



The Newsletter of The North Texas Skeptics

Volume 2 Number 3

www.ntskeptics.org

July/August 1988

In this month's issue:

- [NTS News and Events](#)
- [NTS Attitude Problem](#)
- [Meeting Schedule](#)
- [May Meeting Focuses on Cults](#)
- [Psychic Predicts Own Death](#)
- [Light Years](#)
- [Influence](#)
- [Handwriting Analysis](#)
- [A Visit to the Institute for Creation Research](#)

NTS News and Events

The past two months have been good for media exposure. Articles about NTS have appeared in the May 23 *Dallas Times Herald* and the June 20 *Dallas Morning News*. On June 1, Chair John Thomas appeared on Robin Engel's interview show on Irving Cable. Dr. Arthur Babick and local psychic John Catchings also appeared. Thomas used the opportunity to challenge Catchings' claims about psychic powers. It looks as though the recent media coverage will help increase our membership substantially.

Hope Evans addressed our May meeting. Her talk on cults is covered elsewhere in this issue. The June meeting provided a break from our usual format when member James Rusk provided an interesting planetarium show on UFO sightings.

The response to our request for clippings and articles has been good. We have received material as varied as an article on transcendental meditation, a bibliography of rationalist literature, and a copy from Marvel Comics showing Spiderman debunking a psychic surgeon! Keep up the good work, folks.

Members have also sent us copies of letters they wrote to news organizations. James Rusk's letter about astrology was published in the *Times Herald*. Dave Greenlee had an excellent piece about the Shroud of Turin in the North Texas Catholic. Dr. Tim Gorski sent a lengthy letter constructively criticizing a recent WFAA-TV report on homeopathy. Remember that we are engaged in an intellectual battle with unreason, and intellectual battles are fought with ideas. Written words carry those ideas to the front.

WE are organizing a speaker's program. If you would like to participate as a speaker, or if you know of a service club or other group that might be interested in having us speak, please let us know.

Membership renewals are coming in at a good rate. It looks as if we're going to meet our renewal goals, and may even increase our membership as a result of our recent publicity.

John Thomas starts a two-part article on graphology in this issue. Also, two new contributors are included in this issue. Eddie Vela has prodded us with a book review, and Rick Neeley has written an article about his trip to the Institute of Creation Research. Rick's article was long enough that we had to break it into two parts; in the next issue Rick will tell us about his discussion with Dr. John Morris and his discovery that the reputation of Ron Hastings has spread even to the hallowed halls of the ICR. If you'd like to contribute to The Skeptic, we're interested in hearing from you.

The Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal will be holding its 1988 Conference in Chicago on Nov. 4, 5 and 6. The conference is titled "The New Age: A Scientific Evaluation." Some NTS members will be in attendance; if you're planning on going, you can count on seeing some familiar faces there

[\[Back to top\]](#)

NTS Attitude Problem

by **Tony Dousette**

The Dallas Morning News, on Monday, June 20, had an article on NTS in the 'Today' section. It's a good article, providing a fair and balanced discussion of our group. John Catchings, self-proclaimed psychic and member of the North Texas Parapsychology Association, ventures the opinion that we skeptics have an attitude problem. In John Catchings' words, "These are the negative types. They don't believe in anything but themselves. These are the kinds of people who were burning books, saying man couldn't fly, saying the world is flat." This is the same Catchings who, at last January's Meta-Psychic Fair, predicted that the ice storm then paralyzing Dallas would be repeated in late February, except that it would be much worse. Well, Mr. Catchings' storm seems to have been delayed; maybe we'll see it in August?

And this would seem to be a shining example of the NTS "attitude problem" in action. As skeptics, we want to see evidence that is clear, unambiguous, and conclusive before we accept the claims of the paranormal. The evidence so far has as much reliability as the NTPA predictions, which are distinguished by their unreliability.

Skeptics aren't negative types. We are, though, questioning types, and those who make unsubstantiated claims without evidence can easily fall back on the "negative" accusation as their only defense. And the members of NTS believe in much more than just themselves. We have families, religious and political affiliations, and friendships, just as the rest of humanity. We are united in valuing truth, and we accept that truth is found through reason and evidence.

Allegations regarding book burning are especially offensive, as this is an activity associated with totalitarian movements. Suffice it to say that Nazis are the classical example of book burners, despite the fact that Adolph Hitler accepted astrology. And the followers of Jim Jones were distinguished by their unquestioning acceptance of his cult. Would John Catchings notice an attitude problem at Jonestown?

We accept that humankind can fly. But, as skeptics, we question those who claim they can levitate. We doubt that we'll suddenly develop the ability to teleport, even though Barbara Spencer, at the MetaPsychic Fair, suggested the possibility that this will be a new variety of psychic functioning to emerge in 1988. Any evidence that John Catchings has will, of course, be considered.

[\[Back to top\]](#)

Meeting Schedule:

July 17 - Dr. Arthur Babick speaks on "Researching with Psychics." (This program has been rescheduled from the

March meeting.) Dr. Babick is also compiling psychological profiles of psychics and skeptics, in case any of you are interested in being tested.

August 21 - We will show a videotape of James Randi's investigations of dowzers and psychic surgeons. This film was produced during Randi's recent tour of Australia.

September 18 - Dr. Harold F. Newman of the Food & Drug Administration and the Council Against Health Fraud speaks. Newman will show how medical pseudoscience operates, often with tragic results.

All meetings will be. at 2:00 p.m., Room 101, University Hall, University of Texas at Arlington (corner of Cooper and Campus Drive.

[\[Back to top\]](#)

May Meeting Focuses an Cults

by **John Thomas**

Hope Evans, from the local chapter of the Cult Awareness Council, spoke at the May meeting. The council states its poses as creating public awareness of the harmful effects of destructive cults, sharing information with families who may be losing someone to a destructive cult, and offering support to individuals coming out of a destructive cult experience.

The key word here is "destructive." Ms. Evans believes that a reasoned distinction can be made between organizations which may be cultic in the general sense of extreme or faddish devotion to a belief or leader, but harmless, and those groups which should excite our concern because they systematically use unethical influence to recruit and maintain members. Such destructive cults are often religious in nature, such as the Jim Jones People's Temple, but they may also be based on pseudoscience theories, such as Scientology, or the Krone employee-training method of recent notoriety. If such groups can thrive, it is clearly of interest to skeptics, because it shows that people are not evaluating evidence adequately, and that they do not know how to challenge the promoters of unusual claims. If 65 percent of the members of the Rashneesh commune in Oregon held advanced degrees, then our educational system has failed us somewhere.

Ms. Evans cited some popular myths about destructive cults: that there is no such thing as "mind control." that persons involved are mentally ill or easily led, or that that these are alternative religions which should be Respected. She discussed the techniques of social and psychological pressure usually called mind control. These include deception about what is being done to the subject, the creation of a sense of helplessness and confusion, the manipulation of experience to elicit new behavior and suppress former behavior, and the creation of a closed, authoritarian system which denies the individual freedom of thought. (Those inclined to doubt the existence or efficacy of such techniques might want to consult the book "Influence," by Robert B. Cialdini).

The program drew some questions and discussion from the members. Some felt no distinction could be made between Evans' "destructive" cults and any other organized religion. Others disagreed. pointing out that the issue was not religious doctrine, but the use of abusive and unethical influence to recruit and maintain members.

[\[Back to top\]](#)

Psychic Predicts Own Death

by **Tony Dousette**

Astrological predictions do, on occasion, come true. The following instance involves Gerolamo Cardano (1501-1576), who was the first thinker to attempt to develop a rudimentary theory of probability. His brilliance was balanced by a superstition that eventually prevailed over reason. Readers should judge for themselves whether this validates astrology or whether other forces were at play.

"Cardano was imbued with a sense of mysticism; his undoing came through a pathological belief in astrology. In a publicized event he cast the horoscope of the frail fifteen-year-old Edward VI of England, including specific predictions for the fifty-fifth year, third month, and seventeenth day of the monarch's life. Edward was inconsiderate enough to expire the following year at the age of sixteen. Undismayed, Cardano then had the temerity to cast the horoscope of Jesus Christ, an act not viewed with levity by sixteenth century theologians. Finally, when the self-predicted day of his own death arrived with his health showing no signs of faltering, he redeemed his reputation by an act of suicide."

Richard A. Epstein, *The Theory of Gambling and Statistical Logic*, Academic Press New York, 1967, page 2.

[\[Back to top\]](#)

Light Years

by Gary Kinder.

Pocket Books, Simon and Schuster, Inc., N.Y., N.Y., Feb., 1988

Summary: Swiss farmer Eduard Meier claims a series of contacts with a female alien named Semjase from the Pleides constellation during the mid-1970s and early 1980's. Author Kinder recounts interviews with Meier and several people who knew Meier during the contacts. The book includes several photos of an alien "beam ship."

Kinder tells the history of Meier, and his series of contacts with an alien. Meier, unemployed, lived on a small parcel of farmland in an aging house with no plumbing and one light bulb. His Greek wife, who attempted suicide several times, and his child, who suffers ridicule from other children concerning his father's odd behavior, suffer through more than a thousand visitors and curiosity-seekers during Meier's relationship with Semjase.

Let me get right to the point. Kinder's otherwise meticulous reporting of interviews with Meier and those who knew him fails on the level of high-school science. A few examples include:

Much is made of the circular swirl platters left in meadow grasses where the beamship rested. "The tracks I looked at had stems bent over that weren't broken and they never stood up," Kinder quotes an observer. "How can that happen?" The observer points out that the grass continues to grow, only parallel to the ground.

Meier answers that the Pleidians "told him that it was the magnetic vortices under the landing pads that produce a change in the magnetic orientation of the plant, and the plant grew horizontally in its induced field rather than vertically in a normal field."

The fallacy here is obvious. Plants exhibit some degree of geotropism or phototropism or a combination of both. They grow toward light and orient themselves in the gravitational field, not the magnetic field.

One of the landing sites was allegedly measured for gamma radiation five years after contact. While reporting radiation levels in plants ranging from 0.15 to 2.0, the author never gives the units of measurement. And he offers no explanation, other than a reference to profound changes in the atomic structure of the grass due to an electromagnetic field.

A sample of alien metal is purportedly analyzed by experts and found to be completely unlike any known to

man. However, it disappeared from the lab. Of course.

Given these explanations, even if one assumes the aliens can do everything Kinder wants us to believe they can do, it seems that they aren't very good at explaining it. Perhaps Pleidians, like Earthlings, know how to operate their machines, but not how they work.

Kinder says his strongest evidence is the color photos, of the cereal-bowl-shaped beamship. He quotes expert after expert who praise the photos' quality. In fact, Kinder's best photos were blurry, all from the same angle, and devoid of any scaling information. Kinder offers no photos of Meier or Semjase. The photos of Meier and his wife and other principals in the book, shot in the same locales, are satisfactorily clear and sharp. These kinds of observations are so elementary, that I feel silly having to make them.

In his epilogue, Kinder admits to having seen none of the above-mentioned evidence first-hand, and he describes a burnt-out Meier who suffered a serious concussion two years before Kinder met him in 1984. He says that he's "sampled only a small portion of Phil Klass and Robert Shaeffer's writings, and finds their work "more convoluted and difficult to believe than the sightings themselves."

-Eddie Vela

[\[Back to top\]](#)

Influence

by Robert B. Cialdini

William Morrow a Co., 1984.

Social psychologist Robert R. Cialdini has devoted himself to the study of how human beings get each other to comply with their requests. This book summarizes the current state of scientific knowledge about the behaviors of influence and compliance. After reading it, you will never hear a TV commercial or sales pitch as you did before.

Cialdini maintains that humans as well as animals have fixed-action forms of behavior. The appropriate stimulus can trigger them into action. Usually these stereotyped behaviors work to our advantage, but the trigger features that activate them can be used to dupe us into playing them out at the wrong times, to our detriment. The author devotes a chapter to each of six categories of stereotyped behavior which he considers to be the most important in the human repertoire, and illustrates each by research findings and vivid examples. These are:

- Reciprocation - the rule that we should try to repay, in kind, what another person has done for us.
- Commitment and consistency - our powerful desire to be (and appear) consistent with what we have already done.
- Social proof - we find out what behavior is correct by looking to see what other people think is correct.
- Liking - the simple but powerful fact that we most prefer to say "yes" to people we know and like.
- Authority - our natural and deep-seated sense of duty to authority, as activated by titles, clothing and trappings.
- Scarcity - the rule that things become more attractive to us when it appears they may soon become unavailable

The abstract statement of these principles does not do justice to Cialdini's fully-developed presentation. We learn in each case why the rule works to our advantage in most situations, how it is exploited by those seeking our compliance, and "how to say "no" to the many and varied strategies of the influence artists.

This book is a good complement to the study of what is usually called "critical thinking." In addition to catching logical fallacies, or spotting the weak justifications and unstated assumptions in arguments, the skeptical thinker should be aware of human vulnerabilities to techniques that bypass rational thinking and go directly to our instincts. "Influence" would probably be useful to mental health professionals as well as the lay reader. It has notes, an index and a

bibliography of research literature.

John Thomas

[\[Back to top\]](#)

Handwriting Analysis

by **John Thomas**

Graphology is said by its practitioners to be the scientific study of handwriting to reveal personality traits and predict behavior. I became curious about these claims after reading an article in the "Career Focus" section of the Dallas Times Herald. The article claimed that some 2000 American companies use graphological methods to evaluate prospective employees. My only acquaintance with handwriting analysis had been with the graphologists one sees at psychic fairs, who seem to be happily nestled between the astrologers and the tarot-card readers. Is graphology a science reliable enough to be used in personnel management, or is it only fortune telling? The idea that handwriting, might reflect some personality traits is not entirely implausible, but the association of graphology with the demi-monde of the psychic fair gave me pause. I decided to look into the scientific validity of the subject and its use, if any, by employers in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

The belief that handwriting is a sign of the inner personality is very old. The first serious attempt to analyze handwriting seems to have been that of Camillo Baldi, an Italian scholar, who published a book on the subject in 1622. As literacy spread, handwriting analysis became popular, being practiced as an art form by such literary figures as Goethe, Poe, the Brownings and Dickens. The term "graphology" was coined by Jean Hippolyte Michon in 1875. Michon systematized handwriting analysis by associating hundreds of graphic signs with specific personality traits.

Around the turn of the century, the French psychologist Alfred Binet performed several experiments with handwriting analysis as a device for testing personality. Binet claimed that handwriting experts could distinguish successful from unsuccessful persons with high accuracy. The German school of handwriting analysis, led by Ludwig Klages, developed a subjective and esoteric approach to graphology, and apparently never even attempted experimental verification of its claims.

There is today no single theory or method which dominates graphology. The French school concentrated on isolated signs as specific indicators of personality, and the Germans sought to make subjective interpretations based on a total impression of a person's handwriting. In 1929 M. N. Bunker founded "graphoanalysis" as a compromise between these two extreme positions, and the language and techniques of graphoanalysis seem to be more or less the common graphological practice in the United States today. Bunker founded the The International Graphoanalysis Society, which now offers an 18-month correspondence course for analysts. The society is based in Chicago and claims 10,000 active members. The institute of Graphological Science in Dallas also offers courses and accreditation in graphology, but it is not affiliated with the Graphoanalysis Society.

Even though there is no canonical school of graphology, some discussion of the practice may be helpful. Remember that the basic assumption underlying graphology is that handwriting is an expression of the personality; hence, a systematic analysis of the way a person forms words and letters will reveal traits of personality. The graphologists are fond of repeating, "handwriting is brain writing."

Graphologists look for such features as the slant of characters, the size of individual letters, angularity and curvature, and such non-graphic features as the pressure of upward and downward strokes. In most systems, the slant of the letters is very important. A right slant is generally correlated with extroversion, and a left slant with introversion. The shape of the letter "t" seems important to all systems, Bunker's book contains a dictionary of specific signs and their correlates with personality, such as "pride: tall d-stems, stems not vertical." Another system (Rosen) defines sixteen factors, including graphic factors such as slant, spacing letter size, as well as global features such as "rhythm" and "tempo .

Sheila Kurtz uses handwriting features such as slant, press and t-formation to create a subject's "graphoprofile," which reveals, among other things, his thinking pattern, goal orientation, fear traits, defenses, integrity traits and social traits. In general, graphologists prefer handwriting samples that are spontaneous, and not given for the express purpose of being analyzed. They prefer a text of some length, written with a tool sensitive to pressure and speed. Graphologists want at text with biographical material if possible, and they want to know the age and sex of the writer. The output of the analyst is a free-form personality description, perhaps systematized in some way (Kurtz).

The claims of graphology are bold: "The analyst can, with surprising accuracy, predict what the writer will do and how he will react under certain conditions" (Bunker). "... analysis of a handwriting specimen becomes a behavioral indicator and a remarkably accurate gauge of the writer's character. Graphology can even foretell a person's future actions and future intellectual performance" (Rosen). By focusing attention on [a child's] drawings, you will discover the attitudes and reactions responsible for shaping his personality" (Solomon). Some even claim that changing one's handwriting can change one's personality (Kurtz). Is graphology really a valid method of assessing personality? Psychological tests which attempt to judge personality, as opposed to ability, are notoriously difficult to validate. The difficulty would seem even greater when we are talking about such traits as honesty or integrity. It seems only fair to ask, the graphologists to come up with some evidence to support their claims.

Unfortunately for the graphologists, scientific research has found no clear correlation between handwriting behavior and basic personality patterns. Although some psychologists believe that the subject is worth further study, the existing research is almost uniformly inconclusive or negative. For example, one recent study examined the ability of graphologists to predict sales success, in the sense that graphologists' evaluations would concur with supervisor's ratings. No evidence of validity was found (Rafaeli and Klimoski). A study for the Netherlands Society of Industrial Psychology considered 2250 judgments by graphologists and 6000 by a control group. The Dutch researchers found that graphological judgements, far large numbers, were slightly more often correct than incorrect, but they concluded that for judging the individual, "...graphology is a diagnostic method of highly questionable and in all probability minimal value" (Jansen). Summaries of the research literature can be found in Nevo and Hines. None of the popular graphology books I examined cited any validating research. The attitude of the practicing graphologists seems to be represented by this quote: Moreover, graphology is a self-validating science. This is that the credibility of the method can be proven immediately by the feedback you get from the graphologist." (Kurtz). This comment gives us a hint why graphology seems to work for its practitioners and their clients.

Persons who have some experience with graphological analysis are usually positively impressed. That is they *personally validate* what the graphologist is telling them about themselves. Personal validation gives a powerful subjective impression of truth, but unfortunately the impression can be created by methods that have nothing to do with objective validity. A character reading containing statements which are vague or general enough to be true about almost anyone tends to be accepted as unique by the client. If the reader has real information about the client from other sources as graphologists usually do, he can tailor his stock reading to more accurately fit the client's case, thus increasing the subjective feeling of validity. A handwriting sample with autobiographical material is obviously helpful to the analyst, as is the age and sex of the subject, or the job he is applying for. The article by Hyman describes the process of character reading in more detail. A corporate user of graphological judgments may be in no better position to evaluate their reliability. How does the employer really know that the persons who rejected a graphological advice were likely to be incompetent or dishonest? The personnel officer may get a sense of personal validation simply because the graphologist can prepare a character sketch that sounds rich and credible.

In summary, then, it seems that graphology as currently practiced is a typical pseudoscience and has no place in character assessment or employment practice. There is no good scientific evidence to justify its use, and the graphologists do not seem about to come up with any. In the next issue we will investigate the use, if any, of graphology by employers in the area, and consider some of the legal issues raised by the use of pseudoscientific employment tests.

Bibliography

Bunker, M. N. (1959). *The Science and Art of Reading Character by Grapho Analysis*. Nelson-Hall Co.

Hines, Terence (1988). *Pseudoscience and the Paranormal*. Prometheus Books.

Hyman, Ray (1976-1977). "'Cold Reading': How to Convince Strangers that You Know All About Them." *Zetetic*, 1 (No. 2), 18-37.

Jansen, Abraham (1973). "Validation of Graphological Judgments: An Experimental Study," Mouton Publishing.

Kurtz, Sheila and Lester, Marilyn (1983). *Graphotypes*. Crown Publishers.

Nevo, Baruch, Ed. (1986). *Scientific Aspects of Graphology*. Charles S. Thomas, Publisher.

Rafael Anat and Klimoski, Richard J. (1983). "Predicting Sales Success Through Handwriting Analysis: An Evaluation of the Effects of Training and Handwriting Sample Content." *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 68, 212-217.

Rosen, Billie Pesin (1965). *The Science of Handwriting Analysis*. Crown Publishers, 1965. Solomon, Shirl (1978). *Knowing Your Child Through His Handwriting and Drawings*. Crown Publishers.

[\[Back to top\]](#)

A Visit to the Institute for Creation Research

by **Richard Neeley**

This article is a summary, of my visit to the Institute of Creation Research (ICR) in San Diego and my introduction to Dr. John Morris. I am concerned with the erosion of science education and critical thinking skills of the students that I come in contact with. Many of these students, as well as the public in general, have a poor knowledge of science and do not have the necessary skills to decipher the arguments presented by ICR and other opinions. In this article I hope to impart a better understanding on some of the bizarre adventures of "scientific" scholarship proposed by ICR.

The Institute for Creation Research is an evangelistic, educational ministry. Its aim is to advance their interpretation of science and education, and promote creationism in science and scripture. A few of their ministries include: a graduate school of creation science, books and audio-visual materials, debates and seminars, a monthly newsletter (Acts and Facts), and a museum of creation and earth history. Dr. John Morris is the Assistant Vice President at ICR. He received his Ph.D. in geological engineering from the University of Oklahoma, where he also served four years as Assistant Professor of Geological Engineering;. John Morris is the son of Henry M. Morris, Ph.D., the President of ICR.

I arrived at ICR shortly after noon. The institute occupies a new two-story building, in Santee outside San Diego. I asked the receptionist if John Morris would provide a tour. Unfortunately he was out to lunch, but would be back shortly. I decided to see the museum without him rather than waiting for his return.

My first impression of the museum was one of surprise at how small it was (about the size of a large living room), and how pathetic the exhibits were. The first exhibit, a little astronomy display, presented three illuminated photographs. One showed Saturn's ring, another spiral galaxies, and the third depicted star clusters. The text under the star clusters photograph stated that the different speeds the stars in the cluster provided evidence that the star clusters were breaking up. They allege other stars in the galaxy have a gravitational pull on the star clusters, therefore the star clusters are falling apart so rapidly that they couldn't be billions of years old. I found the caption under the spiral galaxy photograph the most interesting. It said that spiral galaxies are assemblies of stars that do not rotate as a rigid body, and that the inner regions of spiral galaxies revolve more rapidly than the outer regions. Therefore, they reason that within the time span of 200 to 1000 million years the spiral would be wound tight!

There was also a small exhibit concerning the dust on the moon which described evidence from the Apollo moon landings that showed the thickness of the dust on the moon was much too thin to support evidence for a 4.6 billion old

earth and moon. In 4.6 billion years, by their estimation (actually it's R. A. Littleton's estimate) the dust on the moon would be 28 miles thick.

The next exhibit was entitled "Men of Science, Men of God." This exhibit described the time worn idea that since great scientists like Galileo, Linnaeus, Pasteur, and Mendel believed in God, all God fearing creation scientists of today are unquestionably of the same caliber. Since creationists can't find any present day scientists who ascribe to their practices, they must search the history books for scholars and scientists and call them creationists. But scientists such as these did not have access to the information afforded to scientists today. Alongside this display was a list of Bible believing scientists throughout history with their noted scientific contributions.

I was disappointed to see their Grand Canyon Geology display under revision. It amused me to see how they bastardized the geology of the Grand Canyon. The only display they had was a pithy National Geographic Society map of the Grand Canyon area, and some color photographs of the canyon beside some sunset photos over an unknown body of water. There was no text or explanation of the map or photos.

The next exhibit was a wooden model of Noah's Ark, along with photos of recent Mt. Ararat expeditions. There were also many hand written drawings reproduced by ICR for display by various airline pilots and "eyewitnesses" who apparently saw something resembling the Ark embedded in the ice and rock.

I was intrigued to see a Mt. St. Helens display in progress. I later had the chance to read through ICR's graduate school catalog and learned that the May, 1980 eruption of Mt. St. Helens is a major research project involving their graduate students. I am currently a graduate student of geology and have just finished course in volcanology at the University of Texas at Arlington. I am very interested in what ICR has in mind.

The title of their next exhibit was "Evidence for Flood Catastrophe." I noticed a display showing car keys embedded in sandstone as an example. Nowhere did it say to what extent the sample containing the car keys was lithified or cemented. There was nothing describing how and where the sample was found either. The sandstone had colorations from iron oxide staining, but there is nothing unusual about the iron-bearing minerals, brought in by ground and surface waters in an arid environment, oxidizing to form a cement in a relatively short period of time. Another example for their flood catastrophe theory was an assemblage of shell material said to have been washed together by the flood. Nothing is mentioned to the fact that this occurs very frequently in localized areas on niches and tidal areas where waves and currents rework the shell material into these assemblages. One needs only to visit our own Texas gulf coast to see this process occurring.

Other evidence presented for flood catastrophism include a display of iron nails that were supposedly found in Tertiary deposits. But what I found to be most interesting was a slab of limestone, displaying a fish impression with a bend in its neck. They regard this as evidence for instantaneous burial under flood conditions. Yes, this could be true, but there are many things that could cause this condition. We don't need the Deluge to explain fishes with a crick in their neck.

There was also a display titled, "The Fossil Record - After Its Own Kind." This display presented fossilized remains of organisms such as trilobites, ammonites, gastropods, etc., but did not mention any relationship between them. The display looked like something you would expect to find for children showing the different types of seashells found at the beach. Nothing except the title mentions anything about the fossil record and how they are related with respect to "kinds."

I was disappointed to see that their mantrack exhibit was under revision (thanks to Dr. Hastings and others, no doubt). The exhibit was titled "Dinosaurs and Man in Earth History." There was a large wall painting depicting a brontosaurus next to a man. The display was obviously an important part of their museum at one time. There were photographs that, when illuminated, showed people at what appears to be the Paluxy river in Glen Rose, Texas, working to document and record "human footprints" beside dinosaur tracks. There was once a four minute movie one could watch by pressing a button at the exhibit, now no longer in service. The only footprint at the display was one plaster cast of a tridactyl, no plaster casts of "human" footprints were shown. There was no text to accompany the photographs, or reading material of any kind for the exhibit.

Interestingly enough there was one plaster cast of a footprint in an exhibit next to the "Dinosaur and Man in Earth

History" exhibit, but it was in reference to the Laetoli Footprints in Tanzania. The footprints are thought to have been made by *Australopithecus afrensis* but as far as ICR is concerned, they were probably made by their discoverer Mary Leakey as she walked through the mud.

The next exhibit was their "Origin of Mankind Exhibit." This exhibit was their most grandiose display, and a person must see this for himself to full appreciate the boneheaded way these people present their "evidence." They are sill discussing the Piltdown Man hoax, the Nebraska man tooth claim (they even have a recent pigs tooth at the display), the "Dawn Ape," and the Rama Ape. The discovery of Lucy by Dr. Johanson is regarded as simply an ape; and there are pictures of modern chimpanzees which they call Lucy. ICR states that "computer analysis" determined that *Australopithecus* did not walk upright, but rather like a orangutan. They also allege that Dr. Johanson admits that "Lucy" is ape from the neck up.

Another exhibit is titled, "A Case. for Creationism." This exhibit continues the Bombardier Beetle saga and discusses its unique chemical defense system with the inhibitor and anti-inhibitor somehow controlling a potentially explosive mixture of chemicals. (For a good discussion see *CE Journal* issues 3 and 5).

Next Issue: Rick will relate his meeting with Dr. Morris.

[\[Back to top\]](#)
