



THE KEY REPORTER

37th Triennial Council Approves Seven New Chapters, Elects Blitzner and Crosson



Sidney Hook Award winner John Hope Franklin, left, is shown at the Council banquet with Joan M. Ferrante, the outgoing president, and Charles Blitzner, the newly elected president of the Society.



A student guided a group of Council participants around the University of California, Berkeley, campus on a lovely Saturday afternoon. Other groups went on bus tours around the city of San Francisco or to the Muir Woods and Sausalito.

On August 14-17, San Francisco displayed its fabled charm for more than 450 delegates and others attending Phi Beta Kappa's 37th triennial Council, the sun shone every day, and all seven proposed chapters were approved. The first plenary session even completed its business so expeditiously that some participants had time to slip away by cablecar to Fisherman's Wharf for a quick lunch between sessions.

Headquarters for the Council, which is Phi Beta Kappa's legislative body, was the Grand Hyatt Hotel on Union Square. The delegates approved amendments to the constitution designed to smooth the process by which officers are elected, and the nominees for president and vice president, Charles Blitzner and Frederick Crosson, were elected by acclamation thereafter. The new president is director of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C.; the new vice pres-

ident is Cavanaugh Distinguished Professor of Humanities at the University of Notre Dame.

The Council also elected nine senators at large (which include the president and vice president) and three district senators for six-year terms. The new senators at large are Allison Blakely, professor of history at Howard University; Rita F. Dove, professor of English at the University of Virginia and poet laureate of the United States; Werner L. Gundersheimer, director of the Folger Shakespeare Library; and Judith F. Krug, director of the Office for Intellectual Freedom, American Library Association. Reelected senators at large are Vera Kistiakowsky, professor of physics, MIT; Eugen Weber, Palevsky Professor of Modern European History at UCLA; and Burton M. Wheeler, professor of English and religious studies at Washington University.

New district senators are Joseph W. Gordon, dean of undergraduate

studies, Yale University (New England), and Niall W. Slater, professor of classics, Emory University (South

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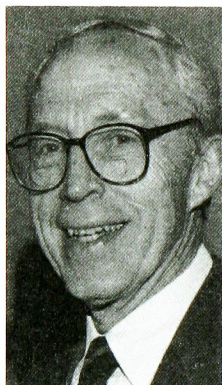
TRIENNIAL COUNCIL

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Atlantic). David W. Hart, professor of English and associate dean of the graduate school, University of Arkansas, was reelected (South Central).

Newly elected members of the Nominating Committee and their affiliations are Hanna Holborn Gray, University of Chicago; Sandra Myers, National Endowment for the Humanities; Marjorie G. Perloff, Stanford University; and Daniel C. Snell, University of Oklahoma.

Resolutions of appreciation were passed to recognize the contributions of several outgoing senators: Otis Singletary, a past president who was completing his third term on the Senate; Carl L. Anderson



Vice President
Frederick Crosson

and David Pingree, both of whom served two terms; and Doris Grumbach and Joseph Wall, each of whom served one term.

Approval of New Chapters

New chapters are to be established at the following institutions:

- American University, Washington, D.C.
- Carnegie-Mellon University, Pittsburgh, Pa.
- Fairfield University, Fairfield, Conn.
- Loyola College in Maryland, Baltimore
- Loyola University, Chicago
- North Carolina State University, Raleigh
- Southwestern University, Georgetown, Tex.

Once these chapters are installed, the total number of chapters nationwide will rise to 249.

Much of the Council's attention was devoted to consideration of the applications of these institutions, where the Committee on Qualifications had recommended the granting of chapter charters to Phi Beta Kappa



Among several past presidents of the Society who attended the Council were Catherine Sims (on the right) and Norman Ramsey, with his wife, Ellie.

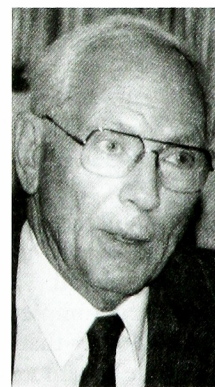
members. At the first plenary session, Burton M. Wheeler, chairman of the 12-person committee, explained in some detail the process by which the committee arrived at its recommendations.

He noted that 53 institutions had applied for chapters in the triennium, and that the committee had spent two full days in Washington selecting 9 institutions that appeared to meet Phi Beta Kappa's standards and thus qualified to receive visits from teams of committee members to investigate the institutions further. All 9 institutions underwent rigorous investigation with respect to their history, organization, students and faculty, curriculum, library and other facilities, athletic policy, and finances, and 7 were recommended to the Council.

Individual members of the committee reported to the Council their



A lively panel discussion on "Phi Beta Kappa and the New Scholarship," stimulated by correspondence in the Key Reporter last fall and winter, opened the 37th triennial Council and served as a topic of conversation for the rest of the weekend. Participating were, front row, from the left: Barbara Carlisle, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (the writer of the letter that initiated the correspondence); Vartan Gregorian, Brown University, panel chairman; and Martha T. Murphy, Export Assist, Inc.; back row: David Levering Lewis and Catharine Stimpson, both of Rutgers University; Louis C. Stagg, University of Memphis; and John P. Burgess, Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. Two of the presentations appear on pages 4-6.



Burton Wheeler

findings on each recommended institution, and answered questions at subsequent plenary sessions before the vote was taken.

The committee members for the 1991-94 triennium, with their affiliations, were Ruth M. Adams, Dartmouth College; Sandra Birch, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University; Allison Blakely, Howard University; Carole O. Brown, Wesleyan College; Eloise Clark, Bowling Green State University; Solomon Gartenhaus, Purdue University; Joseph W. Gordon, Yale University; David Gutsche, Texas Christian University; Elizabeth Moran, Santa Clara University; and Helena Wall, Pomona College. LeRoy P. Graf, University of Tennessee, also was an active member until his death in May 1993.

Meetings of Chapter and Association Delegates

Chapter delegates held an afternoon break-out session to discuss a number of topics of interest:

- Campus visibility, chaired by Frank Eakin, University of Richmond.
- Keys, certificates, and chapter finances, chaired by John Nelson, University of North Carolina.
- Student assessment issues, chaired by Elizabeth Vandercook, University of Illinois, Chicago.
- Recognition for juniors, chaired by Mavis Mayer, Duke University.
- Report of the Committee on Phi Beta Kappa and the State Universities, chaired by Joseph Gordon, Yale University.

At the same time, association delegates met to discuss a number of issues and program ideas. Arline Bronzaft was reelected leader of the Conference of Association Delegates, and Emma Norris was reelected secretary.

President Joan Ferrante presided over the meeting of chapter and association delegates concerning joint ventures. George Oliver, representing the Richmond association, reported on joint activities in the South Atlantic district; Virginia Hornak, of the Southern California association, reported on efforts in the Western district; and Carl Linden, George Washington University, reported on those in Washington, D.C.

Report from the Chair of the Association Delegates

The 37th Council meeting in San Francisco in August was an exciting one for the associations, where 41 groups were represented—our largest turnout thus far. The meeting also marked the first time that association delegates had voted on new chapters of Phi Beta Kappa, and they participated fully in the discussion of this year's applicants.

The enthusiasm among the delegates was particularly evident in the Friday afternoon session on associa-

bara Marmorstein of the Delaware Valley association spoke about the Academic Decathlon.

The Conference of Association Delegates applauded the Senate for its actions during the past triennium to support the expansion and wider distribution of the *Key Reporter*. The delegates also urged the Senate to further expand its efforts to address the need for excellence in the nation's elementary and secondary schools.

Emma Norris, our secretary, and I look forward to a new three-year term that will see the growth of existing associations and continued interest from Phi Beta Kappa members who are eager to form associations in their local areas. We hope that neighboring college chapters will assist in these efforts. Joint ventures between associations and chapters can only serve to strengthen the entire Society.

The winter issue of the *Key Reporter* will describe the activities of the associations and list the addresses of secretaries of active associations. If you have not yet joined an association, we encourage you to contact the secretary of the association in your area. If no association exists near you, volunteer to start one. Linda Surles of the national Phi Beta Kappa office, Emma Norris, and I stand ready to assist you.

Arline L. Bronzaft



Arline Bronzaft

tion business. After sharing news about association projects and ways in which to expand them, association delegates listened to program ideas from Thomas Phelps of the National Endowment for the Humanities, Carol Brissie of the Library of America, and Charles Muscatine, former chairman of the Federation of State Humanities Councils. Patricia Irvin of the North Texas association discussed the Library of Congress's Center for the Book activities, and Bar-



University of Miami delegate Stephen Sapp picks up his Council registration materials from staffers Frances Robb and Barbara Howes.



Svetlana K. Thomson, of San Francisco State University, head teller for the Council (left), and Mary Mladinov, associate secretary of the Society, chat at the Council banquet.

Phi Beta Kappa and the New Scholarship

Two Views from the Panel in San Francisco



By David Levering Lewis

What, I wondered, after reading Professor Carlisle's *Key Reporter* challenge to this Society and President Ferrante's concurrence in it (Autumn 1933) could a panel such as this find to discuss beyond agendas and details? Surely, I thought, the Carlisle letter's major postulate would be as welcome to the vast majority of Society members as a Supreme Court decision reaffirming freedom of expression or separation of church and state. The gravamen of the letter is simply this: that Phi Beta Kappa should, Professor Carlisle wrote, "embrace scholarship that shakes its own foundations."

That such a mandate to a corporate body whose founding Latin motto is best rendered as "Society of Lovers of Learning" should be interpreted as harebrained and, indeed, even subversive is rather surprising. Yet, one peevish response wonders whether the letter's author "has ever traveled, has ever heard of the vast disparities in wealth and privilege in the Third World countries." Were Professor Carlisle to do so, I take it that this respondent believes, she would withdraw a document that is nothing less than a calumny of the last best hope of mankind.

But the most serious reproach her letter has earned is that of being subversive and of being, heaven forbid!, PC—of being, as one respondent signals darkly, "only the first shot in what will probably turn out to be an ongoing effort to politicize our organization."

Conceding, for the sake of argument, that Professor Carlisle may be the point person in a conspiracy to capture Phi Beta Kappa for those without enough frequent flyer miles to permit them to compare the privileged Occident with the benighted netherworlds, or that she may even

represent covert forces exclusively animated by issues of gender, ethnicity, class, and careerism, it seems to me, nevertheless, that this Society would look foolish to the world if it declares itself serenely disposed to "championing only those endeavors that correspond to past models."

One would have thought that the propositions in the Carlisle letter are as aphoristic as the familiar caution that ignorance of history leads to needless repetition, or some such paraphrase as that the unexamined society is not worth contributing to. Yet, some of us stand ready to comport ourselves as intellectual and cultural Minutemen and -women assembled on the Breed's Hill of Western civilization, apparently unmindful of the ironic resemblance such intemperate vigilance bears to that of the morality police who patrol against heresy in so many Islamic countries.

But such combative reactions have etiologies that require our attention. These are deeply troubled times. . . . The national mind is closing; the country is disuniting; illiberal education reigns; a leading feminist legal scholar discloses that the First Amendment merely boils down to validation of male language encouraging, as she charges, "free sexual access to women"; a leading Afrocentrist academic repudiates much of the larger American past so as to avoid, he writes, "being in the periphery of someone else's historical and cultural experiences." Yet Gerald Graff assures us that there is hope beyond the culture wars, even

David Levering Lewis, a ΦBK senator and Martin Luther King Jr. Professor of History at Rutgers University, won the 1994 Pulitzer Prize for biography for his W. E. B. Du Bois: The Biography of a Race, 1868–1919.

though Russell Jacoby warns us that wisdom has become dogmatic, Robert Hughes pans the contemporary concerns as the culture of complaint, and Gertrude Himmelfarb looks into the abyss.

Increasingly, we are coming to perceive the end of this century as the worst and best of times, an Arnoldian plain swept by confused struggle and flight—culture conflict, class war, race antipathy, gender confrontation—on which two armies of warring, mostly well intentioned citizens are assembling. We are dividing into Right and Left (or, more accurately, being divided) as though we were some European nation to whom nothing is so precious as its ancient, ineradicable feuds. In *The Opium of the Intellectuals*, a germinal book about enduring antinomies in the political and cultural life of

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France written more than 40 years ago, Raymond Aron observed how strikingly contradistinctive was the United States to France, where intellectual discourse and group allegiance had long been trapped and distorted within two ideological force fields.

Here in 1950s America, the land of Schlesinger's vital center and Boorstin's infra-ideological consensus, the twin superstitions of exceptionalism and progress long had the effect of marginalizing ideological strife. Ours was a buoyant faith of people living in a land in which past, present, and future were triumphant points on a linear continuum moving ever forward and upward. But no longer. In the polarized 1990s, the American past seems to have been decoupled from the American future. In *That Noble Dream*, Peter Novick's wonderfully lucid book on the epistemology of history, there is a chapter titled "Every Group Its Own Historian." "In the historiographical as in the political realm," writes Novick of the late 1960s and beyond, "*E pluribus unum* was falling on evil days." Us-

able pasts were hijacked, Right and Left acquired apparently incommensurable values, and the language and motives of everybody became suspect. Appeals to tradition and values were shown repeatedly to mask social, sexual, and racial hegemonies. New scholarship was often exposed as the handmaiden of upward mobility agendas.

There is much here to give pause. The sense of social and cultural crisis commends prudence. But prudence ought not be confused with smug defense of status quo or with loss of intellectual nerve. And, in the final analysis, what choice have we—has this Society—but to accommodate ourselves to the evolving constellation of inspiration and investigation? Nor is the threat of new knowledge and the disciplines it generates ever likely to be in actuality as traumatic and disruptive as Professor Carlisle's letter suggests. Very few belief-systems in the humanities and the social sciences are likely to be suddenly upended and demolished in the manner of the scientific epiphanies described by Thomas Kuhn.

The destruction of Western civilization as we know it may be a far tougher enterprise than Professor Carlisle suggests. Whether it was labor studies in the '50s, black studies in the '60s, women's studies in the '70s, or gay studies in the '90s, the changes wrought by these new fields to various canons and orthodoxies have approximated the cultural diffusion model far more than they have Visigothic invasions or even guerrilla warfare. Take, for example, one of my fields—African-American history—in which the supposedly radical changes taking American history beyond political events and the lives of white males have in fact occurred over a 30-year time frame. Hardly a case of demolition derby.

Why then are some of us apparently willing to risk dinosaur-status for the Society? After all, what Professor Carlisle characterizes as the "valuable new critiques being offered the arts and sciences by new perspectives" is already old news in much of the academy as well as in circles of alert opinion. Finally, I would score a much more relevant point about this

debate by quoting from the last pages of Jacoby's *Dogmatic Wisdom*:

Conservatives want us to return to old educational verities, and leftists to new ones. Both may be right. Yet both ignore the ingression of the market that makes a mockery of a return or advance; both avoid the commercialism that constricts a liberal education; both sidestep the invidious elitism that poisons civil life.



By John P. Burgess

Although I do not work in an academic context, the issue of Phi Beta Kappa and the new scholarship has remarkable parallels in mainline Protestantism, and it is as one who works in the denominational offices of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) that I wish to reflect on Professor Carlisle's thoughtful comments.

In her provocative letter in the *Key Reporter*, Professor Carlisle says that she is concerned about a quiet drift in the Society to a conservative stance. She believes that the Society could be doing more to include the "valuable critique being offered the arts and sciences by new perspectives of gender, race, class, and postcolonial inquiry," to welcome their unsettling questions, and to "engage in the current debates." It is not her concern simply to have these perspectives better represented, but to "embrace scholarship that shakes its own foundations."

In sum, the new scholarship breaks the stranglehold of one group, one tradition, one community of interpretation, and provides for a more inclusive pluralism. It dismantles the past for the sake of welcoming perspectives grounded in the full breadth of human experience. In this sense, as Professor Carlisle notes,

John Burgess (ΦBK, Colorado College, '76) is associate for theology in the national headquarters of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Louisville, Ky.

Far too much of the passion—whether pro or con—aroused by Professor Carlisle's timely, cathartic letter derives, I suspect, from the kind of partisan investment deftly exposed by Conor Cruise O'Brien in his essay "Of History and Its Consequences" in *To Katanga and Back*. O'Brien wrote, "Those who can, gloat; those who can't, brood." I suggest that we cease the brooding and the gloating, and get on with the 21st century.

"the destruction of 'Western civilization' as we and the founders of Phi Beta Kappa have known it may be a good thing."

It seems to me, however, that Professor Carlisle fails to appreciate the way in which matters of meaning and truth *depend* on traditions and communities of interpretation. It is not enough to appeal to experience, as shaped by gender, race, and class. As Christian missionary and ecumenist Lesslie Newbigin, drawing on Michael Polanyi's theoretical and epistemological framework, has written in *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society* (pp. 49–50):

A tradition embodies and carries forward certain ways of looking at things, certain models for interpreting experience. . . . [One] has to learn to in-dwell the tradition. Its models and concepts are things which . . . [one] has to internalize . . . until [one] has reached the point where [one] can say, "Now I see for myself."

A Society like Phi Beta Kappa can help remind us of the role of traditions and communities of interpretation in safeguarding knowledge. At a time in which all traditions are fragile, we need more than a scholarship that shakes its own foundations. We also need a scholarship that helps preserve and strengthen its own foundations. Scholarship, at its best, involves mastering traditions and

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wrestling with their methods and claims, in order to free us to new insight. It is like jazz piano. Those who have a classical training are best able to improvise and to test musical limits.

A Society like Phi Beta Kappa can also remind us that people find their *identity* in traditions and communities of interpretation, including those that transcend gender, race, and class. I myself look to other academic organizations to help me appreciate the new scholarship and am thankful that the Society alerts me to other resources.

Finally, a Society like Phi Beta Kappa can help remind us that gender, race, class, and postcolonial inquiry itself constitutes a particular tradition and community of interpretation. We dare not embrace it as though it were the only or the most exciting game in town. We must resist its tendency to dismiss other traditions and communities of interpretation, as if it offered a "higher," more privileged truth.

As Jon Levenson, professor of Jewish studies at Harvard Divinity School, has written in *The Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, and Historical Criticism* (p. 110),

In the humanities today . . . every selection of subject matter is increasingly and correctly understood to involve a normative claim and not merely a description of a value-neutral fact. In all cases, what scholars study and teach is partly a function of which practices and beliefs they wish to perpetuate. . . .

Scholarship that shakes its own foundations is not necessarily good or responsible scholarship. Phi Beta Kappa can be most helpful when it carefully examines the philosophical and cultural assumptions that inform gender, race, class, and postcolonial inquiry, and when it engenders a vigorous, sustained debate across traditions and communities of inquiry, including those that do not take gender, race, and class to be ultimately determinative of human identity. □

The Power of Conversation

By Sondra Myers

In November 1993 at the National Press Club, Sheldon Hackney, chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), announced that the agency would launch a National Conversation on American Pluralism and Identity, informed by the humanities and "open to all Americans, a conversation in which all voices need to be heard and in which we must grapple seriously with the meaning of American pluralism." Hackney put forward an idea deeply grounded in our democratic and humanistic traditions, which we at NEH see as an essential element in what appears to be a movement toward civic renewal.

Can we talk, civilly, about our American identity—about what unites us as a people despite our diversity, what works in our society and what needs fixing, what dreams we have as a nation at this millennial moment? We at the National Endowment for the Humanities think we can. Indeed, my guess is that once we start, we won't want to stop, because conversation—speaking and listening, respectfully exchanging ideas and opinions on issues of common concern—is both engaging and energizing. And it is the consummate democratic act—the quintessential, irreducible unit of action in a democratic society.

Because democracy is about individuals *and* community, it requires perpetual negotiation between the rights and freedoms we enjoy as individuals and the responsibilities we have as citizens to the public good. That negotiation requires the open and free exchange of ideas. We cannot afford to let public communication lapse into one-way, no-questions-asked orations or staged verbal boxing matches. Democracy is not theater, and citizens are not spectators. We have the privileges and the obligations of participants.

When Vaclav Havel, president of the Czech Republic, came to Philadelphia to receive the 1994 Liberty Medal at Independence Hall on July 4, the dissident playwright turned head-of-state observed, "Democracy is a discussion. It is always a matter of some kind of agreement and consensus. Which means compromises, consensus, and mobilizing . . . instincts to determine what kind of compromise is acceptable and what kind is not."



Sondra Myers (ΦBK, Connecticut College '55) is special assistant to the chairman for partnerships and institutional relations, National Endowment for the Humanities.

In the summer of 1787, in that very place in Philadelphia, George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and others did their best to keep the discussion going and the spirit of compromise alive until the delegates to the Constitutional Convention could agree on the substance and form of the U.S. Constitution, that remarkable document that would create a nation out of 13 distinct and disparate states—*E pluribus unum*.

Despite their prophetic vision, the Founding Fathers could not have conceived of the complexities of national life at the close of the 20th century. Indeed, unity as they conceived it might not be possible or desirable now. More fitting, perhaps, is the goal of "wholeness incorporating diversity" which John Gardner, chairman of the National Civic League and its American Renewal project, sees as "the transcendent task for our gen-

eration, at home and around the world."

Interest in the conversation that Hackney proposed last year—from academic, religious, and community leaders, from civic organizations, service clubs, and the media—was immediate and has been continuous; it has far surpassed expectations. Clearly, the idea has struck a chord, perhaps because it promises each of us the opportunity to give voice to our views and assures that our views count—all this at a time when we are a nation unnerved by rampant violence, creeping intolerance, visible poverty, schools and family often unequal to the challenges of a rapidly changing society. We ask ourselves, "What went wrong?" We need to talk.

The conversation offers us a way of working through these perplexing problems. It requires thoughtfulness, self-respect, and respect for the opinions of others—and an understanding that at the end of the day there will be no heroes and villains, no winners and losers, no right and wrong answers, but rather more informed and empowered citizens, better prepared to practice the politics of inclusion, to move us closer to our dream of government of, for, and by the people. Conversation is not a panacea, but we will find no solutions without it.

The NEH is making a substantial investment in the conversation:

- in a one-hour documentary film to be aired on PBS stations nationwide, which will be edited into a shorter version for use in classrooms and discussion groups;
- in a conversation kit, containing suggested texts as conversation starters, along with a discussion guide, bibliography, and filmography, which will help groups organize conversations in their communities;
- in a \$1 million set-aside for grants for the conversation in NEH's Division of Public Programs;
- in an invitation for proposals on pluralism in all other divisions of the NEH—research, fellowship, education, preservation and access, and state programs.

In addition, the NEH is giving the state humanities councils an extra \$10,000 each to enhance their capacity to support conversations at the state and local levels.

One of the strengths of the NEH initiative is that it is not prescriptive but responsive. Americans in their own communities, through their own institutions and coalitions, will

The NEH's conversation is a modest and hopeful effort to restore civility and community to our lives . . . by bringing all Americans into a discussion about what holds us together as a people.

decide the form and content of their conversations. Our aim is to reach beyond our traditional constituencies in attracting people to participate in the conversation.

We at the NEH are frequently asked, "What are the goals of the conversation? What outcomes do you desire or anticipate?" My own an-

swer is twofold: first, more conversation—creating the habit of civil, civic conversation, grounded in the humanities, which will give us insights into our lives as individuals and as citizens; second, a new resolve about preserving and improving American democracy. I think about Robert Hughes, who, in his book *Culture of Complaint*, speaks of an "America, whose making never ends." And I recall too the sobering observations of Robert Bellah and his coauthors Richard Madsen, William Sullivan, Ann Swidler, and Steven Tipton, in *The Good Society*. In a doleful but revealing passage, they tell us,

Accepting the tragedies of the 20th century and the toll they took on all the world's people is the beginning of wisdom. Paradise on this earth, we have learned, is beyond our capacities. But we can, if we are modest and hopeful, possibly establish a reasonably livable purgatory and escape the inferno.

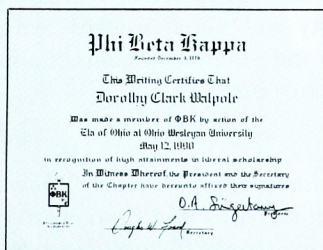
The NEH's conversation is a modest and hopeful effort to restore civility and community to our lives, not

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Keys, Membership Certificates Available



#4 Key, front and back (actual size)



Membership certificate

Keys and key pins, each gift-boxed, are available in a variety of sizes and styles. Pictured here is the #4 key (the number refers to size), which costs \$74 in 10-karat gold, \$24 in 24-karat electroplate. The #4 key pin costs \$78 in 10-karat gold, \$27 in 24-karat electroplate. Other sizes as well as neck chains, tie chains, and tie tacks are available.

Certificates with embossed gold keys are available framed (\$30) or unframed (\$7).

To order, or to request a complete price list, telephone (202) 265-3808 or write to the Treasurer, Phi Beta Kappa Society, 1811 Q Street NW, Washington, DC 20009.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I am writing in response to Laura Barlament's essay on her experiences and observations as an exchange student at a German university (*Key Reporter*, Summer 1994). As an American student of German history who also recently spent over a year studying in that country, I could sympathize with several of Ms. Barlament's opinions, especially her attempt to characterize the differences between the educational systems at home and abroad by referring to "German orderliness versus the American 'free-for-all'." However, I . . . am worried that such conclusions tend to prevent us from seeing that the German educational system is one from which we in America could learn a great deal. . . .

Ms. Barlament makes a great deal of the fact that students entering German universities have already been required to choose their field of study, expressing regret that German students are trapped in a system which values "specialization" over the "ideals of a liberal arts education." What Ms. Barlament fails to stress sufficiently is the high quality of German secondary school education, especially for those students on the university track. In reality, the last two years of study in a German *Gymnasium* correspond to at least the first two years of study in a high-quality American college. . . .

More disturbing to me, however, is Ms. Barlament's conclusion that . . . "the United States in comparison

looks like the land of unlimited opportunity." With all due respect, anyone who believes that the theoretical right of every American to pursue a liberal arts education translates into unlimited opportunity has his or her head in the sand. Perhaps this statement holds true for students like Ms. Barlament and myself, who, gender excepted, share a similar demographic background.

Unfortunately, the notion of unlimited opportunity is a joke for those who, due to some combination of a lack of resources, money, and community support, are denied access to a basic level of education which would allow them to compete both at the college level and in the real world. It is exactly in this area where the United States could learn a great deal from Germany. On a philosophical level, the United States would do well to try to emulate the practically unparalleled commitment to education which has historically served as a hallmark of German society. In practical terms, Americans would not suffer by . . . expressing support for education financially, providing sufficient and across-the-board support for vocational schools, apprenticeship programs, and public schools and universities alike. As long as wealthier communities in the United States continue to hoard their money, and as long as the majority of Americans continue to hang on to their irrational aversion to paying taxes even if all of America's children stand to benefit, we have little reason to compare our educational system favorably to that of the Germans, especially in the area of opportunity.

Daniel Rolde, Weston, Mass.

THE POWER OF CONVERSATION (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

by encouraging nostalgic and naive reminiscences but by bringing all Americans into a discussion about what holds us together as a people. It is to help us recognize that our democratic legacy is not just a tradition to be revered but a compass to guide us into the next century, into a future in which we hope to fulfill our promise of "liberty and justice for all." Abraham Lincoln wondered whether or not "a nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal" could endure. We must continue to ponder that fundamental question.

We are keenly aware that the conversation can be truly national only if it is local—if it takes place on campuses and in community centers; in churches and synagogues; in union halls, board rooms, and shopping malls; in libraries and museums; on TV and radio. For that we need partners: organizations and institutions that are also concerned about the need for a public sphere—a modern version of the village square—where we can talk about the things that are important to us. That public sphere is a *sine qua non* of democracy.

I invite all members of Phi Beta Kappa to become partners with us in this effort—through your chapters, professional organizations, community organizations, and personal associations—to ensure that the national conversation reaches, renews, and reinvigorates the American democratic spirit. Your talents for thinking and talking, and for leadership, would serve the cause of the national conversation immeasurably.

Our postmodern, post-cold war era calls for new interpretations and, indeed, new behaviors. With the legal, political, technological, and economic resources at our disposal, and our own intellectual resources, we cannot resign ourselves to cynicism, apathy, or despair; we must use our energy and ingenuity to work, with modesty and hope, toward realization of the American dream of a just and humane society. □

For guidelines and further information on the National Conversation, telephone the NEH Public Information Office at (202)606-8400.

I just finished reading the essay by Laura Barlament regarding her study-abroad year as an American student in Germany, my former home country.

Her observations were of great interest to me, especially her belief in placing more emphasis on the study-abroad programs, and her reasons for such studies.

I studied in Cambridge, England, and later in Paris, France, before coming to the United States for a visit

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LIFE OUTSIDE ACADEME

Editor's note: *It has been almost a year since Robert Kahn (ΦBK, Stanford '38) of Lafayette, California, sent us the following note: "Whenever I watch a football game, I wonder why there hasn't been a little story in the Key Reporter about a very famous football coach who happens to be a Phi Beta Kappa member: Marvin Levy of the Buffalo Bills" Coach Levy took a little persuading, but he eventually found time between seasons to contribute this piece to our new department, featuring articles written by members who have achieved prominence outside academe—inaugurated by James Michener in the spring issue.*

When World War II ended, a close friend of mine, upon returning home from military service, enrolled at Coe College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Several months later, when I received my discharge from the Army Air Corps, he urged me to join him at that small liberal arts campus.

Most of the football coaches I know believe they possess the personal qualities essential for leadership. On that occasion, however, I chose to be a follower, and I do not regret it.

At Coe I learned that pursuing a liberal education was compatible with a wholehearted involvement in athletics. Subjects such as the history of Western civilization, the humanities, 20th-century intellectual history,

the study of dictatorships, 19th-century English literature, and the French Revolution all fascinated me. So did participation in varsity football and running the quarter-mile in intercollegiate track meets. At Coe, as well as in my life, there was room for both.

I had undertaken my liberal arts studies at Coe intending, upon graduation, to enter law school, and during those undergraduate years I prepared my intellect accordingly. My heart, however, remained on the athletic fields.

Although my enthusiasm for becoming a lawyer had begun to diminish by the time I received my bachelor's degree, I nevertheless entered

Harvard Law School in the autumn of 1950. Three weeks into my first semester I decided to listen to my heart.

The Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences did not begin instruction until three weeks after the start of Law School classes, and when I petitioned for immediate transfer to the Graduate School I was accepted.

With some trepidation, I telephoned my parents in order to inform them of my decision. My father, a World War I Marine Corps veteran who had been wounded at the Battle of Belleau Wood, asked what I planned to do with the rest of my life. When I responded that I was going to be a football coach, 30 seconds of painful silence preceded his terse admonition: "Be a good one!"

At Harvard I majored in history with a heavy emphasis on English history. I cannot avow that what I learned at Harvard prepared me precisely for a career as a football coach. Perhaps being immersed in an environment where such earnest enthusiasm pervaded all of the activities—intellectual and nonacademic—of those who made up the Harvard community helped me understand how important it is to be associated with people who are intrinsically motivated.

It is likely I was the only student at Harvard who, while studying for a master's degree, intended to become a football coach. I became sharply aware of that distinction one Saturday evening when, along with several other Harvard graduate students, I attended a social function at Wellesley. In response to a question from one of the Wellesley students regarding my future, I answered with honest innocence that I planned to be a football coach.

Candor, at times, has its rewards. Throughout the remainder of the evening that young woman insisted upon introducing me to many of her delightful Wellesley classmates as "Harvard's Official Class Humorist."

Upon receiving my master's degree from Harvard, I accepted a job at St. Louis Country Day School, where my duties included teaching English and history in addition to serving as an assistant football coach.

LETTERS

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. . . 28 years ago! Studying and living among other cultures expands one's horizon beyond description. Because I became very successful in the United States and noticed the lack of knowledge on behalf of young Americans regarding other languages and cultures, I decided to return some of my financial success to the community, and among other things to establish a Study-Aboard-in-Germany scholarship in 1993, since Arizona State University (my alma mater) did not have one. The first student under this program left three months ago for Regensburg, Germany, and I hope that her experience will be a positive one, learning more about the people, the culture, the educational system, but most of all that it will foster greater goodwill among the international community. . . .

Uta M. Behrens, Phoenix, Ariz.



Marvin D. Levy

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When I walked out onto the practice field in St. Louis for the first time as an assistant coach, I had no thoughts that I might someday coach in the National Football League. My football-playing experience had been limited to high school and to small-college competition. My playing abilities, while allowing perhaps for a prudent amount of swagger at fraternity parties, did not qualify me for play at the professional level. The professional scouts knew that, and so did I.

I had spent two years at Country Day School when Dick Clausen, my former head coach at Coe College, telephoned offering me an assistant coaching position at my alma mater. Elated, I accepted. My wife, after sharing my joy, asked what my salary would be. "I certainly didn't ask him that!" I answered indignantly.

Dick Clausen was a brilliant coach, and after our team experienced several successful seasons at Coe, he moved to the University of New Mexico as their new head coach. I joined him as an assistant on his staff, eventually succeeding him there as head coach when he left to become director of athletics at the University of Arizona.

At that time I had become the youngest head coach of a major college team in the country. Today I am the oldest head coach in the National Football League. Challenge my coaching accomplishments if you wish, but my stamina, at least, defies criticism.

I followed my two winning seasons at New Mexico with four years at the University of California and then five more at the College of William and Mary.

After serving 16 years as a collegiate coach, I accepted an offer to become an assistant with the Philadelphia Eagles of the National Football League. Assistantships with the Eagles and then with the Los Angeles Rams and the Washington Redskins eventually led to head coaching positions, first at Montreal in the Canadian Football League and then back to the NFL with the Kansas City Chiefs and the Buffalo Bills.

I have had the good fortune to be associated with successful programs in a highly competitive field. Outstanding educators such as Davis Y. Paschall, president of William and Mary, and my professors at Coe and at Harvard along with coaches such as Dick Clausen and Harris Lamb at Coe and George Allen with the Rams and Redskins provided for me, by example, a defining concept of what good leadership should be.

Leadership, I concluded, is the ability to get other people to get the very best from themselves. Accomplishing this depends not upon persuading others to follow you but upon succeeding in getting them to join you.

I cannot avow that what I learned at Harvard prepared me precisely for a career as a football coach. Perhaps being immersed in an environment where such earnest enthusiasm pervaded all of the activities . . . helped me understand how important it is to be associated with people who are intrinsically motivated.

Although I know of few other Phi Beta Kappa members in professional athletics, I have not been deprived of intellectual nourishment. On college campuses and within the large cities where I have lived there are unlimited cultural opportunities. Despite the technological avalanche of innovative electronic distractions, there are still books, and I remain an ardent reader. Among my favorite authors are Charles Dickens, Leon Uris, Thomas Wolfe, and Herman Wouk.

Would I wish to travel a different path if I were granted an opportunity to begin again? My answer is no.

I often think back to my coaches at Coe College. They inspired in me an idealistic—some might say naive—belief that honest athletic competition is a healthy, enjoyable, and worthwhile endeavor. On occasion,

disgraceful events occur which test that viewpoint, but my idealism prevails, for I believe that the day a person becomes a cynic is the day he loses his youth.

Recently, I was asked what advice I might have for young people today. It is presumptuous of me to assume that my opinions are better than their instincts. Nevertheless, I offer the following:

1. Expect rejection, but expect even more strongly to overcome it. There will be many "failures" sprinkled among the successes you enjoy. A failure becomes just one bad time at bat if you refuse to let it defeat you.
2. Whatever life's work you decide upon, avoid choosing it primarily for reasons of security or because of the money involved.
3. So long as you are not being merely impetuous, do not be reluctant to follow your heart.

This is the same advice I directed at myself shortly after I entered Harvard many years ago, and following it has allowed me to say, often with a touch of wonderment in my voice, the words I have addressed to our players as our teams have huddled along the sideline just before the kickoff of every game during my 44 years of coaching: "Where else would you rather be than right here, right now!"

Marvin D. Levy, Buffalo, N.Y.



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RECOMMENDED READING

BOOK COMMITTEE

Humanities: Svetlana L. Alpers, Frederick J. Crosson, Simon W. McVeigh, Robert P. Sonkowsky, Jean Sudrann, Lawrence Willson

Social Sciences: Earl W. Count, Louis F. Harlan,

Thomas McNaugher, Catherine E. Rudder, Anna J. Schwartz

Natural Sciences: Ronald Geballe, Russell B. Stevens

Ronald Geballe

Bad Science: The Short Life and Weird Times of Cold Fusion. Gary Taubes. Random House, 1993. \$25.

It was obvious from the time and style of the initial announcement about “cold fusion” that this subject would provide material for a deluge of publications, some technical and others for the general public. The deluge has abated, although a residue of scientists still probe the subject. We should still expect bursts, but this meticulous study of the developing story (Taubes interviewed more than 260 persons) covering the period from 1989 to 1992 leaves little room for doubt that, whatever was observed, it could not have been fusion of any kind. The narrative of events, from time to time and place to place, tells of research gone astray, of academic politics taking over, of confused federal policies, and of the addiction of the press to reporting a story at any cost.

Heisenberg's War: The Secret History of the German Bomb. Thomas Powers. Knopf, 1993. \$27.50.

Before World War II, many people considered Erwin Heisenberg the world's leading active physicist. Many American physicists and those who had fled Europe knew him well and, for good reason, respected his knowledge and imagination. He declined offers to emigrate to the United States, leaving his friends with doubts about his sympathies for and connection with the Nazis. He never revealed his inner thoughts; many authors have tried to uncover them. Powers's balanced treatment is the latest and most comprehensive

in dealing with the entire German bomb enterprise and the uncertainty over Heisenberg's role.

Complexity: The Emerging Science at the Edge of Order and Chaos. M. Mitchell Waldrop. Simon and Schuster, 1992. \$23.

The question is, “How can a collection of simple entities interact so as to produce order, structure?” Put another way, “How can a great many independent agents organize themselves to form a complex structure?” Or, “Are there general principles that allow spontaneous self-organization?” These questions are common to a variety of seemingly disparate areas: physics, economics, biology, cosmology. The main thrust of science for centuries has been reductionist, to seek inner workings and ultimate entities. But to explain such phenomena as boiling and freezing, the evolution of organisms, sudden economic change such as major stock market fluctuations, even the flocking of birds, one needs to cope with shifts from equilibrium, with shifts that lead to new states of equilibrium or to chaotic states, with a system “at the edge of chaos.”

Waldrop describes the evolution of the Santa Fe Institute, formed to bring together outstanding economists, physicists, biologists, mathematicians, and computer experts who have shown interest in such questions. Whether there is, or will be, a science of Complexity is answered for the present by the final sentence, “All these terms like emergence, life, adaptation, complexity—these are the things we're still trying to figure out.”

Icons and Symmetries. Simon L. Altmann. Oxford/Clarendon, 1992. \$29.95.

One lesson taught here is that an icon of a thing is not necessarily a correct representation of it. A directed line segment is a good representation of some physical objects, displacement, for example, but an inadequate representation of the properties of a wire carrying an electric current. Altmann, in three lectures aimed at a general scientific audience, treats the relationships between physical objects and the icons used to represent them. One deals with the history of the “Oersted Paradox”; another with Hamilton, Rodrigues, and the symmetry properties of vectors, quaternions, and spinors; and a third with the use of symmetry breaking in treating energy levels in solids, the Peierls instability. In the final two chapters Altmann uses some mathematics, but there is much here that one can appreciate even qualitatively.

Pauper and Prince: Ritchey, Hale, and Big American Telescopes. Donald E. Osterbrock. Univ. of Arizona, 1993. \$45.

George Willis Ritchey was the premier designer and builder of telescopes in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and a superb astronomical photographer. George Ellery Hale was the premier astronomy fundraiser and observatory organizer during this period. Ritchey came from a blue-collar family and had little academic training; Hale's background was definitely upper class. The 200-inch telescope of the Palomar observatory is named after Hale; almost all other large reflectors use a design of Ritchey's that Hale had dismissed. Ritchey made many other brilliant contributions to telescope design. For a time the two needed each other, but their complex personalities caused an irrevocable clash and led to Ritchey's summary banishment by the powerful Hale and to near obscurity for this remarkable person. Osterbrock provides a fascinating tale of ambition, pride, and sheer ability based on letters preserved in

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RECOMMENDED READING

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archives and interviews with persons who knew Ritchey.

The Recollections of Eugene P. Wigner as told to Andrew Szanton. *Plenum, 1992. \$24.50.*

Wigner, little known outside the world of physicists, is one of the generation who followed the creators of quantum physics. His contributions, which have been many and profound, include the foundation of the powerful theories of symmetries in quantum mechanics as well as many basic properties of atomic nuclei and nuclear reactions. He was a principal designer of the first atomic pile in Chicago and the Hanford works, so important to the development of atomic energy. Prewar Hungary contributed four remarkable scientists to the emerging preeminence of the United States: John von Neumann, Leo Szilard, Edward Teller, and Eugene Wigner. But this book is not about their science; it tells of their youth in Hungary, their enduring friendship, their unmitigated hatred of Hitler and the Nazis, and their determination that the United States be firmly in charge during postwar years. Wigner is now in his 90s; his memoirs are rich with his personality, his struggles, and his successes.

Designing the Molecular World: Chemistry at the Frontier. *Philip Ball. Princeton, 1994. \$29.95.*

The frontier implied here is the frontier of chemistry, a science that is very much on the move. The book, aimed at the nonscientist, is divided into three parts. The first deals with structure and bonding, dynamics and kinetics, spectroscopy and crystallography—topics that are more or less traditional but are continually finding new paths provided by new methods and understanding. The second part has to do with the way in which molecular physics and chemistry affect molecular biology, materials science, and electronics. The last part discusses chemistry as a process that influenced the development of complex systems on earth and that has a vital effect on our environment. Ball offers many examples of the nature of

molecules simple and complex and of the ways in which they can be constructed and used.

Earl W. Count

The De Soto Chronicles: The Expedition of Hernando de Soto to North America in 1539–1542. 2 vols. *Ed. by Lawrence A. Clayton, Vernon James Knight Jr., and Edward C. Moore. Univ. of Alabama, 1993. \$50 for the set.*

The Chronicles themselves, of course, are beyond a mere review; their marshaling here is a worthy tour de force. The phenomenal De Soto ranged from Peru to the Mississippi on foot and hoof in four years; and so he glimpsed a varied and still quite aboriginal folk, and that Mississippi culture, the most advanced North American achievement ever, soon to become nothing but traces.

The fine scholarship of these memorial volumes is a boon to scholars of like minds, and to you who, like me, read as you run. The volumes contain fresh translations, from the Spanish and Portuguese, of the four well-known principal accounts, plus several minor documents of the day, an interpretive essay, and an impressive bibliography.

A History of God: The 4,000-Year Quest of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. *Karen Armstrong. Knopf, 1993. \$27.50.*

An arresting title for a superlative descendant. Of the great religions, only these three are monotheisms. Although their origins were centuries apart, they have sprung from one stock, among peoples who jostled each other, spiritually and mentally as well as physically. And although each religion went its own way, at their deepest their thinkers often seemed to paraphrase the ultramontane seers. To know the history of One God, you must study three subdivisions of it. I like the chapter headings: A Light unto the Gentiles (Judaism); Trinity: the Christian God; Unity: The God of Islam; The God of the Mystics (unswallowable by scientists—unfortunately, in the last analysis); A God for Reformers (more a good thing than bad); Enlightenment (Christianity in the 18th century, a logical but

costly purgation); The Death of God? Does God Have a Future?

The last, interrogative chapters, in the nature of things, must walk by faith not by sight—yet by an insight sharpened from all that has gone before.

The Oxford Illustrated Prehistory of Europe. *Ed. by Barry Cunliffe. Oxford, 1994. \$39.95.*

The anlagen of the unique and colossal accomplishment that is Europe, from its earliest surviving tools to the end of “barbarism”—700,000 years. Yesterday’s 40,000 years attest the hunter-artist; 4,000 still more recent years cover isolated, rudimentary city-states (the “palace civilizations” of Crete and Mycenae) to the pandemic civilization of today.

Eleven British authorities in 13 essays tell this epic simply, compactly, lucidly. The now-idle monuments—tools, tumuli, graves, huts—have grown in time ever more eloquent. Europe is a compact vastness and an ethnographic mosaic the parts of which have intercommunicated commercially, politically, intellectually, belligerently more or less *ab initio*. South and east of the Alps, the Rhine, and the Danube is circum-Mediterranean Europe—progenitor of civilization (though its southern littoral has been somewhat lost since the Muslim overrun). North of this frontier, Europe lingered in “barbarism” until western Rome collapsed. Since then, the cisalpine and transalpine Europes have melded, and barbarism has obsolesced (ca. A.D. 700). “History” arrived many centuries before “prehistory” ceased. If you have already devoted some shelf space to Europe’s prehistory, this magnificent tome will preside.

Lawrence Willson

Collected Travel Writings. *Henry James. Vol. 1. Great Britain and America: English Hours, The American Scene, Other Travels. Vol. 2. The Continent: A Little Tour in France, Italian Hours, Other Travels. With notes by Richard Howard and illustrations by Joseph Pennell. Library of America, 1993. \$35 each volume.*

It has been said that the writings here collected, originally published as periodical essays, qualify their author as "one of the greatest of all travel writers," a judgment with which it would be difficult to quarrel, for James's alertness to significant detail and his sensitivity to the ambience of place, presented with his customary exquisiteness of style, make his visitations and revisitations seem drawn from his novels and tales, where a sense of place is always paramount. The first volume carries us from his first acquaintance with England in 1869–70 to his final reacquaintance with his native land, "the murky modern Babylon," more than 30 years later. As in the second volume, the text ranges through his various developments of style, from James I through James II to, at last, the Old Pretender.

His tours of France and Italy throb in Jamesian fashion with the excitement of discovery. Consider his rhapsodic reaction to Venice, for example, or his opposite reaction to the ugliness of the town of Chartres, where even the cathedral failed to awaken in him the aesthetic and emotional excitement that his friends Henry Adams and James Russell Lowell felt there. It left him quite literally cold. Although he admired the vastness and grandeur of the architecture, he looked at it rapidly, he said, for "the winter hereabouts has sought an asylum in Chartres cathedral. . . . I supposed I had been in cold churches before, but the delusion had been an injustice to the temperature of Chartres." Nor was he greatly impressed by the pictures in the Pitti Palace in Florence, but he was never much interested in museums, tombs for the glories of the past, even though crucial scenes in his fiction occur in them.

Tenth Muse Lately sprung up in America," the author of "Severall Poems, compiled with great variety of Wit & Learning, full of delight." Hollander has assembled in these volumes roughly 1,000 poems written by nearly 150 of her successors, most of them equally "full of delight." Here is the browser's dream, indeed, wherein you will meet old favorites—such as the once but nowadays unimaginably popular Household Poets, Whittier and the famous trio of Harvard singing faculty, Longfellow, Lowell, and Holmes—and you will make the acquaintance of others, whose names you will be hearing for the first time: George Moses Horton, Samuel Henry Dickson, Rose Terry Cooke, Augusta Cooper Bristol, who at first glance may seem to be admissible to the company of their more famous peers because they also are known by three names. It is instructive to note, by the space allotted to him, the steadily rising reputation of Trumbull Stickney, and the almost total eclipse of George Cabot Lodge, once hailed, at least by his father, the famous senator from Massachusetts, as the great poet of the future. A unique feature of this

splendid anthology is that it contains more than 100 Indian poems and 65 pages of folk songs and spirituals.

Autobiographies. *Frederick Douglass. Ed. by Henry Louis Gates Jr. Library of America, 1994. \$35.*

The first of three autobiographies contained here, "Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave," was published in 1845, seven years after he escaped from bondage, at the age of 21. He wrote it as a fugitive slave, fearful of being returned to slavery but determined to show his former owner (never really his "master") that he could become literate (as that owner had systematically and repeatedly forbidden him to do) and tell his story of revelation, of "the inescapable truth that slavery made a sham of the principles on which America was built." He told his story again, at greater length, in "In My Bondage and My Freedom" in 1855; and finally, in 1881 (updated here to 1893, two years before he died), in his "Life and Times," in which he makes clear why he had become the most influential black American of the 19th century. It is a

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The American Scholar

"The American Scholar, the quarterly journal of Phi Beta Kappa, is quiet — the cover is always just a plain list of article titles — and of course brainy. But give it a chance, and it can become an addiction, especially if you have a taste for humanistic essays."

— William F. Powers, *The Washington Post*

Perhaps you'd like to settle down for the winter months with some good reading material at hand. If so, we'd like to suggest that you subscribe now to *The American Scholar*. Among the articles scheduled to appear in the forthcoming Winter 1995 issue are "America and Its Discontents," by Oscar and Lilian Handlin; "Living Abroad," by Matthew Stevenson; "Home Remedies," by Floyd Skloot; and "Jewish Gangsters," by Joe Kraus. Also appearing will be "Well-Informed," an essay by the *Scholar's* editor, Joseph Epstein, along with a fine selection of book reviews and poetry.

We think you will enjoy reading this issue and many more to come. To order, just complete and return the coupon below. The issue will be mailed in December.

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American Poetry: The Nineteenth Century. Vol. 1. Freneau to Whitman. Vol. 2. Melville to Stickney, American Indian Poetry, Folk Songs and Spirituals. Ed. by John Hollander. Library of America, 1993. \$35 each volume.

America has been a nation of singers since Anne Bradstreet appeared on the national scene in 1650 as "The

RECOMMENDED READING

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

moving tale, worth telling three times. His indictments of injustice and hypocrisy are timeless, applying to current history as aptly as they did a century ago.

The Library of America has ministered well to our present desire to learn as much as we can about the causes of the Civil War, its conduct, and the immediate aftermath. Place beside the autobiographies of Douglass two volumes published a couple of years ago, the memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant and W. T. Sherman (boxed together as *Civil War Memoirs*); two volumes of the speeches and other writings of Abraham Lincoln; and an earlier volume (available at \$40), *Three Novels* by Harriet Beecher Stowe, which contains *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; and you will have a fair idea of what was going on in America between 1840 and 1870, with an account of "how and why the North won the Civil War." (Incidentally, *Civil War Memoirs* was edited by southerners, as if to vouch for their authenticity—two Georgians and a professor of history in Louisiana.) These books are truly significant scriptures of the nation, the most important since *The Debate on the Constitution* (also published by the Library of America).

Novels and Stories: Deephaven, A Country Doctor, The Country of the Pointed Firs, Dunnet Landing Stories, Selected Stories and Sketches. Sarah Orne Jewett. Ed. by Michael Davitt Bell. Library of America, 1994.

A few years ago, Willa Cather, Jewett's most famous (and perhaps only) protégée, observed that *The Country of the Pointed Firs* ranked beside *The Scarlet Letter* and *Huckleberry Finn* as one of the "three American books which have the possibility of a long life. I can think of no others that can front time and change so serenely." At the time it seemed that such praise, despite its seeming extravagance, was deserved; but then the canon changed, and even the name of Jewett faded out of the consciousness of the literary estab-

lishment, although she remained in literary history as an important local colorist, a practitioner of Howells's "realism of the commonplace." Jewett's narratives, quietly told, depict the inner drama of mostly independent, capable, mature women in small towns in southwestern Maine who find fulfillment, generally without the assistance of men. Jewett speaks with the authentic voice of New England through such stalwart characters as Mrs. Blackett in *The Country of the Pointed Firs*, aged 86, "one of them spry, light footed little women. . . . [who's] seen all the trouble folks can see. . . . [but] Life ain't spoilt her a mite."

Sarah Orne Jewett: Reconstructing Gender. Margaret Roman. Univ. of Alabama Press, 1993. \$28.95.

The determination of Jewett's strong female characters to succeed on their own terms creates, says Roman, a consistent "gender dissolving" theme in her works. Couples marry young, assume traditional roles, and stay together too long, abandoning any pattern for growth and discovery. They are consequently dissatisfied and unhappy, unable to develop their individually inherent personalities. They allow society to serve as the arbiter of their lives, forcing them to be stereotypes. Jewett's contention, and very contemporary it is, is that couples should reverse their roles and be more "complete" as human beings. Jewett took little stock in "romance," which is about power, not love. She told Whittier that she herself had never been in love "without reservation" and that "she was more in need of a wife than a husband." She "seemed incapable of perceiving herself as inferior in any dimension. No one would take care of her; she could amply give direction to her own life." Her 30-year "relationship" with Annie Fields was a union of two vigorously self-reliant individuals, as all marriages should be. Sexuality was for both of them "a functioning of the substance of a person," not a physical relationship; but certain unpublished poems addressed to Mrs. Fields raise a question—as well, perhaps, as a few eye-

brows—about the exact nature of that "Boston marriage."

New Essays on *The Country of the Pointed Firs*. Ed. by June Howard. Cambridge Univ. (American Novel Series), 1994. \$29.95; paper, \$11.95.

It is safe to assume that the five essays in this book, edited by a woman and all but one written by women, represent the very latest and best in feminist literary criticism, tempered by the very latest tenets of what is called "theory," derivative (I think!) from the New Criticism of a half-century ago. Moreover, since the book is the latest in a series designed for undergraduate studies, it gives us a glimpse of how Sarah Orne Jewett will be taught to the rising generation of college students. Once again she will assume the status of major writer, *Pointed Firs* being described by the editor as "fully the equal in craft and resonant substance of the novels to which Cather compared it," and as one of "the most rewardingly complex narratives we have, far exceeding the condescending praise that Henry James accorded it as 'a beautiful little quantum of achievement'."

She will be lauded for her broad social understanding and her prescient awareness of what America was becoming. Her stories describe a community touched by "many phenomena associated with a modernizing America: the influence of journalism, factory layoffs, the rise of tourism [she lived in Maine—"Vacationland"], the relations between native-born Americans and immigrants." Dunnet Landing, the small town of *Pointed Firs*, with its inevitable complicated web of human relationships characteristic of all small towns, is exemplary of her power, beyond simple realism, to construct a community. Her novel, says the critic, "is infused with a vivid experience of locality and a powerful sense of interconnectedness." Finally, it will be made clear that she was "a woman writing for women," who may no longer rock the cradle but who still rule the world.

Anna J. Schwartz

The State and Labor in Modern America. *Melvyn Dubofsky. Univ. of North Carolina, 1994. \$34.95; paper, \$14.95.*

Dubofsky reexamines the historical relationship between the federal government and trade unionism since the 1870s. He distinguishes six significant periods when state intervention furthered union growth (1898–1903, 1916–20, the New Deal years, World War II, 1950–53, 1964–68), contrasting his approach that suggests a positive state role at particular junctures with interpretations of state action as designed to repress militant unionism. The author ends his account with the reversal of the fortunes of unionism since the 1980s, as global economic competition exerts pressure on workers to adapt to nonadversarial industrial relations regimes.

Economists and Higher Learning in the Nineteenth Century. *Ed. by William J. Barber. Transaction, 1993. \$24.95.*

Originally published in 1988 under a different title, the essays in this volume document the travails on the road to the attainment of professional standing for economics as a discipline at each of 14 academic institutions from before the Civil War to the end of the 19th century. Initially, instruction in a moral-philosophizing style was displaced by the need to analyze post-Civil War economic problems. How the long-established institutions and the ones newly created met this challenge, who were the leading figures in this transformation, and what were the competing perspectives on the content of economics are the questions the authors of the individual institutional studies examine. A concluding essay links the professionalization of American economics with the revolution in higher education that embraced new subjects and emphasized advanced specialized study and research.

Privatization in Eastern Europe: Is the State Withering Away? *Roman Frydman and Andrzej Rapaczynski. Central European Univ. Press, 1994. \$19.95.*

Two American academics who grew up in Communist Poland report on the outcome of attempts by former Communist economies to privatize state-owned enterprises as one step in their transition to market economies. They also report the evolution of their ideas on how to achieve this objective. Because they actively participated in early policy debates in Poland and later observed privatization practices as they conducted research in a number of countries, their intellectual odyssey is part of their account, which also offers a wide-ranging review of actual experience.

The authors' initial idea was to issue vouchers to citizens who would deposit them with investment funds that would bid for enterprises to gain control and restructure them. This was the blueprint of the Czech and Slovak republics. Other governments, however, did not want outsider private control, but preferred owning the investment funds and hiring managers under short-term contracts to run them. In addition, in most countries privatized enterprises were turned over to insiders—workers or managers—whose main concern was job preservation, not profitability. If outsiders would nevertheless invest in these enterprises, restructuring could proceed, but the authors believe that this capital inflow is unlikely because respect for property rights is not well established.

The authors' ultimate position is that political power limits economic reform. Because the capital stock in Eastern Europe is obsolete, privatization involves not only restructuring existing institutions but reallocating resources across different sectors and shrinking some. In this context, owners of a privatized enterprise of low economic value may choose to seek government subsidies. Given the need for resource reallocation, the state may still prevail over economic decisions even in a transitional regime of privatized enterprise.

The Privileges of Independence: Neomercantilism and the American Revolution. *John E. Crowley. Johns Hopkins, 1993. \$32.50.*

This history of thought from the 1750s to U.S. independence deals with ideas on both sides of the Atlantic about the role of government in commercial policy. The sources for the analysis are letters, pamphlets, books, essays, government reports, and congressional debates in the context of events. Despite the colonists' resistance to parliamentary authority, they did not regard regulation of colonial trade, which also conferred privileges, as a grievance. Mercantilist doctrine that foreign trade was the sole source of national wealth was received wisdom in both the colonies and the mother country, but Adam Smith's refutation of the doctrine had greater influence in Britain than in the new republic, which continued to support mercantilist views.

Profits, Priests, and Princes: Adam Smith's Emancipation of Economics from Politics and Religion. *Peter Minowitz. Stanford, 1993. \$45.*

A broader setting for Adam Smith's disdain for mercantilism and British imperialism is available in this study not only of *The Wealth of Nations* but also of Smith's other writings. Minowitz first compares Smith's thought with that of his predecessors. Throughout, the author indicates the divergence between his interpretations and those of contemporary scholars.

His central concern is to reconsider the contradiction between the theme of self-interest in *The Wealth of Nations* and that of sympathy in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. The reconciliation of the contradiction the author offers is that both books seek to harmonize the individual and society. He finds the treatment of religion more sympathetic in *Moral Sentiments* than in *The Wealth of Nations*, with its secular account that belittles religion and politics, but the ambiguities in the former push it toward atheism. A concluding chapter examines the relation of Smith's approach to the withering of religion and politics in Marx's work.

CONTINUED ON BACK COVER

RECOMMENDED READING

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

Russell B. Stevens

Sowing the Wind: Reflections on the Earth's Atmosphere. Louise B. Young. Prentice Hall, 1990. \$17.95.

The Changing Atmosphere: A Global Challenge. John Firor. Yale, 1990. \$22; paper, \$8.

Ozone Diplomacy: New Directions in Safeguarding the Planet. Richard Elliot Benedick. Harvard, 1991. \$30; paper, \$11.95.

In a sense, these three books address the same issues concerning the nature of our atmosphere and some of the dangers that many people foresee. The first two are both short (less than 200 pages), clearly written, informative, and readily understandable to the nonspecialist. Young's work is the more lyrical of the two, Firor's a notch or two more technical. Both can be read with pleasure and profit. *Ozone Diplomacy*, by the chief U.S. negotiator, shows a detailed account of how very difficult and time-consuming is the process of arriving at an international agree-

ment on steps to alleviate just one of the threats on the horizon—an essential reminder of the enormous effort involved.

The Outer Reaches of Life. John Postgate. Cambridge Univ., 1994. \$22.95.

How, the author asks in the preface, "without formulae and diagrams, does one explain the glorious inwardness of biology, when so much of it is rooted in chemistry?" The answer lies, I think, in the book at hand. Writing clearly and understandably, without resort to technicalities, Postgate has developed an arresting account of the almost incredible diversity of niches in which microorganisms are to be found, not only surviving but apparently prospering. A further attribute of this work is the attention given to the role of bacteria and similar organisms over the first billion or so years of life's evolutionary history.

Tales of the Earth: Paroxysms and Perturbations of the Blue Planet. Charles Officer and Jake Page. Oxford, 1994. \$10.95.

In seeking to provide the nonspecialist with an understanding and

appreciation of Earth from a geologist's vantage point, the authors have hit upon an attractive device. Not only do they employ downright chatty chapter titles, but they consistently and effectively tie the description of each given factor—volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and the like—to historical and cultural events in human society. The resulting mixture is excellent.

The Runaway Brain: The Evolution of Human Uniqueness. Christopher Wills. Basic Books (Harper-Collins), 1993. \$25.

Timewalkers: The Prehistory of Global Colonization. Clive Gamble. Harvard, 1994. \$24.95.

Stimulated perhaps by new technologies and by new archaeological finds, there seem to be at least four active lines of inquiry in the matter of human evolution: molecular genetics, dating of fossils, interplay of similar ancestral species, and patterns of early migrations. The books here identified, as their titles indicate, are scholarly and readable treatments of two aspects of the overall fabric. Each is well worth the time to be read carefully.

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