# Phactum



The Newsletter of the Philadelphia Association for Critical Thinking

January 2008

editor: Ray Haupt email: phactpublicity@aol.com www.phact.org

**Dr. Michael Shermer**, a cycling enthusiast, publisher of Skeptic magazine, and author of nine books, will be the speaker at a meeting co-hosted by FSGP (Freethought Society of Greater Philadelphia) and PhACT at the **Philadelphia Ethical Society, 1906 South Rittenhouse Square, Philadelphia on Tuesday, January 15, 2008 from 7:30 to 10:00 PM. This event is free and open to the public.** 



Dr. Shermer will discuss his new book, *The Mind of the Market: Compassionate Apes, Competitive Humans, and Other Lessons from Evolutionary Economics*, There will be a Q & A session following Dr. Shermer's remarks after which there will be a book signing and opportunity to purchase the book

In addition to his many other intellectual involvements, Michael writes a monthly opinion column in Scientific American. You might wish to check out the January 2008 edition where, in an opin-

ion piece entitled "Evonomics", he discusses Evolution and Economics and, to a point, merges the two concepts. This article serves well as a foretaste of what to expect in his discussion of January 15th.

See page 4 for a description of *The Mind of the Market*.

## The PhACT Council

Eric Krieg, President
Bob Glickman, Secretary
Ray Haupt, Treasurer
Dr. David Cattell
Dr. David Cragin
Tom Napier
Harry Rothwell
Becky Strickland

**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.

## PHACT CALENDAR

The **Physics Department of Community College of Philadelphia** hosts meetings of **PhACT** - at 2:00 PM on the third Saturday of most months at Community College of Philadelphia, 17th and Spring Garden Streets, West Building Room W2-48. **Meetings are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted.** 

**Tuesday, January 15, 2008** - PhACT and FSGP, The Free-thought Society of Greater Philadelphia, will cohost Dr. Michael Shermer, publisher of Skeptic magazine, at a Philadelphia speaking engagement at the Philadelphia Ethical Society at 7:30 PM. This event is free and open to the general public.

Saturday, January 19, 2008 - This meeting is postponed until February 16, 2008.

**Saturday, February 16, 2008 - Paul A. Offit, M.D.**, chief of infectious diseases at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and the Henle Professor of Immunologic and Infectious Diseases at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine will discuss ,**Vaccine Safety: Science Politics and the Media.** Dr. Offit is an internationally recognized expert in the fields of immunology and virology.

Wednesday, January 16, 2008 at 7:00PM. Daniel Schorr | Come to Think of It: Notes on the Turn of the Millenium at the Free Library of Philadelphia, 19th and Benjamin Franklin Parkway. The last of Edward R. Murrow's CBS team still fully active in the media, veteran reporter Daniel Schorr is NPR's senior news analyst and a legend in journalism. Over the course of a career spanning six decades and 12 presidential administrations, Schorr has earned numerous awards, including three Emmys and a Peabody Award. His new book, Come to Think of It, is a selection of Schorr's observations on politics and American life from 1990 to the present day. FREE. No tickets required. For Info: 215-567-4341.

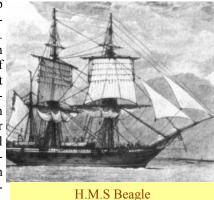
**Tuesday, January 22, 2008 at 7:00PM**, Neil Shubin | *Your Inner Fish: A Journey into the 3.5 Billion-Year History of the Human Body* at the Free Library of Philadelphia, 19th and the Parkway in Philadelphia After six years scouring the Canadian Arctic with several colleagues, native Philadelphian, paleontologist, and professor of anatomy Neil Shubin discovered a 375-million-year-old fossil representing a "missing link" between ancient sea creatures and the first animals to walk on land; a fish that could do a "version of a pushup," he says. Shubin's book *Your Inner Fish* takes readers on an organ-by-organ journey through the human body to explain why we look the way we do. FREE. No tickets required. For Info: 215-567-4341

Wednesday, January 30, 2008 at 6:00 pm at University of Pennsylvania Museum. Dr. David Evening Lecture and Curator's Reception: The Origins of Zeus: The Mt. Lykaion Excavation and Survey Project. Gilman Romano, Senior Research Scientist, Mediterranean section, and Mt. Lykaion Project Director, offers this presentation of the team's provocative new finds. According to Greek mythology, Zeus, the father of the pantheon of Greek gods and goddesses, was born on Mt. Lykaion in Arcadia. New excavations by the University of Pennsylvania Museum, the University of Arizona, and the Greek Archaeological Service at the mountain top site, are providing evidence of early dedications that may shed light on the origins of the cult of Zeus. Lecture is free and open to the public. A complimentary reception follows for Penn Museum members at the Sustaining level (\$150) and above. Information:

215/898-4890.

Sunday, February 10, 2008 at 1:00 pm to 4:00—Darwin Day at University of Pennsylvania Museum. Charles Robert Darwin, author of On the Origin of Species and The Descent of Man, was born February 12, 1809. Penn Museum joins a growing interna-

tional celebration leading up to next year's 200th anniversary of his birth in 2009. On Sunday afternoon, Penn professors from a variety of disciplines will offer short talks in the galleries, focusing on what evolution means to their particular fields of study. There will be children's activities, badminton (a favorite Darwin pastime), film, a sneak preview of the spring exhibition



"Surviving: The Body of Evidence," and birthday cake—and Charles Darwin promises to make an appearance! This enlightening celebration is FREE . Information: 215-898-4890.

Tuesday, February 19, 2008 at 6:00 pm - Evening Talk with Penn Museum's Director: Butrint: At the Crossroads of the Mediterranean. Dr. Richard Hodges, Penn Museum's new Williams Director and a renowned classical and early medieval archaeologist specializing in Western Europe, has, for the past fourteen years, worked extensively on archaeological and cultural heritage projects in Albania. With this illustrated lecture, he offers a wideranging look at the archaeology, history, and modern cultural heritage issues of Butrint, an ancient, medieval, and Ottoman Empire town on the Straits of Corfu in southern Albania. Free. Reservations recommended: 215/898-4890.

**Rittenhouse Astronomical Society Monthly Meetings.** Bring all of your out-of this-world questions. Join The Rittenhouse Astronomical Society the second Wednesday of each month at 7:30 p.m.

# PHACT CALENDAR

in the Fels Planetarium in the Franklin Institute of Science. The society offers all persons an opportunity to participate in the activities of an astronomical group at the laymen's level. They aim to spread knowledge, awareness and enjoyment of astronomy and astronomical issues. It is a popular science club that keeps its members up-to-date on the latest developments. No experience is necessary to attend the FREE meetings. Come with your astronomy questions! The first meeting of 2008 is on January 9. Family Night: The Planets, Gustav Holst, The Science, The Mythology, The Music.

Website: www.rittenhouseastronomicalsociety.org/

**Delaware Valley Mensa.** Monthly Meetings are always open to family, friends, interested others, and the public. See the "Events Calendar" on the Mensa website for more information. After the meeting they adjourn to a local restaurant for some inexpensive food and conversation. The website is http://dvm.us.mensa.org/.

Freethought Society of Greater Philadelphia (FSGP) and the Humanist Association of Greater Philadelphia (HAGP) cosponsor 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. If you have any questions, please contact the book club moderator, Ian Thomas. Email: ian.thomas101@gmail.com Phone: (610) 368-5915 Cell: (610) 565-4530.

#### Henry George School 413 S. 10th Street in Philadelphia 215-922-4278 or hgsphila@gmail.coml

Free Winter 2007-2008 classes

PART I: FUNDAMENTAL ECONOMICS For a Peaceful and Sustainable Planet begins Monday, January 14th, 2008 from 7 pm-9 pm. An afternoon course begins Wednesday, January 16th, from 1 pm to 3 pm. Both are 10 week courses with different instructors. Our text book is *Progress and Poverty*, Henry George's famous, bestselling classic,...

PART II: **APPLIED ECONOMICS** will be offered again in the Spring of 2008.

PART III: **ECONOMIC SCIENCE** begins on Wednesday, January 16th, 2008 from 7 pm-9 pm for students who have completed FUNDAMENTAL ECONOMICS. The text is Henry George's "The Science of Political Economy"

The PhACT Calendar is open to members and non-members 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 **phactpublicity@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.

#### Wagner Free Institute of Science

1700 West Montgomery Avenue Philadelphia, PA 19121 ph 215-763-6529 www.wagnerfreeinstitute.org

#### **Spring 2008 Courses**

Mosses, Ferns, and Other Non-Flowering Plants, Professor Karen Snetselaar. Monday, January 14, 2008, beginning at 6:30 PM. 6 Mondays. Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, 100 N. 20th Street (20th and Arch Streets). Flowering plants have been on this earth a relatively short time. This class will survey the evolutionary history of land plants, including the members of these ancient groups that are still around today and are of special interest to gardeners and naturalists. Preregistration required.

**Big Cats, Little Cats, and Their Genes**, Professor Mary Beth Davis. **Wednesday, January 16, 2008,** beginning at 6:30 PM. 7 Wednesdays. Independence Branch of the Free Library, 18 S. 7th Street (7th and Market Streets). This course will begin with the recent DNA studies that elucidated evolutionary relationships between cat species. Most of the course will focus on understanding the genetic basis of specific traits in the domestic cat. **No preregistration required.** 

Mesozoic Ruling Reptiles, Professor William Gallagher. Saturday, January 26, 2008, beginning at 10:15 AM. 10 Saturdays. University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 33rd and Spruce Streets. This course will study the great reptiles of the Mesozoic era from the early history of the dinosaur to the end of the Mesozoic and the big extinction. No preregistration required.

Perching Birds of the World - Passeriform (Songbird) Families, Professor Nathan Rice. Thursday, January 31, 2008, beginning at 6:30 PM. 7 Thursdays. The Academy of Natural Sciences, 19th Street and the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. This class will focus on songbirds, the largest and most diverse clade of modern birds. Each week we will discuss a series working almost exclusively from the Academy's world-class bird collection. Preregistration required and limited to 12 students. To preregister, call 215-763-6529, ext. 23, beginning Monday, November 12.

*The Evolution of Ideas about Human Evolution*, Professor Monique Scott. **Wednesday, March 26, 2008**, beginning at 6:30 PM. 7 Wednesdays. Independence Branch of the Free Library, 18 S. 7th Street (7th and Market Streets). This class explores how ideas of human evolution and what it means to be human have changed over time. *No preregistration required*.

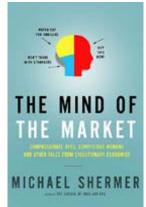
Invasive Plants in the Philadelphia Area, Professor Alfred E. Schuyler. Monday, March 31, 2008, beginning at 6:30 PM. 6 Mondays, 1 Saturday. Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, 100 N. 20th Street (20th and Arch Streets). This course will discuss how invasives differ from non-invasives, negative impacts of invasives from the 18th century to the present day, some notorious invasives and their habitats, and management strategies for reducing or eliminating the negative impacts of invasives. Preregistration required.

To preregister, call 215-763-6529, ext. 23, beginning Monday, November 12.

Wagner Institute courses are Free, but **contributions are welcome**. To order a copy of the catalog and a full description of courses, please email info@wagnerfreeinstitute.org or call 215-763-6529, ext. 21.

# The Mind of the Market: Compassionate Apes, Competitive Humans, and Other Tales from Evolutionary Economics by Michael Shermer

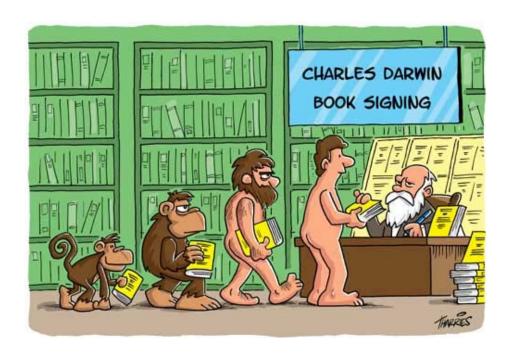
ISBN: 0805078320 Hardcover, 336 pages, \$US 20.00 Times Books, December 2007



Best selling author Michael Shermer explains how evolution shaped the modern economy-and why people are so irrational about money How did we make the leap from ancient hunter-gatherers to modern consumers and traders? Why do people get so emotional and irrational about bottom-line financial and business decisions? Is the capitalist marketplace a sort of Darwinian organism, evolved through natural selection as the fittest way to satisfy our needs? In this eye-opening exploration, author and psychologist Michael Shermer uncovers the evolutionary roots of our economic behavior. Drawing on the new field of neuroeconomics, Shermer investigates what brain scans reveal about bargaining, snap purchases, and establishing trust in business. He scrutinizes experiments in behavioral economics to understand why people hang on to losing stocks, why negotiations disintegrate into tit-for-tat disputes, and why money does not make us happy. He brings together astonishing findings from psychology, biology, and other sciences to describe how

our tribal ancestry makes us suckers for brands, why researchers believe cooperation unleashes biochemicals similar to those released during sex, why free trade promises to build alliances between nations, and how even capuchin monkeys get indignant if they don't get a fair reward for their work.

Michael Shermer is the author of nine previous books, including the best selling *Why People Believe Weird Things*. He is a columnist for *Scientific American*, the publisher of *Skeptic* magazine, and the founder and director of the international Skeptics Society. He lives in Southern California.



## Wanted!!

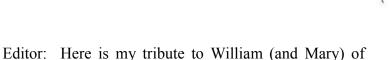
Your opinions and input to Phactum in the form of articles and letters to the editor are desired. You need not be an expert or in agreement with a particular point of view. You need only to have interest in the matter and a willingness to write it down. In fact, dissenting opinions are very welcome as they are the ones that generate the most discussion. We do try to avoid partisan politics and religion bashing but are willing to consider matters that are of general interest to skeptics. Please, no reviews of the Chipmunk Christmas Movie. Poetry is welcome. Suggestions to improve Phactum are very appreciated. Send submissions by email if you can since my scanner is a dicey affair. Hand written notes are OK if they are short. More clerihews please!!

Phactpublicity@aol.com

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#### Letters

Orange. It may not be quite what you wanted but I



Prince of Orange, William III, Had a status quite absurd. As a monarch he is reckoned, Half and half with Mary II.

believe it has a certain charm.

Tom Napier North Wales, PA

Editor: About the December 2007 article on Homeopathy.

The article points out that Homeopathy is probably a lot of baloney, and is probably correct. However, I tried the following: Arniflora Arnica Gel. It is applied to the skin for muscle pain, swelling, stiffness, and bruising. I have used it four times. It is available from stores that sell vitamins. You smear it on, then a second time maybe an hour later, then maybe

a third time an hour later. The pain stops so suddenly that it is like flipping a switch. It really does work.

However, I note that the Arnica is diluted only 1X, so this may be an Allopathic (conventional) medicine masquerading as a Homeopathic remedy. Jerome Mendel

Plainfield, NJ



In herbal medicine, Arnica usually refers to Arnica montana, a mountain plant used for relief of bruises, stiffness, and muscle soreness. Arnica is widely used as a salve for bruises and sprains, and sometimes as a tincture, for the same anti-inflammatory, pain-relieving purposes. Tablets are also available. In homeopathy it has a wider use. It is available in natural/health food stores, most commonly in gel form, to be applied to the affected area approximately three times daily.

Editor:

I won't argue with Albert Z. Conner's scientific facts, since he presents none. I'm only commenting on his description of Al Gore's and the IPCC's Peace Prize as a "travesty" because it allegedly doesn't conform to Nobel guidelines.

It's not hard to see the peace connection if one has an open mind. Clearly the environmental stresses that continued global warming may cause could result in increased conflict both between and within nations Pre-empting such developments by addressing the problem before it gets worse could do a great deal for world peace.



There's nothing new about the Nobel committee's interpreting the guidelines expansively. They also awarded a prize to Martin Luther King, Jr., who probably wouldn't have qualified either under Conner's criteria.

Eric Hamell Philadelphia

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### **Various Ruminations**

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

#### Creationism argument ended in death

Get a load of this article from The Australian, December 14, 2007

A fruit picking trip to NSW ended in the death of a Scottish backpacker over a row about creationism and evolution.

English backpacker Alexander Christian York, 33, was today sentenced to a maximum of five years jail for the manslaughter of Scotsman Rudi Boa in January last year. Mr Boa, 28, died on January 27 after being stabbed by York at the Blowering Holiday Park, near Tumut.

Mr Boa and his girlfriend Gillian Brown arrived in Australia from Scotland at the end of 2005 and went to Tumut to pick fruit as their first port of call on a round the world holiday. York had been in the country since April 2005.

The Scottish couple and York, neighbours at the caravan park, were becoming friends and spent the night of January 27 drinking at the Star Hotel in Tumut. However, towards the end of the night, an argument between York and the pair about creationism versus evolution escalated into a shouting match at the pub.

The couple, both biomedical scientists, had been arguing the case of evolution, while York had taken a more biblical view of history.

"Although this became perhaps a little sharp edged, it did not really amount to anything," Justice Michael Adams said during York's sentencing in the NSW Supreme Court today. "For some reason, however ... the offender's mood changed suddenly and he began to abuse Mr Boa and Ms Brown. There was no hint of a physical confrontation and what a happened amounted to little more than a brief verbal contretemps."

Although the altercation had been defused by the time the Scottish tourists left the hotel, it became inflamed again at the caravan park when all three were quite drunk.

According to Ms Brown, York was making dinner when he attacked the couple outside his tent, stabbing Mr Boa with a kitchen knife as the argument escalated. York said he had lashed out in self-defence, after being attacked by Mr Boa.

In the NSW Supreme Court sitting in Wagga Wagga in July, York was found guilty of manslaughter but acquitted of murdering Mr Boa. He was today sentenced to a maximum of five years in jail, with a non-parole period of three years. He will be eligible for release on January 26, 2009.

Justice Adams said he had given York a sentence at the lower end of the scale, partly because of the accidental nature of the stabbing. "I do not believe that he took aim but rather thrust out," Justice Adams said. "I think he knew that the knife was in his hand ... but he did not actually turn his mind to the potentially serious consequences of doing this. The offender is a person of good character and the offence is a complete aberration."

York, unshaven and dressed in prison greens, sat impassively as Justice Adams read out the sentence. Mr Boa's sister Debbie broke down when York was led into court, and during the sentencing.

#### Alternative Medicine: Another argyria case surfaces.

Dr. Steven Barrett has reported in his interesting Quackwatch newsletter:

CNN has broadcast the story of 57-year-old Paul Karason, whose skin turned blue-gray after 14 years of drinking water containing colloidal silver. The report states that the man still "swears by it," drinks it, and thinks the problem occurred because he rubbed the water on his face. Colloidal silver is a suspension of submicroscopic metallic silver particles in a colloidal base. Long-term use of silver preparations can cause silver salts to deposit in the skin, eyes, and internal

organs, and the skin turns bluishgray. Many cases of occurred argyria during thepreantibiotic era when silver was common ingredient nose drops. in



When the cause became apparent, doctors stopped recommending their use, and reputable manufacturers stopped producing them. But many Web sites sell colloidal silver-making devices with false claims that they can prevent and treat diseases. [Barrett S. Colloidal silver: Risk without benefit. Quackwatch Aug 1, 2005]

http://www.cnn.com/video/#/video/us/2007/12/19/haagenson.blue.man.kfsn

#### **Stink Bugs**

The East Asian Stink Bug was found in Allentown, Pennsylvania in January of 2001. This little insect invader, also known as the brown-marmorated

stink bug is indigenous to Asia and is considered a major agricultural pest in China, Japan, Korea and Taiwan. Already, some local organic farmers in the Allentown area have seen their fruit harvest heavily damaged by this new invader.



And, Oh Joy, I have found several hanging out near my computer!!!

#### **Independent Fact Checking**

FactCheck is a project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania dedicated to the notion of non-partisan investigation of the claims of politicians. Their web address is: **factcheck.org.** I do not know if the project's claims of non-bias are accurate but it worth checking out. I have heard that politicians have been known on very rare occasion to exaggerate and perhaps this website can serve as an impartial observer dealing in "just the facts" without the swagger. Does anyone care to critique this website?

# **TEACH EVOLUTION: Over two hundred scientists** named Steve agree

That was the headline for a Phactum article in the April/May 2003 edition. How times have changed! In a recent email from Glenn Branch, who is the Deputy Director of NCSE, the National Center for Science Education, he indicated the number as of December 12 is 852. In case you are not aware Project Steve was a tongue in cheek stunt to accumulate a list of scientists named Stephen, Steve, Stephanie or some variation

thereof, who endorse the concept of Evolution. This idea evolved after the death of scientist Stephen J. Gould as a way to honor him. The list has grown dramatically. Were Gould's parents clairvoyant? They wisely did not name their son, John.

NCSE has a very informative website that relates current happenings in the world of the Creation/ Evolution tussle that exists in public education. http://ncseweb.org/

#### Send that kid to Dr. Paulos

A few years ago I was in the local supermarket and I noticed a grandmotherly looking woman with a young boy of about twelve years of age. They had a coaster wagon with some empty and some filled jars from which they were pouring coins into a money counting machine. I have no idea how many coins they had or what their circumstances might have been. I went about my business thinking no more of the matter on that day.

The next time I entered the supermarket I saw that machine again and since it was not in use I inspected it more closely. It is a very simple procedure. The customer dumps coins into a hopper, the machine separates and counts the coins, and at the end will print a receipt to be cashed in at the service desk. The machine very kindly deducts a 9% service fee.

A 9% service fee seems like a rather steep price for the service of counting an accumulation of pocket change. I think about that incident each time I walk past that machine.. It certainly is possible that money was needed quickly and the service fee was a necessary evil, but I do wonder about that. Just what were they up to? I will never know but I fantasize that the kid, and his grandmother, did not have a good grasp of simple everyday mathematics. If they had perhaps \$300 worth of change the cost to them was \$27, nice wages for a twelve year old to spend a couple of hours counting.

Since that encounter I have noticed a few others pouring coins into that contraption. It is none of my business but it bothers me to see people waste money in such a manner, just as it bothers me to see people pour money into casino slot machines. There is one big difference; the supermarket customer pours money into the counting machine one time, the gambler recycles to exhaustion.

Customers at supermarkets and casinos would do well to read Dr. Paulos book "Innumeracy", but not many will.



#### **Gambling** - Peeing on the seat

Here is an Associated Press story from August of 2007 that clearly exhibits the negative powers of compulsive gambling. People will play at slot machines losing time and hard earned money hoping for a big payoff. We less often hear of other losses, such as a loss of human dignity while in that pursuit. It is maddening to me that Pennsylvania, and other states, eagerly exploit human weaknesses as a way to enable a stealth tax upon those who will readily give in to their compulsions.

ELIZABETH, Ind. - A Kentucky man who was playing slot machines at the Caesars Indiana casino claims he sat in a chair soaked with urine left by a gambler who had just exited the seat.

Floyd Kibiloski, 60, of Fern Creek, Ky., filed a complaint with the Indiana Gaming Commission, saying a woman who had been playing the slot machine moments earlier had urinated in the chair at the southern Indiana casino. "My whole concern is that they fix this," he told The Courier-Journal of Louisville, Ky. "It's not apparent that they have anything in place to deal with this kind of situation."

Kibiloski said that after his pants got soaked by the chair July 21 he was given no help in finding a



place to clean up and had to walk to his car to change into an old pair of sweat pants. Caesars spokeswoman Judy Hess acknowledged the incident and said the casino regretted what happened. She said they "dropped the ball" because broken or soiled chairs are supposed to be immediately removed from the gaming floor.

Angela Bunton, who reviews patron complaints for the Indiana Gaming Commission, said she believed similar issues had "come up a time or two" at Indiana's 11 casinos but that she could not specifically recall one. Complaints are kept on file for one year.

Gamblers who become addicted can enter a

trancelike state where even basic hygiene habits are ignored, said Carol O'Hare, executive director of the Nevada Council on Problem Gambling. Their reasoning is so impaired by the addiction that they may go for hours and days without eating or showering, she said.

Gamblers have told counselors that they wore adult diapers or relieved themselves to keep from losing their seat at a slot machine where they expected the machine to pay off, O'Hare said.

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# **Soundbites**Compiled by Becky Strickland

- "Directly inhaled cannabis smoke contained 20 times as much ammonia and five times as much hydrogen cyanide as tobacco." New Scientist magazine, 12/29/07, reporting an experiment from *Chemical Research in Toxicology*, This research counters, with science, the myth that cannabis is safe to use.
- Since Ted Daeschler's fascinating talk at our annual banquet last April, people have asked how they could contribute financially to his projects. If you wish to do so, send any contributions C/O Ted at the Academy of Natural Science, 1900 Benjamin Franklin Parkway, Philadelphia, Pa 19103. Checks should be made out to the Academy and include a note that the contributions is for Ted Daeschler's work. It is also possible to contribute online (http://www.ansp.org/) but this option doesn't allow funds to be directed to a particular project.

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## Mr. Krieg Goes to Washington

"The Fringe World of Free Energy": by Tom Schum

Sunday December 8, Eric Krieg gave an amusing and stimulating lecture at the National Science Foundation in Arlington, Virginia, in the suburban Washington, D.C. area. In his lecture "The Fringe Culture of Free-Energy Claimants", he mentioned the names and legends of numerous famous and less-famous crackpots, con-men, crazies, and ignorami.

Yes, the holy name of Tesla was also mentioned,

I support the aims of PhACT and \$10 for students. I have enclose	2 2	•	The annual membership is \$15 and
Membership dues of \$membership.	. ,		Mail checks to: PhACT 639 W. Ellet Street Philadelphia, PA 19119
Donation of \$ additional support	enclosed for (please indicate) a specific purpose:		
Name:		Phone:	
		E_mail	

as well as his slightly-less-than-sterling biography, and some of his more disputed ideas.

A rollicking good time was had by all. While showing immense disgust with the commen on the list, Eric maintained a balanced attitude about free-energy researchers in general, particularly those of us who admit ignorance and prefer the scientific method.

There is no doubt that a successful free-energy device would be revolutionary on a world scale but, as Eric pointed out, the current collection of kooks is not able to give us much hope. Someday maybe, some real progress may be made, and Eric was very clear about how his own lack of technical and scientific understanding prevents him from being able to make valid assessments of some of the ideas floating around in that endless sea we call "the internet".

**Tom Schum is a member of** NCAS, The National Capitol Area Skeptics. Website: ncas.org

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Any man who afflicts the human race with ideas must be prepared to see them misunderstood. - **H. L. Mencken** 

## "A Truth Self-Evident" by Paul Schlueter III

I've found a truth self-evident, distorted not by prophets nor tyrants with agendas grand, shown plainly to my eyes.

I saw that truth, revealed to me by reasoned observation, and awed by its simplicity, adopted it as mine.

I try to hold that simple truth as my own best instructor; to guide, with it, my daily path in search of better life.

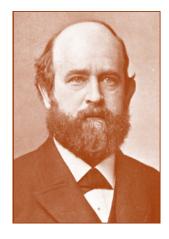
My truth has helped me learn to find a peace secure and stable; a balance between more or less, renewably sustained.

> I need only believe in what good evidence discloses; and share, in common interest, with others of like mind.

### **PHACT**

Phila. Assoc. for Critical Thinking 639 W. Ellet Street Philadelphia, PA 19119





Henry George, a journalist and self-taught political economist, was born September 2, 1839 at 413 South 10th Street in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He died on October 29, 1897 in New York City during his second campaign for the office of Mayor. His ideas and writings inspired an international social movement of enormous importance to secure true liberty and equality of opportunity for all by permanently ending all forms of monopoly—most importantly, that of land rent monopoly. The Henry George School of Social Science was established in New York City in 1932 to make sure the truths revealed in Henry George's writings remain part of the public dialog. The Henry George School has extensions in various cities including Philadelphia.

Please feel free to come by the school for a visit. All are welcome to register for the School's courses, our Free Friday Film Forums, and the free Saturday Seminar Series. See page 3 for course information about courses at the Philadelphia school.

Social reform is not the be secured by noise and shouting, by complaints and denunciation; by the formation of parties, or the making of revolutions, but by the awakening of thought and the progress of ideas. Until there be correct thought, there cannot be right action, and when there is correct thought, right action will follow. - Social Problems, 1886

People do not argue with the teaching of George, they simply do not know it. And it is impossible to do otherwise with his teaching, for he who becomes acquainted with it cannot but agree.

- Leo Tolstoy

If I were to re-write this book [Brave New World], I would offer a third alternative - the possibility of sanity - economics would be decentralist and Henry Georgian.

- Aldous Huxley

I do not claim that George's remedy is a panacea that will cure by itself all our ailments. But I do claim that we cannot get rid of our basic troubles without it.

- John Dewey