



PHI BETA KAPPA

THE KEY REPORTER

SPRING 2008

HOW CAN LIBERAL EDUCATION
ENGAGE "THINGS THAT MATTER"?

MODERN MEDICINE TAKES A
LESSON FROM THE ANCIENT GREEKS





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It's Not That Simple

I'm adding another abstract noun to the list. I mean the list of intellectual and personal resources we hope to enhance through education in the liberal arts and sciences. Everyone who is interested in liberal education has some version of that list to roll out when needed. Some version typically appears on page two of every college's and university's catalog. You know how that statement begins. There is insistence on broad knowledge, skills of inquiry, curiosity, and so on. Then the list mentions critical and deliberative thinking abilities, and it ends with praise for the ability to cope with uncertainty and ambiguity.

In a nice rhetorical way, this closing reference to uncertainty and ambiguity looks out from the intellectual virtues into the world where they are to be practiced. The world is indeed full of uncertainty and ambiguity. But it is also full of something else that needs to be recognized and dealt with; it is full of complexity.

In *The Washington Post* for Jan. 28, 2008, Shankar Vedantam reported on several studies, some still in progress, that tend to show something quite disturbing about political rhetoric and its results. Of course, everybody knows that candidates for public office oversimplify complex issues. Very complicated problems are wrapped neatly in concise terms ("terrorism," for example). Equally concise terms point toward solutions of tremendous underlying complexity ("war").

Vedantam said that new studies also suggest that first-term presidents, faced with the realities of governing, use fairly complicated rhetoric through their first three years. Then they radically simplify their descriptions of issues in their fourth year in office — as reelection time nears. Candidates who reduce complexity succeed in proportion to the reduction. That means that when we hear candidates reducing issues to simple slogans or bumper-sticker language, they are just responding in a rational way to what works. They are giving us what we want.

There has been much discussion, as the 2008 presidential campaign has rolled along, about candidates' eagerness to embrace the concept of "change." This is a stunningly simple, but also, without a more specific articulation, a troubling message. Its forward edge is entirely missing, and what is left is the rejection of whatever now prevails. It's Marlon Brando's great line from *The Wild One*: "What're you rebelling against?" the girl asks. And Brando's character replies: "Whadd'ya got?" However desirable change may be, it needs the specificity produced by engagement with complexity.

The disturbing part, then, is that this strategy works because people dislike complexity and reject it. This leads straight to what Vedantam calls a paradox: the skills needed to get elected — to falsify by oversimplifying things — are the reverse of those needed to govern effectively — to understand the complexities of things and to cope with them. The same could be said for uncertainty and ambiguity. In other words, we elect people for success in displaying abilities that are the opposites of those they will need if they are elected. This would seem to be a problem. How would we address it?

Suppose we do have an inherent dislike of complexity. It's not surprising. If we did not have an inherent dislike for uncertainty and ambiguity, why would we need to list learning to cope with them among the aims of liberal education? Let's add complexity to the list, and hope for some simple way to come to terms with it.

John Churchill
Secretary

SPOTLIGHT

Photo Credit: Cynthia Johnson/Getty Images



President George H. W. Bush (ΦBK, Yale College, 1948) standing with Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto (ΦBK, Harvard University, 1989) during Bhutto's visit to the United States in 1989.

“I was a very shy girl who led an insulated life. It was only when I came to Oxford and to Harvard before that, that suddenly I saw the power of people. I didn't know such a power existed.

“I saw people criticizing their own president. You couldn't do that in Pakistan — you'd be thrown in prison. I saw the press take on the government.

“I was determined to go back home and to give to my people the freedoms and the choices — the individual dignity which I saw my college mates and everyone else in the West have.

“That early educational influence has profoundly affected my outlook on life.”

— Benazir Bhutto

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Davidson College students Davis Greene and Amy Killian relax in front of the east façade of the Chambers Building, the college's main administration and classroom building. Photo Credit: Bill Giduz

ΦBK TRAVELING EXHIBIT

Davidson College Brings Some History Home



John Marshall (left) and William A. Shimer, past secretary of the Society, demonstrate the proper ΦBK “grip” in this photo from the 1930s.

The secret handshake — it’s not a secret anymore. Once a closely guarded ritual reserved for the elect, the ΦBK “grip” is now on display as part of a traveling exhibit about ΦBK and its history.

Last year, Lambda of Pennsylvania and Penn State University, University Park, Penn., launched the project with images and artifacts from the ΦBK national office and the Penn State University archives.

Based on the success of this partnership and responses from other chapters, ΦBK has developed its own traveling exhibit now available to any ΦBK affiliate organization.

The exhibit consists of contemporary and historic images from ΦBK’s collection, Colonial Williamsburg and various university archives. A portrait of John Heath and a copy of the original 1779 charter for a chapter at Yale University

bearing the signature of Elisha Parmele, and the “secret” handshake, of course, are among them.

The ΦBK traveling exhibit will debut at Davidson College, Davidson, N.C., this spring. It’s scheduled for display in the atrium of the E. H. Little Library on the Davidson campus from March 9 - April 7. Then the exhibit will be moved to the Lilly Family Gallery at Davidson where the new ΦBK initiate banquet will take place.

“This is a great way to get members, both new and old, more familiar with the history of this honored organization,” said Cort Savage, president-elect of Gamma of North Carolina. Savage is responsible for bringing the exhibit to Davidson.

If you are interested in hosting the ΦBK traveling exhibit, please contact Cara Engel, coordinator of constituent affairs, at (202) 745-3249 or write to chapters@pbk.org. ■

ΦBK AWARDS 2008 JENSEN FELLOWSHIP

Rachel Corkle of New York University Makes Plans for Study Abroad in France



Rachel Corkle, winner of the 2008 Walter J. Jensen Fellowship, is a doctoral candidate in French literature at New York University.

In 2001, Professor Walter J. Jensen (ΦBK, University of California, Los Angeles, 1941) left ΦBK a bequest to establish the Walter J. Jensen Fellowship for French studies.

The recipient of the 2008 Jensen Fellowship is Rachel Corkle, a doctoral candidate in French literature at New York University. Her dissertation is titled “Literatures in Dialogue: Philosophical and Fictional Dialogues Bridging the Romantic Turn.”

Judges for this year’s award praised Corkle’s integrated approach to classroom instruction and the pursuit of advanced study in France.

“Looking for linguistic and intellectual immersion, I seek to learn by the same means that I prescribe for my students,” Corkle said. “Truly believing that what and how I think is intimately linked to what and how I speak, I wish to further understand the French intellectual tradition in

context, thinking through French models in French at a French institution.”

The Jensen Fellowship, with a stipend this year of \$13,500, will allow Corkle to take advantage of New York University’s exchange with *l’École Normale Supérieure* and spend a year in Paris as a *pensionnaire étrangère*.

The purpose of the Jensen Fellowship is to help educators and researchers improve education in standard French language, literature and culture and in the study of standard French in the United States. The fellowship is awarded annually and has a stipend of at least \$10,000 and a single round-trip, economy-class ticket to France.

For more information about the Jensen Fellowship, contact Sam Esquith, awards coordinator, at (202) 745-3235 or write to awards@pbk.org. ■

THE SECRETARY'S CIRCLE

Join Us for a Weekend of Intellectual Discovery May 16-18



Members who have demonstrated a high level of dedication to the ideals of the Society are invited to join the Secretary's Circle, a group committed to making a significant annual gift to further the Society's mission and to support its efforts to strengthen American education and the life of the mind.

Each spring, members of the Secretary's Circle gather for a special weekend gala in Washington, D.C., which includes tours of cultural sites, a black-tie dinner with a keynote speaker, a private briefing by the

secretary on Φ BK initiatives, and an opportunity for members to enjoy fellowship and conversation about important ideas in our nation's capital.

The Founders' Weekend, held last year May 18-20, included tours of the Anderson House, home of the Society of the Cincinnati, and the Phillips Collection, America's first museum of modern art. Members dined at the Metropolitan Club of Washington, D.C., with guest speaker Knight Kiplinger, one of the nation's most respected economic journalists and business forecasters and a well-known Washington phil-anthropist.

The Secretary's Circle will meet this spring May 16-18. We hope you will be able to join us for another weekend of intellectual discovery.

For more information, call (202) 265-3287 or write to *secretaryscircle@pbk.org*. ■

New Membership Benefits

Through our partnerships with Colonial Williamsburg and Encyclopaedia Britannica, Φ BK is now offering a series of new benefits to our members.



Colonial Williamsburg

Φ BK members and their immediate family can receive a 20 percent discount at Colonial Williamsburg Hotels, a 20 percent discount on passes to the Historic Area and a 15 percent discount on Williamsburg merchandise. Some restrictions apply. For more details, click on the Colonial Williamsburg promotion after logging in on the Φ BK Web site.



New members can also receive a free one-year subscription to Encyclopaedia Britannica online and a 25 percent discount on Britannica merchandise from *store.britannica.com*. In addition, all Phi Beta Kappans are eligible for a 50 percent discount on the annual subscription rate and continued discounts in Britannica's online store.

How to Get the Discounts

To take advantage of these exciting new benefits and review the full details, members will need to login at *www.pbk.org*.

You will be asked for your login, which is your Member ID, the six- or seven-digit number that appears next to your name on your *Key Reporter* address label.

Your password consists of your first and last names and the last two digits of the year you were elected to Φ BK, with no spaces in between.

Have a problem logging in? Call (202) 745-3242, or write to *membership@pbk.org*.

SENATE NOMINATIONS

42nd Triennial Council Set for Austin, Texas

The 42nd triennial Council of the Phi Beta Kappa Society will meet October 1-4, 2009, at the Hilton in Austin, Texas. New members of the Φ BK Senate will be elected at the council, and the nominating committee invites Society members to propose candidates.

The deadline for nominations is **April 4, 2008**.

Secretary John Churchill appeals to the membership of the Society for broad participation in the nominating process. "This invitation represents the committee's need for the support of a broad cross-section of the Society in the electoral process," he said. "The committee hopes that members can assist in making the Senate's membership reflect a diversity of professions and callings, including those outside academe."

Churchill notes that the committee, guided by the recommendation of an ad hoc committee chaired by

Alonzo Hamby, recommends that measures be taken to increase the proportion of Senate nominations from outside higher education.

"Members who are considering offering names for the committee's consideration are encouraged to support this aim," Churchill said.

Judith Sebesta chairs the nominating committee for 2006-2009. Other members are Joan Ferrante, Werner Gundersheimer, Ralph Hexter, David Levering Lewis, William Reinhardt, Bonnie Wheeler and Jack Williams.

Nominations must be made on a form that is available on the Φ BK Web site at *www.pbk.org*. If you do not have internet access please call the national office at (202) 265-3235. We will be happy to assist you. ■

Becoming an Ancestor: The Isthmus Zapotec Way of Death

by Anya Peterson Royce, Phi Beta Kappa Couper Scholar

The Isthmus Zapotec, concentrated primarily in the southern Oaxaca city of Juchitán, are a rarity within Mexico. They have survived 2,500 years of attempts to exterminate them, bring them into submission, assimilate them, and, most recently, to exoticize them, to reach a place where they can and do name themselves and claim their place as indigenous people within the world of nations. The Zapotec have maintained certain fundamental values and outward markers of who they are, while exploiting opportunities — technological, economic and political, that give them a competitive edge in national and global arenas.

Zapotec beliefs about death help us understand deeply rooted indigenous values, especially in contrast to Mexican beliefs. Juchitecos commemorate in two fixed community-wide celebrations which divide the year into wet and dry seasons: Day of the Dead at the beginning of the dry season — “time of the tomb” — and Holy Week at the beginning of the wet season — “time of flowers.” At the level of the individual

and the family, death is dealt with when it happens, and it initiates a whole cycle of acts and obligations that extends over seven years. For the deceased and for the living, transformation and healing are the desired goals. The former is transformed in the 40 days after death from a living body to a body living in the community of the dead. The living community grieves and, through rituals, is restored as a community.

Certain elements are essential to

the slow process of transformation and healing: water, flowers of the wild, healing herbs, earth and sand; the fragrance of wild flowers and incense; the intercessory prayers; the music soothing both to the deceased and to the living mourners; the warmth and light of candles. The deceased is expected to be a voice of intercession and education for the living community. The elements of exchange that characterize the mourners as they move through the

and for the transformation of the community around the loss of one of its members. Dying and death are not private matters, rather, everyone's death is a matter for the community, and each death contains the capacity to heal. ■

Anya Peterson Royce, one of three Phi Beta Kappa Couper Scholars for 2007-2008, is Chancellor's Professor of Anthropology and of Comparative Literature at Indiana University. She has worked for 40 years with the Isthmus Zapotec of Juchitán. Her newest book forthcoming from the University of Nebraska Press is on death — Becoming an Ancestor: The Isthmus Zapotec Way of Death.



Anya Peterson Royce's Zapotec family in mourning clothes prepare to go to a Mass for the Dead. According to tradition, the youngest girl in the extended family carries a photo of the deceased in procession to and from the Mass.

rituals that mark this passage are equally transformative and restorative. The grieving family offers gifts of bread, chocolate, tamales, cigarettes and prayer cards to visitors and those who come to pray. The visitors bring donations of money, candles and flowers. They add their voices to the prayers and their hands to the work.

These rituals provide the time for the physical transformation of the body from living to dying to dead,

time with students and faculty members, taking part in classroom discussions and delivering a public lecture for the community. The program is supported by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The other Couper Scholars for 2007-2008 are Stephen Klineberg, professor of sociology at Rice University, and William Reinhardt, professor of chemistry at the University of Washington. For more about ΦBK's programs go to www.pbk.org. ■

The ΦBK Couper Scholar Program

endeavors to serve colleges and universities underrepresented among ΦBK's host institutions, such as historically black colleges and universities and those serving Hispanic communities. Couper Scholars contribute to the intellectual life of the campus by spending

How Can Liberal Education Engage “Things That Matter”?

by Dennis McEnnerney, Beta of Colorado

In October, the Beta of Colorado Chapter initiated “Deliberation and Liberal Learning,” a two-year series of events at Colorado College, partially underwritten by ΦBK and the Teagle Foundation, promoting teaching and learning of deliberative skills through the discussion of major issues of meaning or value. Our particular concern is effective liberal education.

The series began by celebrating the late J. Glenn Gray of the philosophy department, noted Heidegger translator and author of *The Warriors: Reflections on Men in Battle* (1959) and *The Promise of Wisdom: A Philosophical Theory of Education* (1968). In 2007-2008, three afternoon seminars, co-moderated by distinguished visiting scholars and college faculty members, discussed *Promise of Wisdom* excerpts with students and faculty from across the disciplines.

All were enthralled by the first session, co-moderated by Gray’s daughter, Sherry Gray Martin, of St. John’s College, Santa Fe, and Susan Ashley, history professor and dean. Martin reflected briefly on the problems her father addressed, noting his worry that the modern drive for technical mastery undermined the ancient quest for wisdom. Ashley discussed Gray’s influence on her as a young faculty member and on the college as it embraced the “block plan” in 1970. With each student taking and each faculty member teaching only one course at a time for a “block” of three and a half weeks, Gray’s discursive, open-ended style modeled meaningful, intense study of a topic. He also elevated the tone at faculty meetings, she recalled, by urging his colleagues to reflect on the broader implications of apparently mundane issues.

The 70 students and instructors then broke into small groups to dis-

cuss Gray’s first topic in *Promise of Wisdom*: “What is education?” Despite dated references to “man” and “alienation,” students embraced Gray’s worry that overly technical education fails to make knowledge meaningful. Faculty offered related concerns about academic professionalism. Discussion ranged widely, from how modern American education differs from that of the past and elsewhere to how contemporary problems differ from those Gray faced. With great effort, the small groups broke off their intense discussions to share their reflections in a closing plenary session.

The November meeting, discussing “Individuality and Happiness,” proved equally intriguing. A young intellectual historian from City College of New York, Martin Woessner, moderated the ses-

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PHI BETA KAPPA VISITING SCHOLARS 2008-2009

For more than 50 years, ΦBK has been sending distinguished scholars in the liberal arts and sciences to institutions where our chapters are located. They serve as ambassadors for the Society and make a substantial contribution to the intellectual life of the campus. The following scholars have been selected to participate in the program for the coming academic year. For more write to visitingsscholar@pbk.org.

Eric G. Adelberger, Professor of Physics, University of Washington

Lisa Anderson, Shotwell Professor of International Relations, Columbia University; 2008-2009 Phi Beta Kappa-Frank M. Updike Memorial Scholar

Elaine K. Gazda, Professor of Classical Art and Archaeology, University of Michigan

Philip D. Gingerich, Case Collegiate Professor of Paleontology, University of Michigan

Faye Ginsburg, Kriser Professor of Anthropology, New York University

Linda Gordon, Professor of History, New York University

Robert Haselkorn, Pritzker Distinguished Service Professor of Molecular Genetics and Cell Biology, University of Chicago

Loch K. Johnson, Regents Professor of Public and International Affairs, University of Georgia

Anne K. Mellor, Distinguished Professor of English, University of California, Los Angeles

Betty Smocovitis, Professor of History and Zoology, University of Florida

Anna Tsing, Professor of Anthropology, University of California, Santa Cruz

William A. Wulf, University Professor and AT&T Professor of Engineering, University of Virginia

The Difficult Patient, a Problem Old as History (or Older)

by Abigail Zuger

The sick man was a misery to himself and to everyone around him. For one thing, his personal hygiene was horrific. He stank. And he was constantly in pain, moaning and groaning until you began to wonder if he was doing it just for effect. Worst of all, he was a mean old cuss, angry and embittered after years of illness. All he did was complain.

A few dozen medical students, most of them in their first year at Weill Medical College of Cornell University, listened with concern to a presentation about him. Eventually, they knew, they would run into difficult patients like this one.

The sick man had been a mover and shaker once, with a place in high government circles. But then he had the accident. His wound became infected. It was all downhill from there. He quickly became unable to work, and his distress upset everyone around him. Finally, his business associates forced him into long-term residential care.

Some of the faculty members in the conference room nodded in recognition. It was a case right out of a chronic-care ward in a Veterans Administration hospital.

The patient stayed in his residence for years. Not a single visitor dropped by. He grew prematurely aged, a miserable, stinking, moaning wreck. The infection in his foot was untreatable and oozed foul pus. Pain medication helped only slightly. He became obsessed, focusing all his anger on the old crowd, the false friends who had abandoned him. He blamed them for everything.

The diagnosticians in the room suspected that the patient had a chronic osteomyelitis of the foot, with an anaerobic component accounting for the odor. Perhaps the infection had spread elsewhere through the bloodstream. And then there were his psychiatric diagnoses:

reactive depression with psychotic features, possibly an underlying character disorder. He had certainly been a little narcissistic way back when.

Nine years after the sick man's admission, a stranger came knocking at his door. The visitor was a young man, just a kid, really. He knew the sick man's history, but the sight and sound and smell were overwhelming anyway. The kid was filled with pity

the man became only more agitated, almost incoherent, pain and fury all garbled together.

Fortunately, at this juncture the demigod Heracles showed up to straighten everything out. The medical students breathed a sigh of relief and clapped heartily.

These students and this patient will, of course, never meet; that would require a giant warp in the fabric of time and history. The sick man with the infected foot, Philoctetes, was marooned by his comrades on a deserted Greek island back in the mists of ancient myth. The rest of the crowd all headed off to sack Troy, but the kid, Neoptolemus, son of Achilles, was sent back to steal Philoctetes's magic bow and arrows (without which the Greeks could not prevail). The wily Odysseus was waiting on the beach for the kid to get the goods. It was all only a footnote to the bloody saga of the Trojan war.

But to Dr. Lyuba Konopasek, a pediatrician who directs the medical school's first-year course in Medicine, Patients and Society, Sophocles's play, from the fifth century B.C., had so much to say to medical students and doctors that she invited Bryan Doerries, a classicist and director, to stage a reading for her course last winter.

After the actors finished, students and faculty members talked for a long time about how students often feel helpless in the hospital, torn between befriendng patients with incurable illness and sticking to a professional script. Sophocles somehow got that tenuous position just right, just as he knew that sick people, isolated and transformed by chronic disease, dread being alone and forgotten more than they dread pain or even death.

"We have created a subclass of patients like Philoctetes with modern medicine," Doerries said. "They are



A vase depicting a certain master archer during his stay on the island of Lemnos.

Metropolitan Museum of Art

and revulsion in equal measure. He wanted to help, but had been advised by his supervisor to be dignified and professional, to do his business and leave. Still, the patient was so miserable. Every time the young man tried to leave, the sick man pleaded with him to stay. "Don't go!" the sick man cried. "Please. Stay with me."

The visitor was torn. What should he do? He could have been a medical student on his first clinical clerkship, transfixed by the misery of a patient everyone else had labeled a miserable old crock years before. He tried to reassure the sick man, but the usual platitudes sounded hollow, and

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Photo Credit: Amelia Panico

Philoctetes reading on June 6, 2007, for doctors and medical students at Cornell's Weill Medical College, featuring David Strathairn (*Good Night, and Good Luck*), Jesse Eisenberg (*The Squid and the Whale*), Dudley Knight and John Schmerling.

About The Philoctetes Project

by Bryan Doerries  ΦBK, Kenyon College, 1998

Sophocles' *Philoctetes* is a lean, psychologically complex tragedy about a famous Greek warrior who is marooned on a deserted island by his army after contracting a horrifying and debilitating illness. After nine years of fruitless and bloody warfare, the Greeks learn from an oracle that they will never conquer Troy without Philoctetes and his invincible bow on their side. A small unit is sent back to the island to retrieve the embittered warrior — by any means necessary.

The action of the play arises from the conflict between Philoctetes and the Greek soldiers who come to reclaim him. One of the soldiers, the young Neoptolemus, son of Achilles, soon finds himself mired in a difficult ethical bind. Torn between his allegiance to the Greek army and his compassion for a suffering man, he must choose to do what he thinks is right.

Philoctetes was first performed in 409 B.C., and yet the title character's sense of abandonment and search for meaning in his suffering still speaks to us today, perhaps with greater force and urgency than ever before.

Over the past two years, I have directed several readings of my translation of *Philoctetes* for diverse audiences in New York City. In every

instance, I have marveled at the profound response to this overlooked play. Some people recognize their fathers, uncles and lovers in Sophocles' depiction of the suffering soldier, while others see themselves in the conflicted caregiver, Neoptolemus.

Last year, I was asked to direct two readings of *Philoctetes* for doctors and medical students at Cornell's Weill Medical College. After one of the readings, featuring the actors David Strathairn (*Good Night, and Good Luck*.) and Jesse Eisenberg (*The Squid and the Whale*), doctors connected the character Philoctetes to difficult patients whom they had encountered in hospitals and hospice wards. After another reading, medical students, burdened with compassion for their suffering patients, strongly identified with Neoptolemus' struggle.

Recently, in December 2007, I directed a reading of *Philoctetes* at a foundation called The Philoctetes Center in New York City (no relation). The reading was followed by a panel discussion about doctor-patient relationships in which a psychiatrist, two physicians and a military oncologist related the play to their professional experiences. The medical community's enthusiastic response to

Philoctetes has confirmed the play's unique power to open crucial space for dialogue within our culture about health care. It is my hope to continue to bring people together through the play for meaningful discussion about chronic illness, modern medicine and soldiers returning from war.

In my work, I try to engage audiences with timeless social issues through ancient Greek and Roman plays. By placing smaller, select audiences in dialogue with these texts, it is my hope to one day build a larger audience for ancient Greek and Roman theater in America. My production of *Philoctetes* has helped physicians, psychiatrists, medical students and others address tough questions about doctor-patient relationships, medical ethics and debilitating, long-term illness. The play serves as a powerful bridge between medicine and the humanities.

Bryan Doerries is a New York-based writer and director. He has a B.A. in classics from Kenyon College, where he was elected to ΦBK, and an M.F.A. in directing from the University of California, Irvine. He is currently director of programs at the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers. For more information visit www.philoctetesproject.org. ■

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Award for Distinguished Service to the Humanities and the Sidney Hook Memorial Award

Phi Beta Kappa is soliciting nominations for the two awards to be given during the Council of 2009 in Austin, Texas.

The **Award for Distinguished Service to the Humanities** — a cash prize of \$2,500 and a medal — is given in each triennium to recognize individuals who have made significant contributions in the humanities. The award is underwritten by a gift in 1970 from Mr. and Mrs. William B. Jaffe. Mr. Jaffe was a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Union College. Past winners include Daniel J. Boorstin, Joseph Epstein and Robert Pinsky. The 2006 recipient was Gerald Early of Washington University.

Established in 1991 in memory of the distinguished American philosopher Sidney Hook

(1902–1989), who was elected to Phi Beta Kappa at City College of New York, the **Sidney Hook Memorial Award** recognizes national distinction by a single scholar in each of the following three endeavors: scholarship, undergraduate teaching and leadership in the cause of liberal arts education. The award of \$7,500 has been presented five times in conjunction with Council meetings. Past winners include Leon Lederman, John Hope Franklin and Natalie Zemon Davis. The 2006 recipient was Charles Tilly of Columbia University.

More information on these awards may be found at www.pbk.org/awards.

Submissions must include a letter of nomination written by a person

familiar with the nominee's scholarly work, the nominee's curriculum vitae and contact information for the nominee. Winners must be available to accept their awards at the 2009 triennial Council of the Phi Beta Kappa Society.

Please mail all materials to:

Awards Coordinator
The Phi Beta Kappa Society
1606 New Hampshire Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20009

The deadline for nominations is **May 15, 2008**.

Direct questions to Sam Esquith, awards coordinator, at (202) 745-3235 or awards@pbk.org. ■

Have a Seat!



The Phi Beta Kappa Society is pleased to offer a special chair to its members. Phi Beta Kappa's chair features a hand-stenciled gold key insignia and is made from solid maple hardwood. The black lacquer finish is accented with gold beading and cherry arms. Each chair is personalized on the back with the member's name, chapter, and year of election. Delivery of each chair by UPS takes four to six weeks. Also available are the new Jefferson Cup and traditional Julep Cup. Each is made in solid polished pewter and engraved with the Phi Beta Kappa insignia. The Jefferson Cup is 1 1/2 inches high and the Julep Cup measures four inches.

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 membership number to Hand & Hammer, 2610 Morse Lane, Woodbridge, VA 22192. You can also place an order or request the complete product brochure by calling (703) 491-4866 or by faxing (703) 491-2031. You can also order on line at www.hand-hammer.com. A three dollar shipping and handling fee is added to each order.



- Phi Beta Kappa Chair (black maple and cherry)....\$345
- Shipping for chair (east of the Mississippi).....\$29
- Shipping for chair (west of the Mississippi).....\$39
- Phi Beta Kappa Jefferson Cup (pewter 2 1/2" high)\$25
- Phi Beta Kappa Julep Cup (pewter 4" high).....\$45
- Shipping Fee (per order).....\$3

Name, chapter and date for personalization_____

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THE DIFFICULT PATIENT

Continued from 8

abandoned on their islands to live long, but have we risen to the challenge of taking emotional care of them?"

Dr. Edith Langner, an internist, said, "Philoctetes' horror was the horror of abandonment." And yet, she continued, as Sophocles accurately pointed out, it can take so little from doctors to turn that around: a daily visit, a few minutes of friendly conversation, or sometimes just a new young ear to hear the old story all over again.

Abigail Zuger, M.D., is an associate clinical professor of medicine at Albert Einstein College of Medicine and attending physician at St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center. Zuger frequently writes on medical subjects for a variety of publications, including The New York Times. Zuger has served on the AIDS Clinical Care editorial board since the publication's launch in 1989 and is also an associate editor of Journal Watch. This article was originally published in The New York Times on March 6, 2007. ■

"THINGS THAT MATTER"

Continued from 7

sion with political science professor and former dean, Timothy Fuller. Woessner spoke about discovering Gray's work as he researched Heidegger's American reception, while Fuller reflected on Gray's vision of "generous" education, one connecting tradition and innovation and encouraging both imaginative participation in others' experiences and awareness of one's uniqueness.

After an hour of small group conversation, several students commented that the informal setting, combined with the mixing of students and faculty from across the disciplines, was unlike anything they had experienced and asked whether similar discussions could be organized on a monthly basis. We are encouraging those students to begin planning a session themselves. Meanwhile, a February session, including some local ΦBK alumni, concluded discussion of Gray's work. Judith Genova, professor of philosophy, served as moderator.

Next year, two visiting scholars will prompt discussion of the contemporary challenges facing liberal education. David Oxtoby, distinguished chemist and Pomona College president, will lead the first workshop in September. A second workshop has been scheduled for the spring, focusing on "things that mat-

ter" not easily addressed within a single academic discipline. Each workshop will be followed by an "intellectual salon," in which workshop participants share food and drink while discussing with larger groups their concerns about the kinds of issues raised in the preceding workshop.

Dennis McEnerney teaches philosophy at The Colorado College and serves as executive co-director of the Association for Political Theory.

"Deliberation about Things That Matter" is a series of events sponsored by Phi Beta Kappa for teaching and learning deliberative skills through the discussion of major issues of meaning or value.

For 230 years, Phi Beta Kappa has advocated excellence in the liberal arts and sciences. "Deliberation about Things That Matter" emphasizes the first purpose of the Society: to encourage the application of learning and scholarship in the examination of important topics.

Events on campuses across the country are funded by a grant of \$100,000 to ΦBK from the Teagle Foundation as part of its Fresh Thinking initiative, which supports projects intended to bring new ideas to the liberal arts.

At each location, a series of symposia, discussions, forums and other means of instructional engagement are organized by the ΦBK chapter

and incorporated into the school's curriculum. The program is informed by the research of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts at Wabash College. For more about this and other ΦBK programs, go to www.pbk.org. ■

Start a ΦBK Association in Your Area!

ΦBK is looking for members interested in starting new associations in unrepresented parts of the country. You can find a full list of current associations and links to their Web sites by going to www.pbk.org and clicking on "Association Directory" under the Alumni Associations tab.

Associations bring together ΦBK members for intellectual, social and philanthropic activities. We can put you in touch with other interested members in your area, as well as provide information and experienced contacts who can help you get started.

If you'd like to start an association or if you have any questions, contact Cara Engel, coordinator of constituent affairs, at (202) 745-3249 or write to associations@pbk.org. ■

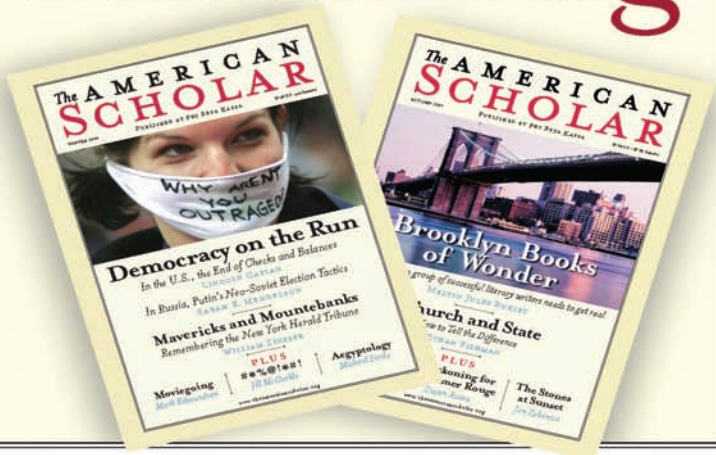
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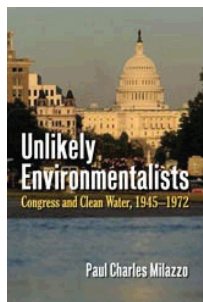
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From Our Book Critics

By Germaine Cornelissen



Unlikely Environmentalists: Congress and Clean Water, 1945-1972. Paul Charles Milazzo. University Press of Kansas, 2006. 312 pages. \$29.95

Global warming, pollution and the integrity of the environment more generally are pressing issues of great concern to scientists. It was enlightening to see the issue of clean water discussed from the viewpoint of legislators and to learn about the important role Congress played from very early on, as early as the 1950s. While many credit environmental activism for bringing the issue to the fore, Paul Charles Milazzo's detailed history shows how governmental policy predates public concern.

Post-World War II prosperity led to a fast-growing population and a rapidly-expanding industrial capacity, sparking a burst in production and urbanization. The volume, intensity and complexity of pollution from municipal and industrial sources that resulted from such rapid development took a toll on America's water resources. Domestic sewage, inorganic industrial wastes, synthetic compounds from an emerging chemical industry, synthetic detergents and insecticides, all washed into local streams and penetrated into groundwater.

Milazzo's book takes us on a historical tour centered on the Clean Water Act that brought stringent standards and tough federal enforcement, acknowledging that water pollution deserves a place on the national agenda, while thus far it was overseen by local officials. He places the spotlight on the legislators who reconfigured the boundaries of environmental politics whom he calls the "unlikely environmentalists," noting that the legislative branch acted more

aggressively than the executive branch.

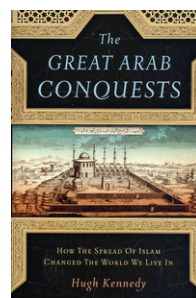
The book is organized in three parts. In the first part, the reader is introduced to the early politics of water pollution control, at a time when conventional concerns about water quantity took precedence over water quality. John Blatnik (D-Minn.), chairman of the House Subcommittee on Rivers and Harbors, took center stage in getting the first permanent water pollution control legislation through Congress in 1956, in his efforts to solve an economic rather than environmental problem. Robert Kerr (D-Okla.) in turn embraced pollution control to deflect criticism of the public works budget. Both shared the power of the congressional committee chair to shape policy. From an unwanted subcommittee on air and water pollution control, Edmund Muskie (D-Maine), the Senate "Mr. Clean" of the '60s and '70s, used his authoritative knowledge to build consensus to create a more viable federal water quality program at a time when relatively few Americans demanded one.

Part two revolves around "systems thinking," giving voice to new kinds of experts to better understand and manage complexity. Ecology emerged as a systems-oriented science emphasizing nature's complex relationship with human society. From the insights of ecology to environmental administration came the landmark National Environmental Policy Act of 1970. The success of Earth Day in April 1970 attests to the mass rally behind ecological values. A shift in environmental law followed that concentrated regulatory power at the federal level, promulgated strict national standards and timetables, and placed the burden of proof on polluters. Part three reviews the policy process and the various discourses that culminated in the Clean Water Act, including a broader conversation with the Army Corps of Engineers and California's aerospace industry.

The leading role of Congress to address environmental concerns like

water quality ultimately led to the expansion of government. Milazzo's detailed story of one of the most far-reaching legislations illustrates the diversity of players and interests that shaped environmental politics at a crucial time in American history.

By Rick Eden



The Great Arab Conquests: How the Spread of Islam Changed the World We Live In. Hugh Kennedy. Da Capo Press, 2007. 421 pages. \$27.95

Although the United States is engaged in a "global war on terror" against predominantly Islamic enemies, most Americans know little either of Islamic doctrine or history. This fascinating book helps the general reader understand key events that contributed to the spread of Islam.

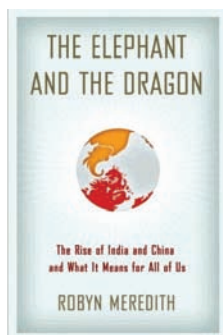
Hugh Kennedy chronicles roughly the first century of Arab military campaigns, from the death of Mohammed in 622 A.D. through 750 A.D., a period in which the Muslim Caliphate expanded until it reached from Spain to India. The chapters march systematically through successive conquests: Syria, Palestine, Iraq, Egypt, Iran, northern Africa, central Asia and the Iberian Peninsula.

The conquests were almost uniformly rapid due in part to the vulnerability of their opponents. The early Arab conquests came largely at the expense of two warring empires that had weakened each other, those of the Romans and the Persians. Moreover, because of plague epidemics in the sixth and seventh centuries, many of the regions that the Arabs invaded were in demographic and economic decline. Major cities of antiquity had become sparsely populated and poorly defended.

Surprisingly, the Arabs lacked any technological innovation that provided a military advantage.

Although the period did see important innovations in land warfare — such as the stirrup and swing-beam artillery — and the Arabs adopted them, their use was not decisive. Rather, the Arabs had other military advantages. For example, rather than rely on logistic supply trains, they used small armies of men on horseback who scavenged and pillaged for supplies. As a result, compared to other armies of the time, they were strategically more rapid and tactically more mobile.

The aggressive expansion of the Arabs stopped only when they encountered stable regions defended by well-organized militaries: the Germans, Romans, Turks and Mongols. Over a millennium later, the outlines of the Caliphate remain visible in today's world order.



The Elephant and the Dragon: The Rise of India and China and What It Means for All of Us. Robyn Meredith. W. W. Norton, 2007. 252 pages. \$25.95

The Elephant and the Dragon is a first-rate journalistic account of the ongoing emergence of India and China as major economic powers. As Robyn Meredith points out, the development is really a re-emergence: "In 1600, India and China accounted for more than half of the globe's economic output, sending everything from silk, porcelain, tea, furniture, spices and wallpaper — a Chinese invention — overland via the Silk Road or via ship on the Spice Route. Until the late 19th century, China and India remained the world's two largest economies."

Generally the book moves forward by juxtaposing a chapter on China with a parallel chapter on India. For example, the first pair of chapters compare the 20th century roots of poverty and economic decline in the two countries. Meredith faults Mao Tse-tung in China and Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru in India for poli-

cies that isolated their respective nations, discouraged trade relations and undercut economic growth.

The next pair of chapters examine the ways the two countries attracted foreign firms to invest and create jobs, turning China into the "the world's factory" and India into "the world's back office." Another pair examine the cultural barriers to change in the two countries that threaten their progress toward economic well-being and wealth.

Meredith closes by considering how the rise of China and India hold the potential for conflict with the United States and other nations, particularly because of the "race for resources" such as oil. She posits that the prospects for war will remain low because of the interdependencies of the economic giants. A kind of "economic détente" has emerged in which every nation's economic well-being depends on peaceful competition and cooperation.



Cool It: The Skeptical Environmentalist's Guide to Global Warming. Bjørn Lomborg. Alfred A. Knopf, 2007. 253 pages. \$21.00

Cool It is essential reading for everyone who is deeply concerned about global warming and its effects. As the title suggests, Bjørn Lomborg has produced an effective counter-manifesto that attempts to dial down the thermostat on the overheated public and political discourse on global warming. He reviews the science, analyzes the arguments and runs the numbers. His conclusions are surprising and compelling.

At the book's core are three essays that address the basic questions: How much global warming are we really likely to face? What will be the magnitude of its effects — both good and bad? And what are the best options for addressing its negative effects, while prioritizing those problems among other social and economic ills?

Lomborg argues that we should

outpace the negative effects of global warming by using our resources and policies to build wealth and then using that wealth in smart, cost-effective ways to reduce the damage from global warming.

One way that Lomborg endorses is to increase research and development for non-carbon and low-carbon energy technologies, to help transition the world from reliance on fossil-based fuels. Yet he opposes the Kyoto Protocol restrictions on carbon emissions, believing Kyoto's goals would brake worldwide economic growth too hard and reduce the wealth available to counter the negative effects of global warming as well as other global problems.

Simply by being balanced, Lomborg dispels some myths about global warming: he reminds us, for instance, that global warming will bring some benefits, too. For one thing, it will reduce deaths from cold, which today outnumber deaths from heat many times over. It will also increase precipitation, potentially helping to ease water shortages in many regions.

Lomborg bolsters his credibility with extensive documentation. Endnotes and references account for 90 of his book's approximately 250 pages. But the main body always remains quick, easy, informative reading.

By William F. Gilly



Swimming in Circles: Aquaculture and the End of Wild Oceans. Paul Molyneux. Thunder's Mouth Press, 2006. 344 pages. \$15.95

If you go to Elfin Cove, Alaska, a town that is essentially a dock nestled in fir trees, you will see a bright yellow bumper sticker gracing the window of the Coho Bar and Grill: "Friends DON'T let friends EAT FARMED FISH — Support Alaska's Wild Fisheries." With the closest salmon farming at least 300 miles

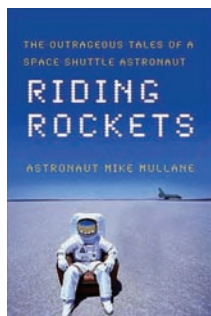
away in British Columbia, and the nearest place where one could conceivably purchase a farmed salmon more than 80 miles away in Juneau, the message might seem rather incongruous. But if you go there reading *Swimming in Circles*, as I did, you would see the scene in a different light.

This well-written, intriguing book is neither a history of fish-farming nor a thesis-focused scholarly work, though it has elements of both. Instead, “[t]his is essentially a travel book through the communities of marine organisms, fishing people, seafood farmers and the offices of those who run aquaculture industries...” Relying on extensive personal experience in commercial fisheries, Paul Molyneux guides the reader through a nonjudgmental examination of the complex relationship between wild fisheries and aquaculture — and the inherent dichotomy they represent. This is an ambitious task, and his personal focus on salmon farming in Maine and shrimp culture in Sonora, Mexico, works well with the attempt to let the global ramifications of the subject seep in throughout.

Although the book is not intended to be a treatise, footnotes, citations or chapter notes would have been a welcome addition to the bibliography. And though some parts of the book are jumpy and don’t work as well as others, when Molyneux deals with what he knows best — real fish, real people and real places — it all comes together in a most satisfying way.

This book will open your eyes and make you see the multifaceted nature of “sustainability” in a new holistic way. Indeed, places like Elfin Cove will continue to be the battleground where the concept of sustainable seafood must be hammered out.

By Jay Pasachoff



Riding Rockets: The Outrageous Tales of a Space Shuttle Astronaut. Mike Mullane. Scribner, 2006. 400 pages. \$15.00

If you want to know what it is like to become and to be an astronaut, then Mike Mullane’s *Riding Rockets* is the book for you. This first-person account by a three-time space shuttle astronaut gives an unvarnished view of events and personalities. We learn about the nature of the men and women who make up the astronaut corps and how their personal traits have gotten them there.

Though he makes himself out to be an uncultured boor, his reports of what it was like to look out a shuttle window at the Earth, its atmosphere and its aurorae are lyrical. He spares no punches about his own motivations, his family history or about his views of his colleagues. His scathing evaluation of the functioning of the astronaut office at the Johnson Space Center and how people were chosen for specific flights provides an antidote to the Panglossian view of NASA put out by public relations departments.

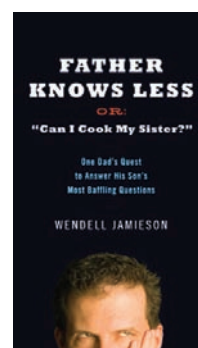
A subtheme of the book is his relation with and his opinion of Judy Resnick, her skill, her beauty and how she and her six colleagues aboard the Challenger were sacrificed through NASA’s dysfunction, ignoring signs that should have prevented Challenger’s launch that fateful cold day in 1986. He described the astronauts’ strongly negative feelings about inclusion of civilians on the space shuttle missions, given how far from routine shuttle operation is, in spite of official assurances to the contrary.

I hadn’t realized that Challenger didn’t actually explode, though so many people think so. Mullane carefully explains how the O-ring problem allowed “fire leaking” from one of the solid-fuel booster rockets, which led to a separation of the

booster from the crew cabin. As it “pulled free, it ruptured the external tank, and the aerodynamic forces and the G-loads of the moment caused the catastrophic breakup of the stack. There had been no high-power detonation. The enormous ‘explosion’ seen in the sky was merely tons of liquid oxygen and hydrogen vaporizing and burning.” Some emergency switches had been flipped. The most unfortunate consequence, weighing on him heavily still, was that the crew was most probably alive as the shuttle plummeted to the ocean, eventually hitting at the terminal velocity of nearly 250 miles per hour.

Mullane, who had flown one mission before the Challenger disaster, had his next mission scrubbed along with the Air Force’s cancellation of their investment in a second launch site, at California’s Vanderbilt Air Force Base. He went on, in any case, to fly two more missions, also well described though at shorter length in the book than his first mission, providing a suitable balance of length — foregoing the temptation to go through the lengthy pre-launch setup a second time — that maintained my interest throughout.

Though I hadn’t heard of Mullane, and I join billions of people around the world in knowing about Neil Armstrong’s accomplishments, the official biography of Armstrong is much stodgier and much less interesting to read.



Father Knows Less Or: “Can I Cook My Sister?”: One Dad’s Quest to Answer His Son’s Most Baffling Questions. Wendell Jamieson. G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 2007. 258 pages. \$24.95.

This is a wonderful book. A father, who happens to be city editor for *The New York Times* with all his experience in finding experts to check things, takes his young son’s questions seriously. He intersperses his son Dean’s questions with answers from experts, enlarged occasionally to include

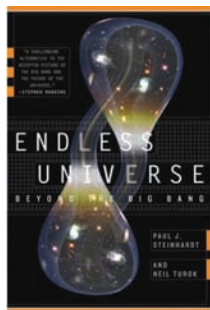
questions from other youngsters. He also gives a description of his family's life and of his quest.

I like any book that tells kids, as I used to tell mine, that as evening approached "Rayleigh scattering turned the edges of the sky pink and then red," an explanation also of the deceptively simple question "Why is the sky blue?" But who knew that Robert Louis Stevenson, "who was very active in the British lighthouse service," made the key decisions that led to red lights meaning stop and green meaning go? Our land-based traffic lights descend from lighthouse signalling, which led to using red on a ship to signal to other ships that they had to yield the right of way, and then to red and green for railroad signaling.

"Why does the pyramid on the dollar bill have an eye in it?" asked Dean. The curator of exhibitions for the American Numismatic Association Money Museum answered this one, with a reference to Masonic imagery. He cites also its introduction on currency Silver Certificates in 1935, though he doesn't mention the role of Nicholas Roerich, an expatriate Russian of multiple skills, who pushed it then.

A digression into dinosaurs led to a visit to the head of dinosaur paleontology at the American Museum of Natural History, and the excellent lesson that "I'm not one of the people who sits around and thinks about dinosaurs. ... To me they are data sets." So Jamieson's book functions on a variety of levels. The philosophy of demoting Pluto is one of the examples used to illustrate how science, or at least science bureaucracy, works.

"Why can't we just cook her?" asked Dean, pointing at his sister. An archaeologist replies you can't "because your father is trying to civilize you," and goes on to explain examples in the animal kingdom and from the Aztecs. I will leave you to read the book to find out whether the Mona Lisa wore shoes.



Endless Universe: Beyond the Big Bang. Paul J. Steinhardt and Neil Turok. Doubleday, 2007, 284 pages, \$24.95

Among the most difficult questions for astronomers to answer is "what came before the Big Bang." The conventional answer is that time began at the Big Bang, so that the question is similar to asking what is north of the north pole in that it doesn't make sense. But Paul Steinhardt and Neil Turok, two of this generation's most talented and respected cosmologists, have some other ideas.

First, though, they take a substantial part of the book in explaining contemporary cosmology in a most understandable and interesting fashion. Steinhardt, now at Princeton University, played a major role in developing the widely accepted theory known as the inflationary universe, an elaboration on Big Bang theory that involved the Universe's inflation by a factor of at least 10 to the 50th power in a tiny fraction of a second after the Big Bang. Turok, at Cambridge University in England, has also worked on the steady improvement of cosmological understanding. The personal stories of how each of the authors got involved in cosmology, and how their ideas evolved, are interspersed with the scientific explanations.

For the last half of the book, Steinhardt and Turok jump off the deep end and use astrophysical cosmology, theoretical particle physics and string theory (which works in 10 spatial dimensions) to come up with an alternative type of cosmology, a cyclic universe. They suggest that instead of being smoothed by the rapid expansion known as inflation, the Universe is smoothed mainly by the previous cycle's period of ultra-slow contraction that led up to the Big Bang. This "ekpyrosis" followed a period of accelerated expansion that is equivalent to the current phase of our own cycle in which the Universe is dominated by "dark ener-

gy," a key cosmological discovery of the last decade. Our Big Bang, in their model, resulted from the collision of two preexisting "branes" (a generalization into higher dimensions of a two-dimensional "membrane"). Such important and technical matters as their "ekpyrotic" theory are being evaluated in the professional, refereed journals (as the authors point out), and it is those judgments that count rather than descriptions in books for the general public. But in any case their ideas are laid out clearly to admire, and they clearly discuss observational tests in the near and in the decades-away future that should distinguish between inflationary and ekpyrotic models. They even cite the millennia-long history of cyclic models, while showing how their own is based on contemporary ideas. Reassuringly, the top scientists and historians of science in the field are credited with reviewing the material.

I can strongly recommend that everybody interested in the most fundamental questions of the Universe, and in how theoreticians advance their scientific ideas, read this fascinating book. ■

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