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## The third eye

By Pat Reeder

There are times when doing this column is a bit like shooting fish in a barrel. It is not difficult to laugh at supermarket tabloids, trance channeling, UFO abductions, psychic astrologer 900-lines, and Robert Tilton. In fact, the hard part is keeping a straight face while discussing them.

But if we are to accomplish our goal of furthering good science and skeptical thinking in all areas of society, we must occasionally turn away from the blatant nonsense and spend a little time on the more subtle nonsense ... the bad science that is routinely disseminated through the mass media, via reporters untrained in science and uninterested in researching technical topics. When bad science is repeated often enough, by so many trusted sources, the general public eventually begins to accept it as fact. Yet many times, it is nothing more than unproven conjecture, often disputed by real scientists who prefer to spend their time in laboratories rather than in press conferences.

One good example of this is the "cold fusion" brouhaha, which had everyone so excited a couple of years ago. A sillier example is that "medically-verified pregnant man" in the Philippines who had quite a run in the press last month before he was finally unmasked as a hoaxster (I'm proud to say I never came close to falling for that one). And during the past month, the Earth Summit in Brazil provided us with an excellent example of what can happen when science is corrupted by political influence.

Now, before you start writing me hate mail on recycled Sierra Club stationery, let me assure you that I also consider myself an environmentalist. I have been contributing to many worthy environmental groups since long before it became fashionable. In fact, it is precisely because I am so concerned about preserving the Earth, and particularly endangered animal species, that I become upset when politically-motivated environmental organizations twist the truth in order to gain money and influence. I do not believe that a lie is ever justified by some greater good it may accomplish. Eventually, the lie will out, a deceived public will feel betrayed ... and it is not so much the liars who will suffer from the backlash, but rather the worthy cause they allegedly represent.

If you did not see the June 1 issue of Newsweek, please go to the library and catch up on it. The headline on the cover reads, "No More Hot Air: It's Time To Talk Sense About The Environment." Inside, there are several articles examining a variety of environmental controversies, all offering a rational, well-researched perspective that proved sadly absent from most of the speeches and reporting emanating from the Earth Summit.

One article in particular, "A House Of Cards" by Gregg Easterbrook, does an excellent job of explaining the problems with the "greenhouse effect" theory, and with making any long range predictions about world climate. Just a few examples...

Fifty years ago, England's Royal Meteorological Society predicted that because of increased carbon dioxide emissions, a greenhouse effect had begun, and the Earth would heat irreversibly. Immediately, it got cooler.

After 30 years of cooler temperatures, environmentalists declared in the late 1970s that a new Ice Age was beginning. Immediately, it got hotter.

When the same global computer models that predict global warming are fed with climate information from the year 1880, they predict that temperatures should have risen five degrees by now. The actual increase is at most one degree, and this could be explained by variances in

measuring standards and equipment.

There are many more such eye-opening facts throughout this issue of Newsweek, all of which added together show the difficulty of making any kind of accurate, longterm predictions about the weather. Indeed, a year or so ago, the Dallas Morning News interviewed meteorologists from local television stations, and all of them admitted that even their "five-day forecasts" are virtually worthless, and are only offered because of viewer demand. They're like horoscopes ... "presented for entertainment purposes only."

Newsweek did an exemplary job of cutting through the political rhetoric that surrounds environmental issues, particularly "global warming." The magazine probably surprised a lot of people who took it for granted that the doomsday scenarios were scientifically established. At the same time, the writers made clear the necessity for protecting the environment and the benefits that can come from taking immediate, rational action. Newsweek does not recommend clear-cutting the rain forests, even if you are building a meeting hall for environmentalist big-shots ... they merely suggest cutting through the nonsense, so we know what really needs to be done and can begin doing it as soon as possible.

The alternative is the currently popular "Chicken Little" approach: the belief that it's best to take some sort of radical action now, no matter what the cost or effectiveness, and even if it attacks a problem that doesn't exist while ignoring worse problems that do. Like Leacock's knight, we are urged to jump on our horse and ride off in all directions.

No thanks. Frankly, I believe that it isn't the stuff you don't know that can hurt you most ... the most damage is done by the stuff that you know for a fact to be true, and which turns out to be wrong.

...

And now, back to the blatant nonsense ... Since we only publish once a month, I don't try to offer blow-by-blow coverage of the diamond-ring circus that is the Robert Tilton ministry. However, a quote arose during the past month that I just have to include, for anyone who might have missed it.

Texas Attorney General Dan Morales was reprimanded by a judge for releasing Tilton's court deposition to the press, the judge apparently being unfamiliar with the Texas Open Records Act. Morales accepted the reprimand, but said he would handle any future such cases in exactly the same way. Apparently, he does not believe that being able to hire expensive lawyers gives you the right to sue other people out of their First Amendment rights. And herewith, the quote from Morales ...

"(Robert) Tilton is raping the most vulnerable members of our society. It's really sickening to see poor people, to see elderly people, to see individuals who believe some of these claims that the reverend is going to heal them if they will just send their money. It's very distressing from a personal perspective. I am hopeful ... we can find a mechanism in the near future to put a stop to it."

To Rev. Bob and his lawyer, please note: I didn't say it. Dan Morales said it. I'm just sitting at home, embroidering it into a sampler.

Tilton's response to Morales' statement was predictable. "This is an anti-Christ attack," he said, displaying his usual garbled syntax. His statement could mean that it's an attack by the Anti-Christ (i.e., Morales), but I doubt that such a powerful entity would be wasting his time in the Texas Attorney General's office when there are whole worlds to conquer for Satan. Or Tilton might mean that it's an attack against Christ, in the unlikely guise of Robert Tilton ... but I can't imagine the Son of God having a perm, an eye tuck, and a mansion in Plano. Or he could mean that it's an attack against the Anti-Christ. My lawyer has advised me to refrain from commenting further. I'll just leave the choice to you.

P.S. -- As we go to press, some late breaking news: Tilton's lawsuits against Ole Anthony and the attorneys representing his victims (Oops, sorry ... "followers") have just been thrown out of court! Chalk one up for the good guys!

...

And now, it's time for a quick round-up of all the news that's unfit to print, from the wires of the Associated Press ...

You may have thought witches were active only in October, but May and June saw a flurry of activity from the covens of Wicca followers. First came word that a group of witches in Walnut Creek, California, were demanding that "Hansel And Gretel" be removed from elementary school classrooms because of its disparaging portrait of witches. A spokeswitch who is also a mother joked to reporters, "We do not eat children. No matter how irritating they get, I don't do anything more than turn them into frogs." Then, I suppose, she eats their legs.

Next, from Levittown, Pennsylvania, came a story about a half-empty shopping center that was seeking a buyer. A company agreed to buy it, on the condition that the Gypsy Heaven shop, a witches' supply store, be evicted. The store offers candles, incense, New Age books, and other such stuff, and was apparently the only store in the shopping center that was doing any business. About 30 witches staged a protest. One said, "We are not green-skinned, evil people. In 24 years, I've never ridden a broom." But it's possible that she's just married to an advertising man who won't let her.

More frightening than a witches convention is this feature story from Atlanta, one of only two cities (the other is Las Vegas) with a municipal board to regulate astrologers. The three-member Atlanta Board of Astrology Examiners began 22 years ago when local alderman Wyche Fowler (now a U.S. Senator!!) was so impressed with the powers of a local astrologer that he helped her set up a licensing board. Astrologers who want Atlanta's seal of approval must pay \$100 and pass a test "that measures their mathematical and charting abilities" (that's what's wrong with America: the only people who can pass a math test go into astrology).

Chairwoman Mikki Sligh said the board is "a way of making sure the profession is practiced with honesty and integrity. We feel we can do that best by monitoring each other." If this sounds familiar, that's because it's the same theory that's used to justify having Congressional Ethics Committees.

And finally, a woman after my own heart: Candy LeFleur, a general store owner in Canton, Connecticut, is so sick of Elvis sightings and other Elvis hysteria that she is displaying an ordinary potato in her store and claiming that you can see the face of Elvis on the peel. She's even letting her customers vote on whether the potato looks like the young Elvis or the old Elvis.

I vote for the young Elvis. If it were a mashed potato, it would look like the old Elvis.

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## The Gerson Cancer Cure

### Eat Your Veggies!

By John Blanton

Max Gerson seems to have been a very self-reliant man. At an early age he found he could cure his own migraine headaches by controlling his diet, and as a medical doctor he found diet to be a cure for a multitude of other complaints. The list is impressive. According to the flier distributed by the Gerson Institute, the Gerson Therapy can cure or prevent: cancer, heart disease, strokes, diabetes, arthritis and "other diseases of civilization that kill and cripple us." Just wait until the AMA hears about this.

Max's daughter, Charlotte Gerson, is living proof of the effectiveness of the Therapy. At age seventy, she looks the picture of perfect health. Slim and vigorous and very neat looking with white hair and wearing white sandals and slacks with a blue blouse and a string of pearls. She looks the way you would like your grandmother to look (or the way you would hope your wife looks at that age). You would never believe that 58 years ago her father cured her of "incurable" bone tuberculosis. Indeed, the only sign of malady she exhibited (that could not be attributed to seventy years) was a "Band-Aid" patch on the middle finger of her right hand.

Charlotte's free lecture was presented at the Unity Church of Dallas on Forest Lane. I wasn't surprised that Unity minister Donald Curtis was hosting this seminar along with a series of other lectures on healing. Dr. Curtis speaks often of "healing" on his five-times-weekly radio addresses. You can catch Donald Curtis and his "Five Minutes that Will Change Your Life" at 6:45 each Monday through Friday on WRR FM, 101.1, my favorite Dallas-owned radio station. I usually listen to WRR's classical music format on my way to work each morning, but ever since I've gotten a car with a tape cassette player and digital dash clock, I tend to miss Dr. Curtis' daily musings.

Back to Gerson. The Institute's perennial antagonist seems to be the medical and government establishment, who have banded together in an unholy alliance to discredit Gerson and other forms of alternative medicine. However, Gerson thwarts their attempts by declining to sell cures or devices or medical services (at least in this country). They only sell lectures and literature and video tapes (and lunches), and so are protected by the Constitution's guarantees of freedom of speech. In Mexico, where speech might not be as free (or as profitable), they sell medical services. I recall that during the last months of his life Steve McQueen availed himself of alternative medicine (but not Gerson) in Mexico.

Gerson's formula is simple (which makes me wonder why people were shelling out \$25 for the afternoon workshop). Just eat right, and you can avoid (even cure) all of those nasties that wait for us at the end of the road. No meat of any kind, only good, fresh, wholesome vegetables. And lots of them. I could find no quarrel with that. By the end of the Saturday morning lecture and series of testimonials, I was even getting hungry. Charlotte told us the same thing our mothers told us (but did we listen?). Eat your carrots.

OK, it's not quite that simple. There is medical theory behind Gerson Therapy, and here it is. Disease is caused (my interpretation) by toxicity and deficiency. To get rid of an existing disease you first have to correct the deficiency (eat your veggies). Bad news. That releases the toxins your cells have been hoarding from a lifetime in the twentieth century. These toxins can do you in right now if you don't immediately detoxify. Detoxify: coffee enemas (please, no jokes about "cream, no sugar"). Are you still hungry? Also, you have to eliminate sodium from your diet. Sodium promotes mitosis (cell division). Since cancer is runaway mitosis, sodium promotes cancer (it seems mitosis might also be involved in the production of new blood cells, but I didn't follow up on that).

I'm sure there is more to Gerson therapy, but I just picked up on the high points that caught my attention at Charlotte's lecture. For the rest you will have to go to the literature (see details later on).

One questioner in the audience asked "What about all of those who died?" Ooh! Bad form. Charlotte readily admitted that the Gerson therapy is not 100% successful. Not by a long shot either, as a large percentage on the therapy failed to recover. Charlotte conceded 30% failure but blamed those on 1) people wait until its too late and all hope is gone (Gerson is not a miracle cure) and 2) people fall off the wagon. She also seemed to be saying You win some, you lose some, and some get rained out. That's good. A dose of reality helps put the whole business of alternative medicine into proper perspective. I don't know why, but I kept thinking of Robert Tilton.

Charlotte Gerson followed up her description of the wonders of the therapy with some live testimonials from "cured incurables."

The first to go on was Marilyn Barnes, who is also the one who prepared the sumptuous Gerson diet lunch served after the lecture. Barnes, according the Gerson brochure, had melanoma stage 4 (my interpretation again) and cervical cancer, both biopsied about 1979. Barnes began Gerson treatment in a Mexican hospital in 1980 and has completely recovered (re-biopsy in 1981). She has had no cancer in twelve years. Marilyn is pushing fifty and looks great.

Allison Sinclair is now a psychotherapist with a practice in the Dallas Turtle Creek area. In 1979 she had a lemon-sized lump on her neck that was surgically removed. Chemotherapy was recommended to prevent recurrence of the tumor, but this treatment was refused. In 1980 another lump appeared in the same place as before, and again chemotherapy was refused. This time Sinclair tried "visualization" and finally sought treatment from the Gerson clinic in Mexico. She is alive and well at 46.

I interviewed Sinclair following the lecture, and she confirmed that her original tumor had been diagnosed as malignant. She stated that no other treatments were received, no radiation therapy, no chemotherapy, no surgery. She claimed that the second tumor (and others) went away following the Gerson treatment. My own concern was that Sinclair may have greatly over emphasized the criticality of the original and subsequent diagnoses. Perhaps the diagnosis was "tumor," and she interpreted it as "cancer." I asked her if she would be agreeable to an examination of her records by an independent physician. She said yes.

NTS Technical Advisor Tim Gorski, M.D., who has a medical practice in Dallas, indicates that even this approach might not resolve the issue. Only if a physician has access to all medical records can a valid assessment be made. In a case like Sinclair's, it is still up to the patient to correctly report all sources of treatment and diagnosis. If the patient fails to mention any additional treatment or diagnosis, then the physician is in the position of taking the patient's word as to what treatments were received.

I also interviewed one additional woman who claimed to have been cured. She expressed great faith in the coffee enemas that she administered to herself up to three times daily. When I mentioned this (to me) bizarre practice to Tim Gorski he expressed considerable doubt about the effectiveness of coffee enemas. He also mentioned one point of the downside of this therapy: perforated colon lining. I suppose if you are faced with cancer then a perforated colon would seem like a pinprick.

The lady (she is not quoted in the Gerson flier, and I didn't get her name) found that with a family it was difficult to stick to the Gerson diet unless the whole family participated, which meant everyone ate nothing at home but fresh vegetables (organically grown, I assumed). Her grocery bill, as a consequence, was \$200 per week. This is amazing when you realize that previously in this century unprocessed food was the cheapest way to eat. It is a statement of how we have come to depend on the food processing industry.

Another man was also questioning the Lady X, and he seemed to be asking some very intelligent questions. He was wearing a medical pager, and I asked him if he was a doctor. He said he was, but he declined to be identified. He considered it professionally unwise to acknowledge interest in alternative medicine. His wife was diagnosed with breast cancer, and he was seeking anything that promised hope. For some reason the conversation turned to other quack medical practices, and the subject of homeopathy came up. I was surprised when he stated complete confidence in homeopathy. Not only that, but the two others in our little conversation knot expressed the same convictions. Of course I shouldn't have been surprised. Where did I think I was anyhow?

How could homeopathy work, I asked? What could possibly be the mechanism for the effectiveness of a remedy that mathematically could be demonstrated to consist of pure water after all of the active ingredient had been diluted out? One man (who also claimed to be a practicing alchemist) suggested quantum mechanics (Q-M). When I stated that I had some slight knowledge of Q-M he retreated slightly and stated, "But it produces results," meaning that even if we don't know the mechanism, we still have the empirical results to prove the effectiveness. (I wondered to myself that if he were willing to abandon Q-M and to fall back on results, then why had he bothered to mention a plausible mechanism in the first place.) My companions pointed out the famous work of Jacques Benveniste and the futile attempts by the "Amazing" Randi to debunk him. My own recollection of the whole affair was somewhat different. Skeptical Inquirer readers will recall Martin Gardner's account of the "experiment effect" in the winter 1989 issue.

In the final analysis, how does Gerson therapy differ from standard medical practice? Good question. Although Gerson claims to cure almost all of the incurable diseases (no accident victims need apply), the major emphasis seemed to be on cancer. Charlotte claimed in her lecture that cancer is the leading cause of death (including accidental death) for Americans 17 and under. In this case I think she needs to get the AMA straight on the issue. They claim (as seen on TV last week) that the leading cause of death for this age group is automobile accidents, followed by gun shot fatalities.

So, you go to the doctor and he says you have cancer. You're going to die. However, he's willing to spend all of your money (and more importantly, all of your insurance benefits) to keep you alive for a few more years or months. Sometimes he can do just that, but if you die you still don't get your money back. Some forms of cancer are effectively eliminated by surgery, radiation therapy or chemotherapy (or a

combination). All this means is that you're going to die of something else besides cancer. For some forms of cancer your chances are slim to none.

You go to Gerson. You have to tell them you have cancer, because they're not doctors. I don't know what Gerson is going to tell you when you go to their clinic, but Charlotte seemed to state very emphatically that the Gerson therapy will cure your cancer. Gerson can't practice medicine in this country, but apparently they are allowed to accept your money in Mexico. How much does Gerson charge to cure your cancer, I don't know. Consider, however, that since your insurance most likely doesn't cover Gerson, then unless you have deep pockets they can't reach for the moon at your expense they way American hospitals can.

So, who's the good guy, and who's the bad guy? The critical difference, hopefully, is that a medical doctor will be able to tell you up front what your real chances are so you can make intelligent decisions. Ideally you will not hear from a legitimate doctor "Give me your money, and you're going to live," unless that is very close to the truth.

Although it was obvious that I hadn't stumbled into a conference of rocket scientists, neither were these your standard high-school dropouts. A survey of the parking lot showed that the audience was solid middle class. There was not a low rider or VW Beetle in the bunch.

And there was money, too. Charlotte was selling books and videos out in the lobby during the whole time, and the solid citizens were lining up two-deep to shell out. Typical prices were \$20 for Elizabeth Clare Prophet interviews Charlotte Gerson and \$50 for Workshop: How to Do the Gerson Therapy. You could also get Max Gerson's book Censured for Curing Cancer for only \$6.95. The sumptuous Gerson lunch was \$10 (reservations recommended), and the afternoon workshop was \$25. Contact me if you are interested, and I will give you an address where you can order the Gerson literature.

I'm ashamed to admit that I skipped out on the Gerson lunch and the afternoon workshop. I went home and had a bowl of chili for lunch and took a nap.

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## Baugh on Baugh

By Dan Phelps

All right, so you're tired of watching alien abductions and ads for psychic readers on TV. Radio to the rescue. On March 20, the Reverend "Dr." Carl Baugh was interviewed on the talk show Mike Ryan Live which airs on the fundamentalist station KVTT-FM 91.7 in Dallas. Reverend Baugh is famous for his odd claims about the Paluxy "mantracks" and his plans to build a full-size model of Noah's Ark near Glen Rose, Texas, and on this occasion he resurrected his long-discredited arguments for a young earth and flood geology and added some new ones, as well.

In case you haven't been keeping up with the Rev. Carl, here is what he has going now (with editorial comments):

"We've excavated 57 human footprints among 203 dinosaur footprints..." (along the Paluxy, presumably).

"We have confirmed that man and dinosaur did live contemporaneously" (wait, that's an old one).

Dinosaur bones excavated near Glen Rose were carbon dated at 9600 years (the Journal of Paleontology must have missed that one).

"If eight people got off a boat about 4500 years ago and started populating the earth, we would have about 5.5 billion people on planet earth today."

"35,000 vertebrate life forms can explain all the speciation we have today...there's room on one level of the Ark for all 35,000 of these forms."

Noah took juvenile dinosaurs on the Ark, i.e., "a creature that could ultimately reach the size of Seismosaurus as a juvenile would be the size of a Shetland pony and just trot on the Ark. No problem getting them on."

"About 5-1/2 months ago in Mozambique, in Africa, a girl wandered into the missionary station to get her shots, and this girl is 13 years of age, she stands 10 feet, 4 inches tall, and they were checking out her general health -- she's no freak, she bench pressed 300 pounds."

Tyrannosaurus and other predatory dinosaurs may have been vegetarians (carrots were meaner and more vicious in those days).

Baugh also talked about his "hammer in Cretaceous stone that cannot be duplicated today," and further discussed his "Creation Evidences Museum" and his expeditions to search for the Ark. "We have direct information from our satellites -- the Ark has been picked up -- it's in four components -- it's been picked up under 60 feet of ice and snow, and we photographed the end of it plus the secondary location 800 feet below, and we've now located the third main section of it down in the Ahora (?) gorge. We have photographic data verifying that, and we're planning to be back late this summer, like late August-early September. We need some sponsors for funding, so if any of your listeners would like to be a part of history, we know where the Ark is."

Remember, you read it here first. All of the foregoing is from an audio tape obtained from the producer of the radio show.

Earlier in the show, host Mike Ryan had told his listeners that Rev. Baugh is "one of the most intelligent ministers that we've had over the airwaves in recent months." All of this prompted a visit to Baugh's "Creation Evidences Museum" near Glen Rose.

If you are not familiar with the creation science museum, it's situated on a small plot of land at the turn-off for Dinosaur Valley State Park, giving you an excellent opportunity to compare real science with the other kind. You figure out which is which. Besides the museum, housed in a prefab building at the back of the lot, there is a huge pressure vessel lying on its side, imbedded in a concrete pad. More on that later.

I decided not to reveal myself as a skeptic (or as an intelligent person) in order to get the standard treatment reserved for the file of believers who trek through daily. I do regret giving up the opportunity to correct Baugh's numerous errors of fact as he presented his story to his audience.

Most of the fossils on display were casts and other replicas, and these replicas included a very large Pleistocene bison skull, a Dimetrodon skull and a sabre-toothed cat skull. Also on display were other replicas I'll discuss later.

Most of the rest of the museum consisted of laminated cardboard displays with photographs and text illustrating various points of creationist dogma. One display was a child's science fair project attempting to show that canyons can form rapidly and that the earth need not be billions of years old. A few interesting fossils were on display, as well, but they were either not labeled or were poorly labeled. Overall, the museum was what I had expected, and less.

No other tourists were present when I first got there so Baugh waited for more to arrive before giving his presentation. Meanwhile, he showed me a photograph of a fossil "human finger" from the local Cretaceous rocks (he keeps the original in a vault). Baugh's "finger" could easily be mistaken for a fossil burrow and only vaguely resembled a human finger. The amazing thing is that the original is kept in a vault, since more like it are easy to obtain. A thin layer of weathering on this one was interpreted by Baugh as fossil skin. By the way, you can get replicas of this item for a \$50 contribution.

Soon, about ten other tourists (including several young children) were present. They were generally normal, decent, middle-class people who seemed predisposed to believe in creationism. They smiled and nodded at almost everything Baugh told them.

Baugh began his presentation by making the sweeping statement that all life forms in the fossil record are larger than their modern counterparts. He attempted to support this claim by referring to the huge bison skull replica on display, but he neglected to mention that numerous prehistoric organisms were smaller than their modern counterparts. It was not the first time that what Baugh neglected to say was more important than what he actually said.

We were also told about "out-of-place" fossils which supposedly invalidate the geologic time scale. Baugh began by claiming that a Silurian trilobite had been found in the local Cretaceous limestone. He failed to mention that several years ago this specimen was shown not to be of local origin. It is made of nearly pure dolomite; whereas there are only scattered traces of dolomite in the local limestone. Moreover, the trilobite is identical to those found in Grafton, Illinois and widely offered for sale at mineral and fossil shows (including Fossilmania which is held annually in Glen Rose). Additionally, I have collected this same species of trilobite in quarries in western Kentucky in rocks that are often used for road aggregate and railroad fill.

Baugh displayed a cast of what he claimed was a sabre-toothed cat track. Because of the track's size it was claimed that the cat was nine feet tall at the shoulder. To me the cast resembled the fore print of a Camptosaurus-like dinosaur. However, NTS Technical Advisor Ron Hastings has since told me the "cat track" is really just a chance occurrence of fossil burrows, the original being much less convincing than the cast on display.

Again, too, Baugh made his famous "mantrack" claims. First he pointed out a cast of a large (20-inch plus) track known as the Caldwell Print and claimed that it was produced by a very large antediluvian woman. This particular track is an obvious carving; it bears very little resemblance to what a human foot stepping in soft mud would produce. If this print was produced by a very large woman, then she used a hammer and chisel to do it. Besides carvings, other "mantracks" are erosional features and misinterpreted dinosaur tracks.

Baugh attempted to account for the enormous size of the "mantracks" by giving examples of modern giants. He repeated the story of the 13 year-old girl from Mozambique. When asked the source of this highly improbable story, he cited that great scientific journal, The Denver Post.

The final piece of evidence presented was an "antediluvian" hammer found in the local limestone. This is actually a 19th-century-style hammer that a siderite (iron carbonate) nodule has formed around. Only a replica was on display, the original being in a vault (presumably with the finger).

Baugh went on to present his long explanation of the creationist "Vapor Canopy Model." Some of the creationists believe there was once a layer of water vapor in the upper atmosphere that was the source of Noah's Flood. This water vapor also created an unusual greenhouse effect which made life easy for the giant, antediluvian people and also enabled Methuselah to live 969 years.

With a substantially denser atmosphere, Baugh went on, the pterosaurs couldn't take off, and Tyrannosaurus rex would have great difficulty breathing. Moreover, with a denser atmosphere a person could run 200 miles without getting winded.

To bear this out, a huge metal pressure chamber is being constructed to test the effects of increased atmospheric pressure on living things. Baugh has been raising money, but little progress seems to have been made of late. Portholes have been flame cut in the walls of the pressure vessel, but no effort has yet been made to seal them, which will possibly require welding pressure flanges to the present rough openings.

Baugh took a few questions from the tourists, and when asked how old he thinks the earth is, he replied "7000 years." He attempted to support this view with the discredited claim that the earth's magnetic field is decaying exponentially. According to some supporters of "creation science," if the field strength is extrapolated back in time, about 10,000 years ago it would have been too powerful for life to exist.

This view is supported by Dr. Thomas Barnes, and a good account of it is given in Arthur Strahler's book *Science and Earth History*, available from Prometheus Books (Buffalo, NY). Barnes' argument ignores the fact that the earth's magnetic field has reversed polarity many times in the geologic past. Additionally, paleomagnetic studies indicate that in the past the field strength has been both higher and lower than its present value.

One woman who apparently believed everything being presented asked how anyone could be so foolish to believe evolution in the face of all the wonderful evidence. Baugh told the audience that people who accept evolution are really just rebelling against God. To me this was the most offensive thing Baugh had said all day, and I left to look at the pressure chamber.

Although I am against supporting Baugh financially, I do recommend you pay him the one dollar admission to see his museum. It's worth the buck if only to get an appreciation for real science. The Dallas Museum of Natural History has no competition from Carl Baugh.

After you take in the "creation science" museum, you should stop by the state park, about two miles on down the road. The small museum at the park entrance contains professionally prepared exhibits explaining the geology of the region and telling how the remarkable fossil footprints in the river bed were formed.

Further information on Baugh and the "mantracks" is available through the NTS and your local library. The previously mentioned *Science and Earth History* gives a brief account of Baugh and the tracks (pp. 464-471). In their book *The Creationist Movement in Modern America*, NTS Technical Advisors Dr. Ray Eve and Dr. Frank Harrold provide some biographical information. "Baugh claims a Ph.D. in anthropology from the College of Advanced Education in Irving, Texas. This Bible college is located on the grounds of the Sherwood Park Baptist Church in an old house. It has no library or research facilities...."

The authors reference Glen Kuban's article, "A Follow-up on Carl Baugh's Science Degrees" in *The Skeptic* (Vol. 3, No. 5, 1989) and Ron Hastings' "Creationists' 'Glen Rose Man' Proves to Be a Fish Tooth (as Expected)," *NCSE Reports* 9(3): 14-15. NTS members can get copies of these two articles from the NTS library. Contact John Blanton at 416-8038 or send a note to the NTS.

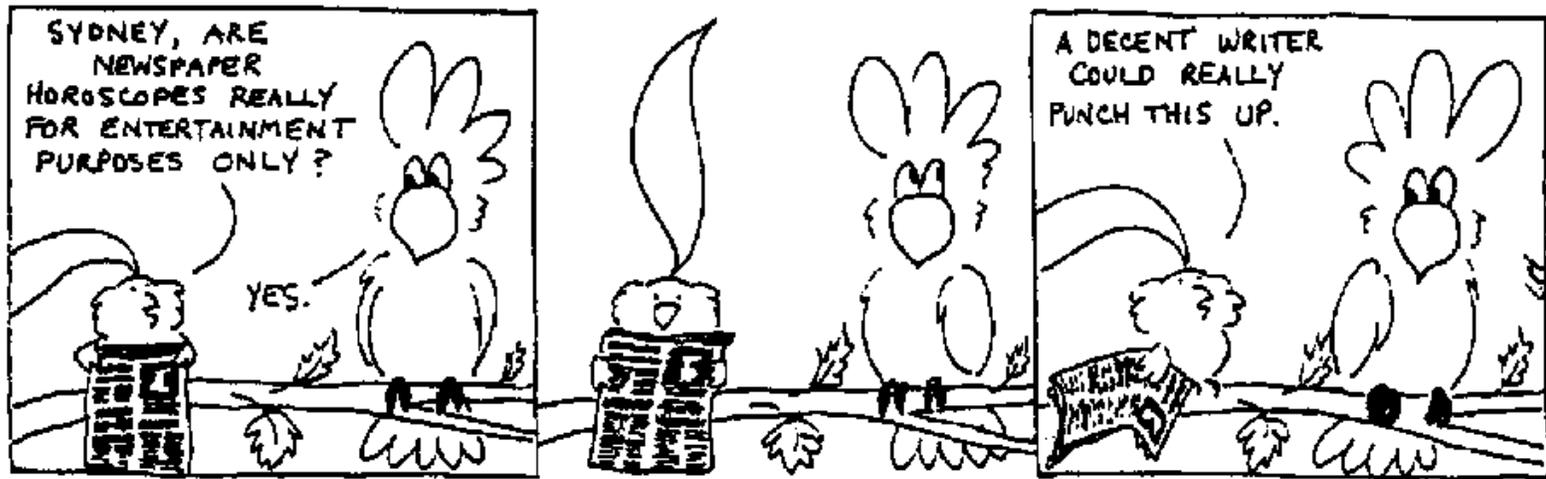
NTS members can also borrow a video tape of the Nova TV program "God, Darwin and the Dinosaurs," which features both Ron Hastings and Carl Baugh, or a copy of the Mike Ryan Live radio show audio tape. You might be interested in hearing what they have to say about the TV show on the radio program.

Dan Phelps has a B.S. and an M.S. in geology from the University of Kentucky (1990). His M.S. thesis was on carbonate petrology and paleoecology. He is a member of the North Texas Skeptics, the Dallas Paleontological Society, the American Association of Petroleum Geologists and the Paleontology Society.

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## Up a tree: a skeptical cartoon

By Laura Ainsworth



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