



## Marie Ponsot Receives ΦBK Poetry Award for 2002



*Yusef Komunyakaa presents a bronze medal to Marie Ponsot. David and Allan Winston, at left and right, created the award.*

Marie Ponsot received the 2002 Phi Beta Kappa Poetry Award at a Washington, D.C., luncheon in November. She received \$10,000 and a bronze medal for "Springing: New and Selected Poems," published by Knopf.

The award was established by Allan and David Winston to honor their late parents, Joseph and May Winston. Joseph, a lawyer and Phi Beta Kappa Fellow, loved poetry and often hosted literary salons. The award is funded by the Joseph and May Winston Foundation and the J and M Foundation. Last year the inaugural award was presented to Kenneth Koch.

"The Phi Beta Kappa Society is very pleased to honor Ms. Ponsot for her compelling and original poetry," said John Churchill, the ΦBK secretary.

"And we are grateful to the Winstons for the opportunity to recognize some of our nation's most accomplished poets. Allan's and David's foundations share the mission of Phi Beta Kappa: to foster excellence in the liberal arts and sciences."

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Phi Beta Kappa's national office has advanced the date of its move to new headquarters. The office will move in the spring. The wrong ZIP code was given in the Fall *Key Reporter*. The correct mailing address is 1606 New Hampshire Avenue NW, Washington DC 20009.

## ΦBK Presents Annual Book Awards



*Winners, from left, are William Calvin, Fredric Cheyette, and Susan Stewart. Behind them are Don Wyatt and Carl Trindle, who presented awards to two of the recipients.*

The Phi Beta Kappa Book Awards for 2002 were presented during the December meeting of the ΦBK Senate in Washington. For more than half a century, the annual awards have recognized outstanding books in the humanities, the natural sciences and mathematics, and the social sciences.

Sixty-six publishers submitted 102 books for the awards. The winners were selected by committees of scholars in the fields represented, and each winner received \$2,500.

The Christian Gauss Award for literary scholarship was established in 1950

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## From the Secretary

# Conversations and Colloquies

By John Churchill  
Secretary, The Phi Beta Kappa Society

At its meeting last December, the Phi Beta Kappa Senate endorsed a document, developed by its Policy and Executive Committees, outlining the objectives and policy issues for the national office. The objectives include improved service to the chapters and associations and, as part of the advancement of the Society's role in advocating for the liberal arts and sciences, alliances with other institutions sharing that aim.

In the spirit of this objective, Phi Beta Kappa is cooperating this winter and spring with the Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts at Wabash College to sponsor four colloquies. The Center was established at Wabash (home of Phi Beta Kappa's Beta of Indiana Chapter) in 2000 through a grant from the Eli Lilly and Company Foundation. Drawing together participants from a variety of colleges and universities, the campus-oriented discussions will complement the association-based Phi Beta Kappa Conversations, which are already in progress around the country.

One of the Wabash-Phi Beta Kappa Colloquies will consider whether there

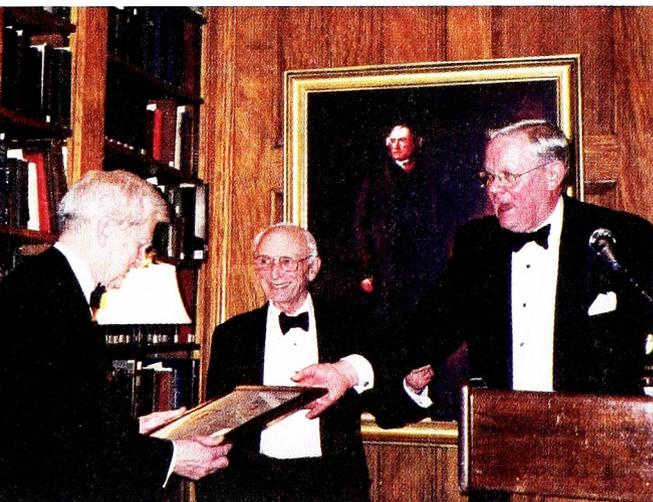
is an essential content to a liberal arts education. Dr. George Allan, longtime provost at Dickinson College, is coordinating that event. A second colloquy will examine the place of the laboratory sciences in liberal education. Deans Neal Abraham of DePauw University and Mauri Ditzler of Wabash will take the lead in that discussion. Professor of Religion William Placher of Wabash is in charge of a third, which will focus on whether a liberal arts education is essentially a Western concept in addition to being—as a matter of historical fact—a Western phenomenon. The fourth, led by Stephen Ainlay, academic vice president at the College of the Holy Cross, will examine the relation between an institution's commitment to the liberal arts and any commitments it may have to religious traditions, doctrines, or institutions.

Each colloquy will involve about 20 participants, drawn from different types of institutions. The aim in each case is to advance and enrich our concept of a liberal education by exploring one dimension of its definition. Running parallel to the Conversations,

the Colloquies will serve as a useful counterpoint to those discussions. The results of both will be channeled into the meetings at the Triennial Council in Seattle on August 6–10.

I am pleased to report that an inaugural event of the Conversations series, the Middle Atlantic District's Symposium at Hunter College, CUNY, was a splendid success. The moderator was Prof. Howard Krukofsky of Hunter College, president of the Middle Atlantic District and one of the moving forces behind the symposium. About 250 people heard the keynote address by Dr. John Brademas on the importance of participation in democratic processes. Phi Beta Kappa's president, Dean Joseph W. Gordon of Yale, spoke on the opportunities for, and obstacles to, serious intellectual discussion on college campuses. Prof. Larry Kramer of the New York University School of Law discussed the political history of constitutional interpretation, and Ms. Betsy Gotbaum, public advocate of the City of New York, dealt with issues of governmental responsiveness to citizens' concerns.

In a spirited exchange that closed the sessions, someone in the audience asked what evidence there is that an education in the liberal arts and sciences does, in fact, lead to responsible citizenship. That is, of course, a central question for Phi Beta Kappa that we are addressing in our Conversations.



*Librarian of Congress James H. Billington received the annual Award of the Fellows of the Society of Phi Beta Kappa last December in New York City. It was presented by David Alexander, right, Fellows vice president and awards committee chair. Murray Drabkin, center, is president of the Fellows. Billington spoke on recent Russian history and U.S.-Russian relations.*

The family of the late Geri Braman Hill has established an endowment for the Phi Beta Kappa Society's Visiting Scholar Program. The \$30,000 gift will support visits to colleges and universities by classics scholars. A member of Phi Beta Kappa, Hill graduated *magna cum laude*, with honors in English, from Pembroke College at Brown University in 1941. She was an Elisha Benjamin Andrews Scholar at Pembroke and received the Lida Shaw King Prize. Her family's gift is in recognition of her fondness for the classics.



# Poetry Award

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Ponsot and four other finalists were selected from 200 poets who submitted their published works for the Phi Beta Kappa Poetry Award. Each of the other finalists received \$2,500. They are Jimmy Santiago Baca for "Healing Earthquakes," T.R. Hummer for "Useless Virtues: Poems," Grace Schulman for "Days of Wonder," and Nathaniel Tarn for "Selected Poems: 1950–2000."

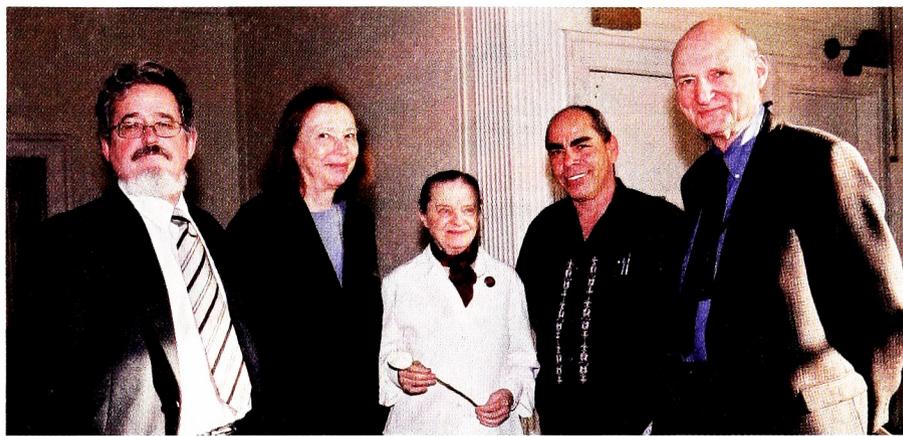
The judge was Yusef Komunyakaa, whose honors include a Pulitzer Prize

in 1994 for "Neon Vernacular: New and Selected Poems, 1977–1989." He is a professor in the Creative Writing Program at Princeton University and a member of the Council of the Humanities.

Born in New York City in 1921, Ponsot graduated from St. Joseph's College for Women in Brooklyn and earned a master's degree at Columbia University. She published her first book of poems at age 35, and her second a quarter-century later after raising seven children, mostly on her own. In 1999 she won the National Book

Critics Circle Award for "The Bird Catcher." Among her other honors are a National Endowment for the Arts grant, the Delmore Schwartz Memorial Prize, and the Shaughnessy Medal of the Modern Language Association.

Ponsot also translates books from French and has written television and radio scripts. She teaches in the graduate writing program at Columbia, and she has taught at Beijing United University, Queens College, the Unterberg Poetry Center of the 92nd Street Y in Manhattan, and New York University. A *New York Times* profile of her in 1999 was headlined, "Recognition at Last for a Poet of Elegant Complexity." Last year *The Philadelphia Inquirer* hailed "Springing" as a "rich and unflinchingly beautiful book."



Poetry Award recipient Marie Ponsot, center, is flanked by finalists, from left, T.R. Hummer, Grace Schulman, Jimmy Santiago Baca, and Nathaniel Tarn at the Washington, D.C., event.

**W**inners of two major Society honors have been announced by the Awards Committee of the Phi Beta Kappa Senate. They are Jonathan Spence, Sterling Professor of History at Yale University, and former U.S. Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky, who teaches in the graduate writing program at Boston University.

Spence has been selected for the Sidney Hook Memorial Award, which commemorates the career of a Society member who was a renowned philosopher and teacher. Pinsky will receive the  $\Phi$ BK Award for Distinguished Service to the Humanities. Both awards will be presented in August at the Society's 40th Triennial Council in Seattle. The winners will speak at the closing banquet.

**T**he Phi Beta Kappa Senate invites Society members to submit their views on the relevance of new instructional technologies, such as distance education and web-based instruction, to the traditional roles of the liberal arts and sciences. This invitation follows a resolution passed in 2000 at the 39th Triennial Council in Philadelphia.

Opinions may be sent by e-mail to the national office at [instructech@pbk.org](mailto:instructech@pbk.org), or by postal mail, "Attention: Instructional Technology." The responses will be used in discussions within Phi Beta Kappa on those issues, and they will help shape the Society's advocacy of liberal education in the context of changing modes of instruction.

## THE KEY REPORTER

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# ΦBK Members Start Theme-Based Journal

By David Haskell

In October 2001, Bill Gates Sr., CEO of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, spoke at Cambridge University in England, where the foundation had recently established an international scholarship to rival the Rhodes scholarship at Oxford. He had come to meet the inaugural class of Gates Cambridge Scholars, about 150 students selected from over 50 countries.

While each of us was passionate about something, we shared few academic interests. Many of us had never been to England, and almost all planned to return home after a few years of study. In the meantime, Bill Gates Sr. asked that we make the effort to meet and learn from each other: in essence, “Make conversation!” For him, this scholarship was a promising metaphor for the interconnected world his son has played no small role in developing.

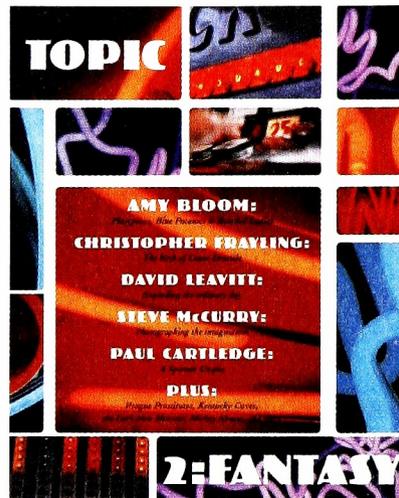
Over the course of the fall, a few of us wondered if we could share this opportunity for conversation. Thanks to the Internet and e-mail, as well as personal networks in our native countries, we had the opportunity to tap into a world of voices. We started exploring the idea of creating a publication that was truly international—not just in subject matter, but in writing as well.

What could be learned, we asked, by broadening the spectrum of thinkers one usually finds in the media? How might reflections based on personal experience and expertise enrich our understanding of subjects currently covered relentlessly, yet somehow numbingly? We decided that those questions deserved answers. To find them, we created *Topic Magazine*.

*Topic* is our attempt to help revitalize public writing. We focus on one theme at a time and print short nonfiction pieces. This structure allows us the freedom to highlight an unparalleled variety of voices. We seek out individuals with professional or academic expertise and invite them to write for a popular

audience. We also welcome novelists interested in exploring nonfiction, artists concerned with the relevance of their work, politicians with an intellectual bent, and anyone with unique experiences and perspectives. Above all, we strive to find and present a refreshing mix of recognized experts and those who are usually unheard.

Our first issue, published last summer, tackled the subject of war, with contributions from, among others, a Polish vice-minister, a Malawian bish-



op, a U.S. World War II veteran, a New York City architect, Harvard professors, a Hong Kong school teacher, and an Azerbaijani relief worker. Among all the comments we received about our inaugural issue, I am most

proud of what ΦBK President Joseph Gordon thought because it speaks clearly to our purpose.

“The war issue,” he wrote, “seems not just brilliantly edited, but curated, like the best museum shows, juxtaposing the scholarly and the intensely personal, and making room for the unexpected and the uninhibited.”

The roster of contributors for *Topic 2: Fantasy* was equally exciting, and a reviewer in *The Nation* wrote: “No magazine I’ve read this year has been anywhere near as consistently intelligent or fresh.”

*Topic* was created by three ΦBK members: Joanna Guldi, Harvard ’00, and Robert B. Gilpin and me, both Yale ’01. We believe strongly in Phi Beta Kappa’s mission to celebrate and share the world of ideas. In today’s increasingly networked society, with unprecedented means of communication, we intend to start a conversation.

*Topic 3: Cities* will be released in February, and it includes leading professors at Yale, the University of Chicago, and MIT, as well as Nobel Peace Prize winner José Ramos-Horta. *Key Reporter* readers are invited to contact us to learn more about *Topic* and our staff of 60 volunteers at [info@topicmag.com](mailto:info@topicmag.com) or PO Box 204956, New Haven CT 06520. Our website, [www.topicmag.com](http://www.topicmag.com), features excerpts from the magazine and additional online-exclusive material. We hope that other FBK members will join us in this fresh, critical, international conversation.

The Phi Beta Kappa Society was saddened to learn of the death in November of Senator James P. Lusardi at the age of 71. He also had served as chair of the Society’s Middle Atlantic District.

Lusardi was Francis A. March Professor Emeritus of English at Lafayette College, where he had taught for 30 years. A 1955 graduate of Lafayette, he earned master’s and doctoral degrees at Yale University. Before joining the Lafayette faculty in 1966, he taught at Williams College, Yale, and Wesleyan University.

He was co-author of “Reading Shakespeare in Performance: King Lear,” and co-editor of the Yale edition of “The Complete Works of St. Thomas More.” Since 1984 he had been co-editor of *Shakespeare Bulletin*, an international journal of performance criticism and scholarship, published at Lafayette. He served as an academic adviser for the reconstruction of Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre in London, which was initiated by the late American actor Sam Wanamaker.

Survivors include Lusardi’s wife of 49 years, two daughters, and four grandchildren.

# “The Computer Ate My Homework” and Other Signs of Progress in Modern Life

**Editor’s Note:** *H. Frederick Filice, who was elected to Phi Beta Kappa at Florida State University, teaches Shakespeare at LeMoyne College in Syracuse, N.Y. His other academic interests include postmodern theory and American cultural studies. He is co-author of “Postmodern Theologies: The Problems of Religious Diversity” but says he takes more pride in the sale of a story to DC Comics.*

By H. Frederick Filice

Who coined the term “labor-saving device” and used it in reference to the computer? The zipper had to be the last labor-saving device we invented. Now to stifle the cries of “Luddite,” let me admit that I *am* a bit of a technophile. I own more than one computer and use technology to the fullest extent possible in my classroom. My syllabi are multimedia extravaganzas.

But does the technology save me any labor? No, it doesn’t. The fact is that I spend as much time using a computer as I would on all the things I would have done without a computer. The real difference is the final product and our expectation of it.

The demands I make on my students, much like the demands made in the modern office, are not what they were 20 years ago. While the computer *has* made it easier to edit, change, and format text and graphics on a page, it has also raised the bar on our basic expectations. Today I demand a pristine document that would have been nearly impossible to produce on a typewriter. Students, however, are spending as much time producing it as one did producing a document on an old Smith Corona, because with the computer comes a host of new problems. Computers don’t back up documents, they lose files, they get infected with viruses, and let’s not even talk about what they do to printers.

“The dog ate my homework” has been replaced with excuses about ink-jet cartridges and lost e-mail. All of this tells me that the labor is still there. I see it most clearly when it’s been avoided. The good students still go out of their way to produce good papers,

and they’re spending the same amount of time that they would have 20 years ago. I just get a more polished product today.

This extends beyond the classroom. Does CGI [Computer Gateway Interface] make it easier to make a movie? No, we merely get a more elaborate product. Does digital recording make it easier to make an album? No, but we get a better sound quality. Does the spreadsheet make figures more exact? No, we just produce more numbers and expect more of our accountants.

## Book Awards

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to honor a former Phi Beta Kappa president and renowned scholar at Princeton University. The 2002 winner was Susan Stewart for “Poetry and the Fate of the Senses,” published by the University of Chicago Press. She is Regan Professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania. John Hollander of the selection committee was unable to attend because of bad weather, so Society President Joseph Gordon read Hollander’s remarks praising Stewart’s book.

The Phi Beta Kappa Award in Science, created in 1959, was presented to William H. Calvin for “A Brain for All Seasons: Human Evolution and Abrupt Climate Change,” also from the University of Chicago Press. Calvin is a theoretical neurobiologist and affiliate professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at the University of Washington School of Medicine. Carl

And how can we really talk about computers as labor-saving devices when there is such a huge industry dedicated to building, selling, and repairing the same machines that are saving us labor?

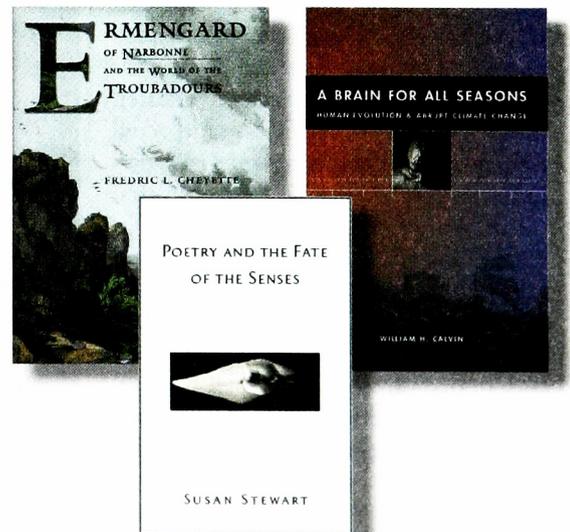
The modern age is characterized by production, and capitalism is all about producing more for less. We produce so much, however, that the factor of labor in the equation never really seems to change. Last time I checked, the 40-hour workweek was still the standard, and over-achievers were still putting in more than that. If we find a device that cuts our workload in half, we double our production. We sacrifice the saved labor for improved output.

So while I can set up my grading in Excel and e-mail it to my office from the comfort of my home, I’m also beset by student e-mails and departmental

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Trindle of the selection committee made the presentation.

The Ralph Waldo Emerson Award in the social sciences was founded in 1960. Fredric L. Cheyette received the 2002 award for “Ermengard of Narbonne and the World of the Troubadours,” published by the Cornell University Press. Cheyette is professor of history at Amherst College. Peter Gay of the selection committee, a 1969 winner, was unable to attend, so the award was presented by Don Wyatt, chair of the Senate’s Awards Committee.





## Among Our Key People

At first glance, only fame links Martin Luther King Jr., Angela Lansbury, Clarence Darrow, Cab Calloway, and Samuel Beckett. But like 2,000 other notable 20th-century figures, their lives and careers have been brought together in the Department of Special Collections at Boston University.

This is a tribute to one man's foresight, persistence, and—by his own cheerful admission—willingness to beg, cajole, and flatter. As Howard Gotlieb marks his 40th year as founder and director of BU's Special Collections at age 76, he can take pride in pioneering an unusual skill. That is the art of acquiring original research materials about people of achievement while they are alive and can contribute these themselves, sometimes even before they become prominent.

When BU offered a position to Gotlieb in 1963, he was curator of historical manuscripts at Yale University, concentrating on such renowned but dead white males as Napoleon, Washington, and Lincoln. BU had a small, traditional collection of rare books and manuscripts, and neither the budget nor the endowment to explore new directions. Its president, Harold C. Chase, agreed, however, that Gotlieb could focus on contemporary material, which was receiving little attention at other institutions.

"The field was wide open then," he said in a phone interview. "Now it's large and, I hope, illustrious. We created our own competition. We needed not just writers, poets, novelists—we needed individuals in music, theater, film, journalism, politics, and civil rights to give future scholars a true picture of the century. We were the first institution to do this."

Housed in the University's Mugar Library, today the collection's holdings occupy seven miles of shelves. There are diaries, manuscripts, notebooks, journals, drafts, galleys, scrapbooks, reviews, photographs, films, personal and professional correspondence, and various

editions of published works. There are Oscars, Emmys, Tonys, Fred Astaire's dancing shoes, opera basso Jerome Hines's costumes, and the fatigues that Dan Rather wore in the Gulf War.

Gotlieb said that initially he had to "educate" what he calls his collectees about the value of such material. "They were surprised and even shocked when I approached them," he said, citing the common assumption that one must be dead to merit such treatment. Martin Luther King Jr.—a BU alumnus—had not yet led a march on Selma, Ala. David Halberstam had just returned in 1964 from covering the Vietnam War for *The New York Times*. Germany's brilliant Heinrich Böll had yet to win the Nobel Prize for Literature—or to have his books translated into English.

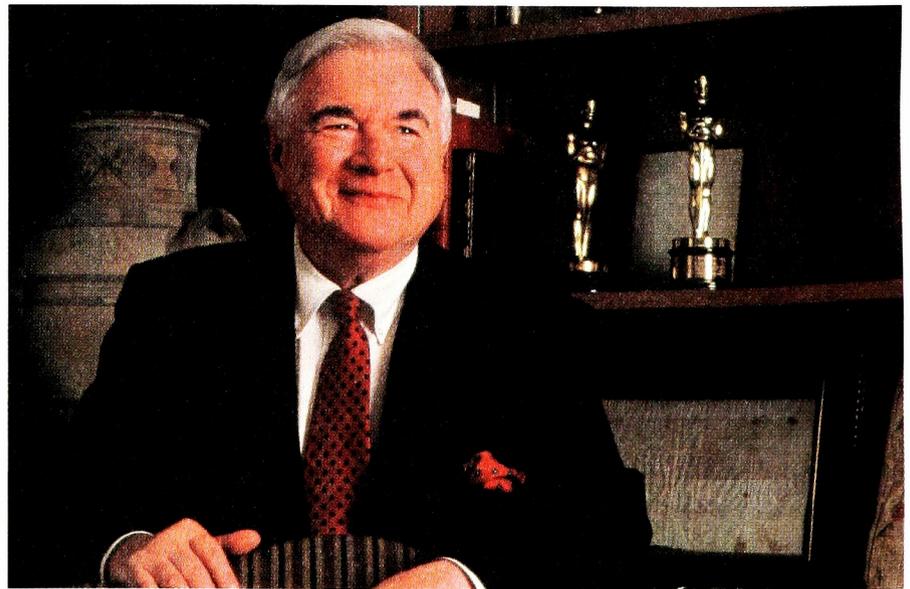
"No two people can be approached in the same way," Gotlieb said. "One has to be somewhat intuitive. It took 10 years to persuade Bette Davis. She'd come and check on me and look me over, send for me, send other people to check on me. What is more personal than your papers? A curator or archivist has to attune himself or herself to the individual to convince them to give their collections."

He said some prospective collectees are reassured to learn who else already is represented: "People are keen on knowing whom they'll be 'entombed' with." Having Astaire's shoes, for instance, helped win over Gene Kelly. And once Roddy McDowall said yes to Gotlieb, he encouraged his Hollywood friends to do the same.

In return, Gotlieb has been "very possessive of my collectees." He confirmed that he has "sometimes written a rather strong letter to a critic if I feel an author's work has been reviewed in a way that was unfair. This may not be the role of a curator, but it is a role I've assumed. Unless there's a strong rapport between the person collecting and the person being collected, it just won't work. I had couches reupholstered for Bette Davis, and arranged for a room especially tailored for Rex Harrison's taste and comfort at the Ritz in Boston."

He said many collectees have visited their materials, "but most have not. So we hold functions regularly in London, Zurich, Los Angeles, New York City, and Palm Beach so the collectees in that area can visit with me, make sure I do exist—and the collection exists."

Why should notables—or notables-to-be—give their materials to BU rather than to their own alma maters or other



*Howard Gotlieb is marking his 40th year as director of Boston University's Special Collections. He has excelled at acquiring materials about notable figures during their lifetimes.*



institutions? "Quite frankly, I may have thought of it first," Gotlieb said. "We have all the Benchleys here—Robert, Nathaniel, Peter, his son—all Harvard men. I don't think Harvard ever approached them. Some august institutions may want to wait until papers are offered to them; I realized I wouldn't have anything if I didn't actively seek them out. No one would come to me; I'd have to go out and massage and persuade and, on occasion, grovel.

"The ambassador from Germany asked if I had certain German authors. 'Yes,' I said. 'Why?' he asked. 'Because I asked for them.' No one in Germany had." (He returned Böll's papers to Hamburg when a major institution was being established there; "it was the right thing to do.") Similarly, he noted, "California institutions were ignoring their primary industry: film. The actors, producers, directors, writers" were ready for Gotlieb's requests. But he said he will never forget the letter from a new widow who said her husband's body "was hardly cold yet."

The Special Collections are not a museum; they are a research library. "Everything we collect is to be used," Gotlieb said. "Anyone with a serious purpose may use them free of charge." He said between 4,000 and 5,000 scholars used them last year, many from abroad. Researchers from China, India, Italy, and Japan studied the King material, which includes 83,000 documents, and a scholar from Norway examined the archive of Harold Gray, creator of "Little Orphan Annie."

There is a Special Collections website, but the contents are not on it. "We say to the donor," Gotlieb said, "that we'll look after the papers, care for them, and let you know who is using them and for what purpose. There's a lot of intimate material, and we do accept restrictions, such as keeping a diary or financial records closed. Martha Gelhorn, Hemingway's third wife, said his material must be closed for 20 years after her death." The papers of Robert Redford and Shirley MacLaine remain sealed until the actors decide they can be opened.

"We urge people to allow their papers to be opened as soon as possible

to scholars," Gotlieb said. "That's the whole object of this enterprise. But if I didn't agree to such requests, they'd be destroyed."

The public is welcome to attend lectures and major exhibits. A recent exhibit celebrated the acquisition of the extraordinary W. Somerset Maugham archive of Loren and Frances Rothschild, which Gotlieb said has made BU "the center of Maugham studies." Currently featured are the archives of Douglas Fairbanks Jr. and "On the Front Line: Women Journalists on War and Politics."

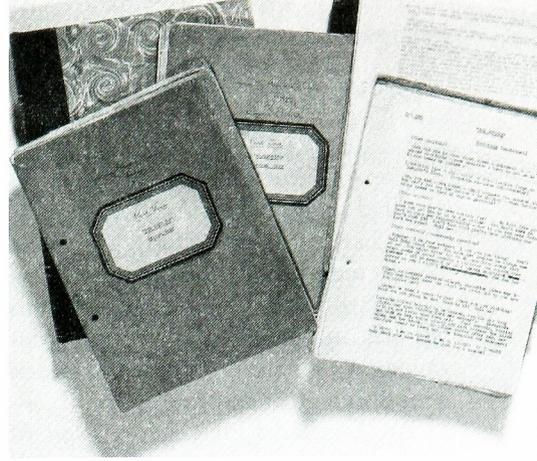
Also on view are "Images of 15th–17th-Century French Architecture"—evidence that the Special Collections are not confined to the 20th century. And last year the books on display included a second folio edition (1555) of Andreas Vesalius's classic volume on anatomy, "*De Humanis Corporis Fabrica*," Virgil's "*Georgicks*" and "*Bucolics*" (1741 and 1749), and two volumes from an extremely rare first edition set of Diderot's "*Encyclopédie*," printed in 1751.

"We have 2,500 individual archives in many fields," Gotlieb said, "and we now have the luxury of building up our pre-20th-century collection. We've pretty well mined the 20th!"

That is just as well because, he noted, "the economy has changed, and people's attitudes have changed relative to their own papers—they see them as a valuable commercial commodity."

Gotlieb also observed that U.S. nonprofit institutions were hit hard in 1971 by a change in federal tax laws affecting charitable donations. But a decade before, he had created Friends of the Libraries of Boston University, which attracted "not just BU people and alumni but also collectors, professional people, who are interested in the growth of the collection. And after 1971 our constituency remained loyal.

"Now we frequent auction houses and antiquarian book dealers. So I walk into a bookshop and see a \$13,500 first edition of 'Oliver Twist,' and I call on loyal members of the Friends to raise the funds to purchase it. The Friends meet four times a year here, and we have one of our authors



*Eugene O'Neill's typewritten manuscript for "Mourning Becomes Electra" has hand-written corrections.*

or film people or journalists give a talk. These events keep Friends feeling very close to the collection."

A native of Bangor, Maine, Gotlieb's first career ambition was the Foreign Service. He was elected to Phi Beta Kappa at George Washington University, where he majored in international relations. But in 1946, the U.S. Army Signal Corps decided that he was an archivist, assigning him to collect Nazi documents in occupied Germany. After military service, he stayed in Europe as a correspondent for the Associated Press and other news agencies. Later he earned a master's degree in modern European history at Columbia University and a doctorate in international relations at the University of Oxford. Then he received a degree from the National Archives Institute, and advanced training at Heidelberg University and the London School of Economics.

The word "retire" does not seem to be in Gotlieb's vocabulary. "I should have retired years ago," he said. "Even the custodians here tip their hats to me—that's a sign. But the chancellor of the university has been good enough to allow me to stay."

So what does he do for fun? "My hobbies extend into my professional life," he said. "I collect modern art, blue and white porcelain, and books that one author has inscribed for another author. They are called association copies, and they're hard to find."

And will he leave his personal collections to BU? Gotlieb gave a hearty laugh. "You sound just like the chancellor. Yes, probably most of them."



# Phi Beta Kappa in the News

*The St. Paul Pioneer Press* (Jan. 5) profiled Minnesota's new governor, Tim Pawlenty, citing his Phi Beta Kappa membership and quoting a colleague who "marveled at his ability to 'absorb an incredible amount of detailed data and apply it in short order. He's also a great communicator.'"

An Associated Press report (Nov. 6) said: "Quick-witted and easygoing, Pawlenty, 41, grew up in a blue-collar neighborhood of South St. Paul, became a Phi Beta Kappa scholar at the University of Minnesota and honor graduate at its law school."

A letter to *The New York Times* (Jan. 5) noted that a Dec. 22 reference to Paul Robeson at Rutgers might have mentioned that he "was the first Rutgers football player to be named All-American—twice. He also won 15 letters in four different sports, won the oratorical prize all four years, made Phi Beta Kappa and was class valedictorian. He went on to get a law degree at Columbia, then became one of America's greatest actor-singers."



Former  $\Phi$ BK Secretary Douglas Foard, right, was honored at a banquet by the Society Chapter at Randolph-Macon College in Ashland, Va., his alma mater, and the Richmond, Va.,  $\Phi$ BK Association. An award for outstanding sophomores has been named for him. With Foard, from left, are Susan Martin, wife of Roger Martin, the College's president; Martin; and Foard's wife, Janet.  $\Phi$ BK Secretary John Churchill and his wife, Jean, also attended.

*Jet Magazine* (Oct. 28) reported that a plaque has been placed on the London house where Robeson lived from 1929 to 1930 while performing in "Showboat." It was installed by English Heritage, a preservation group.

*The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* (Dec. 11) announced that David Shribman would become its executive editor in February. Shribman, a Pulitzer Prize winner, has been *The Boston Globe's* Washington bureau chief and assistant managing editor as well as a syndicated columnist. He previously worked at *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Star*, and *The Buffalo Evening News*. He was elected to Phi Beta Kappa at Dartmouth, graduating *summa cum laude*.

*The New York Times* (Dec. 6) described the recovery of the "Central Park jogger" since she was attacked and severely injured in 1989 in Manhattan. Noting that she was elected to Phi Beta Kappa at Wellesley, the newspaper said that this spring she will publish "I Am the Central Park Jogger: A Story of Hope and Possibility."

*The Sunday Times of London* (Nov. 17) published a profile of Christie Ann Hefner, who "runs the business side of the Playboy empire created by her father, Hugh. She is cool, tough, efficient—and a feminist ... At 20 she was elected to Phi Beta Kappa, the American undergraduate organisation."

An editorial in *The Greensboro (N.C.) News & Record* (Nov. 6) saluted Elizabeth Dole on her election as North Carolina's first female U.S. senator. "She was May queen and Phi Beta Kappa, schooled in the finer points of Southern etiquette in her native Salisbury and the finer points of litigation at Harvard Law."

*The Sacramento Bee* (Oct. 24) profiled Josephine Van Ess, 93, and Diane Davidson, 78, who "are in the final stages of co-authoring a historical

novel, 'Pablo's Gold: A Tale of Early California.' A more unlikely writing team might be hard to find, although both women graduated with honors from college and are members of Phi Beta Kappa."

From *Daily Variety* (Oct. 23): "Further signaling the regime change of executive editor Howell Raines, Steven Erlanger will replace John Darnton as cultural news editor at *The New York Times*, one of the most influential arts jobs in the country ... Erlanger's appointment may contradict the much-publicized notion that Raines sought more pop culture in the arts coverage. A Phi Beta Kappa and a former teaching fellow at Harvard University and the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Erlanger was co-winner of a Pulitzer this year for being part of a team that uncovered the provenance of the terrorist syndicate *Al Qaeda*."

*The Tulsa World* (Oct. 10) reported that Jane Richardson ( $\Phi$ BK Swarthmore), a biochemistry professor at Duke and a MacArthur Fellowship winner, would present a public lecture at the University of Tulsa. She was on campus "as TU's Phi Beta Kappa visiting scholar."

*The Contra Costa [Calif.] Times* (Oct. 8) hailed the selection of Rob Siltanen as "Teacher of the Year of Alameda County." It noted that he was a Phi Beta Kappa at Dartmouth, and after law school he clerked for a U.S. District Court judge and was an attorney at the California Medical Association. "My heart just wasn't in it," Siltanen said. "Without sounding like a cliché, I wanted to influence and positively change the world." He teaches government and economics to high school seniors.

*Poetry Magazine* (Oct. 1) published a poem by Kenneth Koch, "A Momentary Longing to Hear Sad Advice from One Long Dead." A footnote said, "Kenneth Koch published over 20 collections of poetry before his death last July, including 'New Addresses' (Knopf, 2000), for which he was given the first Phi Beta Kappa Poetry Award in 2001."

# Longtime Observer Gives Low Grade To Trends in U.S. Higher Education

**Editor's Note:** Mel Elfin is editor emeritus of the U.S. News & World Report College Guide. He was elected to Phi Beta Kappa at Syracuse University and earned a master's degree in history at Harvard University.

By Mel Elfin

Surely, only the most cranky, cynical, or foolish would slight the momentous contributions of higher education to America's well-being. Since 1636, when Puritan elders converted an acre-and-an-eighth of Cambridge cow yard into the nation's first institution of higher learning, our colleges and universities have been the repository to which we have entrusted our ideals, our ideas—and millions of our young. But in the first years of the new century, what many recall as the golden age of higher education has been tarnished by spiraling costs, declining standards, and an erosion of ethical values. The academic system that served us so well for so long is growing outworn, outmoded, and for many students and their families, outlandishly expensive. Higher education itself has been placed on probation.

To be sure, the college presidents and officials I came to know during my decades at *U.S. News* and *Newsweek* were sincerely convinced that higher education was better than ever. The question, however, was—and still is—better for whom? Life in academia is better for most ranking administrators, superstar faculty, and doctoral candidates in “hot” disciplines. The same, however, cannot be said for the majority of undergraduates, whose first brush with college begins with a complicated and anxiety-filled application process, and often does not end until long after graduation, when they make the final payments on their student loans. In between, they encounter a college experience often less rewarding and more stressful than what students confronted not long ago. Consider:

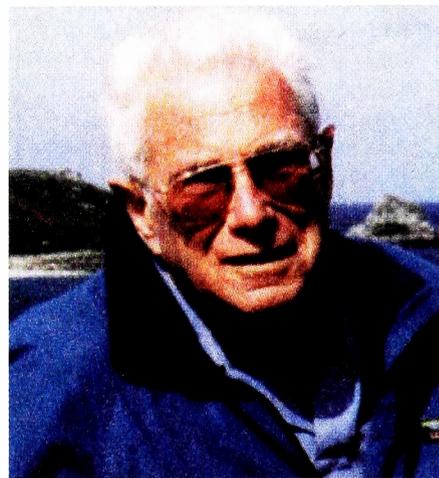
- Since 1985, the cost (in real terms) of attending a four-year college has

more than doubled. Moreover, at a time when two out of three high school graduates are opting for higher education, its escalating price is having a dramatic impact on the finances of most middle-class families. Indeed, other than housing and health care, no item in the budgets of typical U.S. households now exceeds saving or paying for higher education.

- To relieve the anxieties created by ballooning tuition and fees, many college officials try to reassure prospective students and their families by claiming that increasing amounts of financial aid still make higher education affordable. Yet since much of that aid is in the form of loans, the claim is misleading. At many schools, a majority of graduates leave campus burdened with the need to begin repaying those loans at a time when their income is at a minimum, often influencing their choice of jobs, careers, and lifestyles.
- Even in the best of times—and this certainly is not one of those times—our colleges and universities graduate more students than there are college-level positions for them to fill. Consequently, many are forced to take jobs for which a high school diploma was once the maximum qualification. Although pouring *latté* in a coffee bar and filing fiction in a mega-bookstore are honorable ways to begin earning a living, they are not the sort of post-college employment pictured in higher education's fulsome recruiting brochures and Internet websites.
- Surveys measuring what undergraduates learn—or, more accurately, don't learn—underscore a decline in academic standards. The drop mirrors the effect of such phenomena as grade inflation, larger classes, a

shrinking school year, the academic vogue for “deconstructing” the truth, and a mostly losing struggle to restore teaching to pride of place on campus. In addition, some faculty find it necessary to “dumb down” the rigor of their courses to accommodate the ill-prepared graduates of our deteriorating secondary schools. And at a few more politically correct institutions, the decline in learning is, in part, one result of mandatory courses in multiculturalism, a fashionable discipline that often seems to combine the *gravitas* of Cliff Notes with the subtleties of agitprop.

- Along with the traditional anxieties that they bring to college, today's



Mel Elfin

undergraduates are subject to even greater stress by the anything-goes atmosphere on many campuses. Not only can the absence of so-called parietal rules invite binge drinking, sometimes with tragic results, but coed living arrangements magnify opportunities for the overindulgence of youthful hormones, a major source of post-adolescent *angst*. Coupled with the need of many students to work at one or more jobs to pay living expenses, it is little wonder that the demand on many campuses for professional counseling and “someone to talk to” is rising almost as fast as the tuition.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

The  
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## SEDUCTIVE

"The editor had a voice like sun-softened caramel. He made it clear that the two of us had something very compelling in common—our interest in me. His voice evoked a feeling I hadn't had in many, many years—the sense of submitting, with token resistance, to a stranger's seduction. All the while, as I listened to his flattering persuasions, I felt that my inner skeptic was struggling frantically to scale the smooth walls of his voice, only to slide down inexorably into the pit of honey at its base. . . ."

— From "Book of Days,"  
an essay by Emily Fox Gordon in the  
Winter 2003 issue of the SCHOLAR.

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## Recommended Reading

### BOOK COMMITTEE

**Humanities:** Svetlana Alpers, Michael Griffith  
Rebecca Resinski, Eugen Weber

**Social Sciences:** Rick Eden, Josephine Pacheco  
Anna J. Schwartz, Larry J. Zimmerman

**Natural Sciences:** Germaine Cornelissen, Jay M. Pasachoff

### By Larry J. Zimmerman

**Small Pieces Loosely Joined: A Unified Theory of the Web.** David Weinberger. Perseus Publishing, 2002. \$25

Do we need another book about the impact of the World Wide Web? We've been bombarded with hype, and most of us survived the "dot-com" bust, so we'd probably say we don't. As the Web became part of our daily information-gathering tool kit, we didn't much consider the Web's social and intellectual contexts. Weinberger does exactly that in a challenging and upbeat book that asks fundamentally why the Web so excites us. He contends that the Web provides an opportunity to rethink our presuppositions about our own and the world's nature, and that the hype has not been unwarranted, only misdirected.

The Web is a new, social, public place that challenges our views of space, time, and perfection, and by doing so, our perceptions of self and society. This book is profoundly Western in perspective, and I wonder what impacts the Web will have on other cultures whose world views may already incorporate some of the perspectives that the Web brings to our own.

**Heart of the Rock: The Indian Invasion of Alcatraz.** Adam Fortunate Eagle (in collaboration with Tim Findley). University of Oklahoma Press, 2002. \$29.99

In 1969, a small group of American Indian university students took over Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay, claiming for Native Americans the decommissioned federal prison as surplus federal property under the 1868 Black Hills Treaty with the Sioux. Most mark this takeover as the start of American Indian militancy in the early 1970s. The reality is that much of the militancy was the result of earlier activism by the National Congress of American Indians and others, in an effort to combat an early 1950s federal policy of "Termination" whereby the government tried to end its relationships with tribes.

Fortunate Eagle (then Adam Nordwall) was a product of an accompanying federal policy of relocating Indians to urban areas, his Chippewa family having been moved to the Bay area. He became a reluctant local activist who, along with others, was dissatisfied with the results of federal policy during a time of growing national concern about civil rights. He and Richard Oakes organized the Alcatraz takeover to high-

light Indian anger and concern. The takeover garnered international media attention, lasting over 19 months before authorities removed the remaining activists.

The significance was not in the attempt to get Alcatraz, but what the action did for consciousness-raising among Indians and the non-Indian public, culminating in the 1973 takeover of Wounded Knee. Fortunate Eagle's perspective as an elder, now looking back on such an important event, is compelling. More important historically, he documents an early and formative episode in contemporary American Indian militancy.

**Openness, Secrecy, Authorship: Technical Arts and the Culture of Knowledge from Antiquity to the Renaissance.** Pamela O. Long. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001. \$55

Long demonstrates the very deep roots of our attitudes and practices involving the production and transmission of knowledge. She investigates what she calls the "cultures of knowledge," which include whether knowledge is open or secret, which topics are covered by "authorship," when knowledge is considered to be property, and what knowledge is taken to be. Her analysis is framed within the 17th century, but looking at the prior two hundred years during which the mechanical arts were changed into discursive disciplines.

She addresses the substantive content of books, but also the social and cultural circumstances of their production. In today's digital age, when there is almost constant argument over intellectual property rights in everything from student plagiarism to Web sources to copy protection of CDs, this book is a must read.

**Linked: The New Science of Networks.** Albert-László Barabási. Perseus Publishing, 2002. \$26

This puzzling and fascinating book looks at everything from DNA to *Al Qaeda* as networks, a series of links and nodes, proposing that we need a new science of networks to analyze and understand them. The stated intent is "to get you to think networks," looking at how networks develop, what they look like, and how they evolve. Our vision is clouded by the reductionist approaches of science in which we can understand the pieces perfectly well, but not what happens when they are connected. A new network science needs to be multifocal and interdisciplinary. The author's approach is anec-



dotal, personal, and very readable, though as I read the book, I could hear all sorts of echoes from general systems theory advocates from three decades ago.

**Disgraceful Archaeology, or Things You Shouldn't Know About the History of Mankind!** *Paul Bahn and Bill Tidy. Tempus Publishing, 1999. \$16.99*

Known but to a few in the archaeological underground since first published in the United Kingdom in 1999, this hilarious little book by archaeologist Bahn and cartoonist Tidy recently became generally available in the United States. Sixty-four cartoons and explanatory text about everything from breaking wind to bestiality to foul death provide a very different view of our ancestors. Perhaps because archaeologists have little access to information from the archaeological record about individuals in the distant past, they tend to present pasts that are generalized and, frankly, sanitized to protect our contemporary sensibilities.

Bahn and Tidy strip away any pretense of a fully noble human past, and that's good. Many of the examples are Roman, but others come from ancient South America, China, and Egypt. The book is best when the cartoons and text mesh well, such as in my favorite example of a backside recognition chart for the assassination of Saxon King Edmund Ironside, who died from a sword thrust into his bowels by someone hiding in a lavatory pit (think about the problem of recognizing someone only from their hind end). The authors provide lots of laughs in a book that is delightfully "humanizing."

**Mammoth: The Resurrection of an Ice Age Giant.** *Richard Stone. Perseus Publishing, 2001. \$26; paper \$15*

Many will remember two Discovery Channel specials, "Raising the Mammoth" and "Land of the Mammoth." Both document the incredible graveyard of thousands (600 skeletons per square kilometer!) of Pleistocene epoch megafauna in the tundra of the Taimyr Peninsula of Siberia. In his slim but fascinating book—now available in paperback—Stone tells the story of the hunt for mammoth remains from the late 1800s into the contemporary era, with all its technological marvels put to the task. Still, the hunt has been mostly a story of very dedicated individuals, tangled with international politics, scientific and monetary greed, and the rigors of Arctic research.

The story of the need for enticing visuals for television is outrageous enough to make the book a good read. For example, the Discovery crews nearly crashed a helicopter trying to airlift an oversized block of ice, and they staged a scene with unrelated mammoth tusks protruding from the block. The real story, however, is the science of trying to understand the lives and deaths of the mammoths. Stone relates most of the major theories of their demise, from overkill by humans to an ebola-like virus wiping them out. He also discusses the scientific and ethical issues relating to cloning a mammoth or other

extinct Ice Age creature, and the dream of Russian ecologist Sergei Zimov of a Pleistocene Park ultimately to be inhabited by cloned Pleistocene animals. "Mammoth" was a difficult book to put down!

**By Svetlana Alpers**

**Iconoclasm: Beyond the Image-Wars in Science, Religion and Art.** *Edited by Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel. The MIT Press. 2002. \$45*

In recent decades, art studied in the academy, but also art in its making everywhere, has been caught up by, and has put under consideration, many other things: science, politics, gender, the social order, and more. What do we learn from all of this? And where is the art itself left?

This large, splendidly illustrated book, with contributions by many authors from many places, specializing in many different things, served as the catalog for an exhibition in Karlsruhe, Germany. Among the questions it addresses: Why do images attract so much hatred? What motivates aggression against them? Why do these images always return? How is it that the aggressors make new images even as they destroy the old?

This impulse to turn art appreciation upside down, to replace it with a taste for art destruction, is of our time. But this book is not so simple. It aims to show that the myriad suspicions of images (the "clashes" about and between them) are also a source of their power. Some highlights: historian of science Peter Galison on the tension images/logical analysis in science; art historian Joseph Koerner on Protestant image-breakers as image-makers; Tibetan scholar Heather Stoddard on Buddhist golden idols, and anthropologist Anne-Christine Taylor on the persistence of face-painting in the upper Amazon. A big book to browse in, with unexpected images and arguments at the turn of every page.

**The Lives of Images.** *Peter Mason. Reaktion Books. 2001. \$35*

This is an example of an aspect of the new anthropology: The study of kinship has been replaced by, among other things, the study of images. The images in question in this elegantly produced book are not by, but of, non-Europeans. And it is not so much their nature as their historical peregrinations that are of interest. The material is fascinating and the book well illustrated, as Reaktion books always are.

We learn of the disturbing occasions for images such as photographs of natives of Tierra del Fuego, when they were brought to Europe and put on exhibit in the 1880s. But the life of the book lies in its ambition to trace a process of recycling. How, for example, the representation of feathered headdresses wanders from Rome to the Americas and back with no true ethnographic origin. How a 16th-century Mexican codex travels to and through Europe,

its exotic images taken up for a variety of European purposes before, in the 20th century, they return home in the work of Diego Rivera.

To emphasize images having a life of their own is to de-emphasize their descriptive power. Fair enough. But this is bound up with Mason's suspicion of the possibility for artists, even skillful ones, to deal with what is different, specifically what is not European. In his view, the depiction of the exotic, be it feathered crowns or people, is a function of the outsider's appropriate eye. But surely, a perception of strangeness is an aspect of how we come to know anything at all. It is essential to the making of art and hence an essential form of the life of art.

**Style and Politics in Athenian Vase-Painting: The Craft of Democracy, c. 530–470 B.C.E.** *Richard T. Neer. Cambridge University Press. 2002. \$80*

Painted vases are puzzling objects to come upon in a museum. What were they made for? Why were they painted with such care? How might we look at them? Neer has written a serious scholarly intervention (you get a sense of "the state of the discipline") that is also a nuanced critical account of highly sophisticated painting, and a political analysis of the short reign of red-figure vases in Athens. The next time you come upon some Greek vases, you will know what to look for.

Vase culture is, by Neer's account, the culture of the symposium, the men's drinking party for which, as he puts it, the pottery served as furniture. This situates the pots in the midst of a verbally sophisticated political elite. The pictorial play is like wordplay. Whereas the old progressivist account is of Greek depiction becoming more visually true, here the emphasis is on paradox and ambiguity, on the combination of taking in and fighting with the difference between the vase surface and the real world.

When a few of the vase painters introduce self-portraits, artisans are masquerading in the trappings of their aristocratic patrons and intruding on their space. Social ambiguity, the re-imaging of class structure, Neer suggests, goes along with the pictorial one. Finally, after the "democratic" revolution of 508/7 B.C.E., the duality of this pictorial mode was made to serve the complexities of a new and problematic civic structure.

Insofar as Neer convinces us that these modest painted vases are in effect "traces of the craft, the *techné*, of being Athenian," he offers not only a skillful scholarly study but also an interesting model for considering the arts of other times, including our own.

**By Eugen Weber**

**Snobbery: The American Version.** *Joseph Epstein. Houghton Mifflin. 2002. \$25*

"Snobbery" is a put-on. Pretending to be about a social activity, it's really about a personality: that of the author, who is not a snob

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15



## Helping Teachers Learn

Education reform is murky business. Legislators, academicians, public school officials, teachers, parents and industrial leaders agree that improving America's public schools is central to maintaining a healthy democracy and a robust economy. Beyond this, no consensus exists. Genuinely effective reforms are difficult to identify, implement and defend.

Amid the shifting fog of standardized testing, charter schools and vouchers as mechanisms of public school reform, some unassailable facts are lost: a good education hinges on the quality of the interactions between students and their teachers, and the likelihood of quality interactions increases when teachers are experts in the subjects they teach. Expertise is derived from rigorous university training and ongoing professional growth in a specific field.

Better education occurs with teachers who are scientists and not simply science teachers (I teach high school chemistry), and are writers and not simply English teachers. It is unfortunate that the systems which train and license teachers do little to promote subject expertise. Teacher training programs through schools of education do not require rigorous subject mastery relative to traditional majors. State-run professional standards boards re-license teachers without demanding additional training in the subjects they teach.

To foster subject-area growth in America's teachers, I offer two suggestions. First, state legislatures and state-funded universities could work together to offer free subject-area classes to all teachers.

Also, private industry could provide internships for teachers. Several programs already exist, and have both re-energized teachers and provided industry with reliable part-time help.

What higher calling could the public university have than to improve instruction across an entire state? If industry seeks positive community partnerships, there is no better way than to assist in the professional growth of teachers. America's youth would be the ultimate benefactors.

*Joseph Wallace Shane, Noblesville, Ind.*

## A Key Question Answered

There's a wonderful case of cross-pollination in your Fall 2002 issue. On page 2, John Churchill reports on the Society's efforts to answer a "question of relevance: the social value of the liberal arts." Two pages away, Charles Adams answers that very question about as succinctly as I've seen it done: "To think critically and creatively, to express one's ideas clearly, to learn to interpret ideas from a rich intellectual

and cultural context: These are inextricable from the development of a sense of individual dignity and respect for the rights of others."

The liberal arts teach us the value of ideas; from this we learn the highest social value of all—the value of one another.

*Gary Langer, New York, N.Y.*

The changes described in Charles H. Adams's interesting article, "Russians Introduce Liberal Arts," are certainly welcome. However, they are far less innovative than he implies. Long before the Smolny became the Communist Party headquarters in St. Petersburg, it was an institution for the education of young women. Broadly modeled on St. Cyr in France, it was founded in 1764 by Catherine II. She, along with Ivan Betskoi, author of "On the Education of Young People of Both Sexes," envisioned an ideal, humane pedagogy of the Enlightenment carried forward by educated women in society and the family.

*Catherine Woronzoff-Dashkoff, Leeds, Mass.*

The lead article in the Fall 2002 issue contains a photograph of the author in "a cemetery at the Alexander Nevsky Monastery" in St. Petersburg, Russia, where, according to the caption, "[a]mong other notable Russians buried ... are Tchaikovsky, Borodin, and Rimsky-Korsakov." However, the [enclosed] photograph would appear to be of the latter's grave. I snapped it in July of 2001 at the cemetery by the Novodevichy Convent in Moscow, where such other notables as Chekhov, Gogol, Shostakovich, Prokofiev, and Khrushchev are buried.

*Joel Marks, Milford, Conn.*

## Challenging "Stolen Words"

It is difficult to know what to do with Thomas Mallon's comments on the Web and student plagiarism (Fall *Key Reporter*). The first half of the piece is taken up with defending his book, "Stolen Words," which is his privilege, though the image of tweedy academics brandishing copies of Roland Barthes's "The Death of the Author" corresponds to no contemporary English department I've seen (I've studied and worked in several large public research institutions). Mr. Mallon manages to wield a label like "the professors" in an accusatory manner that recalls the worst anti-intellectual strains of the culture wars. The whole screed comes off as at least 10 years out of date.

In any case, when it comes to the Web, Mr. Mallon is largely at a loss for words. If it is true, as he says, that the Web "makes it impossible for students to value originality, or writing itself, in quite the same way," then our job

begins precisely with the phrase "in quite the same way." We must teach our students to use online resources responsibly, and do so in part by engaging the question of what "writing" and "originality" have meant in different information epochs. (This is not reflex relativism: It is an acknowledgement that sometimes ideas are complicated. If Mr. Mallon doubts this, he might start with Geoffrey Nunberg's fine essay on the changing meaning of information, "Farewell to the Information Age.")

Our students are growing up in a media culture that embraces mixing and sampling, and is simultaneously witnessing the most dramatic confrontations in copyright and intellectual property law we've seen in generations. When I talk with students about Internet file swapping or Lawrence Lessig, they are both animated and opinionated—and often surprisingly well-informed. This is, it seems to me, what used to be called a "teachable moment." My students may leave my classes with the notion that authorship and intellectual property are historically determined, but they also leave with a practical sense of what's right and wrong when it comes to their own writing and research in the digital settings they inhabit—and will continue to inhabit once they enter their chosen professions.

By the end, it is clear that Mr. Mallon has no real ideas to offer. Instead, for a closer, we are treated to a meditation in the thin tradition of Sven Birkerts on the glam seductions of bibliofind.com as compared to whiling away the hours at the Strand bookstore. "Why dig a well instead of turning on the tap?" Mr. Mallon wants to know, lamenting the way the Web has altered the student work ethic. Only he doesn't want to know: It's a rhetorical question, and that's where his essay ends. But I have running water taps in my home, and I suspect Mr. Mallon does too. That may seem like a cheap rhetorical ploy, but he employs exactly the same tactic in suggesting how angry the critics of "Stolen Words" would be to find their own words plagiarized or improperly cited. The point is that those taps are not going to be turned off, nor is the Web going to be unplugged. If we don't teach students how to use it wisely and well, then AOL, Microsoft, and the rest of the edutainment industry will be only too glad to do it for us.

*Matthew G. Kirschenbaum, Silver Spring, Md.*

## Thomas Mallon Replies:

Professor Kirschenbaum suffers from the common occupational confusion that any criticism of academic life is "anti-intellectual." While spending, I'm sure, at least as much time in higher education as he has, I tried never to consider my Ph.D. or tenured professorship a guarantor of clear, or even honest, thought. He

does not defend the academic rationalizations I quote because, of course, he can't. But those arguments, and all the appeals to Barthes *et alia* come right out of the university world he thinks is in such fine shape.

Professor Kirschenbaum seems content to be hustled from one "information epoch" to another, and if he considers "edutainment" a useful word, one can only be happy for him. Though "10 years out of date," I can manage a Google search, and I'm pleased to know that he's written a hypertext dissertation called "Lines for a Virtual T[y/o]pography." The brackets are his. When it comes to matters of style and grace, I congratulate him on being right up to the minute.

### Some Other Views

We think the Fall 2002 issue of *The Key Reporter* is an especially good one. The articles are solid and the letters remind us that we have to pay closer attention to where we keep back issues.

I particularly liked Thomas Mallon's article on plagiarism, with its Sokal-like quotation from Rebecca Moore Howard that borders on the surreal. And also to read that Gail Kern Paster at the Folger Library, when asked about the Shakespeare authorship question, "neither sighs nor rolls her eyes" and succinctly makes the case for William of Stratford. She will probably be interested in the forthcoming (let's hope) "Monstrous Adversary: A Documentary Biography of Edward de Vere, Seventeenth Earl of Oxford (1550-1604)" by Alan H. Nelson, scheduled for publication by Liverpool University Press this year.

*James Smith, St. Paul, Minn.*

I was pleased to see the excellent article on Dr. Gail Kern Paster, director of the Folger Shakespeare Library. I too have specialized in the Elizabethan era, but in a different way. I write a historical mystery series with Gloriana as the amateur sleuth, with books five and six out this year, the 400th anniversary year of the queen's death. A former teacher, I have found my thoroughly researched mysteries are an excellent way not only to entertain but to continue to teach. I am also Renaissance-obsessed enough to wear a 30-pound Elizabeth gown to my book signings and speaking engagements.

*Karen Harper, Columbus, Ohio*

### Positive PR

I'm a younger person (OK, 34) and many people in my age bracket don't know what  $\Phi$ BK is—at best they think it's a frat. I've never had any occasion to wear my  $\Phi$ BK key. There is, however, at least one high school in America where every student knows what  $\Phi$ BK is. When I taught at Hopkins School in New

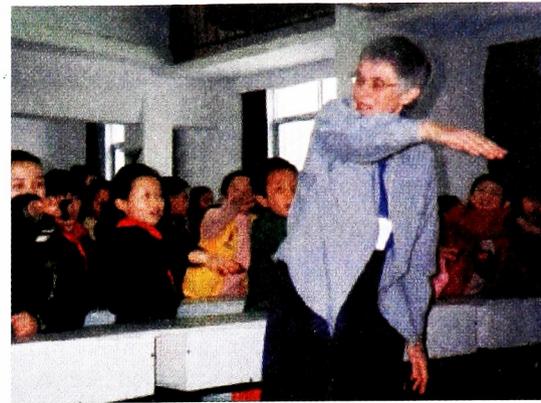
Haven, one day in late spring was designated as "Phi Beta Kappa Day." If any graduates of the school (from four years before) were elected to Phi Beta Kappa that year, the whole student body and faculty got the day off. If not, not. Needless to say, winning this honor was perceived to be of great value, and the Phi Beta Kappans were greatly blessed by all.

*Deb Sweeney, Eden Prairie, Minn.*

### Volunteering Abroad

I enjoy reading about alumni who are outside of academia, contributing in creative ways to their communities and to the planet. While my experiences have been modest, I recommend a Global Volunteers experience to anyone who wishes to travel and see "tourist destinations" in a different light.

In 1999 my husband and I helped care for children, and do construction, at a daycare center near Quito, Ecuador. Last February I spent two weeks in Querétaro, a beautiful colonial city in Mexico, helping students at a technical college with English conversation. In March we were in Xi'an, China with volunteers recruited

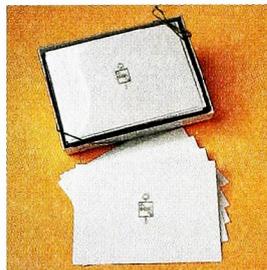


$\Phi$ BK member Beverly Williams taught conversational English at a new experimental elementary school in Xi'an, China.

through Global Volunteers and Elderhostel. Each of us was assigned to a school to help both students and teachers with conversational English. Although we marveled at the terra cotta warriors and other treasures of ancient China, our Xi'an memories center on the staff, students and teachers we were privileged to meet.

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## Noteworthy Phi Beta Kappa Items



Phi Beta Kappa members may wish to take note of new insignia items offered by the Society including the desk-set pen and note cards shown here. The Phi Beta Kappa desk-set is made of heavy lucite with an embedded Phi Beta Kappa key. It includes a gold-plated Cross-style pen and is personalized with the member's name, chapter and year of election. Informal note cards, engraved in gold with matching envelopes, are available in boxes of twenty. The wall display combines a membership certificate and a large gold-plated key in a 12 x 16 inch walnut frame.

To order, complete the form below and mail it with your payment and a copy of your mailing label from the back cover showing your  $\Phi$ BK membership number to Hand & Hammer, 2610 Morse Lane, Woodbridge, VA 22192. You may place an order or request the complete product brochure by calling (703) 491-4866 or by faxing (703) 491-2031. You may also order online at [www.hand-hammer.com](http://www.hand-hammer.com).

\_\_\_ Phi Beta Kappa Desk Set - black lucite, 3" w/pen.....\$35

\_\_\_ Phi Beta Kappa Note Cards - 20 cards w/ envelopes...\$14

\_\_\_ Wall Display - key and certificate framed 12"x16".....\$79

Name, chapter and date for personalization\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_Check payable to Hand & Hammer is enclosed

Charge my\_\_Visa \_\_MasterCard (VA residents add 4.5%)

Card No.\_\_\_\_\_ Exp. date\_\_\_\_\_

Signature\_\_\_\_\_ Phone No.\_\_\_\_\_



- While trivial when compared with the transgressions roiling the worlds of business and religion, higher education's own moral standards have been undermined by instances of personal scandal, petty corruption, institutional misconduct, and by what some of academia's most esteemed elder statesmen see as a distressing shift in campus priorities. In this view, the interests of students historically have taken precedence on campus. However, in recent decades, they feel that priorities have changed and now the personal, professional and, of late, politically correct interests of faculty and administrators come first.

Clearly, this is not higher education's finest hour, a judgment evidently shared by a large percentage of the American public. Our colleges and universities, which not long ago enjoyed almost Oprah-like levels of respect in public opinion surveys, now register approval ratings closer to used car salesmen, dinner-hour telemarketers and, alas, members of the media. Academics tend to dismiss polls like these as statistically meaningless,

politically inspired, or the product of circulation-hungry newspapers and magazines. In reality, they represent the serious concerns of parents, alumni, and friends of higher education.

No doubt, the troubles plaguing our increasingly diverse, disparate, and doggedly independent four-year colleges and universities differ widely in number, kind, and degree. And although the possible solutions are often as dissimilar as the institutions themselves, they all share many of the same urgent imperatives. For example:

First, the undergraduate experience needs to be reshaped so that a diploma will certify more than that its recipient has amassed 120 credit hours of academic miscellany without unduly arousing the suspicions of faculty advisers. A degree should signify that the graduate has evidenced familiarity with a coherent core of knowledge, and the ability to process it with at least a minimal level of competence.

Second, our colleges and universities must pay more heed to the principles of cost control that they teach in introductory business management courses. They need to make greater distinctions between expenditures that are absolutely necessary and those that are merely desirable, or designed pri-

marily to enhance the prestige of the institution or the perks of its faculty and administrators.

Third, our colleges must become more cooperative and less feverishly competitive in their relations with each other. They need to determine how to share more of the financial burdens of health care, new technology, and campus libraries. And they need to reach a detente in what has become the academic version of an arms race, in which they vie to attract students by erecting more upscale housing and recreational facilities than the competition.

Fourth, academia must begin to see itself not as "higher" education but as part of a continuum in which the educational experiences of early childhood may ultimately prove more beneficial to learning—and to society—than those of late adolescence.

Fifth, college trustees must appreciate that the post is no longer simply an honorific, useful for burnishing an entry in "Who's Who in America." Trustees need to ask the right questions, recognize artifice in the answers, and then have the courage to challenge a system that frequently does not encourage those who depart from the conventional academic wisdom.

Sixth, our colleges and universities must realize that the computer, the Internet, and undergraduates more comfortable in cyberspace than in the campus library, have brought higher education to the brink of what is potentially the most dramatic advance in learning since Gutenberg. Many inside the ivory tower believe that computerized learning destroys the relationship between teacher and student—even on campuses where that relationship consists of little more than an exchange of friendly waves across the quad. Nonetheless, the unlimited resources and extraordinary flexibility offered by sophisticated technology are destined to reshape how our colleges fulfill their educational mission, as well as the future role of the campus itself.

Finally, in the spirit of Ralph Waldo Emerson's celebrated 1837 address to the Phi Beta Kappa scholars at

## The American Scholar Honors 2002 Writers

The editors of *The American Scholar*, which is published by the Phi Beta Kappa Society, have announced the winners of this year's American Scholar Awards. The awards recognize the best writing published in the journal during 2002.

"Teacher: Eleven Notes" (Winter 2002), by the late Lionel Basney, was selected as Best Essay. Cristina Nehring's "Eros Unseated" (Autumn 2002) won the award for Best Literary Criticism. Margaret Ryan's "Reading Balzac" (Spring 2002) was chosen as Best Poem.

The winning essay was discovered in manuscript after Basney's death in a drowning accident in 1999. His "Immanuel's Ground," published posthumously in the Summer 1999 issue, won that year's American Scholar Award for Best Essay. He had been professor of English at Calvin College.

Nehring teaches literature at UCLA and the Université de Paris. Ryan teaches poetry at the 92nd Street Y in New York City.

The American Scholar Awards were established in 1998. The selections are made by the journal's editorial board and staff members.



Harvard, higher education must free itself from entrenched and often-dysfunctional customs, traditions, and attitudes bequeathed by cultures long since past. In the opening years of the new century, our colleges and universities have reached a watershed between the failing end of a once-golden era and an economic, structural, and technological transformation lying just over the campus horizon. As a consequence, they must rethink what they do, for whom they do it, and how they can do it more effectively, more efficiently, and with greater concern for the welfare of what will be a larger and demographically different body of undergraduates.

Simply nibbling at the edges of the massive changes that are needed, or pursuing them at higher education's customary sluggish pace, will not suffice. At a time when the public's patience with higher education's rising costs and falling standards is wearing thin, conducting academic business as usual risks a destructive crisis of confidence in an enterprise that, for all its deep-seated troubles, remains integral both to the well-being of our society and to the future of our democracy.

I believe higher education's optimal course is clear. And I hope many Phi Beta Kappans will share my concerns—and at least some of my conclusions.

mirroring the other's movement. Embuffling typically ends when one person decides to stand still and shrug or smile at the other person, allowing them to pass.

*Connie Davis, Vashon Island, Wash.*

I would like to propose a new and fitting word to replace the word "palindrome": "palin-ilap," because it is itself a palindrome. Neat, what?

*Robert P. Martin, Fort Collins, Colo.*

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

The fact that the paper was a Word document certainly doesn't save me any time. The dictionary attached to the spell-checker is so huge that it sees "qweejibo" and tells me it's an ancient Sumerian word meaning "he who always wins at Scrabble." If anything, I'm forced to read more closely now, because the mistakes that make it past the computer and require a human eye are miniscule and easy to miss. All the computer did was take away the easy mistakes.

Luckily, we still have erudite writers and attentive editors to catch all our mistakes.

## Recommended Reading

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

though he tries hard, but a snobographer condemned to limn the comic, cruel, crabby sport—not as a player but as an observant fan. The great age of snobbish sharks has passed and left behind snobby guppies gulping designer water. What used to be a blood sport has turned into aerobics. Yet Epstein demonstrates that snobbery may change its spots, but not its caprices.

Picking through the day's specials, he skewers vegetarians filled with self-righteousness and wind; politically correct and sanctimonious virtucrats; culture cuckoos piping among the nobrows; parents who vest their vanities in their offspring; and edbiz activists, most of whose charges seem to escape unscarred. He punctures current fatuities about status (celebrity swiftly dilapidated); taste (an arbitrary construct); name-dropping; food (for the anorexic); wine (not for the oenologically challenged); riches and their absence; victimhood, which has replaced blue blood in the snobbery stakes; and other popular hang-ups.

A hardened snob watcher, Epstein does more than list variants of the species: He muses. The book is a treasure trove of apt quotations, but even more of sage reflections. And the reflections reveal him as a moralist. Not a moralizer, but a keen, playful, amiable observer endowed with a sense of humor that makes for compulsive reading and fills his pages with the patter of tiny *bons mots*.

**Academic Animals: A Bestiary of Higher-Education Teaching and How It Got That Way.** *Lois Roney. Xlibris, 2002. \$31.99; paper \$21.99*

Lois Roney's hilarious meander through our strife-torn zoos parades 18 prototypes of academic fauna that run from the armadillo to the walrus. They include a wonderful teacher and an awful one; a bully intimidating his dead white colleagues with racist anti-racist attacks; learning-disabled students in quest of B's, terrorizing teachers; learning-disabled profs impressing students and peers who know no better; and a remedial education specialist cashing in on the tide of illiteracy that swells over the campus.

The only species missing from Roney's menagerie is the Mock Turtle with her account of lessons called lessons because they lessen from day to day. Keen-eyed readers will spot students (not their own) and colleagues (not their own) preening, professing, convening, caucusing, theorizing, swathed in prejudice or imbibing it.

When she hauls the ethics, economics, intellect, and wonky professionalism of academe over the coals, Roney is ruthless, acerbic, sardonic, sometimes unjust but most of the time right on. Subversively funny, serious, sparkling, this is a deeply reactionary book. All deep reactionaries should make a beeline for it.

## Letters

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

Global Volunteers is a nonsectarian organization that sends North American volunteers only as requested by local groups. Volunteers work in partnership on projects chosen by the hosts. The website is [www.globalvolunteers.org](http://www.globalvolunteers.org), and the phone number is 800-487-1074.

*Beverly England Williams, Wilkes-Barre, Penna.*

## Neologisms

In response to Dr. John Franz in the *Fall Key Reporter*, here is a word that I believe the English language needs: "embuffle," a verb. This describes that embarrassing moment when two people encounter each other in a hallway or on a sidewalk, and each shuffles from side to side to avoid the other, only to find themselves

## Filice

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

memos. Maybe I could ignore those missives and read a nice labor-intensive, non-electronic book, but I will *always* open the student e-mail and give the attached Word document a quick once-over as requested by the worried student. He won't have to come by during my office hours the next day, which will give him time to work on something else and give me time to work on something else, and we will both wonder where our time went.

## Recommended Reading

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

**Rethinking Home: A Case for Writing Local History.** Joseph A. Amato. *University of California Press, 2002. \$48; paper \$18.95*

The case for local history should be open and shut. It isn't yet. Humming with action, crowded with specifics, Amato's "Rethinking Home" advances an impressive argument for it. "Home" in Amato's case is Minnesota, where his college town of Marshall lies not far from Sinclair Lewis's Sauk Center; but it could be elsewhere too. Particular yet broadly suggestive, his capacious vision includes physical, social, and cultural landscapes, but also landscapes of sound, anger, business, and madness. He etches and sketches proliferous muskrats that wane as wetlands waste away, roads, railroads, settlers, water and water wars, ditches, drainage, sewage, crops, homes, weather, conflicts, churches, schools, markets and farm crises, scams and spiritualities, "acoustic tyrannies" of recent vintage, gossip and deviance, prairie poetry and prairie prose and, of course, "Main Street" (which he finds both right and wrong) along with "Madame Bovary."

The tale of turbulence and transformation Amato tells is not nostalgic but affirmative and passionate, not misshaped by theory but informed by grassroots research. A veteran professional, the narrator is also an amateur in the best sense: He loves what he does. Reading him, one understands why.

**French Rugby Football: A Cultural History.** Philip Dine. *Berg, 2001. \$68; paper \$19.50*

On a spring day in 1823 a schoolboy, William Webb Ellis, "with a fine disregard for the rules of football ... first took the ball in his arms and ran with it ...." The exploit enshrined in a tablet set in a wall of Rugby School will do as a foundation myth for the game now played with an oval ball (originally a pig's bladder) all around the world. Philip Dine chronicles its French fortunes in a concise and informative book that combines social, political, and provincial scenarios in the best kind of sports history.

When Ellis died in 1872 at Menton, on the Côte d'Azur, his name and his game were unknown in France. Soon though, rugby became the game of choice in prestigious Paris lycées, in the exclusive Racing Club de France, finally in provincial clubs—mostly in the



"I'm not convinced that's the best strategy.  
Then again, I wasn't listening."

Courtesy of the artist, Marc Tyler Nobleman (ΦBK Brandeis 1994), [www.mtncartoons.com](http://www.mtncartoons.com)

southwest. Upper-class recruitment gave way to democratization; team colors and team songs appeared; by 1914 rugby was part of the identity of communities large and small.

After World War I it flourished in films and songs, and the Basque beret made famous by the success of a Bayonne club. After World War II, rugby exploded. National and international success attracted media, state, and corporate attention. No longer a symbol of elite consumption, rugby now stands, like soccer, for economic dynamism and political confidence. For controlled violence too. The story of men at play can be as revealing as that of men at work or war. Dine's book makes the point eloquently.

**Marketing Michelin: Advertising and Cultural Identity in Twentieth-Century France.** Stephen L. Harp. *Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001. \$42*

We all know Michelin tires; we've all seen Bibendum, the Michelin Man (born 1898). Harp traces the rise of the great family firm from the small-scale but innovative manufacture of bicycle tires to mass production of automobile tires, and he interweaves this with advertising motifs and advertising campaigns. These include not only posters but bike and auto races; eye-catching prizes; campaigns to promote tourism and tourist facilities, and to improve French roads and road signs; the publication of maps and guides; and the association

of Michelin's image with that of France, French patriotism, and cultural identity at many levels.

Harp's business history goes beyond business to social and cultural history. Ambitious, original, and helpfully illustrated, it documents the crucial role the Clermont firm's marketing strategies played in the development of mass consumption and communications, gastronomy, imagery, travel, and travel accommodations.

**The Zaddik: The Battle for a Boy's Soul.** Elaine Grudin Denholtz. *Prometheus Books, 2001. \$26*

Cults—Christian, Muslim, Jewish—brainwash their adherents and turn them into zealots who join and reinforce other zealots. In this case, a 13-year-old Jewish boy kidnapped in New York by a fat ultra-Orthodox rabbi is brainwashed and hidden for years, while his distraught mother seeks him. A Brooklyn district attorney, dependent on Hassid votes for reelection, puts spokes in the wheels of police inquiries. A Rockland County judge, himself an Orthodox Jew, refuses to hear evidence that goes against his prejudices.

Not overly well written but riveting, this story of the 1990s would be preposterous if it were not true. An object lesson of the power that nutty crackpots wield over their own kind, and on our own doorstep. Read it to find out how it ends.

### THE KEY REPORTER

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