



Cincinnati Skeptic

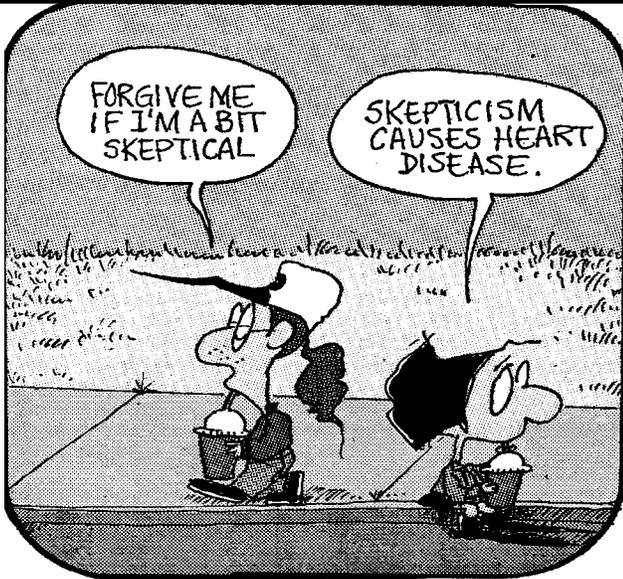
Newsletter of The Association for Rational Thought

Vol. 10 No. 4

February/March 2001

The power of accurate observation is frequently called cynicism by those who don't have it.

— George Bernard Shaw



T. COCHRAN 10-1

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December Meeting

Newark “Holy Stones:” Unholy Fraud, Holy Purpose

Brad Lepper, Curator of Archeology at the Ohio Historical Society, provided the December meeting with a lively introduction to the Newark, Ohio, “holy stones.” His talk provided a context for these oddities, transforming them from a local antiquarian curiosity into a topic with implications for the political, intellectual, and religious history of Ohio and indeed, of all the U.S.

As a middle schooler inspired by Erich von Daniken’s *Chariots of the Gods?* Brad dreamed of being an archeologist and wanted to explain von Daniken’s theories. Eventually he found that the real story was far more interesting than von Daniken’s unsupported speculation.

The subject of Brad’s doctoral dissertation was a study of the very earliest people to discover America. After graduate school, he was hired as a Hopewell culture specialist and worked at Newark, home to some of the most extensive and

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January Meeting

Not Your Mother’s Dinosaurs

At the January meeting David Meyer, paleontologist at the Department of Geology, University of Cincinnati, made an all out effort to bring A.R.T. members up to date on dinosaur research. His specialty is not dinosaurs, but crinoids, both living and sufficiently dead to have fossilized. Studying living crinoids requires extensive SCUBA diving in the blue waters of the Caribbean and the western Pacific, a fate David gracefully endures.

Dinosaurs capture popular attention more than any other animal living or extinct. People of all ages have been fascinated with these long dead beasts ever since their fossils were first discovered. David believes that dinosaurs remind us of huge, fierce, mythical monsters like dragons. Dinosaurs are also mysterious because they dwelled eons in the past and are now extinct. For many people, dinosaurs are an icon of evolutionary failure, serving as a metaphor for failed species. Another attraction is that our reconstructions of dinosaurs can be based only partially on fact and must be filled out with speculation and imagination.

This combination of intense interest and misinformation makes dinosaurs attractive to teachers, too, because it provides opportunities to puncture many

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The By-Laws require that officers for the following year be elected annually at the May meeting. They begin their duties on following July 1st.

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**Comments Corner.....****Except for the hair.....**

Joseph Rodes Buchanan never wrote a book on phrenology, at least not a book with that title. In a sense all of his books were about phrenology or a variation of that "science." A glance through his *Journal of Man* shows that the identification and measurement of mental faculties, and character traits which constitutes Phrenology is at the core of all of Buchanan's new sciences.

Science itself was a new undertaking. It can be argued there was probably no uniquely American science being done by 1830. Classes in chemistry, geology, physics were offered in the more progressive colleges whose core curricula was centered on law, theology, and the liberal arts. Psychology had not yet escaped its theological origins and phrenology slipped into this gap as a secular way of discussing the "self." The illusive concepts of soul, personality, talent and character were converted into an empirical science by the discovery that "the brain is the organ of all of our instincts, propensities, sentiments, aptitudes, intellectual capacities, and moral qualities. Further, each of these has a portion of the brain appropriated to it, and the development of these 'little brains,' or organs is manifested on the cranium, or skull, as a protuberance or 'bump.' "

Franz Joseph Gall (1758-1828) was influenced by physiognomy, which proposed that internal character could be read from the expressions on the face. Gall was a trained physician who did original work on the physiology of the brain. In 1801 his "organology" was declared illegal in Austria as "subversive of religion and morals," and Gall moved on to success in France and other parts of Europe. Gall's protégée, Johann Gaspar Spurzheim (1776-1832) moved to England, coined the term phrenology, or "study of the mind." He translated Gall's work into English.

In 1821 Charles Caldwell attended Spurzheim's lectures in Paris and returned a convert to phrenology. In 1824 he published his *Phrenology* in Lexington. The book was a big hit and Caldwell hit the lecture circuit as the American Spurzheim. Gall had identified 35 organs, Spurzheim dropped a few of the more negative organs (e.g. murder) and added a few for a total of 37. Caldwell stuck with these 37 which remained the orthodox count, until Joseph Rodes Buchanan, in 1842, announced the number of organs was limited only by the sensitivity of the phrenologist. His bust showed an additional 91 organs located by stimulating the bumps with the flow of "nervaura" from his finger tips. The subject cooperated by acting out the faculty being stimulated. One need only imagine the wonderful "mirth" bump above the center of the eyelid or the "vagranacy" area on each side of the neck below the rear of the jaw.

Spurzheim made a tour of the United States in 1832 which promoted his science. He pushed himself so hard that he died that October. Caldwell reacted cautiously to Buchanan's discoveries and warned that his claims demanded extraordinary evidence. The discovery that the phrenological organs could be stimulated by some fluid from the finger tips was made in at least five places in 1842. This new discovery became known as "phrenomagnetism." In this way the two pseudo-sciences from Vienna, Mesmer's "Animal Magnetism" and Gall's "Organology" united for a short burst of popularity. Buchanan spent months demonstrating his new science which he called "Neurology." Scientific committees in cities across the country viewed and validated this new "miracle." Next issue will provide a sample of a phrenomagnetic seance.

— Joe Gastright



**A.R.T.
Business**



Membership Duration

The ART Executive Council approved a proposal to have all memberships start in late Summer, in order to coordinate membership with our activity year, from 1 August to 31 July of the next year. This will allow us to mail renewal requests only once a year in the Fall. This is why some of you have been getting renewal letters from Nurit. If you have any questions, please contact Nurit Bowman at (513) 731-0642.

Executive Committee

There have been a number of changes in the Executive Committee. Bryan Sellers has agreed to be Publicity Coordinator. Since the beginning of this activity year, Lance Moody has been our Vice President and Nurit Bowman has been Membership Secretary. Bob and Diane Streifthau are Media Coordinators. Terry Endres has been our Investigative Officer. If you would like to help any of these people, feel free to contact them by phone, e-mail or during regular Saturday meetings.

AT SEA

Transcript of a radio conversation of a US naval ship with Canadian counterparts off the coast of Newfoundland.

Can: Please divert your course 15 degrees to the south to avoid a collision.

Am: Recommend you divert your course 15 degrees to the north to avoid a collision.

Can: Negative. You will have to divert your course 15 degrees to the south to avoid a collision.

Am: This is the captain of a US Navy ship. I say again, divert your course.

Can: No. I say again, you divert your course.

Am: This is the aircraft carrier USS Lincoln, the second largest ship in the United States Atlantic Fleet. We are accompanied by three destroyers, three cruisers and numerous support vessels. I demand that you change your course 15 degrees north, I say again, that's one five degrees north, or counter-measures will be undertaken to ensure the safety of this ship.

Can: This is a lighthouse. Your call.

— Source: *The Funnel* (Summer 2000) p. 19

Off the Internet, way off.

Subject: UNIVERSITY DIPLOMAS, LIKE NOW!

Date: Sat, 06 Jan 2001 05:15:54 -0800

From: rkhyx@AU.RU

To: GEOGRAPH@SEGATE.SUNET.SE

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On Pornography

A few months ago, during the Republican Party nomination race, I got a call from a journalist asking about John McCain. The decorated pilot had apparently just expressed alarm that there were computers in public libraries that kids could use to access pornography. The journalist had called me because, as the editor of *Nerve*, I would apparently try to defend freedom on the Internet from conservative politicians seeking to restrict it. Instead, I said that if John McCain didn't know how to find pornography in a library without computers then I'd be happy to give him a tour. Or let any thirteen-year-old kid do so.

— Jack Murnighan (25 September 2000)



Too Many Books... Too Little Time...

My Quest for the Yeti:

Confronting the Himalayas' Deepest Mystery

by Reinhold Messner, (trans: Peter Constantine)

(New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000)

Westerners call him the *Abominable Snowman* of the Himalaya Mountains. Messner says this is really a mistranslation of the Tibetan word, *migyu*, and is not the Nepalese *yeti* either. In both cases the quest refers to a large man-like animal, a primitive human or perhaps an ape, which is said to have been spied by numerous expeditions and other visitors from the West. Local guides and storytellers enjoy regaling the innocent with tales of this being. The Yeti is perhaps the best known, unknown animal. Others are the *Sasquatch* of the Pacific Northwest, the Loch Ness monster or dinosaur of Scotland, or *Mokele-Mbembe* another putative dinosaur, thought to hang out in the remote swamps of the (former French) Congo. There are many more mysterious beasts. There is even an entire "science" of this biology, which meets under the name of cryptozoology.

Why are skeptics so blatantly unwilling to credit sightings of large, uncatalogued beasts. If these animals are ordinary, undiscovered species of flesh and blood, it requires a large population for continued reproduction. As a minimum some fifty to a hundred individuals have to roam the land to assure survival into the present. A large animal also needs a large territory to support the mass of its body. And, large animals leave large signs of their presence, including footprints, feeding places, dead bodies and bones. Given the pace at which the earth is ransacked by prospectors and tourists, a large animal could remain hidden only in a very remote region.

It is to Messner's credit that he realizes these requirements. Throughout the book he searches either for a real animal, or tries to pin the Yeti down as a mythical creature. A literal translation of the German title is *Yeti - Legend and Reality*, and that is what Messner reports on.

Reinhold Messner is a mountaineer, some have called him the greatest living mountaineer, who has traveled widely in Tibet, Nepal, Kashmir, and western China. He is willing and able to live with the local people, eat their food, and speak their language. Although not fluent, Messner knows enough Tibetan to understand the difficulty of translation and meaning of words. He refers to a sizeable number of descriptive words in the various languages and dialects of the region. These sometimes translate as "wild man" and some as "snow bear," but never as abominable snowman.

Messner opens the book with his own first glimpse of the beast while hiking alone at nightfall in eastern Tibet. In a deep forest he saw what he thought was a large animal walking upright. This was 1989 in the upper Mekong river valley in eastern Tibet. Local natives, on being told of his sighting, had no doubt he spied a real animal, which they called *chem* not yeti. On and off, over the next decade, Messner tried to find and see this animal. He also pursued the stories, experiences, and tales of local people from the Mountains of Kashmir to the Chang Tang Desert, from Chengdu in western China to the Kunlun Mountains.

The bottom line is something like this. There is the "abominable snowman" of western fantasy, a myth which speaks to our desire to find the origins of humans, and pristine human beings. This is not how the people of the region see the animal. They see a man-like animal of many stories and tales. It can come and go like a ghost, it may fly through the air, it will take their goats, and maybe a young yak. You will only see it by accident not by tracking it. It will abduct young women to live with it in a cave and have his children. Underlying these fairy tales is a real animal, a large species of brown, black or yellow bear. Perhaps there are several species, certainly a number of varieties. For understanding, think of the western fairy tale wolf, who swallows little Red Cap whole, and the real wolves in the wild or in a National Park. Messner describes the bears thus: (p. 156)

... this is an extraordinary animal - fearsome and preternaturally intelligent, as far as possible from the cuddly image people in the West sometimes have of bears. These animals are nearly impossible to track, and for all their reality they remain deeply enigmatic. They avoid all contact with humans and are partly bipedal, nocturnal omnivores. Usually the males of the species, who roam from the group, are sighted.

The book provides clear photographs of this bear. Neither Messner nor the author of this review think that these findings will end the fantasy and speculation in the West about primitive, pre-human, abominable snowmen, or other hidden beasts.

— Wolf Roder

Voodoo Science:

The Road from Foolishness to Fraud

by Robert L. Park

(New York: Oxford University Press, 2000)

Only the highest praise will be adequate for this book. A must read for skeptics. Park writes simply, clearly and directly. And, just in passing, he can explain some of the greatest or most difficult mysteries of science in a paragraph. What is more, this book is a pleasure to read, not to say it is a real page turner.

Park does not try to cover the entire run of nonsense, but rather sticks to issues in the hard sciences, physics, chemistry and biology. There are no descriptions of Atlantis or other pseudo-history, no revisit to creation science or other religious preferences. He does comment "that many people choose scientific beliefs the same way they choose to be Methodists, or Democrats, or Chicago Cubs fans. They judge science by how well it agrees with the way they want the world to be." (p.viii). Park insists the real world works according to a number of physical laws which we might not like, but which cannot be broken or circumvented. In consequence, scientific findings may not be to the liking of the public, of politicians, of you and me, or of the religious establishment. Which leads to powerful temptations to find some convoluted way of denial.

Park examines global warming, alternative medicine, space travel and star wars, cold fusion, free energy, the cancer from power lines foolishness, and a few others. He covers what he was witness to, and what we saw in the news recently. Park does give us his categorization of voodoo science, which he says comes in four varieties. *Pathological science* in which scientists manage to fool themselves, and for a time others; *junk science* are arguments crafted to fool juries and judges; aliens visiting earth and magnetic healing is *pseudoscience*; the promoters may think it is science but it isn't. Finally there is outright *fraudulent science* to

make a profit or scam the ignorant.

There are a number of lessons to be learned. The cold fusion debacle teaches us why it is important to publish in the professional literature first, in order to give ones colleagues a chance to show up mistakes before going to the public media. It is the process of scientific debate and interaction which can be objective and find truth, not the individual scientist.

Park uses "the power lines may cause cancer" argument to show us why blind and double blind research is a necessity. The first such study was not blind, that is the researcher knew which houses had cancer cases, and designed a wiring measure which permitted judging the victim's homes more critically (p. 150). Park uses the issue to instruct us in the concept of confounding variables, which in the case of power lines are legion. He also explains the 95 percent confidence level in a few words. This shows you would get a false positive in about every twenty tries. If you examine 30 different types of cancer simultaneously in one sample and study, it is to be expected one or two would show false positives.

Here is Park's three sentence explanation of Einstein's theory. In 1887 Michelson and Morley measured the speed of light and compared it to the motion of the earth in its orbit (approximately 67,000 mph). They found it invariant whether they measured in the direction of the earth's movement or at right angles, i.e. as if the earth was standing still. (P. 99-100)

Einstein proceeded to derive the mathematical transformation of time that would result in the measured speed of light being the same no matter where you are or how you're moving when you make the measurement. That transformation is known as the theory of relativity. When Einstein used this transformation to calculate energy, he got a stunning result: an object has an energy of $E = mc^2$ even when it is stationary.

Since c , the speed of light (186 thousand miles per second), is a very large number and is squared to boot, a small mass packs a lot of energy. Which idea ushered in the nuclear age and is true whether we like it or not.

— Wolf Roder



If we must clone, let's clone first some truly vanishing species: an honest politician, the whore with a heart of gold, a professor with wisdom.

— bio-astrologer Esmeralda von Löwenzahn-Dentdelion

Newark "Holy Stones:" from page 1...

impressive early earthworks in the country. While at Newark, he was asked many questions about the holy stones, became interested himself, and discovered that a professor at Denison University at nearby Granville had decided that the holy stones were genuine historical artifacts and had even written a book on the subject. An economics professor at Ohio University also has come to the conclusion that the stones are genuine. But Brad had his doubts, and began to investigate the matter.

He found that the first European settlers in Ohio saw differences between the culture of the contemporary Native Americans in the area and the long abandoned earthworks. Since the elaborate earthworks seemed far beyond the capabilities of the local "savages," they concluded that they had been built by "civilized" people, most likely the Lost Tribes of Israel. This idea

was not mere uneducated speculation, but was accepted by mainstream academics of the day.

David Wyrick, who lived in Newark, was among those who thought that the Lost Tribes of Israel must have built the local earthworks. Wyrick focused all his antiquarian interests on the earthworks. In fact he and a Cincinnati physician, Joseph S. Unzicker, in 1860 completed a highly detailed, highly accurate map of the Newark Earthworks, a map so well executed that it remains useful today.

During the summer of 1860, while digging for evidence that would provide a factual basis for his belief about the builders of the earthworks, he found a brownish, wedge shaped, polished stone engraved with what appeared to be Hebrew letters. No find could have pleased him more. He dashed off to tell his friend Israel Dille, a Newark resident also interested in history, about his spectacular find. As it happened, and there are some who believe that this was no coincidence, on the very day of Wyrick's discovery, Dille had a house guest, Charles Wittlesey, a well-known Cleveland archeologist who was a recognized expert in Ohio prehistory.

Wyrick, Wittlesey, and Dille were all sure the mysterious markings on the stone were Hebrew, but none them could translate them. So they sought the help of the only person in Newark who could read Hebrew, John Winspeare

McCarty. McCarty, an Episcopal priest trained at nearby Kenyon College, was an avid student of Hebrew. He found on the stone four statements written in modern Hebrew: "The Laws of Jehovah," "The Word of the Lord," "The Holy of Holies," and "The King of the Earth."

Response to the discovery was vigorous and varied. Wittlesey noted that the Hebrew characters were modern, not ancient, and that the stone had been found suspiciously close to the surface. He concluded that the stone was not a fraud, but that it was a fairly recent historical artifact. A local Mason thought the stone looked like a Masonic keystone, and suggested that Masons had built the

earthworks. *Harper's Weekly* declared the stone a fraud.

Some said it certainly was remarkable that this particular find should be made on the very day that the outstanding expert on Ohio antiquities was in Newark, and accused Wyrick of plant-

ing the stone himself. Wyrick continued to dig, and in November of the same year found in one of the smaller mounds known to have been buried originally under forty feet of stone, a wooden sarcophagus. He reburied it and returned with witnesses, and with them dug out the sarcophagus again, and under it found a small stone box. Inside the box was another stone marked in Hebrew with the figure of a man wearing long robes.

The Hebrew markings were once again promptly translated by the Rev. McCarty, who said they were the Decalogue, from the Torah, written in ancient Hebrew. In addition the figure was labeled "Moses." So the stone met all of Wittlesey's criticisms: it was written in ancient Hebrew, it was definitely not Masonic in origin, and it was found in an area that until very recently had been deeply buried.

Nevertheless, careful examination proved the Keystone, as it came to be known, a fraud. The "ancient" Hebrew contained an error likely to be made only if writer had translated the Decalogue from modern Hebrew. The mark of a mechanical grinding wheel was discovered on the stone. Local people were certain Wyrick had not planted the stones. Wittlesey eventually stated that he thought Wyrick was the culprit. Wyrick himself believed he had been the victim of a plant. Brad's conclusion, and that of his fellow

For more information:

Bradley T. Lepper and Jeff Gill. "The Newark Holy Stones." *Timeline*, (May/June 2000) pp. 17-25. (Publication of the Ohio Historical Society. Illustrated.) Ohio Historical Society web pages:

<http://www.chiokids.org/chc/timeline/13000bc.html>

<http://www.chiokids.org/chc/timeline/history.html>

<http://www.chiokids.org/resource/collect/curator/arch.html>

Web page for the Center for the Study of the First Americans:

<http://www.peak.org/csfa/index.html>

Web page for Searching for the Great Hopewell Road:

<http://www.ohiojunction.net/hopewell>

researcher, Jeff Gill, was that Wyrick was an unlikely suspect, and in any case would have needed help with Hebrew to have pulled off the fraud.

Nevertheless it was odd that a stone engraved with the Ten Commandments and Moses had been found just days before the election of Abraham Lincoln. Contemporary newspapers, which were considerably more partisan than those of today, were divided on the issue. All the Democratic papers said the stones were frauds, and all the Republican newspapers supported their authenticity as genuine archeological treasures. On the eve of the Civil War, popular opinion was deeply divided over abolition and slavery. At the same time, the foremost scientific question in archeology was the question of ethnic groups and how to understand ethnic differences. Some scholars believed in monogenesis, a theory that the entire human race came from the same source, Adam and Eve. Others believed in polygenesis, the notion that there were separate creations. This latter theory was used to justify black slavery by claiming that Blacks were the result of a separate creation, and therefore a species different from whites. The same theory was used to justify exterminating native American groups.

The Holy Stones, if genuine, would tend to support the monogenesis theory, suggesting that the Newark Earthworks had been built by and thus the unity of all human beings in one race. They would also support driving out Native Americans, by showing that the first inhabitants of the New World had been refugees from the Old World.

Jeff Gill, himself a member of the clergy, was the one who first suspected John Winspeare McCarty. McCarty was fluent in Hebrew, a well-known student of the language. McCarty was also known to have strong abolitionist leanings. He had been observed escorting the only Black student at Kenyon to the front of the church to give him Communion first. He was known to be not entirely conventional, given to occasional intemperate outbursts of irritability and bad temper. He was also quite ambitious, which may account for his bypassing the local Newark paper and sending his translations of the markings on the stones to a Cincinnati newspaper, where his boss Bishop McIlvaine would be sure to see them.

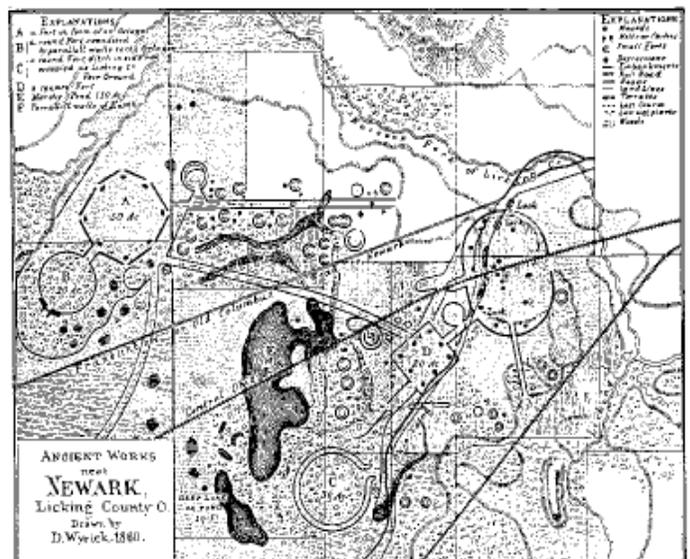
McIlvaine had expressed the belief that ancient Biblical tribes were the first settlers of North America, and that relics supporting this theory were sure to be found. He also believed that all human beings were one

species, and that slavery was therefore wrong, and a threat to the church. To him the stones would confirm his beliefs, undermining the allegedly scientific claims of polygenesis.

Brad and his colleague concluded that the Holy Stones were a fraud perpetrated in order to undermine the intellectual arguments supporting slavery. The stones were planted in Newark because at the time the Newark Earthworks were the focus of a great deal of popular and academic interest. They further concluded from evidence mentioned here and other information, that McCarty may well have been the perpetrator who threw the stones into the stew of intellectual and political ferment surrounding ideas of race and slavery in nineteenth century America. Whether McCarty was concerned with promoting abolition or his own career is an open question.

Whether the stones influenced the course of archeology and politics is better understood. Their appearance at the center of controversy was shortened by the advent of the Civil War a few months after the stones were found, and by the appearance of Darwin's *Origin of Species*. Slavery came to a bloody and protracted end, and nudged by Darwin, monogenesis and polygenesis quietly disappeared into the dustbin of history.

-- Reported by Virginia Jergens.





A Puzzle for Thinkers

Can you understand the Newspaper?

University of New Hampshire professors have been working without a contract for almost two years, locked in a battle with the trustees over salaries. The faculty seeks annual raises of five percent over the next five years. The administration has offered 22 percent over five years. — *The Portsmouth Herald* (23 May 2000)

Just how far are the two contracting parties apart? That is, how much would the professors proposal earn after five years, and/or what annual percentage is the administration offering?

Solution to last issue's puzzle: average entry fee, or average cost per visitor?

Actually the students get neither figure. For the average cost of a ticket they need to average the entry fees, which would be as follows:

Pool A, 100/20 = \$ 5	
Pool B, 100/25 = \$ 4	
Pool C, 100/10 = \$ 10	
Pool D, 100/20 = \$ 5	
Pool E, 100/40 = \$ 2.50	
Pool F, 100/50 = \$ 2	
	—————
Total	\$ 28.50

Divided by 6 pools, the average entry fee is \$ 4.75. This is also the average entry fee collected per visitor if each pool draws the same number of customers, an unlikely event.

The average cost per visitor depends on how many persons visit each pool, a figure we don't have. For instance, if all attend only pool F, then each pays only \$ 2. The figure the students estimated is the average entry fee per visitor on the assumption that each pool collects the same amount of money, another unlikely event.

Said a careless magician of Wales,
 "An odor of gasoline prevails,"
 He then struck a light
 And later that night
 Was collected in seventeen pails.

Ode to the Butterfly Mind

by Edwin F. Kagin

The Parliament of Butterflies
 Was racked by deep division
 Questions of what to teach the young
 Demanded their decision.

It had been known and taught and thought
 Since butterfly life began
 That butterflies in glory rose
 From their creator's mighty hand

Now some few who this truth mocked
 Had attacked faith's very pillars
 "All butterflies," these scientists claimed,
 "Came from caterpillars."

This indecent theory spread
 Into butterfly education,
 Until this "caterpillar cult"
 Threatened creation's revelation.

The faithful sought to restore the truth
 About the origins of butterflies;
 And to build an absolute moral base,
 To stop the metamorphic lies.

"Believe you descended from some worm
 And wormlike you will be!"
 Reasoned those who'd seen faith's light
 And knew there was nothing left to see.

"We see no proof," some butterflies said
 "That we are all come from cocoons—
 Unbelievers who would teach this tale
 Are all immoral loons."

Some said the metamorphous lie
 Was laid by "the enemy," they believed,
 Set, like candle flames and windshields,
 To destroy all who were deceived.

The matter was at last resolved—
 Both theories must be taught—how fine!
 Now all youth can simply decide the truth,
 Each in their own simple butterfly mind.



Mother's Dinosaur from page 1...

dinosaur myths. In spite of all the children's books, movies, fiction, nonfiction, and amusement parks featuring dinosaurs, much of the information available from popular sources is inaccurate, stereotypical and often just plain wrong.

The scientific study of dinosaurs began less than 200 years ago. When the name dinosaur, which means "terrible lizard," was coined in 1802 no complete skeletons had been found. Discovered dinosaur teeth looked a lot like lizard teeth, leading naturalists to believe that they had found the remains of giant, extinct lizards. The first full sized reconstructions, built for an exhibition in Britain in the 1850's before a complete skeleton had been found, looked like huge, sprawling lizards.

The first complete skeleton was discovered in Haddonfield, New Jersey, and now resides at the Philadelphia Academy of Science. This was the beginning of a great dinosaur rush sparked by explorations in the American West. There was fierce competition to find and name new species. As the big natural history museums like the Field Museum in Chicago and the Smithsonian Institute in Washington began to acquire and display these fossil skeletons, the huge and continuing popularity of the dinosaurs took off and has never simmered down. Later dinosaur expeditions spread around the world. Today dinosaur remains have been found on all the continents, including the Arctic, providing evidence of their extensive dispersal over much of Pangaea, the original mega continent from which all of today's continents formed.

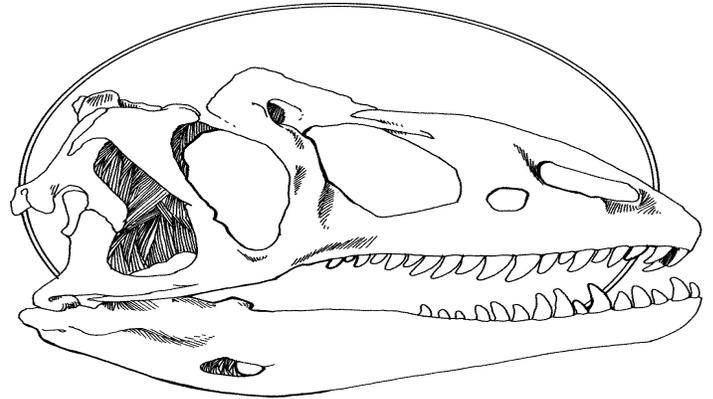
The 1920's and 1930's brought expeditions to the Gobi Desert led by Roy Chapman Andrews looking for human skeletons to support the notion, promulgated by the head of the American Museum at the time, that human beings originated in Asia. No human bones were discovered, but dinosaurs and their eggs were found, further fueling the dinosaur's popularity.

Our speaker himself was inspired as a child to write to Andrews, who sent him postcards, part of a tradition among dinosaur researchers, who will often answer mail from children, even if other mail goes neglected. A falling out with the Chinese over dinosaur eggs illegally put up for sale and the rise of the Communists in China put an end to American explorations there until the 1990's, when the American Museum went back to the Gobi.

In the 1960's new methods of interpreting dinosaur fossils provided



another burst of exploration and research. The new research focused on trying to determine what dinosaurs looked like and how they lived. This research continues today, applying, for example, molecular research and new techniques like CAT scans. New studies show that



dinosaurs are not lizards, as their name suggests. They are another kind of reptiles whose skulls have two openings in addition to eye and nose openings, unlike reptiles. In addition, dinosaurs legs are not attached to their bodies as lizards' legs are. Many of the old exhibits of dinosaurs show dinosaurs squatting, supported by the triangle formed by two legs and a tail. New research shows that dinosaurs hips were made so that they could stand upright, and new exhibits show them with tail extended behind to balance as they race forward on four legs, their rear legs extending straight down from their hips. This kind of ball and socket hip is unique to dinosaurs. There goes the dinosaurs are giant lizards myth.

The notion that some dinosaurs, the sauropods, were too heavy to walk on land has also fallen to new analysis of the evidence. Old paintings of sauropods show them wading in deep water, eating pond vegetation. New paintings suggest that the sauropods were lively and agile on dry land, able to rear up and feed on high tree branches.

The discovery of fossilized nests and brooding dinosaurs suggests that adults cared for their young. This has exploded the old notion that dinosaurs laid their eggs and forgot about them in typical reptilian manner. Another myth that has been discarded is the idea that all dinosaurs are cold blooded. At least some of them were probably warm blooded. Others were so large that their body mass could maintain their temperature.

Small dinosaurs probably evolved into birds. In the Jurassic period, small dinosaurs developed scales which became body insulation and eventually developed into feathers. This is not to say that birds are little feathered dinosaurs: they are a new, unique product of evolution. The myth that dinosaurs are a failed species evaporates in the

face of evidence suggesting that their descendants are chowing down on sunflower seeds at backyard bird feeders. In addition to producing descendants well adapted to new circumstances, the dinosaurs dominated the Earth for 160 million years, a period of time a fledgling species like Homo sapiens can scarcely criticize as failed.

The demise of the dinosaurs appears to have occurred because of long term factors like gradual climate change and the sudden catastrophic impact of an asteroid with the Earth off the coast of Yucatan. Recent research has focused on exactly how such an impact could cause extinction. --Reported by Virginia Jergens.

For more information on David Meyer's research:

www.uc.edu/geology/faculty/meyer.html

Local fossils: Big Bone Lick, a northern Kentucky state park, includes no dinosaurs. Fossils of recent, ice age mammals have been found there. Even Thomas Jefferson had bones from Big Bone Lick in his natural history collection. Local fossils around Cincinnati including trilobites are of late Ordovician age, 460 to 440 million year ago, i.e. much older than the dinosaurs.



Dr. Seuss Explains Why computers Sometimes Crash

(Must be read out loud)

If a packet hits a pocket on a socket on a port,
and the bus is interrupted as a very last resort,
and the access of the memory makes your floppy disk abort,
then the socket packet pocket has an error to report.

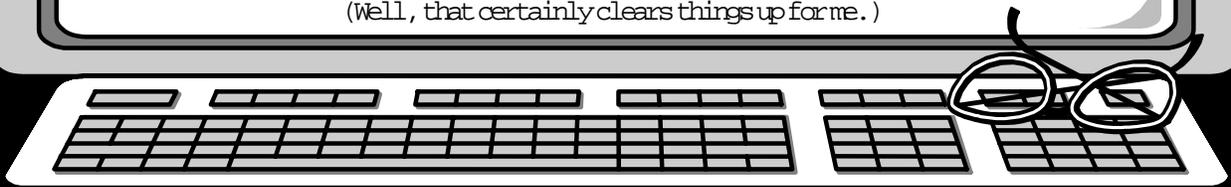
If your cursor finds a menu item followed by a dash,
and the double-clicking icon puts your window in the trash,
and your data are corrupted cause the index doesn't hash,
then your situation's hopeless and your system's gonna crash!

If the label on the cable on the table at your house
says the network is connected to the button on your mouse,
but the packet wants to tunnel to another protocol,
that's repeatedly rejected by the printer down the hall,

and your screen is all distorted by the side effect of gauss,
so your icons in the window are as wavy as a souse;
then you may as well reboot and go out with a bang,
'cuz sure as I'm a poet, the sucker's gonna hang!

When the copy of your floppy's getting sloppy in the disk,
and the macro code instructions cause unnecessary risk,
then you'll have to flash the memory
and you'll want to RAM your ROM.
Quickly turn off the computer and be sure to tell your Mom!

(Well, that certainly clears things up for me.)



The Association for Rational Thought is an independent, nonprofit, scientific and educational organization. We share the ideas and philosophies of CSICOP, the Skeptics Society, and JREF.

CSICOP : the *Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal* publishes the *Skeptical Inquirer*, a journal of investigations of paranormal claims. PO. Box 703, Amherst, NY 14226-0703, phone: 800-634-1610, fax: 716-636-1733, www.scicop.org

The Skeptics Society, publishes *The Skeptic Magazine*. PO Box 338, Altadena, CA 91001; phone: 626-794-3119; fax 626-794-1300; skepticmag@aol.com and www.skeptic.com.

JREF: the James Randi Educational Foundation publishes the *Swift Newsletter*. 201 SE Davie Blvd. Fort Lauderdale, FL 33316-1815. phone: (954) 467-1112, fax: (954)467-1660, www.randi.org

A.R.T. meets on the second Saturday of each month September through June, 10:00 AM and publishes *Cincinnati Skeptic* each month. A.R.T. meetings are open to the public. A.R.T. also maintains a database of information on paranormal claims for local new media to consult and investigates local paranormal claims. A.R.T. was founded by Cincinnati area skeptics in 1991. Annual dues are \$15.00 and include a subscription to the *Cincinnati Skeptic*.

For more information call: President Roy Auerbach (513)731-2774 or Lance Moody (513) 336-9835 or visit our website. **Address Changes and Corrections, Membership Questions:** Nurit Bowman (513) 731-0642 E-mail: nuritb@netscape.net

Mailing Label Information: "00/00/00 Member": You are a member in good standing; your membership will expire on the date on the label. "Lapsed": (*highlighted*) - your membership has expired. Please send your dues as soon as possible.

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Renewing Member

Contribution

Gift membership for/by:

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Work: _____ Home: _____ E-mail: _____

We have kept dues low and will continue to do so in spite of rising costs. However, if you are able to, your additional contributions are very much appreciated. Please give generously, if possible. Thank you very much!

I would like to make a contribution in addition to my dues to further the important work of the Association:

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Make your check payable to the **Association for Rational Thought** and mail to A.R.T., P.O. Box 12896, Cincinnati OH 45212. *Contributions are not at present tax deductible, but we are working on it.*

Request subjects for future meetings _____

Please do *not* include my name and address in mailing lists exchanged with other groups.

Skepticism and ART on the Electronic Media



For the latest in skeptical news via e-mail, join SANE, the Skeptical Area Network Effort. You will find cheerful, rational messages from CSICOP, James "The Amazing" Randi, your fellow local skeptics and ART in your e-mail box every week. This is our means of staying in touch between issues of the *Cincinnati Skeptic*.

Be sure to check out our skeptical website at <http://www.cincinnati-skeptics.org> --- It contains: our BLURBS on various subjects; lots of nifty links to skeptical thinking around the world; the information for joining SANE; the basic definition of who we are, what we do, and our bylaws. In addition, you'll find such things as how to get to our meetings; other ways to reach us; and how to send sample copies of the newsletter to potential members.

—David Wall, Web Site Manager

Web: <http://www.cincinnati-skeptics.org>

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The Association for Rational Thought is an organization committed to encouraging rational, well- informed evaluation of fringe-science, pseudoscience, and paranormal claims. A.R.T. encourages the investigation of paranormal and pseudoscientific claims from a responsible, scientific viewpoint and the distribution of the results of such investigations to the public. You are cordially invited to become a member of A.R.T. Membership information is included elsewhere in this issue.

Preview Of Coming Attractions....

Sixth Meeting of the 2000-2001 Season! Date and Day: Sat. Feb. 10 2001



Topic: Free (& Fun) for All

Speaker: President Roy Auerbach, PhD will moderate.

Here's an opportunity for any member to make a 5 - 10 minute presentation on a topic of (likely) interest to other skeptics, followed by some discussion. These programs are LOTS of fun and often lead to ideas for in-depth inquiry the following year. While not required, an e-mail to Roy (raa@cinci.rr.com) indicating your topic & amount of time you expect to use will help organize the morning.

Seventh Meeting of the 2000-2001 Season! Date and Day: Sat. Mar 10, 2001

Topic: The Drake Equation: Piecing Together the ETI [extraterrestrial intelligence] Puzzle

Speaker: Terry Endres, ART Investigations Officer Cincinnati State Technical & Community College

Terry's developing an activity wherein the audience will break into small groups to play with the Drake equation, addressing the evolution of solar systems and life forms.

$$N_* \times f_p \times n_e \times f_i \times f_c \times f_L = N$$

Place: Bonham Branch Library; 500 Springfield Pike, Wyoming at NE corner of "the pike" & Wyoming Ave. Parking is limited at library & for nearby businesses, so if at all possible, park on Wyoming Ave. (toward Sturkey's). Coffee & doughnuts can be had nearby.

Time: 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM -- program --> 12:15PM - 2:00 PM -- lunch at Sturkeys

Sturkey's Restaurant; 400 Wyoming Ave.; to preview the menu, or get a good map: <http://www.sturkeys.com>

Please mark your calendar and plan to attend!..See you there!