

# Phactum

The Newsletter of the Philadelphia Association for Critical Thinking  
July/August 2007

editor: Ray Haupt

www.phact.org

## The Not-So-Gentle Gentle Wind Project

Judy Garvey and Jim Bergin, successful plaintiffs in a complex anti-cult lawsuit, have sent in this news item that some of the “healing instruments” of the healing cult Gentle Wind Project (GWP) are being exhibited as art.

A forthcoming exhibition at New York’s Feature Inc. gallery, entitled “The Healing Instruments of the Gentle Wind Project,” displays a well-preserved example of the mind-control cult’s “Photon Accelerator Ver. 6.5,” 2003.

It’s amazing what you can do with a closet door handle, a sheet of perspex, and some plastic pipe. And it’s even more amazing that a NYC art gallery would be dumb enough to display this “art”, presumably they don’t know the backstory. A Google search for “gentle wind project” will yield plenty of disturbing results.



There has been some material about this cult in previous Phactums and there likely will be more. GWP has lost some lawsuits in the US District Court in Maine and seems to have closed down in that state. James Randi, who describes Gentle Wind Project as “one of the nastiest little cults to take root in the U.S.”, reports that this cult has moved west to Sparks, Nevada where they have managed to infiltrate a public school. Here is a computer link to James Randi’s article about this: <http://www.randi.org/jr/2007-05/052507.html#i3>.

When GWP was in business this healing apparatus cost about \$7,600, perhaps it is priceless art now. The

*(Continued on page 3)*

### The PhACT Council

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*Phactum* is, in theory, printed 6 times a year and is the main propaganda organ for the Philadelphia Association for Critical Thinking.

If you are not a subscriber we invite you to become one by sending \$15 for a one year membership to PhACT, \$10 for students.

Send letters of rebuttal, ideas, short essays, poetry, opinion pieces, complaints, and lavish praise to Ray Haupt, Phactum editor, at [phactpublicity@aol.com](mailto:phactpublicity@aol.com).

# PHACT CALENDAR

**Monthly PhACT meetings are held on the third Saturday of each month from September to May. The first meeting for the 2007/2008 lecture series will be on September 15, at 2 PM at Community College of Philadelphia located at 17th and Spring Garden Streets in Philadelphia. Meetings are free and open to the public.**

**The agenda for this meeting is not yet established. Stay tuned to this newsletter and check [phact.org](http://phact.org) on the internet from time to time.**

**Tuesday, August 7, 2007** at 7:00PM at Ludington Library, 5 South Bryn Mawr Avenue, Bryn Mawr PA 19010. **The Freethought Society of Greater Philadelphia** will be showing the documentary *The God Who Wasn't There* by filmmaker Brian Flemming. The film is a critical exploration of the origins of Christianity. FSGP is presenting this event and may request a donation from those in attendance.

**Thursday, September 6, 2007** at 7:00PM at the Free Library of Philadelphia at 19th and Vine Streets. **Michael Palin** will discuss his book *Diaries 1969-1979: The Python Years*. One of Britain's foremost comedy character actors, Michael Palin is known for his inventive genius and astonishing versatility. A founding member of the Monty Python comedy troupe, Palin is also a screenwriter, author of children's books, and writer-host of travel documentaries. With the Pythons, however-whose other members are Terry Gilliam, Terry Jones, Graham Chapman, John Cleese, and Eric Idle-Palín became part of an international comedy phenomenon that spawned such glories as *The Life of Brian*, *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, "The Lumberjack Song," and "The Spanish Inquisition." Ticket Info: FREE. No tickets required. For Info: 215-567-4341.

At the **Franklin Institute** until September 30, 2007. 222 N. 20th St., Philadelphia, PA, 19103. **Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs.** From 1976-1979 the Treasures of Tutankhamun exhibit toured the United States, attracting more than eight million visitors and inventing the phenomenon of the blockbuster museum show. In a highly publicized return visit, a larger selection of items from the famed pharaoh's fabulous tomb goes on a 27-month U.S. tour, introducing a whole new generation to the golden treasures of Egypt's Valley of the Kings. Tickets are timed and dated and must be reserved in advance. Call 1-877-888-8587.

**The Wagner Free Institute of Science** offers an assortment of science lectures presented at the introductory college level by professors from various universities around Philadelphia. These courses are free and vary from a single night

to an eight week course. They do appreciate donations or memberships. See their website at <http://www.wagnerfreeinstitute.org/>.

**University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology** presents **Amarna, Ancient Egypt's Place in the Sun**, a new exhibition that offers a rare look at the meteoric rise and fall of this unique royal city during one of Egypt's most intriguing times. The exhibition, the centerpiece of the Museum's event-filled "Year of Egypt", runs through October 2007. Admission is free with museum admission: \$8 adults, \$5 seniors and students. Free Sunday afternoons until Memorial Day. For information: [www.museum.upenn.edu](http://www.museum.upenn.edu).

**Ongoing: Freethought Society of Greater Philadelphia (FSGP) and the Humanist Association of Greater Philadelphia (HAGP)** co-sponsor a monthly book discussion club. The book club meets on the third Saturday of each month at 7:00 PM at Willow Grove Barnes & Noble, 102 Park Avenue, Willow Grove, Pennsylvania 19090. **The August book will be Dark Ages America by Morris Berman, 400 pages.** If you have any questions, please contact the book club moderator, Ian Thomas. Email: [ian.thomas101@gmail.com](mailto:ian.thomas101@gmail.com) Phone: (610) 368-5915 Cell: (610) 565-4530.

**Philadelphia Brights Meetup Group.** Meetings are held at the Barnes & Noble Cafe at 1805 Walnut Street, at 7pm on the second Monday of the month.

The PhACT Calendar is open to members, and non-members too, who wish to announce meetings and events of other groups of which they are interested or affiliated. These events should be of some general interest to the Skeptical or Scientific community and should be within a reasonable radius of Philadelphia. Send submissions to the editor at [phact-publicity@aol.com](mailto:phact-publicity@aol.com). Keep the announcements brief. Space is limited and insertions will be made on a first come-first served basis after the needs of PhACT are accomplished.

(Continued from page 1)

paragraph in blue explained to the court what this gizmo is supposed to do.

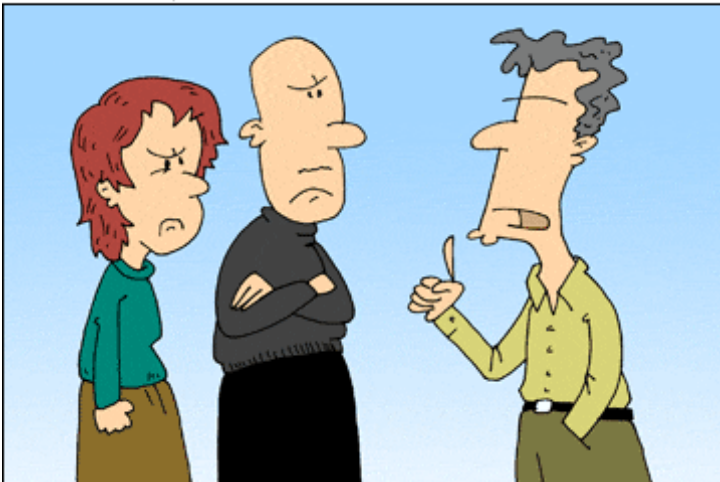
This healing technology was designed to restore and regenerate a person's energetic structure when used one time in a person's life. Your energetic structure is the invisible etheric web in which you exist. The energetic web is, generally speaking, oval in shape. It extends 8 to 10 feet in height and 4 to 6 feet in width, with your physical body in the middle. Within this system, there are 32 different levels. Over 90 percent of the world's population is missing between 10 and 15 levels. If you had etheric vision and could see 32 layers deep, you would see fragmented, burnt-out, sub-atomic spiritual nets in just about everyone, including all the great spiritual leaders past and present.

Did you understand that paragraph? I did not, and apparently the judge did not. Fortunately, Randi is watching.

## Letters and Articles Wanted

PhACT members and non-members are invited to submit letters and articles for publication in Phactum. If something is on your mind that might interest a bunch

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OF COURSE I VALUE YOUR OPINION ... IT IS SO LUDICROUS THAT IT MAKES ME REALIZE JUST HOW AWESOME MY OPINION IS

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of skeptics then by all means write it down and send it to the editor. The range of topics is as huge as your

imagination and contrarian views are welcome. Please no partisan politics and no heavy religion bashing. Original poetry is welcome too. Send by e-mail to [phactpublicity@aol.com](mailto:phactpublicity@aol.com).

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## Letters

### Quackwatch

One of the enclosures with the latest Phactum had references to [www.Quackwatch.com](http://www.Quackwatch.com). While some of the information on that site is OK, much is not, and thus it should never be cited without qualification.

Joel M. Kauffman, PhD  
Berwyn, PA



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## Various Ruminations

Collected/written by Ray Haupt, editor  
(with help from others)

### Judicial common sense in New Zealand?

I think so. Get a load of this news item from ABC News concerning baby names. The judge has it right, daddy has it wrong.

New Zealand Judge Blocks Name for Baby  
ABC News

(June 23) - Actress Gwyneth Paltrow named her baby after a fruit, Apple. Comedian Penn Jillette chose Moxie Crimefighter for his spunky daughter. And while unusual names may be a Hollywood staple, some believe it may cross the line in the real world.

One New Zealand judge even blocked one family from using the name it chose. The judge said the name was unfair to the child.

"Initially, the reaction is, 'Are you for real?'" said Pat Wheaton, the New Zealand father who was blocked from naming his son 4Real. Wheaton said the

idea for the name came when the couple saw the first scan of the child. "We started thinking 'Jeez, he is for real?'" Wheaton said.

But when the parents filed the name with New Zealand's Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, they were told names beginning with a number were against the rules.

Registrar-General Brian Clarke said the rules are designed to prevent names that are "likely to cause offense to a reasonable person."

The Wheaton's idea for a name came naturally, but many parents are feeling the pressure to be different. Baby naming is big business today. Some parents are turning to professional consultants, computer programs, polls and even numerologists to achieve the perfect moniker for their bundle of joy.

### **The Send-Me-To-Another-Planet Department**

The Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) has reported on July 13, 2007 that "Britain's World War II prime minister Winston Churchill has been cut from a list of key historical figures recommended for teaching in English secondary schools, a government agency says. The radical overhaul of the school curriculum for 11- to 14-year-olds is designed to bring secondary education up to date and allow teachers more flexibility in the subjects they teach, the Government said."

Making the matter even worse, such unknown figures as Mahatma Ghandi, Adolf Hitler, and Joseph Stalin will be dropped from the curriculum and perhaps most breath taking of all Henry VIII and Elizabeth I will be missing from the required base of knowledge expected from British students.

"Schools Secretary Ed Balls defended the move, saying a slimmed-down curriculum was overdue and traditional elements in all subjects had been protected. Among the few named figures that stay in the new history curriculum is William Wilberforce."

I sure am glad William Wilberforce will not be forgotten. Can you imagine an American History course where George Washington and Abraham Lincoln are deemed insufficiently noteworthy for inclusion in the curriculum?

### **Global Warming**

The Global Warming issue continues to heat up

and is likely to do so for some long geologic period but it seems that folks are having difficulty in agreeing that warming is actually happening let alone whether or not it is induced by men. The most common explanation for warming is that the burning of fossil fuels injects an extraordinary amount of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) into the atmosphere thus causing a greenhouse effect to warm the earth.

That explanation apparently has a lot of plausibility and many scientists agree. Some do not, and some agree that CO<sub>2</sub> has a warming effect but is not the only factor causing GW. One such scientist, according to an article in Discover magazine, is Henrick Svensmark, the director of the Center for Sun-Climate Research at the Danish National Space Center in Copenhagen. Svensmark does not dispute the warming effects of CO<sub>2</sub> but he does suggest that solar activity and cosmic rays are instrumental in determining the warming and cooling of the Earth. His studies suggest that cosmic rays trigger cloud formation and that a high level of solar activity suppresses the flow of cosmic rays striking the atmosphere resulting in fewer clouds and a warmer planet.

For his efforts one would think that scientists would applaud Svensmark's efforts, or at least keep it in mind for consideration until proven or disproved. Apparently that has not been the case and it seems that people are suspicious of hidden motives. One criticism is that Svensmark is doing his research on behalf of an oil company. That is not the case. This particular research is funded by the Carlsberg Foundation which supports scientific research. The Carlsberg folks make beer, not gasoline.

### **California anti-diploma-mill law expires.**

Dr. Stephen Barrett reports in his weekly Quackwatch newsletter: "The 1989 California law enacted to protect students from "diploma mills" and other non-accredited schools has expired. The state Bureau for Private Postsecondary and Vocational Education, which had jurisdiction over more than 1,600 for-profit schools has been shut down at least temporarily. Legislators who care about consumer protection are working toward temporary restoration, but it is not clear whether they will succeed". Los Angeles Times, July 2, 2007] <http://www.latimes.com/>



news/local/la-me-voced2jul02,0,3680353.story?coll=la-home-local.

One famous alumnus of a diploma mill, Dr. Kent Hovind, a fiercely aggressive Young Earth Creationist, has earlier this year, taken residence in a Federal Penitentiary for having bamboozled various local, state, and federal tax authorities. Dr. Dino has plenty of time for another course, another degree.

### The Dubious Achievement Department

The Times (of London) reports that scientists have bred the world's first mentally ill mouse. <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/science/article2159295.ece>.

Hasn't this been done before by Boris Karloff? Or was that Pinky and The Brain?



*Brain : "Pinky , Microsponge is a huge computer corporation run by the world's richest nerd."*

*Pinky : " Gumby?"*

*Brain: " No , Pinky. Famous as he is , sadly Gumby was never included in profit participation."*

### The Kingdom of God begins on 23rd March 2008!

"That date is hard. But the date of Armageddon is easy. The last day of this system, 6,000 years after Adam sinned, is 2008Nisan14, or March 21st 2008 (Adam sinned aged 33½ on 3993Nisan14). On 2008Nisan14 Satan loses his heavenly kingship of this world. Yes we must declare the Good news of the Kingdom of God which begins on the third day thereafter 2008Nisan16, or March 23rd, 2008 (counting inclusively)!"

This and a lot more is documented at <http://www.truebiblecode.com/> so it is a good idea to be up to date with PhACT dues before the Rapture.

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## Skeptical Podcasts: You'll Hardly Believe Your Ears

By Greg Lester

I think it is safe to say we'll never get a "real" skeptic-style radio show. Sure, you'll be able to find Science Friday on NPR, but Ira Flatow will rarely talk skeptically about ghost orb, conspiracy theories and Nessie. That is why we are fortunate to live in the time of podcasts – amateur and professional media shows that, unlike commercial or even public radio, allow for niche programming. What the skeptical websites were to the late 1990s, podcasts are to the late zeroes.

Audio podcasts, in particular, are lifesavers for folks who like the convenience of bopping along to the radio, but are sick of the partisan politics and herbal remedy commercials. Podcasts come in all genres in forms, but here I'd like to point out a few of the more outstanding skeptical shows now being produced.

### What is a podcast?

(If you already use something other than iTunes, feel free to skip right to the reviews, you're too advanced for this bit of the discussion. And yes, for the sake of argument, your choice of aggregate software and/or digital music player is better than mine.)

A podcast is a digital media file (both audio and video) recorded specifically to be downloaded and played on a portable media device, like an mp3 player. Yes, many of the large media outfits produce audio and video podcasts, but you can also download files that serve as companion pieces to magazines (Nation Geographic, Scientific American), old radio shows (including every episode of X Minus One) and amateur productions that cover everything from politics to arts & crafts to astronomy to children's stories.

The word podcast is a play on the word broadcast by way of the iPod, the most popular digital music player on the market. You do not, however, need an iPod to listen to a podcast, just a computer and Internet access. For the sake of simplicity, I suggest you go to [apple.com/itunes](http://apple.com/itunes) to download iTunes, a free program for both Mac and Windows.

With iTunes, you can subscribe to podcasts so that new episodes will be automatically downloaded to your computer as they become available.

*Skeptic's Guide to the Universe* – SGU is a weekly hour-long production from our colleagues up north at the New England Skeptical Society, in cooperation with the James Randi Educational Foundation. Ste-

ven Novella, a Yale neurologist, and his brothers were a major part of the regional skeptical movement in the 1990s and have led the wave with this podcast, now with over 100 episodes.

In each episode, a panel of skeptics, including the brothers Novella (Steven, Rob and Jay), Perry DeAngelis, Evan Bernstein and lone “skepchick” Rebecca Watson, hold a round table discussion on science news, conspiracy theories and emerging topics of skeptical interest. Occasionally, Randi himself contributes a message, usually discussing some interesting episode from his storied career.

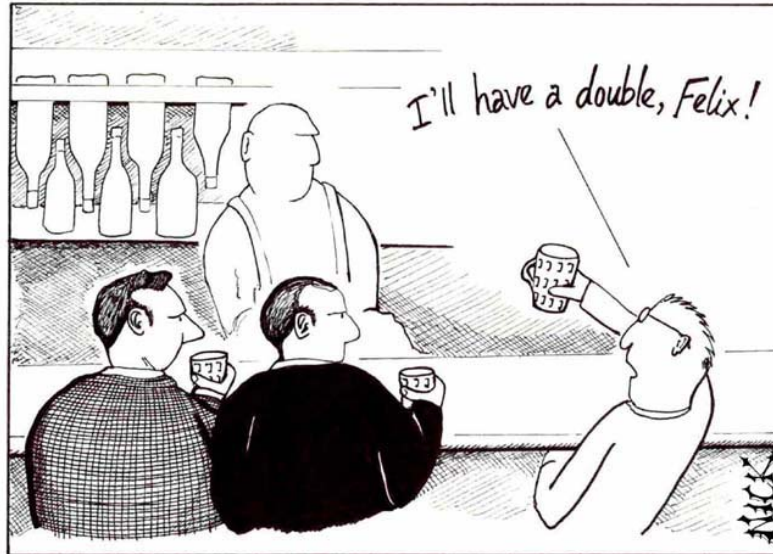
The panel provides a good mix of skeptical viewpoints and is always entertaining, if not laugh-out-loud funny. But “fringe skeptics” with thin skins beware, they tend to be dismissive some of the more thoroughly debunked pseudoscience topics and they don’t soften their viewpoints for the sake of appearing balanced. Dr. Novella is also something of a fallacy cop and, on occasion, simply points out logical fallacies in pseudoscience-y topics without explaining *why* they are pseudoscience.

Still, I point out the show’s faults because it is too easy to heap praise. SGU provides a consistent hour of interesting discussion each week. In particular, their interview segment has set the bar for skeptical podcasts, with notable guests on either side of the science/pseudoscience debate. Recently, they even had a long conversation with President Jimmy Carter to discuss the controversy surrounding his UFO experiences. This interview and all of the other episodes can be found at [www.theskepticsguide.org](http://www.theskepticsguide.org)

**Skepticality** – Off on the other coast, we have *Skepticality*, the official biweekly podcast The Skeptical Society’s *Skeptic* magazine. Its hosts are Derek Colanduno and Robynn McCarthy (a.k.a “Swoopy”), and as you can imagine Michael Shermer appears frequently. Like SGU, *Skepticality* offers about an hour or so of interesting commentary and interviews – they tend to speak to a lot of the same people, like Randi or Bad Astronomer

Phil Plait.

While the show lacks the diversity of *SGU*’s large cast, it does play a little looser with the podcasting formula. Recent episodes featured a discussion of the hype surrounding Apple’s iPhone and an entire episode devoted to JREF’s Hal Bidlack, repeating a speech he gave at The Amazing Meeting 5 on why he is a Deist. It was heartfelt and very moving. Well worth listening to at [www.skepticality.info](http://www.skepticality.info)



Cambridge, 1953. Shortly before discovering the structure of DNA, Watson and Crick, depressed by their lack of progress, visit the local pub.

**Skeptoid: Critical Analysis of Pop Phenomena** – At the other end of the production spectrum is Brian Dunning’s one man show, *Skeptoid*. Each week or so, Dunning takes a brief, yet thorough, look at a pseudo-science topic, generally in the realm of Fortean. He’s sober and insightful, but he does not pull punches. If you ever want to hear a complete knock-down of, say, the Marfa Lights or ghost orbs, *Skeptoid* pulls it off masterfully. You can learn more at [www.skeptoid.com](http://www.skeptoid.com)

**The Penn Jillette Show** – As an honorable mention, I’d like to offer up the now-defunct Penn Jillette Show, a terrestrial radio program that ran from January 2006 to March 2007. The show was a bit of magic on its own; imagine an FM radio program in this day and age where you can hear “Monkey Tuesday” one day and an hour-long interview with Richard Dawkins the next. It was a combination of brows, both high and low, the likes of which we’ll probably never hear again. Fortunately, you can catch up to what you missed at the PennRadio archives at [www.pennfans.net](http://www.pennfans.net)

Next time, a look at the other side of the fringe, with podcasts like *Skeptiko* and *Audiomartini*.

*Greg Lester is Editor Emeritus of Phactum. In addition to that he is a really nice guy. Will those audiomartinis be shaken or stirred? Stay tuned to Phactum to find out.*

## Right or "Bright"

By Tom Napier

Early in my brief and catastrophic marriage my then wife asked me what was most important to me. After thinking a moment I answered, "Intellectual integrity." As a scientist I felt this was self-evident but it was probably not the reply she expected.

When discussing important virtues in a 1954 essay, Bertrand Russell wrote, "I mean by intellectual integrity the habit of deciding vexed questions in accordance with the evidence, or of leaving them undecided where the evidence is inconclusive."

I've expressed the same idea thus: "Intellectual integrity is a concern that one adopts only those positions that are supported by the available evidence." Either definition tacitly excludes taking an illogical position or adopting two or more mutually inconsistent ones. Russell's second clause suggests saying nothing when there is nothing definitive to say, a precept TV's talking heads might take to heart.

Total intellectual integrity is an ideal to be aimed at and I won't claim to have achieved it. To review all one's statements for logical and factual flaws before saying anything would make for very one-sided conversations.

Not everyone aspires to intellectual integrity or even knows what it is. This essay was inspired by an acquaintance who asserts that the police keep psychics on their pay-rolls and regularly use them to solve crimes; she apparently takes docudramas seriously. I suggested consulting any of several authoritative Internet references on psychic detectives but she wouldn't,

she's "Not interested." Add to the demands of intellectual integrity the requirement to check for disconfirming evidence before adopting a position.

I have talked at a PhACT meeting and elsewhere about how readily a claimant having a real paranormal power could demonstrate this to a skeptic. My argument was that anyone claiming to possess such a power must have had sufficient evidence to convince themselves. If this evidence is not adequate to convince a skeptic it should never have convinced the claimant. This further failure of intellectual integrity could be codified as:

- ◆ A) Skeptics are honest, skilled in evaluating evidence and not prone to self-deception.
- ◆ B) A claimant's experience has convinced them that they possess a paranormal power but they cannot provide sufficient evidence to convince a skeptic of this.
- ◆ C) Therefore the claimant is either dishonest, unskilled in evaluating evidence or prone to self-deception.

Having evidence for one's position does not guarantee that it is right. The evidence or one's evaluation of it may be flawed. Still, a commitment to evidence is a step in the right direction and helps one avoid being seduced by religion, a field singularly devoid of evidence.

As a devout agnostic I am tolerant of people's internal belief systems, provided, of course, that they don't use force or the ballot-box to impose them on others. Not being an atheist, I find the campaign to introduce "A bright" as an all-inclusive term for skeptics and atheists both irritating and silly.

Irritating because I, and many others, distinguish logically between the paranormal and the numi-



**PhACT member Eric Hamell is a Bright fellow and is one of the organizers of the Philadelphia Brights Meetup Group. They meet at the Barnes & Noble Café at 1805 Walnut Street in Philadelphia at 7 PM on the second Monday of each month. Meetings are free and you are invited to attend and participate in free-wheeling discussion.**

**Eric is working on a critical thinking tract similar to those of religious believers and of atheists. Eric's focus is not to disabuse people of their beliefs but rather to help enable them to think critically. That will be one topic of discussion at PBMG meetings which are locally called "munches". A draft of Eric's tract can be found on line at:**

**<http://stripey7.blogspot.com/2007/07/introducing-worlds-first-critical.html>**

nous. Silly because Mensa, the international organization for intelligent people, has first dibs. Mensa used, "Are you bright enough?" as a recruiting slogan around 1980 and I still have the posters to prove it. I will admit, from long experience of Mensa, that while most skeptics are bright, disturbingly few bright people are skeptical. Mensans espouse at least as wide a range of woo-woo beliefs as the general public and, being highly intelligent, feel that their beliefs are all the more justified. Intelligence and intellectual integrity may correlate but not strongly.

As for "Bright," I have suggested a compromise. Spell the word "B-right" and pronounce it "Be Right." Now, Surprise! Surprise! it designates a person having intellectual integrity. That is, being a "B-right" indicates one's adoption of a method of thinking rather than of a particular point of view. A theist able to produce evidence supporting his or her position could justifiably claim to be a B-right.

The alternative to being a B-right is being a B-wrong. My ex used to complain that I always wanted to be right. (I was merely trying to do what was right.) Still, I doubt if even she thought I should deliberately strive to be wrong.

*Tom Napier is a physicist, an inventor, an ardent Critical Thinker, and long time member of PhACT.*

## Soundbites

Compiled by Becky Strickland

♣ "Parents should be ready to bring lawsuits for any school system that uses public funds to bring students to this museum". Lawrence Kraus, director of the *Center for Education & Research in Cosmology & Astrophysics* at Case Western Reserve University, on the \$27 million Creation Museum in Petersburg, Kentucky. *New Scientist*, May 26. Dr. Kraus went on to describe the museum as denying most, if not all, of natural history on this planet as centuries of careful study and experimentation have revealed it.

♣ "Science is a gift of God to all of us and science has taken us to a place that is biblical in it's power to cure." Nancy Pelosi, speaker of the House, arguing for a bill to ease restrictions on federal funding of embryonic stem cell research. *New York Times*, June 8.

♣ "Recent scientific developments have reinforced my conviction that stem cell science can progress in ethical ways" George Bush, who has pledged to veto the House of Representatives bill on embryonic stem cell research on the basis that amniotic or adult stem cells could be used instead. *New York Times*, June 8.

♣ "It was a very evangelical meeting. Others who were there said it was like a Billy Graham sermon." Tim Worner, who runs a UK multiple sclerosis support group, on a presentation by charity Proventus lobbying for greater access to an unlicensed MS treatment called Aimspro, derived from goat serum containing killed HIV virus. *The Guardian*, London, June 11.

♣ "We are at a crossroads like the start of the Renaissance, where you couldn't just leave reading and writing to the kings and priests any more. Ordinary people have to keep up. You have to become scientifically literate or you will fall quickly from view." Natalie Angier, science editor of the *New York Times*, quoted in *The Observer*, London, July 1, 2007.

♣ "We are used to nonsense like this" Kevin Pardian of the University of California, Berkley, responding to the appearance of the first books promoting an Islamic creationist agenda. *New York Times*, July 17, 2007

♣ "People like to think of physics as being the source of the fundamental laws of science. But there's one fundamental law that comes from the life sciences, and it's just as deep and all-pervasive and universal as anything in the pantheon of physics. Evolution by natural selection is an absolute principle of nature, it operates everywhere, and it is astonishing. but evolution is underappreciated, and, what hurts me far more, it is under assault" MIT physicist Robert Jaffe in *The Cannon, a Whirligig Tour of the Beautiful Basics of Science*, 2007 by Natalie Angier.

♣ "When the next US presidential debate airs, voters should swiftly reject any candidates who flaunt their scientific illiteracy". Lawrence Krauss, *New Scientist*, July 28, 2007.

*Becky Strickland is a long time skeptic with fondness for British science magazines and Turkish cuisine.*



## Strange Places - The Coney Island Mermaid Parade

by Jeff Clarke with editing by Eric Krieg

Last Saturday (June 23), was the 25 anniversary of the sometimes raunchy Coney Island Mermaid parade. Each year, a different celebrity King Neptune and Queen Mermaid reign over the proceedings, riding in the parade and officiating in the ceremonial opening of the Ocean for the summer swimming season. They do this by marching down the beach from the boardwalk, cutting through ribbons representing the seasons, and tossing fruit into the Atlantic to appease the Sea Gods. In the past, David Byrne, Queen Latifah, Ron Kuby, Curtis Sliwa, Moby, and David Johansen have done the honors, presiding over the jubilant hoards. It's a kind of place that brings out all the new age, fringe and alternative life style kinds of people. Some really believe in the mythical mermaids. Other new age folks into mythology try to recreate or dress like mermaids



and other mythical beasts. Some people wore clam shell bras, others dressed only in body paint - many should have been more covered.

It's hard to know the percentage drawn by the new age ritual, the spectacle, the excuse to imbibe or just the public nudity. A certain kind of raunchy spirit comes over the alcohol lubricated crowd of gawkers - it can be described as a mini Marti Gras right up this

way. Some would say that events like this or the folks that parade nightly on South Street are just not seen on other occasions - but the truth is, many are conservative accountants by day, and merely don freaky clothes and a persona at such events.

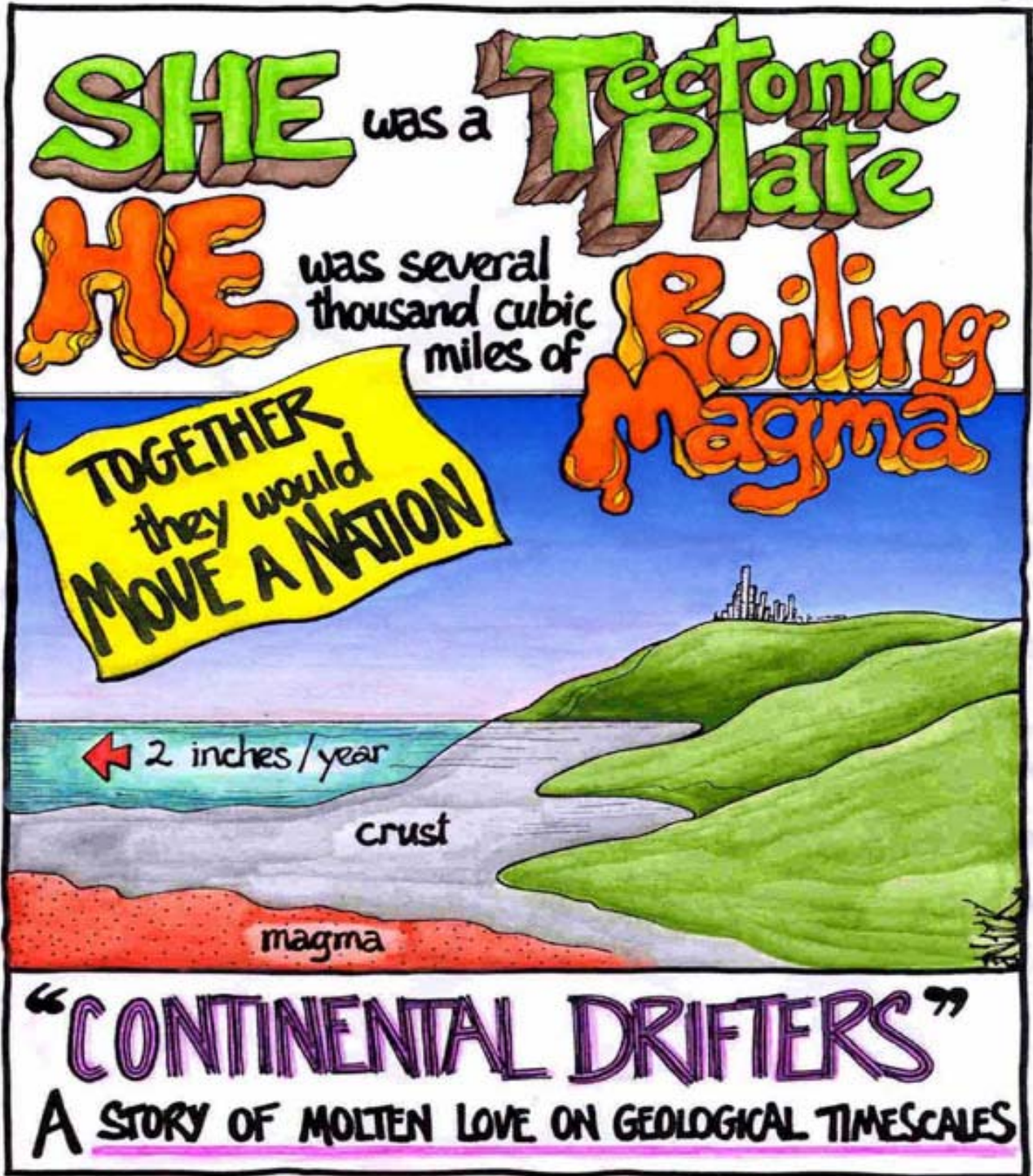
Jeff was attired in his Scottish bagpiper kilt/socks/shoes with the addition of a colonial jacket, clam shells, bandanas and ear ring (fake) to make himself into a Scottish pirate. He drew his fair share of pictures and attention from the teeming hoards of freak watchers. This year's parade was well attended as the future



Wearing a kilt is a sure way to meet new friends at the beach!!

of Coney Island is in limbo - word is that most all of it will succumb to developers. Aside from just the little known parade, it was agreed that it would be a shame for a great American cultural icon like Coney Island to be paved over for more dreary condos.

Note: Jeff did find out while talking to some of the parade organizers that some of Coney Island will remain, including the famous Cyclone roller coaster. The Freak Show building, whose owners organize and run the parade, had their building bought by the city of New York and turned back over to them for free, ensuring that the yearly parade will still go on un-interrupted.



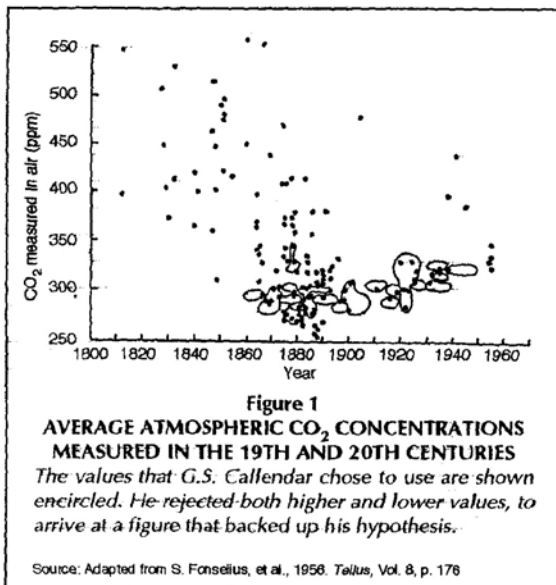


## Global Warming Fears - Part 2 Scientific or Manic?

by Joel M. Kauffman, Ph.D.

Part 1 in Phactum, Mar 2007, pp12-14, gave more than adequate evidence that claims of human-caused "global warming" by means of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions are false. The claimed temperatures of the last 100 or 1000 years are incorrect, and the claimed CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations are false. More evidence of the latter has just been brought to my attention.

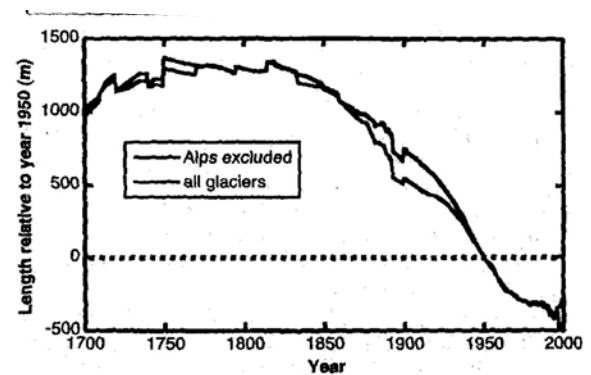
Professor Zbigniew Jaworowski, MD, PhD, DSc, of the Central Laboratory for Radiation Protection, Warsaw, Poland, had examined CO<sub>2</sub> concentration data. Figures 1, 3, 4 are his [1]. According to Jaworowski, the father of modern "global warming" is Guy Stewart Callendar, a steam engineer and amateur meteorologist, who claimed that fossil fuel burning had



changed the CO<sub>2</sub> concentration from a 19th century value of 274 ppm to 325 ppm in 1935, and that this had caused a warming of 0.33 K. To do this, he selected from the data in Fig. 1, in which each point is the mean of actual chemical determinations of CO<sub>2</sub>, *only the values circled* from the years 1860 - 1935, rejecting, for no reason, 16 that were higher and 2 that were lower, committing an obvious fraud. Values of 550 ppm in 1815, 1860 and 1866 were ignored, as were at least 20 values over 400 ppm as late as 1941.

Some of those who looked at my Part 1 asked

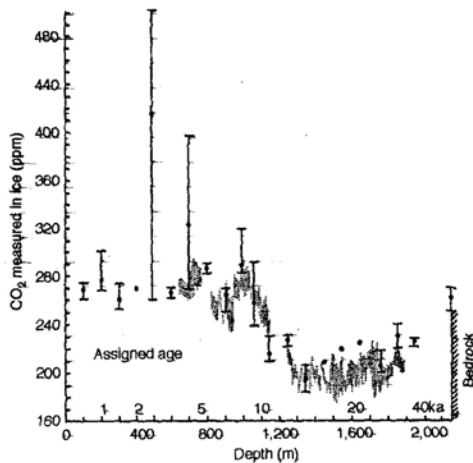
how I could ignore melting glaciers. Lengths of 169 glaciers compared with the base year of 1950 are shown in Fig. 2 [2]. J. Oerlemans, Institute for Marine and Atmospheric Research, Utrecht University, Netherlands, wrote that: "Moderate global warming started in the middle of the 19th century. The reconstructed warming in the first half of the 20th century is 0.5 K. This warming was notably coherent over the globe. The warming signals from glaciers at low and high elevations appear to be very similar." Already by 1906, *before* CO<sub>2</sub> levels were supposed to be elevated, the shortening due to melting was half of what it was in 2000. A reversal can be seen in 1998, the warmest year of the last 100 years, for the non-Alps glaciers, in Fig. 2.



**Figure 2.** Length reduction in 169 glaciers mostly preceded the increase in CO<sub>2</sub> (Oerlemans J, *Science* 2005;308:675-677).

Speaking of ice, the air bubbles in a drilling core from 6000-year-old ice from Camp Century, Greenland, showed a CO<sub>2</sub> concentration of 420 ppm, while it was 270 ppm in a supposedly 6000-year-old ice core from Byrd, Antarctica. [1] "New light was shed on the validity of the dating of recent ice strata when 6 U. S. [Lockheed] Lightning fighter planes and 2 B 17 [Boeing] Flying Fortresses from World War II were found buried in 1942 ice...in Greenland...where they had made...emergency landings. The planes were found 47 years later at a depth of 78 m, and not at the 12 m depth that had been estimated by glaciologists using oxygen isotope dating." Jaworowski also noted that air from ice at Summit, Greenland, deposited during the last 200 years, ranged from 243-641 ppm in CO<sub>2</sub>. "Such a wide range reflects artifacts caused by sampling, or natural processes in the ice sheet, rather than the variations of CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations in the atmosphere." G. I. Pearman et al., in a 1986 paper in *Nature*, rejected 43% of the CO<sub>2</sub> readings from the Law Dome, Antarctica, core, 39% of the methane readings, and 43%

of the nitrous oxide readings, because they were higher or lower than the politically correct values. They decided on a value of 281 ppm for CO<sub>2</sub> in the pre-industrial period.



**Figure 3**  
**HOW SELECTION OF ICE CORE DATA**  
**SKEWS RESULTS TO MATCH**  
**THE GLOBAL WARMING THEORY**

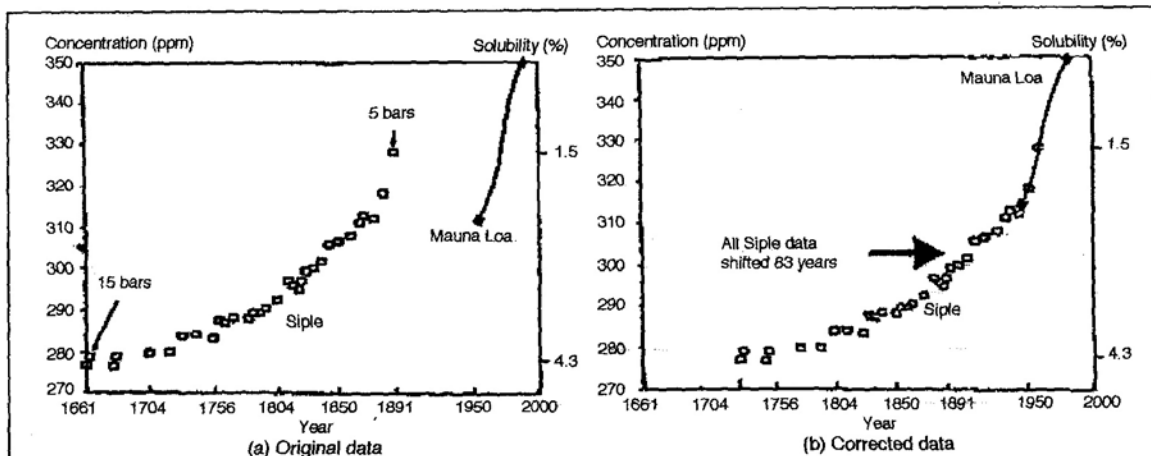
In presenting measurements of CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations in the pre-industrial ice core from Byrd Antarctica, Neftel, et al., in 1982 showed maximum values up to 500 ppmv (dots and bars). In 1988, the same authors published measurements for the same section of the Byrd ice core (gray areas), but left off the high readings published previously, reporting a highest concentration of 290 ppmv, in agreement with the global warming theory.

According to Jaworowski, until 1985 the published CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations in air bubbles in pre-industrial ice ranged from 160-700 ppm, with an occa-

sional spike to 2450 ppm. After 1985, high readings disappeared from publications! Jaworowski gave a flagrant example of data selection from A. Neftel et al., also in *Nature*, who reported in 1985 that pre-industrial CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations from a Byrd, Antarctica, ice core were 330-500 ppm (dots and bars in Fig. 3). However, in 1988, also in *Nature*, and on the same core, only values of 290 ppm or less were reported, in agreement with the “global warming” theory (gray areas in Fig. 3).[1]

I always wondered how the “experts” knew what age ice came from what depth. The examples above indicate that they do not know. Now we go from biased selection of data to outright fraud. The CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations in 19th century ice collected at Siple, Antarctica, were first reported as in Fig. 4(a) with a peak at 330 ppm in 1891. These data were arbitrarily moved to the right by assuming that the occluded air is 83 years younger than the ice its bubbles were found in! This gives the politically correct match with infrared measurements commenced in 1957 on the big island of Hawaii shown in Fig. 4(b). This is the basis for claims by the IPCC in its scary report of 1990, repeated incessantly by Warmers, that CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations were around 280 ppm pre-industrially, and have skyrocketed since to an “unprecedented” 380 ppm. Never mind that the infrared data were taken near a CO<sub>2</sub> emitting volcano, Mauna Loa, [1] and never confirmed by any type of assay anywhere else in the world.

The start of the infrared data in 1958 showed a



**Figure 4**

**CORRECTING THE CO<sub>2</sub> ICE DATA TO FIT THE THEORY: AN EXAMPLE FROM SIPLE, ANTARCTICA**

The figures here show measurements of CO<sub>2</sub> in pre-industrial ice (open squares) and CO<sub>2</sub> as measured in the atmosphere at Mauna Loa, Hawaii (solid line). The original data are shown in (a). The same data appear in (b) after an arbitrary “correction” of 83 years in the age of the air, to make the data accord with the global warming theory. Using the real age of the air, could indicate that the CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations in the latter 19th century were the same as those in the 1970s. The “corrected” data were published by Neftel et al. 1985; Friedli, et al. 1986; and IPCC, 1990.



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CO<sub>2</sub> concentration 12 ppm higher than the best chemical titration data of the period, these chemical data being very consistent with each other. This discrepancy has never been resolved. During the Little Ice Age, say 1700-1850, the lower temperatures meant that more CO<sub>2</sub> would have dissolved in sea water according to Robert Bunsen's measurements of solubility around 1850. This is not a trivial difference, since 20% more CO<sub>2</sub> dissolves in water at 15°C than at 20°C. [3] Therefore, steady concentrations of CO<sub>2</sub> in air before about 1900 as claimed by Warmers are unlikely. Thus, it would be advisable to have chemical measurements made, once again, to verify the infrared measurements, after 50 years of ignorance.

Solar cycles of changing heat output and the sun's influence on cosmic ray effects on the Earth's clouds determine climate, not CO<sub>2</sub> levels. [4] According to Laurence Hecht, Editor of *21st Century Science & Technology*: "Of all the hypotheses [on Earth climate], that of human-produced carbon dioxide as the forcing mechanism for warming is the most deeply and extensively studied, and by far the most discredited. No other hypothesis rests on such flagrant and lying disrespect for data as...on the falsification of the historical CO<sub>2</sub> record." [5]

[1] Jaworowski Z, Ice Core Data Show No Carbon Dioxide Increase, <http://www.21stcenturysciencetech.com> under the topic "Global Warming", accessed 30 June 07.

Jaworowski Z, Ancient atmosphere - validity of ice records, *Environ Sci & Pollut Res* 1994;1(13):p161-171.

[2] Oerlemans J, Extracting a Climate Signal from 169 Glacier Records, *Science* 2005;308:675-677.

[3] Partington JR, *A Text-Book of Inorganic Chemistry*, London, Macmillan, 1957, p65.

[4] Jaworowski Z, Solar cycles, not CO<sub>2</sub>, determine climate, *21st Century Science and Technology*, Winter 2003-2004, pp52-65. Accessed as a PDF on 5 Jul 07 at: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zbigniew\\_Jaworowski](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zbigniew_Jaworowski) or at: <http://www.21stcenturysciencetech.com/>

[5] Hecht L, What Really Causes Climate Change? *EIR Science*, 2 Mar 07, pp6-9. Accessed as a PDF on 5 Jul 07 at: <http://www.21stcenturysciencetech.com/>

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**Skepticism, like chastity, should not be relinquished too readily.**

**George Santayana**

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