

NAS...UPDATE

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FOR REASONED SCHOLARSHIP IN A FREE SOCIETY

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NAS Releases Report on Zogby Cultural Knowledge Survey

On December 18, 2002, the NAS released the companion report to its July 2, 2002 publication of "Ethics, Enron, and American Higher Education," described in *NAS Update*, Vol. 12, No. 4. This second report, "Today's College Students and Yesteryear's High School Grads: A Comparison of General Cultural Knowledge," completes the analysis of an April 2002 survey by Zogby International on behalf of the NAS. The new report compares the cultural knowledge and aspirations of high school and college graduates of the 1940s and 1950s with that of today's college seniors. Its results have attracted significant media attention.

The report found that contemporary college seniors scored on average little or no higher than the high school graduates of a half-century ago on a battery of 15 questions assessing general cultural knowledge. The questions, drawn from a survey originally done by the Gallup Organization in 1955, covered literature, music, science, geography, and history.

There were variations in the pattern of responses. The contemporary sample of seniors did better than the 1950s high school graduates on four questions relating to music, literature, and science, about the same on seven questions pertaining to geogra-

phy, and worse on four questions about history.

The answers given by today's seniors were also compared to those provided to the Gallup questions by college graduates in 1955. Although the relatively small number of college graduates in the latter sample limits the degree of confidence one can have in the comparisons, the consistency and size of the knowledge superiority displayed by the 1950s college graduates strongly suggests that it is real.

The overall average of correct responses for the entire general

Continued on page 8

NAS Files Briefs with Supreme Court in Michigan Cases

On January 15, 2003, the NAS filed legal briefs in two landmark cases pending before the Supreme Court of the United States. The briefs are available at www.nas.org. To read the NAS press release announcing the briefs, please turn to page 5.

The Michigan Association of Scholars also filed a brief, available at www.nas.org/affiliates/michigan/masamicus.htm. Ω

OUTLOOK

Multiculturalism: The Socialism of the Well-to-do

by Stephen H. Balch, President

“Anti-Semitism,” it was once famously remarked, “is the socialism of fools.” “Multiculturalism,” it might now be added, “has become the socialism of the well-to-do.” To understand the spectacular career of multiculturalism both in academe, where the concept was first hatched, and in America at large, which it subsequently conquered, this fact should be kept squarely in mind.

Perhaps the most universally accepted political lesson of the Enlightenment is that sanctification comes from below. Legitimate rulers must look to the people, not heaven, for their warrants. Elections, even when scripted and staged, are thought the best form of such demonstration. But repeated assertion that the touchstone of policy is popular service forms a vital and omnipresent supplement. For democratic politicians, this is business as usual. Despots too, whether left or right, rarely omit to make at least ritualized obeisance to the egalitarian ideal.

Nonetheless, the principle of popular sovereignty inevitably poses problems for leaders, most of whom prize their autonomy and perquisites. Where representative government and individual rights prevail, the people’s needs and opinions can, in fact, demand from leaders a genuine measure of respect. But whether constitutionalism is deeply entrenched or brazenly suppressed, professions of egalitarian ideology are regularly employed to obscure what otherwise might seem conspicuous failures to give popular interests their due, and with a vehemence often in direct proportion to the enormity of the lapse.

Historically, the most strenuous exhibitions of this kind have been produced by the champions of socialism. Politicians and intellectuals pledging themselves to material equality can hardly be thought slackers in their commitment to the common good. In socialism’s red-blooded heyday such pledges could be plausibly made. Then, socialist politicians were typically of working class origin and, though keen for power, could be credible to

others, and comfortable with themselves, in seeking no more than a modest subsistence. Intellectuals, in bygone days a raffish lot on society’s fringe, could also pretend contempt for bourgeois creature comforts without prompting too much disbelief. No doubt there was much hypocrisy even in yesteryear, but the gap between profession and reality was still manageable for both those who professed and their lower class audiences.

Not so, however, for egalitarianism’s most energetic professors today who, unlike their forebears, frequently own the name as well as the vocation. They have become, for the most part, decidedly affluent, the politicians sometimes “to the manor born,” while the intellectuals, if full-time academics, and most especially if cosseted scholar-celebrities, enjoying lifestyles abounding with income, leisure, and security. In this much-altered circumstance, once manageable tensions become glaring embarrassments, not only in the public square, but in the innermost recesses of the soul.

Enter “multiculturalism” (with its handmaiden “diversity”), the latest twist in radical egalitarianism’s long and checkered history. Contrived by well-heeled savants, it provides one of the cleverest solvents of inconvenient contradictions yet devised, making commensurable the swank appurtenances of a Vernon Jordan, or a Stanley Fish, with a take-no-prisoners attitude toward anyone resisting the noble goal of equality. The secret lies in a subtle move, whose tactical significance is generally missed: the substitution of an equality of outcome for groups, for an equality of outcome for individuals.

The equality of multiculturalism consists in the parity of caste, not the abolition of class. If each racial, ethnic, and sexual denomination gets its proportionate cut of wealth, power, and position—to say nothing of tenured faculty lines—the egalitarian ideal is thought well on its way to satisfaction. Fair shares for every group’s natural aristocracy, it is supposed, should both psychologically satisfy the

status demands of the rank and file, while offering—at least to some—the hope of eventual promotion. But the bottom line is legitimacy without sacrifice, allowing a new cultural elite to preen itself on its surpassing compassion without having to surrender much of anything it actually covets. Happy days.

To be sure, “multiculturalism” and “diversity” have many other features attractive to the postmoderns who have propelled these catchwords into the ambient culture. Superficially the terms suggest little more than tolerance and open-mindedness, allowing them to be readily marketed, and enthusiastically embraced, among the well-meaning. Less benignly, they sanctify relativism, opening to attack a wide range of intellectual, moral, and political constraints that would otherwise inhibit the potential sway of budding mandarins. And they, in their libidinous dimension, also offer an appealing opportunity to pander to the carnal instincts of mass constituencies—a new and handy form of bread and circuses. Yet the translation of the leveling impulse from a war between classes to strife among groups is certainly their most ingenious and politically useful consequence. In this, their academic authors can find true grounds for self-congratulation. Ω

PLEASE REMEMBER US...

WHEN YOU ARE WRITING OR
UPDATING YOUR WILL.

A BEQUEST MADE TO THE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
SCHOLARS WILL HELP US
CONTINUE TO CHAMPION
REASONED DISCOURSE
AND INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM
IN HIGHER EDUCATION
FOR YEARS TO COME.

CUNYAS, NYAS Represented at New York City Hearings

On November 13, Barry Latzer, President of the New York Association of Scholars (NYAS), and Nahma Sandrow, Vice President of the CUNY Association of Scholars (CUNYAS), testified on remediation at the City University of New York before the City Council Committee on Higher Education. Three years ago, CUNYAS fought vigorously—and successfully—to end remediation in the senior (bachelor’s degree) colleges of CUNY. It was a bruising battle, involving some of New York’s top leaders, including Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, Governor George Pataki, then-CUNY Board Chairman Herman Badillo, and Vice Chair (now Acting Chair) Benno Schmidt. When, in 1999, the State Regents approved the new policy, they did so on condition that it be reviewed by the end of this year, and this prompted efforts to reverse it.

Professor Sandrow testified eloquently about the role of community colleges (she taught at Bronx Community College for many years), observing that they were the most appropriate place for remediation, and that proper skills training in the community college environment better prepares students for real college coursework. Furthermore, she noted, the University clearly was not seeking to keep students from earning baccalaureate degrees at the senior colleges, as it is CUNY policy to encourage community college students to transfer to senior colleges as soon as they can.

Professor Latzer argued that excluding under-skilled students from senior college classes will inevitably raise academic standards at the University, a policy that benefits all of CUNY’s students. Moreover, he pointed out that strident predictions three years ago that CUNY would abandon its traditions and turn into an elitist institution for students of privilege have proved completely unfounded. Since remedial exclusion was adopted, he noted, nonwhite freshman enrollment fell only three percent, and some of this was probably attributable to declines in the proportion of black and Hispanic graduates of New York City high schools.

The hearings were not well attended, indicative of the lack of interest in the remediation issue this time around. Although the Chair and some members of the City Council Committee were hostile to the exclusion policy, the State Regents unanimously approved it on December 13, 2002.

Sandrow’s and Latzer’s remarks are available on the CUNYAS website, <http://www.nas.org/affiliates/cunyas/>. Ω

Alabama Scholars Association Featured on Talk Radio

by Laurie Morrow

Charles W. Nuckolls, Executive Director of the Alabama Scholars Association (ASA) and Professor of Anthropology at the University of Alabama (UA), was interviewed about the controversy arising from the ASA's objection to partisan, mandatory diversity training for UA faculty and staff. The interview was conducted on April 10, 2002 on the radio talk show *True North* (WKDR 1390 AM, Burlington, Vermont), which was co-hosted by Laurie Morrow, president of the Vermont Association of Scholars, and Kelsey Bush Nadeau.

Early in 2002, Professor Nuckolls and his colleague, Professor David T. Beito of the UA Department of History, learned that UA Dean of Engineering Timothy J. Greene intended to implement mandatory "diversity training" for faculty and staff. This "training," the ASA discovered, would feature Jane Elliott's infamous video, *Blue-Eyed*. Ms. Elliott asserts that all whites, however tolerant they deem themselves, are racists, and that all blacks, however successful they imagine themselves, are victims of oppression by the universally racist whites. Ms. Elliott is also infamous for offering partisan, ideological commentary during her "trainings." On March 8, 2000, for example, at a Department of Education seminar for federal employees, she openly declared that a vote for George Bush (then a Presidential candidate) was a vote for a racist. While the ASA supports Ms. Elliott's right to express her opinions as part of free and open debate, the ASA does not support compelling university faculty or staff to listen to her political opinions.

Having been unsuccessful in their attempt to persuade Dean Greene from mandating this offensive "training" course, members of the ASA drew public attention to the University's attempt to require faculty to attend the planned indoctrination sessions. Exercising their First Amendment rights as well as their right to petition the government for redress of grievances, in February 2000 they sent letters to a variety of citizens, including members of the Alabama state legislature, describing the "training" sessions and outlining objections to mandatory attendance. "As a citizen of Alabama," the letter indicated, "you have a right to know how your tax dollars are spent. If you do not want them spent to promote racial division, political indoctrination, and the abuse of children, then we ask that you stand up and be counted."

After several state legislators inquired about the "diversity" workshops to UA President Andrew A. Sorensen, Mr. Sorensen sent a letter (dated February 27, 2002) to Alabama State Senator Larry Dixon, promising that the workshops would not, after all, be mandatory, a promise he repeated the following day in a memorandum to the ASA.

The matter should have ended there—but it did not. The UA Faculty Senate, co-chaired by Professor of Law Wythe W. Holt, Jr., was enraged that the ASA had made public the plans for diversity training, especially that members of the Alabama legislature had been apprised of the nature of the "training" to be mandated at this taxpayer-funded institution. The Faculty Senate announced it was launching an investigation into the ASA, despite the fact that the ASA is a voluntary association of citizens with no official ties to the University.

For help in responding to these continuing efforts at intimidation, the ASA enlisted the assistance of the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE). Attorney Harvey Silverglate, Co-Executive Director of FIRE, characterizes the UA Faculty Senate's actions as "a conspiracy to intimidate others into relinquishing the exercise of their constitutional rights. While any citizen or group of citizens may debate how others exercise their constitutional rights," Silverglate asserts, "a line is crossed when an official governmental body, such as the Faculty Senate of the University of Alabama, enters the realm of investigation, intimidation, and threats of punishment."

This issue has not yet been resolved, but light is increasingly shed on it, as news of the controversy has been distributed by United Press International.

If you would like further information concerning the diversity training controversy at the University of Alabama, please contact the following:

Foundation for Individual Rights in Education,
www.thefire.org

Harvey A. Silverglate, FIRE: 617-523-5933;
has@thefire.org

Alan Charles Kors, FIRE: 215-717-3473;
ack@thefire.org

Andrew A. Sorensen, President, University of Alabama: 205-348-5103; sorensen@pres.ua.edu

Wythe W. Holt, Jr., Professor of Law, Faculty Senate Co-Chair: 205-348-1123; wholt@law.ua.edu

Jerry L. Rosiek, Professor of Education, Faculty Senate Co-Chair: 205-348-7598;
jrosiek@bamaed.ua.edu

David T. Beito, Professor of History: 205-348-1870; dbeito@history.as.ua.edu

Charles Nuckolls, Professor of Anthropology: 205-348-8202; executive@alabamascholars.org 

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOLARS

221 Witherspoon Street, 2nd Floor • Princeton, NJ 08542-3215

phone: 609-683-7878 • fax: 609-683-0316

email: nas@nas.org • web: <http://www.nas.org>

Press Release

January 15, 2003

For Immediate Release

Contact: Bradford P. Wilson, Executive Director, <wilson@nas.org>

NAS Files Briefs with Supreme Court in Michigan Cases

PRINCETON, NJ — The National Association of Scholars today filed legal briefs, available at www.nas.org, in two cases pending before the Supreme Court of the United States. The plaintiffs in *Gratz v. Bollinger* and *Grutter v. Bollinger* are challenging the constitutionality of the use of race in student admissions at the University of Michigan.

The NAS briefs, prepared by the Washington office of Covington and Burling, refute the arguments of Michigan that campus racial diversity is a “compelling governmental interest” that justifies the use of racial preferences in its pursuit.

Among the points made by the NAS are the following: All professional survey evidence shows that, contrary to claims made by the University and its supporters, most faculty and students oppose racial preferences in student admissions, as does most of the larger American public. Furthermore, claims made by the University and its amici that there is empirical support for the notion that student racial diversity results in significant educational benefits are false. A detailed study by the NAS (*Race and Higher Education and Supplement to Race and Higher Education*, available at www.nas.org) demonstrates that all available evidence, including the very evidence relied on by the University, *refutes* the University’s claim that campus racial diversity is positively correlated with specific educational benefits.

“We are hopeful that the Supreme Court will soon put an end to these unfair and arbitrary admissions practices that favor some and disfavor others simply because of the color of their skin,” said NAS executive director Bradford Wilson. “Students want their universities to treat them as individuals, not as racial statistics to be used by administrative gatekeepers to decide whom to admit in the next round of competition. And unsuccessful applicants want to be assured that they have not been discriminated against because of their race or ethnicity. Michigan admissions officers have fallen into a bad habit. Sadly, only the law can force them to break it.”

The National Association of Scholars is America’s foremost higher education reform group. Located in Princeton, it has forty-six state affiliates and more than four thousand professors, graduate students, administrators, and trustees as members.

North Carolina Scholars Host Veterans Day Address

On November 12, the day after Veterans Day and in commemoration of that event, the North Carolina Association of Scholars (NCAS) presented 65 autographed copies of Lynne Cheney's *America: A Patriotic Primer* to the Jefferson Elementary School, part of the Guilford County School system. In cooperation with Post 2087 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the NCAS also gave the school framed founding documents such as the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights, together with Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, on antiqued parchment. The NCAS later distributed thirty-seven sets of these four documents to the high schools of the system.

Mrs. Julie Zwahr, Executive Director of Communications and Community Relations of the Guilford County Schools, represented the Superintendent at the ceremonies. Also present were Representative Howard Coble of the Sixth Congressional District of North Carolina, and Dr. Robert Rosthal, president of the NCAS, as well as various school principals and members of the Board of Education. Mr. Coble addressed the audience, which also included fifth grade classes, on the topic of freedom and individual rights. After displaying the Cheney text, illustrated by Robin Preiss Glasser, Dr. Rosthal spoke on the principles and ideals of the Declaration, and stressed the importance of teaching U.S. History. Channel 45 taped the proceedings and aired them on public TV.

The framed documents will be hung in the administrative offices of the Guilford County Schools. Unframed copies will be suitably prepared to hang in the high school classrooms, together with the more readable Cato Institute pocket editions, which include framable copies of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. The primers are now prominently displayed in the various school libraries. Mrs. Cheney received a formal thanks for her book from students at the Vandalia Elementary School. [Ω](#)

Letter to the Editor

September 6, 2002

This is in response to "CUNYAS Criticizes Adjunct Proposal" (Vol. 12, No. 4, pp. 6-7). In complete disagreement with the CUNY Association of Scholars, I believe that the proposed agreement between the CUNY faculty union (Professional Staff Congress) and CUNY is a giant and welcome step towards recognizing the professional status and treatment of all faculty. It is a giant step toward breaking down the walls of the ever-expanding ghetto of adjunct faculty, a ghetto that CUNYAS wrong-headedly and mean-spiritedly wishes to preserve.

The proposed agreement would indeed, as claimed, impact full-time faculty in the short run adversely, but in the long run will benefit all faculty. At present, full-time faculty (and just about everyone else in higher education) are riding on the back of adjuncts: our compensation increases and other "perks" are at their expense. They are exploited. They in effect subsidize administrators, full-time faculty, and students.

On the other hand, full-time faculty in general and the CUNY Association of Scholars in particular should recognize that "a system heavily dependent on adjunct faculty," the increasing reliance on adjunct faculty, threatens all faculty. Sooner or later, most faculty will be gypsies, adjuncts without office space, health insurance, access to conferences, support in time and money for research, and, most important, without the possibility of tenure, the best protection so far devised for academic freedom and intellectual independence. And if we cannot have academic freedom and intellectual independence, we are not really professors.

For all faculty to be and to remain professional and independent, all faculty must enjoy equal status and treatment. [Ω](#)

Yours,

Blair F. Bigelow
Professor of English
Suffolk University
Boston, Massachusetts

CUNYAS Reply to Professor Bigelow

October 4, 2002

We agree with Prof. Bigelow on two points: (1) many colleges take advantage of adjuncts' willingness to work for lower wages and under less favorable conditions than full-time faculty, and (2) over-reliance on adjuncts threatens all faculty and, we would add, higher education itself.

However, we strongly disagree with Prof. Bigelow's solution, which is to make adjuncts equivalent to full-time faculty. (In Professor Bigelow's words, "all faculty must enjoy equal status and treatment.") Apparently, he thinks that all college instructors, including adjuncts, deserve tenure and research support without regard to scholarship or non-teaching service to the university.

Tenure and research support are both rewards and incentives for high quality teaching, scholarship, and service. Adjuncts are hired and compensated only to teach specific courses on an "as needed" basis. Scholarly research and committee service, which are major responsibilities of full-time faculty, are neither required nor expected of adjuncts. Why should adjuncts "enjoy equal status and treatment" with full-time faculty when their required contributions to the university are not equal?

Making adjuncts and full-time faculty equivalent would undermine both scholarship and the university. First, it would create a major disincentive for young aspiring professors. Why undertake years of difficult and demanding scholarly research if the same benefits can be obtained by becoming an adjunct "professor" without any publication or other tenure-review obligations? Moreover, if adjuncts become much more costly, colleges may hire fewer of them and meet rising expenses by giving full-time faculty lower pay and more work (more and larger classes).

Our position is that the conditions of adjuncts should be improved, but not by treating them as if they and full-time faculty were equivalent. They aren't.

We invite interested readers to examine our complete report, *Parity for Adjuncts? The New Threat to Academic Standards*, available on our

CUNYAS website, <http://www.nas.org/affiliates/cunyas/parity.html>. Our second report on this issue, *The Role of Adjuncts at CUNY*, should be available on the site soon. Ω

Barry Latzer and Dorothy Lang,
CUNY Association of Scholars

Recent Events

ALABAMA ASSOCIATION OF SCHOLARS

Date: October 15, 2002
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Speaker: Peter Kirsanow, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights
Event: "Grade Inflation and the Decline of Academic Standards"
Place: Ferguson Theater, University of Alabama

CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF SCHOLARS

Date: November 1, 2002
Speaker: Jack Citrin, Professor of Political Science, UC Berkeley
Place: Berkeley
Title: "Recent and Proposed Changes to UC Admissions Policies"

Date: November 8, 2002
Speaker: David Benjamin, Founder and President of *Ahead of the Class*
Place: Corona Del Mar
Title: "Recent and Proposed Changes to UC Admissions Policies"

NEW YORK ASSOCIATION OF SCHOLARS

Date: December 15, 2002
Speakers: Barry Latzer, Professor, John Jay College of Criminal Justice & The Graduate Center of the City University of New York; President, New York Association of Scholars, and William Crain, Professor of Psychology, City College of New York; Co-director, *CUNY Is Our Future*
Place: Home of Nahma Sandrow and William Meyers
Subject: A Debate: "The CUNY Admissions Controversy"

Elections Held at Membership Meeting

The election of new members to the NAS Board of Directors was held during the Annual General Membership Meeting on Saturday, December 7, 2002 at the Washington Marriott Hotel in Washington, D.C.

The following individuals were elected for the term beginning January 1, 2003 and ending December 31, 2006:

Professor David D. Mulroy
Professor B. Nelson Ong
Professor Edward Rauchut
Professor Glenn Ricketts
Professor Charles Rubin
Professor Adam Scrupski
Dr. Sandra Stotsky
Dr. Bradford P. Wilson

In addition, Dr. Laurie Morrow, president of the Vermont Association of Scholars, was elected to fill the remainder of the term, ending December 31, 2005, of retiring board member Thomas C. Reeves, professor emeritus at the University of Wisconsin/Parkside. Ω

NAS RELEASES REPORT, continued from page 1

knowledge survey was 53.5% for today's college seniors, 54.5% for the 1955 high school graduates, and 77.3% for the 1955 college graduates.

(If we remove three questions about which, for reasons indicated in the full report, the earlier respondents may have had more "extracurricular" sources of knowledge, the figures become 50.3% for the 2002 seniors, 46.4% for the 1955 high school graduates, and 67.8% for the 1955 college graduates.)

In addition, the 2002 college seniors were asked two questions dealing with reading and musical interests that were asked of national samples of the American population in 1946 and 1957. With respect to interest in high literary and musical culture, the answers fail to show impressive differences between the two groups.

On a question inquiring whether or not they had a favorite author, 56% of 2002 college seniors, as opposed to 32% of the general population in 1946 (the great majority of whom had only an elementary

or secondary school education) answered affirmatively. For both groups, however, most of the authors specifically mentioned were writers of popular fiction. When only responses naming "high-brow" and canonical writers were tabulated, the differences between the two groups shrank considerably: 17% of the national sample falling into a "high-brow" classification in 1946, as opposed to 24% of the 2002 college senior sample.

Asked whether or not they would like to collect a fairly complete library of classical music on LPs or CDs, a 1957 subsample of owners of 33rpm-capable phonographs (37% of a national survey sample) provided a more affirmative response than did the 2002 college seniors, 39% of the former, and only 30% of the latter, responding "Yes."

On the other hand, the contemporary college seniors were more likely (69%) to have studied a musical instrument than were the members of the population as a whole (44%) in 1957. The type of instrument studied also differed, the 1957 national sample more heavily favoring the violin and piano than did the 2002 college seniors.

"The results," concluded NAS president Stephen H. Balch, "though somewhat mixed and based on a limited number of questions, are hardly reassuring. America has poured enormous amounts of tax dollars into expanding access to higher learning. Students spend, and pay for, many more years in the classroom than was formerly the case. Our evidence suggests that this time and treasure may not have substantially raised student cultural knowledge above the high school levels of a half-century ago."

"Worse yet," he continued, "the high cultural interest and aspirations of today's college seniors are neither consistently nor substantially more elevated than yesteryear's secondary school graduates. Creating such interests and aspirations has traditionally been considered a core element of the collegiate experience. If the last fifty years have in fact witnessed few gains in this respect, it represents a real disappointment of once widespread hopes."

To read the remainder of the report, including complete survey details, please visit our website at http://www.nas.org/reports/senior_poll/senior_poll_report.pdf. Printed copies of the report will also be provided upon request.

The responses to the general knowledge questions follow on the next page.

General Knowledge Questions

1. With respect to two questions testing knowledge of high culture, today's college seniors scored substantially better than 1950s high school graduates. Compared to 1950s college graduates, today's seniors did slightly better on one question, and less well on the other.

a. Asked "Who wrote the play titled *A Midsummer Night's Dream*?" 78% of 2002's college seniors correctly identified Shakespeare, as opposed to 37% of the high school graduates and 73% of the college graduates in 1955.

b. Asked "What composer wrote the *Messiah*?" 35% of 2002's college seniors correctly identified Handel, as opposed to 20% of high school graduates, and 56% of the college graduates in 1955.

2. With respect to two questions testing knowledge of science, today's college graduates far outscored both the 1950s high school and college graduates on one, but only equaled the high school graduates, and trailed the college graduates on the other.

a. Asked "Which planet is nearest the sun?" 59% of 2002's seniors correctly identified Mercury, as opposed to only 6% of the 1950s high school graduates and 20% of the college graduates.

b. Asked "What great scientist do you associate with the Theory of Relativity?" 72% of 2002's college seniors correctly identified Einstein, as opposed to 83% of the 1950s high school graduates and 98% of the college graduates. (The earlier survey was conducted in June of 1955, two months after Einstein's death. It began "What great scientist, who died recently...." The 1955 respondents thus had an additional clue.)

3. With respect to eight questions on geography, 2002's colleges seniors did better than the 1950s high school graduates on three questions, about the same on two, and worse on three. The seniors did about as well as the 1950s college graduates on one question, and worse than them on seven.

a. Asked "Which is the largest lake in North America?" 38% of 2002's seniors correctly identified Lake Superior, as opposed to 27% of the 1950s high school graduates and 47% of the 1950s college graduates.

b. Asked "What is the national language of Brazil?" 55% of 2002's seniors correctly identified Portuguese, as opposed to 13% of the 1950s high school graduates and 58% of the college graduates.

c. Asked "What is the capital city of Spain?" 63% of 2002's college seniors correctly identified Madrid, as opposed to 61% of the 1950s high school graduates and 89% of the college graduates.

d. Asked "Which of the following states borders Canada?" 60% of today's college seniors correctly answered Yes when Montana was named, as opposed to 56% of the 1950s high school graduates and 69% of the college graduates.

e. Of today's college seniors, 50% correctly answered Yes when Maine was named, as opposed to 67% of the 1950s high school graduates and 80% of the college graduates.

f. Of today's college seniors, 57% answered Yes when Michigan was named, as opposed to 86% of the 1950s high school graduates and 91% of the college graduates.

g. Of today's college seniors, 53% correctly answered Yes when Minnesota was named, as opposed to 61% of the 1950s high school graduates and 71% of the college graduates.

4. With respect to three history questions, today's college seniors trailed both the 1950s high school graduates and the 1950s college graduates.

a. Asked "Who made the first non-stop sole trans-Atlantic Flight?" 49% of 2002's college seniors correctly identified Lindbergh, as opposed to 79% of the 1950s high school graduates and 96% of the 1950s college graduates. (The 1955 respondents were, of course, more than a generation closer to Lindbergh's 1927 flight than the respondents in 2002.)

b. Asked "In what country was the Battle of Waterloo fought?" only 3% of 2002's college seniors correctly identified the country as Belgium, as opposed to 44% of the 1950s high school graduates and 64% of the 1950s college graduates.

c. Asked "What profession do you associate with Florence Nightingale?" 53% of today's college seniors correctly answered nursing or medicine, as opposed to 87% of 1950s high school graduates and 96% of 1950s college graduates.

d. Asked "What is the name of the decoration given to those in the armed forces who are wounded in action against the enemy?" 78% of 2002's college seniors correctly answered "the Purple Heart," as opposed to 90% of the 1950s high school graduates and 91% of the 1950s college graduates. (It should be noted that conscription was still in effect in the 1950s). Ω

Science Insights Reprise

After a brief hiatus, *Science Insights* is back, now under the editorship of John Wenger. The contents of the last two issues are shown below. The full text of both issues is available at www.nas.org. Ω

Table of Contents, Vol. 7, No. 1

From the Editor. Introductory Remarks. A new editor of *Science Insights*, John Wenger, replaces his able predecessor Patricia Hausman. A quick reminder of the goals of this online newlist along with a brief introduction to its new editor and some of his thoughts on his new job.

Kennewick Man. A *Science Insights* article, written by California State University Anthropology Professor Glynn Custred, who is the President of the California Association of Scholars and the co-author (along with Tom Woods) of California Proposition 209, which banished racial preferences from public organizations in the state of California.

Stand and Deliver. The story of what happened to Jaime Escalante and the program he made famous. Many people know about the program Jaime Escalante came up with to teach calculus to high school students who ordinarily would not have been exposed to it in high school (or possibly anywhere). Jerry Jesness has written an interesting essay on this interesting man, entitled *Stand and Deliver Revisited* and subtitled “The untold story behind the famous rise—and shameful fall—of Jaime Escalante, America’s master math teacher.” It is worth reading.

Optimists and Pessimists. A Mayo Clinic study attempts to demonstrate that one’s outlook has dramatic effects on one’s life. The article leads to some fundamental questions about the study.

One Liner. You have to click on the story to find out what this is about, since this sentence is already longer than what you will read. Ω

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Animal Research. A short article distributed to members of the National Association of Scholars about the never-ending controversy over the use of animals in scientific and medical research provoked the editor to unburden himself on some thoughts concerning animal rights and the basis for human rights.

Big Business = Bad Science? An excellent article about a conference in London organized around the sponsorship of research by commercial firms as well as commentary on the article. The benefit of corporate sponsored research is money for research, but there are downsides as well.

Calories and Politics. A short editorial introduction to a short article about “obesity” together with the article. Note the scare quotes: the article questions what the term means and whether it has been divorced from concerns about health.

Cloning. The issue of human cloning has been in the news recently, with a claim from a fringe group (with evidence somehow not forthcoming) that a successful human clone has been born. A law is being proposed in Congress that would ban all cloning of human beings, including cloning that would help stem cell research.

Environmental Profits. A fascinating article is presented (with what appears to be a huge, but basically irrelevant) math error concerning how one measures profits in a field like the environment.

PS on the Kennewick Man Controversy. A short update on what has been happening since our last issue. Ω

Upcoming Events

MASSACHUSETTS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOLARS

Date: February 16, 2003
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Speaker: Harvey A. Silverglate
Event: “Can Free Speech Survive at Harvard Law?”
Place: Home of Steve & Abby Thernstrom,
1445 Massachusetts Avenue, Lexington

WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF SCHOLARS

Date: April 10, 2003
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Speaker: Shelby Steele, Hoover Institution
Event: “White Guilt and the Disappearance of the Black Individual”
Place: Kane Hall, Room 120,
University of Washington

ALABAMA

President: David Beito
University of Alabama
1139 Heritage Lane
Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0377
205-348-1870

ALASKA

President: Judith S. Kleinfeld
759 Cranberry Ridge Road
Fairbanks, AK 99712
907-457-8691
ffjsk@uaf.edu

ARIZONA

President: Marianne M. Jennings
College of Business
Arizona State University—
Main Campus
Post Office Box 874806
Tempe, AZ 85287-4806
480-965-6044
480-965-3995/fax
marianne.jennings@asu.edu

CALIFORNIA

President: Glynn Custred
Anthropology Department
California State University, Hayward
Hayward, CA 94542
925-934-3969
925-934-4917/fax
glync209@aol.com

Executive Director:
Thomas E. Wood
1730 Martin Luther King, Jr., Way
Berkeley, CA 94709-2140
510-843-4957
510-845-9053/fax
tom_wood@pacbell.net

COLORADO

President: Andrew E. Busch
Associate Professor of Political
Science
Department of Political Science
Sturm Hall 466
University of Denver
Denver, CO 80208
303-871-2133
303-871-2045/fax (non-secure)
abusch@du.edu

CONNECTICUT

President: Jay A. Bergman
Department of History
Central Conn. State University
Post Office Box 4010
New Britain, CT 06050-4010
860-832-2811
860-667-9499/home fax
bergmanj@ccsu.edu

DELAWARE

President: Jan H. Blits
2 Calgary Road
Newark, DE 19711
302-831-1649
302-831-6058/fax
JBlits@udel.edu

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

President: Sol S. Shalit
P.O. Box 58212
Washington, DC 20037-8212
202-338-7468
sss.sol@gte.net

FLORIDA

President: Laurin A. Wollan, Jr.
School of Criminology and
Criminal Justice
313 Hecht House
Florida State University
634 West College Street
Tallahassee, FL 32306-1127
850-644-7373
850-644-9614/fax
lwollan@garnet.acns.fsu.edu

GEORGIA

President: Ann Hartle
Philosophy Department
Emory University
Atlanta, GA 30322
404-727-0105
ahartle@emory.edu

GUAM

President: O. Randall Braman
P.O. Box 21119
G.M.F., Guam 96921
671-649-2309
braman@kuentos.guam.net

HAWAII

President: James Roumasset
Department of Economics
University of Hawaii at Manoa
514 Saunders Hall
Honolulu, HI 96822-2281
808-956-7496
808-956-4347/fax
jimr@hawaii.edu

IDAHO

Acting Coordinator: Miles E. Friend
5055 Apache Place
Pocatello, ID 83204
208-233-1870
208-282-4741/fax
friemile@juno.com

ILLINOIS

President: John N. Mathys
105 East Vallette Street—Suite 1136
Elmhurst, IL 60126-4446
312-362-6888
312-362-6566/fax
jmathys3@attbi.com

INDIANA

President: Robert H. Heidt
School of Law, Rm. 261
211 South Indiana Avenue
Indiana University
Bloomington, IN 47405-7001
812-855-7272
812-855-0555/fax
heidt@indiana.edu

IOWA

President: Donald P. Racheter
Dept. of Political Science
Central College
812 University St.
Pella, IA 50219-1999
641-628-5259
641-628-5316/fax
racheterd@central.edu

KANSAS

President: Marsha L. Frey
Department of History
208 Eisenhower Hall
Kansas State University
Manhattan, KS 66506-1002
785-532-6730
785-532-7004/fax
mfrey@ksu.edu

KENTUCKY

President: Monica J. Kern
Department of Psychology
220a Kastle Hall
University of Kentucky
Lexington, KY 40506-0044
859-257-6842
859-323-1979/fax
harris@pop.uky.edu

LOUISIANA

President: Robert S. Robins
Department of Political Science
Tulane University
New Orleans, LA 70118
504-862-8314
504-862-8745/fax
robins@tulane.edu

MAINE

President: James W. Roberts
Department of Political Science
University of Southern Maine
P.O. Box 9300
Portland, ME 04104-9300
207-780-4194
207-780-4459/fax
roberts@usm.maine.edu

MARYLAND

President: Duane C. Ellison
Department of History and
Political Science
Humanities Building, Room 263
Montgomery College—
Rockville Campus
51 Mannakee Street
Rockville, MD 20850-1199
301-251-7286
301-251-7278/fax
dellison@erols.com

Coordinator: Robert Lerner
rlerner@erols.com

MASSACHUSETTS

President: Abigail Thernstrom
1445 Massachusetts Avenue
Lexington, MA 02420-3810
781-861-7634
781-860-9045/fax
thernstr@fas.harvard.edu

MICHIGAN

President: Howard Schwartz
Organizational Behavior
Oakland University
2175 General Motors Road
Milford, MI 48380-3639
248-370-2122
schwartz@oakland.edu

MINNESOTA

President: Jim Chen
University of Minnesota
School of Law
229 19th Ave. South
Minneapolis, MN 55455-0400
612-625-4839
612-625-2011/fax
chenx064@maroon.tc.umn.edu
Executive Director: Jeremiah Reedy
Dept. of Classics—Old Main, Rm. 311
Macalester College
1600 Grand Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55105-1801
651-696-6722
651-696-6689/fax
reedy@macalester.edu

MISSISSIPPI

President: Miriam C. Davis
Department of History
DSU Box 3162
Delta State University
Cleveland, MS 38733-4381
662-846-4174
662-846-4136/fax
mdavis@deltastate.edu

MISSOURI

President: J. Martin Rochester
Department of Political Science
805 Tower
University of Missouri
8001 Natural Bridge Road
St. Louis, MO 63121-4499
314-516-5844
314-516-5286/fax
rochester@umsl.edu

NEBRASKA

President: Edward A. Rauchut
Executive Assistant to the President
Bellevue University
1000 Galvin Road South
Bellevue, NE 68005-3098
402-293-3701
402-293-2035/fax
erauchut@scholars.bellevue.edu

NEVADA

President: David S. Fott
Department of Political Science
University of Nevada Las Vegas
Post Office Box 455029
Las Vegas, NV 89154-5029
702-895-4187
dfott@unlv.edu

NEW HAMPSHIRE

President: John R. Kayser
Department of Political Science
Horton Social Science Center
University of New Hampshire
Durham, NH 03824-3586
603-862-1699
603-862-0178/fax
john.kayser@unh.edu
nhas@ttic.net

NEW JERSEY

President: Glenn M. Ricketts
221 Witherspoon Street—2nd Fl.
Princeton, NJ 08542-3215
609-683-7878
609-683-0316/fax
ricketts@nas.org

NEW MEXICO

Coordinator: Tamara Holzapfel
320 Kearney Avenue, #30
Santa Fe, NM 87501
505-983-4778

NEW YORK

President: Barry Latzer
c/o Department of Government
John Jay College of Criminal Justice
445 West 59th Street
NY, NY 10019
212-237-8192
blatzer@jjay.cuny.edu

**CITY UNIVERSITY OF
NEW YORK CHAPTER**

Chair: Dorothy Lang
Business Dept., 3N-219
CUNY-Staten Island
2800 Victory Blvd.
Staten Island, NY 10314-6600
718-982-2927
cunyas@earthlink.net

NORTH CAROLINA

President: Robert Rosthal
P.O. Box 4846
Greensboro, NC 27404-4846
336-299-3873
336-299-7932/fax
rosthal@aol.com

**DUKE UNIVERSITY
CHAPTER**

Chairman: John E.R. Staddon
1535 Pinecrest Road
Durham, NC 27705
919-660-5725
919-660-5726/fax
staddon@psych.duke.edu

OHIO

President: George W. Dent, Jr.
School of Law
Case Western Reserve University
Cleveland, OH 44106-5409
216-368-3311
216-368-2086
gwd@po.cwru.edu

OKLAHOMA

President: Andrew C. Spiropoulos
Oklahoma City University
School of Law
Oklahoma City, OK 73106-1493
405-521-5801
405-521-5089/fax
aspiropoulos@okcu.edu

OREGON

President: Michael Kellman
Department of Chemistry
University of Oregon
Eugene, OR 97403-1253
541-346-4196
541-346-4643/fax
kellman@oregon.uoregon.edu

PENNSYLVANIA

President: Richard Orodender
P.O. Box 173
Wyncote, PA 19095-0173
215-635-2784
215-635-0954/fax
rxo6@psu.edu

RHODE ISLAND

President: Philip E. Devine
Department of Philosophy
Providence College
Providence, RI 02918-0002
401-865-2748
401-865-1222/fax
pdevine@providence.edu

SOUTH CAROLINA

President: Jeffrey J. Poelvoorde
Department of History and Government
Converse College
Spartanburg, SC 29302-1931
864-596-9103
864-596-9202/fax
poelvoorde@msn.com

TENNESSEE

President: Michael J. Neth
Department of English
MTSU Box 070
Middle Tennessee State University
Murfreesboro, TN 37132-0001
615-898-5836
615-898-5098/fax
mneth@mtsu.edu

TEXAS

President: Joseph M. Horn
3311 Big Bend Drive
Austin, TX 78731-5310
512-452-7566
512-471-6175/office fax
horn@mail.utexas.edu

UTAH

President: Royal Skousen
Department of English
3187 JHKB
Brigham Young University
Provo, UT 84602-1001
801-422-3482
royal_skousen@byu.edu

VERMONT

President: Laurie Morrow
15 Deerfield Drive
Montpelier, VT 05602
802-229-9208
lpmorrow@msn.com

VIRGINIA

President: Ted J. Smith III
School of Mass Communications
Box 842034
Virginia Commonwealth University
Richmond, VA 23284-2034
804-827-3759
804-828-9175/fax
Dixie50505@aol.com

WASHINGTON

President: Phillip Goggans
Department of Philosophy
Seattle Pacific University
Seattle, WA 98119
206-281-2080
pgoggans@spu.edu

WEST VIRGINIA

President: Robert K. Griffith
Department of Basic
Pharmaceutical Sciences
School of Pharmacy,
Box 9530
West Virginia University
Morgantown, WV 26506
304-293-1481
304-293-2576/fax
griffith@hsc.wvu.edu

WISCONSIN

President: David Mulroy
Department of Foreign
Languages and Linguistics
PO Box 413
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Milwaukee, WI 53201-0413
414-229-4711
414-229-2741/fax
dmulroy@uwm.edu

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOLARS
221 WITHERSPOON STREET, 2ND FLOOR
PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY 08542-3215

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221 Witherspoon Street, 2nd Floor
Princeton, New Jersey 08542-3215

609-683-7878/tel
609-683-0316/fax

nas@nas.org
<http://www.nas.org>

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