living in the most anti-intellectual, anticultural age since this country was founded. The less “intellectual” a political candidate sounds, the more he is trusted. Sad? No, disastrous. Today, living in the most complex age in human history, we look for easy, old-fashioned answers to subjects and situations that are beyond our experience.

It is not surprising, then, that even our educated classes are, for the most part, anticultural or antiartistic, because we have learned how to deal with the real, the obvious, and the materialistic in life but we are scared to death of the abstract, the metaphorical, and the enigmatic. We therefore have embraced a culture that does not demand an “in-depth encounter with it or ourselves,” as Rollo May describes it—a culture that we can justify as being relevant and democratic, meaning it speaks easily to all people about things they can understand and can relate to without too much effort—in other words, popular culture.

In my own field, music, for instance, we have created a colossus. Let me quote Alan Bloom, in that controversial book, The Closing of the American Mind, on the subject:

Nothing is more singular about this generation than its addiction to music. Today, a very large proportion of young people between the ages of 10 and 20 live for music. It is their passion; nothing else excites as it does; they cannot take seriously anything alien to music. When they are at school or with their families, they are longing to plug themselves back into their music. The power of music in the souls—described to Jessica marvelously by Lorenzo in the Merchant of Venice—has been recovered after a long period of desuetude. And it is rock music alone. Classical music and any kind of variant from rock music is generally dead among these young people.

This addiction to pop music unites our young people, the educated and the uneducated. Milton Babbitt, the great American composer and pedagogue, once said:

For 40 years I have taught in one of our most prestigious institutions of higher learning [Princeton University]. I have taught courses in Baroque, Classical, Romantic, as well as 20th century music. My students were brilliant; they did all the listening assignments; wrote excellent papers; scored high grades on their examinations; but what bothers me is that when they went home and had a choice of what music they wanted to hear, they listened to the same music as the street cleaner, the garbage collector, or anyone else who never had a chance to acquire higher education.

In the famous passage on music education in The Republic, Plato said, “When judging a civilization, mark its music.” He also taught, “What’s honored in a country, that is cultivated.”

Now, before I am accused of being un-American and anti-rock music, let me say that I confess popular music today possibly better than, but certainly as good and as entertaining as, popular music in any previous era. The ballads popularized by Frank Sinatra and Doris Day were no more intellectual or cerebrally stimulating—maybe even less so—than the songs of the Beatles, and, God forbid, the Grateful Dead.

But people used to grow out of the state of puberty and, although students listened to and enjoyed pop music in college, neither the better ballads nor the great pop singers became subjects of college courses. Nor did the songs or their singers demand serious discussions about their revolutionary capabilities to change the world to a zombie culture, insensitive or
desensitized, oblivious to the inner self—which certainly demands something else to improve its quality of life. As Mel Powell, the West Coast composer and jazz pianist, said, “It is reprehensible to call the unadorned colloquial, sacred.”

This, then, is the point at which education has failed to teach people to differentiate between a healthy, enjoyable, sensuous, limited artistic experience and a life-changing one. The aftermath of the 1960s is still too much with us. The younger generation is afraid to grow old gracefully, and therefore has accepted as gospel everything it feels is young, energetic, overtly sexual in an adolescent way, and, worst of all, immediately accessible to everyone.

Why do we recoil before the serious artistic creations of our time? Why is the mob dictating our sensibilities? Why do educated people surrender, so as not to be caught being different?

There are many reasons, but one overriding one is that this century has been filled with such horror, on the one hand, and such unbelievable miracles, on the other, that most sensitive and knowledgeable people are frankly afraid to take a stand. The only thing we can easily predict is the unpredictability of life. To prognosticate about it is ludicrous, for scientifically, medically, and sociologically, all prophetic visions are mere speculation, and most of them are nonsense.

That is why I believe the answer is for people to steep themselves in the fine arts, for these can provide a life-changing experience. We must no longer be as we were described by Adair Stevenson: “Our Victorian ancestors were embarrassed in the presence of the base. We are embarrassed in the presence of the noble.” Rather, we must strive for deeper and more eternally satisfying experiences in our lives through art. The Greeks had a word for it: oussia, meaning “the really real.”

Man, of all creatures in the world, knows that he is alive. Humankind educates itself so that lives that are bound up with tragedy from birth, as Isak Dinesen said, nonetheless become bearable, even ennobling, through education and the arts.

As we educate ourselves to fulfill our destiny, what we need, as Theodore Roethke wrote in Straw for the Fire, is “more people that specialize in the impossible.” As artists have always done, we must dare for the “not yet.” Robert Kennedy struck a responsive chord with the refrain, “Some men see things as they are and say, why. I dream things that never were and say, why not.”

Artists realize the true value of life because, with the media native to their talent, they try to show how life can be lived to the fullest and its worth constantly appreciated and exploited. The artists’ task seems to be to stir all other human beings not only to exist, but to live all their lives to the utmost as if they had only one more hour to live. The artists do this through three highly developed “is”: imagination, intuition, and ingenuity. (As Norman Cousins, writing in the Saturday Review, put it, “The artist is exquisitely aware of humanity.”) Most people fear or distrust their imaginations; artists, on the contrary, dig deep into their imaginations, call up their intuitive spark, and use their ingenuity to create works of art that will communicate to everyone who joins the artists in the adventure of life.

Through this process, art can put us in touch with the highest, the best, and the most complex within us. It is true that real art cannot reach everyone, but who it can reach is unpredictable. To have an adventure with art takes effort, not only on the artist’s part, but just as creatively on the audience’s, because we must realize what the artist is doing, namely, transforming the commonplace into the sublime with our participation.

Music should reflect life—it should make us feel what life at any given time feels like.

While I was a student at Tanglewood, we had a weekly symposium of student works, with Aaron Copland as the moderator. One day a young woman came to challenge Copland, telling him that she loved “classical music.” She said that when she came home from work each day in New York City, she turned on WQXR and settled down to relax for a half-hour. When the music of Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, or Debussy was played, she said, she had no problems “relaxing and snoozing” for a while. But, she charged, when Aaron Copland’s music was played, she could not relax and her nerves were “frazzled.” Copland responded, “Madam, I did not write these pieces while relaxing and snoozing, and I do not expect you to do that” while listening to them.

Today, the fine arts are often characterized as fossilized. For example, some contemporary composers maintain that the symphony orchestra belongs in a museum. There is much truth in that contention, because of the tremendous cost associated with the orchestra. Its entrepreneurs tell us that they are able to perform only the standard repertory because people do not want to hear new music that they do not understand.

Here I must respectfully but violently disagree. I think our audiences understand our music too well. They are upset by it; it makes them uncomfortable. Well, music should reflect life—it should make us feel what life at any given time feels like. In the latter part of the 20th century, is life altogether pleasant, unproblematical, and uncomplicated? By all means, if you want to be soothed, listen to something you know or listen to pop music, but do not expect serious artists to paint a completely false picture of the world as they perceive it.

I believe that all art, whether it is a play, painting, statue, poem, piece of music, or ballet, is in essence a drama depicting a slice of life. The drama is in the mind of the beholder or listener, of course, and all of us bring our own life experience to every presentation; thus we are engaged on the level of perception we have reached in our lives. I believe, in my music, in plugging listeners straight into the center of things and keeping them there. That is the reason I feel that educated persons can be so beautifully engaged in such a process or, better, such an adventure, for they can bring to it so much “baggage.”

But what is most exciting to an artist is the way children react to great art before we spoil their innocent and exquisite taste with commercialization. Children feel things naturally, intuitively, and their imaginations are not stifled by tradition. Artists have much of the child in them, and an artistic experience can often offer adults a childish glimpse into a complex life. This glimpse illuminates the world, so that the complexity, the enigma, becomes fathomable, because artists must create out of love. In a beautiful essay, “Concerning Landscape,” in Where Silence Reigns, Rainer Maria Rilke wrote about this artistic phenomenon: “The artist’s function is to love the enigma. All art is this: Love, which has been poured out over enigmas—and all works of art are enigmas surrounded, adorned, and enveloped by love.”

It is high time that we reverse the combative stance between education for pragmatic purposes and the arts—in other words, abandon the stance of that horrendous title I chose, “The Educated Person versus the Fine Arts.” I am all too familiar with the charge that the most culturally aware civilization listened to Mozart and read Goethe within earshot of Auschwitz, but I reject the inference that Mozart and Goethe had anything to do with causing the Holocaust. I would never claim that art has the power to influence politics, but the failure to taste great art can impoverish lives. The renowned cellist Piattiorsky once said, “The greatest enemy of art is apathy. An enlightened artistic public will be ennobled when it is shaken out of its apathy and boredom and challenged to confront its higher self.”

Mozart and Goethe were misunderstood, for their message was one of human dignity, universal understanding, and equality. Insensitive persons can use art as an opiate, but people who strive for real communication with eternal and universal values will want to keep their education open-ended, hungrily striving (continued on page 4)

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The Educated Person (continued from page 3)

to expand their knowledge of as much of the world as they can master, and rounding out that knowledge with an intimate savoring of the highest of the arts.

Benedetto Croce reasoned in this way: “Art is the only eternal and concrete reality which man possesses, science being only a succession of hypotheses which replace each other in turn. Humanity or, perhaps better, civilization without art was a slumbering without quickness.”

I am optimistic that there are among us enough who care that we can leave the world in better shape than we found it. So let us take every advantage here to educate ourselves, gilding that never-ending educational process with a love and understanding of the arts, for they encourage the defeat of habit by daring to strive for originality.

Samuel H. Alder, professor of composition at the Eastman School of Music, Rochester University, came to the United States from Germany in 1939. He is the author of Choral Conducting, Sight-Singing, and The Study of Orchestration, and the composer of some 300 works, including six symphonies, four operas, chamber and choral works, and band music. He has just finished a year as a Visiting Scholar for Phi Beta Kappa, during which he visited 12 campuses. This article is adapted from one of his Visiting Scholar presentations.

covering the subjects at the forefront of physics. Ostensibly aimed at scientists and nonscientists, the book will help the former with topics outside their specialties, but the latter might face tough going.


The steam engine seems hopelessly low-tech, boring, and unlikely as a source of scientific literacy, much less profundity, but Atkins leads the reader step by step to understand how it models the inescapable irreversibility of our world. Industrial consequences aside, the intellectual fruit is the Second Law of Thermodynamics, to which changes of all kinds, biological and physical, must conform. Here is a skillful, plain exposition of a topic that need not be taken to be recondite beyond reach. One imagines that C. P. Snow would be pleased.


It was not until 1908 that W. Ostwald, perhaps the most prominent of the chemists of his day, conceded that “we have recently become possessed of experimental evidence of the discrete or grained nature of matter” and “the most cautious scientists [may speak] of the experimental proof of the atomic nature of matter.” The debate over atoms had for aeons been postponed to a “cul de sac” (but for adventurers who escaped history). Yet it is spiritually progressive: St. Columba went to Christianize the Scots, monks with their scriptoria went to eastern Switzerland—candles to glow in Europe’s Dark Ages.

The Green Isle is dotted with the lithic marks of an earlier splendor. In prehistoric times, which gestated them and their ilk; their strenuous yet comfortable settlements, their graves and monuments; implements of early stone, of latter metal, that implement peace and war. No doubt Irish verse, song, and harp sprang from their world.

This book is rich in the facts of the matter, though unadorned in the telling—sparing of interpretation and speculation. Unless it awakens reminiscences, you will probably not curl up with it; but let it stand with magisterial patience on your 10-foot shelf.


Descartes reported that in 1619 he dreamed of his method for “properly guiding the reason in the search of truth in the sciences,” imagining that “all matters which may enter the human mind” are interrelated in the fashion exemplified by geometrical reasoning. The mathematician author parodies his dream with the 17th-century warning by G. B. Vico that mathematics is created in the self-alienation of the human spirit. In a series of first-person essays, they test the ever-growing mathematicization of our culture against these antithetical propositions. Their aim is to develop awareness of our relationship to the mathematics we have created in order “to shield us from the effects of the revolutionary waves of symbols that are about to wash over us.”

Leo W. Count


Eight leading Russian museums have pooled a loan for an exhibition currently touring Los Angeles (May 29–August 25), New York, Houston, Naples, Tatars, Mongols, Caucasoids, Mongoloids, hybrids—peoples inhabiting like great, crustal tectonic plates. The exhibition includes exquisite Scythian goldwork from protohistoric graves, shaman drums, musical string instruments of today, vessels, textiles and garments, a curious large family couch on animal supports, a model of themselves with the photos of this terrestrial ocean, with the yurts, herds, and herders that move upon it, and the stately men and women who pose and look back at you.


Ireland is Europe’s westernmost outlier (Iceland excepted)—a cul de sac (but for adventurers who escaped history). Yet it is spiritually progressive: St. Columba went to Christianize the Scots, monks with their scriptoria went to eastern Switzerland—candles to glow in Europe’s Dark Ages.

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An anthropologist looks at the writing of history: only open-class societies develop historical consciousness; closed-class societies do not. With this far-flung thesis, he author broadly surveys China, India, and Southeast Asia (particularly Burma); the ancient Near East, Egypt, Greece, and Rome; and some of medieval and renaissance Europe. I recommend this survey to your scrutiny be-

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cause it is seminal, although, as of now, I do not buy the author's thesis. The book is broadly researched but not probing. Coincidence cannot substitute for cause and effect. Some of the correlations—Athens/Sparta, Florence/Venice—impress me as forced. Britain is sufficient to dismantle the thesis itself; historicizing the source makes it less from class rigidity. And the author neglects transalpine Europe and Mesoamerica.

The hypothesis is intriguing. Some truth lurks behind it, but what?


Artists and art critics would probably confine themselves to the first three words of the title. But these words span only the latest 0.25 percent of art's and art criticism's life. Art is not Athenian Zeus's forehead. To ask what it has been for during that ascent throws it into the basin along with language and the making of symbols. Apes harbor rudiments of language, symbol coining, art for play's sake. Surely art was a behavior long before it beamed aesthetics. The author steps in as a human ethnologist outfitted with anthropology, psychology, bio-evolution—an aesthetic nonetheless. And Im Anfang war die That.

What has art been for? The human mind. The world over, has never been content to leave things as they are. Perforce it must “make special” everything it touches; it imposes its condition on “raw reality,” thereby enhancing meaning. This behavior, the author believes, must have had survival value, especially for social cohesion, as culture grew ever more complex and problem-laden.

This involved thesis is skilfully presented and of landmark stature. You may ignore the final chapter (“From Tradition to Aesthetics”) and the Epilogue; or you may frame them, for the author expands her novel hypothesis to a social philosophy of art in a new key. The functions of what art has been for have been crumbling in measure as industrialism has taken over the life of man, in ways that have made and sustained him hitherto. It is an irreversible turning of the corner.

“Do venous-nous? Que sommes-nous? Ou allons-nous?” So spoke the artist Gauguin. The author makes these words the Leitmotif of her new key.

No, you may not borrow my copy. It must remain on my desk a little longer.

The Riddle of Amish Culture. Donald B. Krabill. Johns Hopkins, 1989. $35; paper, $8.95.

They own and drive horses and buggies; they will ride in your car but will never own or drive one. In the fields they use modern farm machinery that they buy on time and work off the debt. They do not allow their children beyond grammar school level. Schools and teachers are strictly Amish (the state has acquiesced). They use the services of non-Amish physicians; however, they pay into Medicare and Social Security but never draw on them. They eschew electric power from public utilities, yet they have their own from gas-driven generators. Their homes are neat and well appointed and are hardly distinguishable from their non-Amish neighbors, except for the absence of electric power outlets. No telephones are in the houses, but a communal one is in its own booth a little way off. The restrictive paradoxes, however, should not cuddle up to our modernity and actually consolute their Amishness. Paradoxically, they have made Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, America's most productive farmland.

Yes, today some of them are tradesmen or businessmen; nevertheless, all centers about their communal church. And yes, today a few of the young folk—more men than women—dissent and depart, which augments the number who have left. Ninety years ago there were 5,000 Amish, today, 100,000.

Both sexes work hard; they take pleasure in sex, within marriage. The husband is king of a menage; the wife is queen (their own simile). Children are not raised to seek comfort and labor-saving devices but to consider what is really human. Home continues to be the cymosuere over the generations: Amish communalism is homes with arms interlocked.

Everybody goes to church. Local ministers are leaders in things secular as well as spiritual, but the secular has a deep-grained spiritual tinge. Bishops are the final custodians and authority figures, their rulership strictly endued in this country since 16th-century Alsace. (The Anabaptists are gone from Europe.) And it has bred a peculiarly gelassen (composed) body of men and women.

This is a consummately skillful account; the author, a masterly sociologist, details complex matters simply; she reflects personal detachment, he emphasizes. Although not Amish himself (how could he be?—he has gone beyond grammar school), he likes these people. So will you.

Madeline R. Robinon


Fritz Stern has collected his essays and public lectures on many aspects of modern German history. His introduction is an excellent synthesis and explanation of his own thinking on matters simple and complex. His comprehensive, detached, he emphasizes. Although not Amish himself (how could he be?—he has gone beyond grammar school), he likes these people. So will you.


This is an astute, intelligent interpretation placing well-known modern European current events in historical perspective. To Hughes, the term sophisticated rebels implies a recognition of realistic limits and frequently defies the conventional classification of Right and Left. Beginning in 1965 with the student riots in Paris and Prague Spring, he deals (inter alia) with the reactions to the problem of foreign immigrants in northern Europe, the transference of the political specter of Europe to the changing of democratic socialism, the waning of Marxism, and the emergence of the Greens. His discussion is illuminate with reference to both literary and political protagonists.


What is democracy? It is a word much bandied about today by those who seek to—disenusters and revolutionaries, in dictators of the Left and of the Right, Communist or merely military. Toqeulville visited America in 1831. He sought to understand why two societies, France and the United States, seeking the same goals of liberty and equality traveled such different roads in 1789, one of revolution and the other of democracy, to achieve their goals. Sociologist Lambert offers a brilliant guide to the thinking of Toqueulville based not only on Toqueulville's published works but also on his diaries and correspondence. As Toqueulville struggles with the concepts and historical circumstances applicable to the two main themes of democracy and revolution. A useful bibliography of both French and English works is included.


Bosher, a Canadian scholar, looks at the French Revolution with a fresh point of view. He challenges many of the myths of the Left and Right in his analysis of the economy and social structure of pre-Revolutionary France and in the course of his narrative. Throughout, he draws a sharp distinction between the public and the popular. The public tradition is the liberal one of the Enlightenment; the populace tradition is “violent, iliberal and anti-parliamentarian.” In a final chapter, he illuminates the impact of these two traditions by reference to events in the 19th and 20th centuries. There are condensed chronologies of events and an elaborate Who's Who. A useful and thought-provoking book.


This is a curious but fascinating biography that for aficionados of Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire and the late 18th and early 19th century science and letters, he delivers the book. The author who wrote the biography of the Young Edward Gibbon, integrates Gibbon's writing of the Decline and Fall chapter by chapter with his letters, his memoirs, and the detailed notes that he kept about his daily activities, the people with whom he visited and dined, and his activities (limited) as an M.P.—to produce a picture of the life of a man of letters in this period, as well as to show his intellectual and emotional growth.


To all who have read or studied English law, the name of Sir Henry Maine and his book Ancient Law immediately recall the phrase “from status to contract.” This volume places Maine in the context of Victorian thinking with its emphasis on scientific laws and history and the acceptance of the idea of progress as well as evolution. This is an interesting and stimulating analysis of Maine's role in the history of English law and his involvement in the science of law, the legal profession and legal education.


What brought about the end of the British Empire, the colossus of the 19th century? This is the problem that John Darwin sets out to express. He is also concerned with the effects of the growing local tension and nationalism on the former colonies, the restructuring of the world economy, and the expanding power of the Soviet Union and its increasing pressure on the
Recommended Reading

Middle East, Greece, and Turkey in the post-World War II years. These complex and interac-
ting factors faced a Britain exhausted and
financially drained by a grueling war. This
complicated story is here well told.


Michael Thompson describes his book as an “attempt to understand what made Victorian society tick.” Beginning with a description of the economy and society in 1830 when the results of the Industrial Revolution were being felt, he shows how the lives of the middle class and the working class were affected. Chapters on changes in the family, marriage patterns, and the position of women and children as well as on home, work, and play help to explain the rise of “respectability” among the majority of the working class. He depicts them as “fiercely self-reliant and determined to live on their own resources and not to suffer the indignities of poor relief, charity or ruinous debt.” Vic-
torian middle-class literature, he says, was
dedicated to separate spheres: single-family houses, separation of work from home, and separation of women from work. Critical of long-accepted myths and stereotypes, this is a valuable and informative book.

Victoria Schuck

Are We To Be A Nation? The Making of the Constitution. Richard B. Bernstein with

The Framing and Ratification of the Constitution. Ed. by Leonard W. Levy and Dennis

this Constitution: Our Enduring Legacy.
American Historical Association and Ameri-
can Political Science Association: Project ‘87,

this Constitution: From Ratification to
the Bill of Rights. AHA and APSA: Project ‘87,

A Man Need Must Go and Go Myself: The
Constitution in American Culture. Michael

Inventing the People: The Rise of Popular
Sovereignty in England and America. Ed-

The Forging of the Union, 1781–1789.
$22.95, paper, $8.95.

Birth of the Nation: The First Federal
Congress 1789–1791. Charlene Bangs Bickford
and Kenneth R. Bowling. George Washington
Univ., 1989. To be reprinted. Tel. (202)
676-6777.

English...

Saving the Revolution: The Federalist Papers
and the American Founding. Ed. by

The Moral Foundations of the American
Univ. of Virginia, 1986. $25; paper, $5.95.

Philosophy, The Federalist, and the Con-
sent of the Governed. Robert J. Vetterli,
with Gary C. Bynner. Rowman & Littlefield,
1987. $31.50; paper, $13.95.

The American Constitution—For and
Against: The Federalist and Anti-Federalist
Papers. Ed. by J. Jackson Barlow, Dennis J.
$37.50; paper, $16.75.

The anthology edited by Kesler is an inter-
pretation of The Federalist Papers by 14 con-
temporary scholars. Following the Consti-
tution, there is a conference at Kenyon College. This book examines the in-
tent of the Founders and asks, among other questions, whether the Declaration of In-
dependence and the Constitution harmonize or differ. In pairing a number of essays of differ-
ent views on major themes, the book ensures debate.

White’s book converts The Federalist into a
study primarily concerned with philosophy.
Vetterli and Bynner’s book supports the major
influence of public virtue in the founding and
contests the conventional wisdom of self-inter-
est as the motivating concept. The authors sur-
vey the evolution of the concept of civic virtue
from ancient times through Western thought
and the origin of republican government. They
argue for the relevance of religion to free
societies.

Pole’s book presents the essential principles
from The Federalist and anti-Federalist tracts
published during the ratifying campaigns.
The author terms the Federalists propagand-
ists and The Federalist not the last word on the
“true” meaning of “the Framers.”

The New Federalist Papers consists of 85 of
the best syndicated articles relating to the Con-
sent of the Governed. Distributed to newspapers through
out the country since 1984. The purposes of the book were to relate the principles of the found-
ing to current problems and to answer the
question whether the Founders’ expectations were being met. The subjects range from war-
fare policy, congressional and judicial power, and balancing to the Iran-contra affair. Although
the brief articles are a mixed bag, they do show
continuity in attitudes toward the Constitu-
tion and governmental principles.

Separation of Powers: Does It Still Work?
Ed. by Robert A. Goldwin and Art Kaufman.
American Enterprise Institute, 1986. $22.75,
paper, $11.75.

This is a lively text on the Constitution rather
than on constitutional law dealing with the
question of a separation of powers. It argues
that the powers of president and Congress prevents an action to carry out sound domestic, interna-
tional, and national defense policies. Proposals for change have shifted over the years. In
the 199th century Woodrow Wilson urged stronger congressional leadership. Today the call is
less for lessening the power of Congress and more for change and presidential leadership. The eight essay-
ists here, primarily academics, were selected

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because they disagree with one another, and
the book will encourage readers to find their
own answers.

The Senate, 1789–1989: Addresses on the
History of the United States Senate. Robert
C. Byrd. Ed. by Mary Sharon Hall. U.S. Govt.
Print. Off., Volume 1, Bicentennial Edition,
1988. $55.

"To Make All Laws": The Congress of the
Respectfully Quoted: A Dictionary of
Quotations Requested From the Congressional

The comprehensive history of the Senate
contains contributions by Senator Robert Byrd in
the Senate between 1980 and 1989 is a book of vast scholarly
research. Byrd discusses political, social, and
economic issues and the personalities, elections,
and forces that have affected the Senate from
the First Congress to contemporary bodies. A
definitive chronology, this book is good reading
enhanced by more than 300 illustrations, in-
cluding the best cartoons of the day.

Hutson's new book tells the story of
Congress as an institution, and of its members
and achievements. Written by the chief of the Li-

brary of Congress Manuscript Division, it
accompanies the Library's bicentennial exhibit-
ion in celebration of the 200 years of Congress, the
book contains accounts of the people's rights,
the economy, the environment, foreign policy,
education, and voyages of discovery. Originals of
many of the 113 illustrations will be found in
the exhibit also.

Suzy Platt's collection of 2,100 quotations re-

flects the thousands of requests made by mem-
bers of Congress during the past 75 years. The
quotations are classified by subject (from "Ac-
tion" and "Affluence" to "Writer" and "Youth")
and indexed by author and keyword/subject.

Creating the American Presidency, 1775–
1799. William B. Michaelis. University
To the Best of My Ability: The Presidency
and the Constitution. Donald L. Robinson.
W. W. Norton, 1987. $22.50

Two academics examine the most innovative
section of the Constitution, the presidency,
which, 200 years from the founding, probably
differs most from the Framers' expectations.
Michaelis's study tracks down how executive
power evolved between 1775 and 1789 and be-
came the presidency. The author first shows
the contribution of Revolutionary thought, the
role of state governors, and the executive in
the Continental and Confederation Con-
gresses and then presents an account of the
Constitutional Convention and of the ratifica-
tion of the Constitution up to the inauguration
of Washington as president.

Robinson, taking his title from the constitu-
tional oath of office of the president, examines
the constitutional foundations of the presi-
dency and the changes in the country that
have affected the office, including the democ-
ratization of the franchise and the role of the
country in foreign affairs. To relieve "the strains" that have affected the system, he sug-
gests some corrective proposals similar to
those proposed by others: the development of
responsible political parties; the elimination of
the deadlock between the executive and legis-
lative branches of government brought on by
the separation of powers, the removal of the
prohibition against members of Congress sit-
ting in the Cabinet, the holding of special elec-
tions in the event of failed governments, and
especially the introduction of a power of dis-
solution of a government. His singularly dif-
f erent proposal is to establish a federal council
of 100 notables appointed for life by the presi-
dent with the advice of Congress. The overall
purpose is to obtain "coherent action and
responsibility."

The Court and the Constitution. Archibald
The Supreme Court: How It Was, How It Is.
$18.95; paper, $10.95.

Original Intent and the Framers' Con-
$19.95.

Public Prayer and the Constitution: A
Case Study in Constitutional Interpretation.
Rodney K. Smith. Scholarly Resources,
1987. $35.

Liberty Under Law: The Supreme Court in
Hopkins, 1988. $30; paper, $10.95.

Cox traces judicial review of cases and con-
troversies before the Supreme Court from the
beginnings in 1803 to the present period, re-
vealing how the Court has interpreted the law
and the Constitution in each era of history. He
laces his analysis with portraits of justices and
ligitants to create the realities of the matters
in which the Court has acted, given
meaning to the Constitution, and shaped the
course of the country. Important reading for
the bicentennial of the Constitution.

Designed as an introduction to the Court, the
book by Chief Justice Rehnquist begins
with his clerkship following law school and re-
lates his personal career to an account of how
the Court functions today from the selection
of cases to be decided (certiorari) through oral
argument and decision making. His Court his-
tory extends to 1983 (in order not to become
involved in possible current litigation) and
covers a period of major "test" cases with his commentary.

In a book of remarkable scholarship, Levy, a
leading constitutional historian, demolishes
the idea that the Supreme Court should apply
the "original intent" of the Framers. With
immense historical and legal research and
compelling argument, Levy concludes that
original intent provides no viable foundation
for a constitutional jurisprudence. Support for
it, however, is found in Smith's book on public
prayer, in which he reconciles the difficulties in
interpreting the freedom-of-religion clause of
the First Amendment. Wiecek has written a
succinct, balanced overview of criteria em-
ployed by the courts in constitutional decision
making throughout the past century.

Democracy and the Amendments to the
Constitution. Alan S. Grimes. University

Grimes provides a useful analysis of amend-
ments to the Constitution since 1789. He
points to the fact that, except for technicalities,
little has been added to modify the essential
structure of government. The big changes have
been in "the collective rights of citizens,"
which have democratized the document. The
book offers an explanation of how and why this
has happened. The author demonstrates the
"clustering" of amendments (more than one
amendment adopted around the same time)
and their regional character. For instance, the
first 12 amendments were southern; the sec-
ond group, northern; the third, western; the
fourth, transitional; and the fifth, urban.

Richard N. Current

The Puritan Ordeal. Andrew Delbanco. Har-

"This book," the author states, "is about the
experience of becoming American in the sev-
enteenth century." More particularly, it is
about the spiritual life of the Puritans as its
life changed in response to New World condi-
tions. The author finds survivals or analogies
in the experience of later immigrants, in per-
sisting themes of American literature, and in
the dissimilar addresses that Edward Everett
and Abraham Lincoln delivered at Gettysburg
in 1863. Here is a richly textured argument for
"a theory of American culture as a willed des-
tination for people in flight from their Old
World history and from themselves."

(continued on back cover)

“More than most Presidents he symbolized for his own time the strength and power and perpetuity of American democracy.” So declares Robert V. Remini, the most recent and most authoritative biographer of Andrew Jackson. An unabashed admirer, Remini convincingly establishes the greatness but does not hide the flaws of his subject. He writes with clarity and verve, bringing Jackson and his contemporaries vividly to life and carrying them, along with the reader—reliably through the political complexities of the period. This one-volume condensation maintains the high quality of the three-volume biography, which won a National Book Award.


Two factions of well-to-do colonists had appeared before the Revolution. One of them consisted of expansionists who foresaw a glorious future for Americans as denizens of “a mighty empire.” They became the revolutionaries, the Patriots. The others, the nonexpansionists, became the Tories. Such, in essence, is the fresh interpretation that Marc Egnal offers, basing it on a careful scrutiny of pre-Revolutionary political conflict and political leadership in Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and South Carolina.


Susan B. Anthony was the “Napoleon” of 19th-century American feminism. She did not live long enough to hail the 19th Amendment, but its final adoption owed a great deal to her long generality of the women’s suffrage movement. Her latest biographer both reinterprets the struggle for women’s rights and adds to an understanding of Anthony as a person, a very unconventional one. “Women’s history,” the author concludes, “will be a comprehensive reality when not only are the stories of individual women and the history of women’s daily lives recorded but when feminism forces a rewriting of all history.”

ΦBK Associates to Meet in Boston, October 6–8

The 1989 annual meeting of the Phi Beta Kappa Associates will take place in Boston on October 6–8, the president of the group, Stanley Frankel, has announced. The John F. Kennedy Library will be the site for the annual dinner on Saturday, October 7. Other events, including a reception at the State House on Friday evening, are being planned.

The Associates organization, which was founded in 1940, is made up of Phi Beta Kappa members who are leaders in their professions and whose membership contributions provide important support for the Phi Beta Kappa Foundation. For more information about the Associates or the annual meeting, write to the Associates at the Phi Beta Kappa Society, 1811 Q St., N.W., Washington, DC 20009.


Historians used to treat Reconstruction as a time of national disgrace, when corrupt carpetbaggers and scalawags, making pawns of the ex-slaves, ravaged the already defeated and ruined South. Students of the period have drastically revised that view during the past generation. One of them, Eric Foner, now presents a masterly synthesis of the newer studies, including his own. Foner does not blink at the seamier phases of the story, but he shows Reconstruction to have been essentially an experiment in biracial democracy, with African Americans taking a positive, important, impelling role.


In recounting his own intellectual odyssey, Sidney Hook throws humane light on intellectual currents in the United States during his lifetime. He does not elaborate here on his ideas as a philosopher (ideas he has expounded in numerous other publications); instead, he concentrates on radical thinkers and radical thought. After a boyhood in Brooklyn, where he was born in poverty in 1902, he became a Marxist but a critic of communism as it developed in the Soviet Union. He stood out as a defender of academic freedom against threats from both old Communists and the New Left. In recognition of his contributions to American life, President Reagan presented him with the Medal of Freedom in 1983.

Graduates

By E. B. de Vito

They, most of all, are unaware that schooling is not the whole, by far. They, least of any, understand the immeasurable range and scope of things that unknowingly, they know.

Lessons are breathed in from the air: the calm or turbulence of their vista from words tossed lightly, emotions, brief, but always played at concert pitch. Truths are stored and preserved by chance like the gilded dust from golden objects that rub together carelessly.

Knowledge comes, in a way, unsought, as in the Chinese tale of the youth who came for daily lessons in what there was to learn of jade. And each day, for a single hour, while he and the master talked together always of unrelated matters, jade pieces were slipped into his hand, till one day, when a month had passed, the young man paused and with a frown, said suddenly, “That is not jade.”

As Life is something, we are told, that happens while you make other plans, learning slips in and comes to stay while you are faced the other way.

This poem, which appeared in The American Scholar (Summer 1989), is reprinted with the permission of the poet.

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