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Newsletter of the American Society of  
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Summer 2000

## American Society of Parasitologists Newsletter, v. 22, no. 2, [Summer 2000]

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Gardner, Scott Lyell, "American Society of Parasitologists Newsletter, v. 22, no. 2, [Summer 2000]" (2000).  
*Newsletter of the American Society of Parasitologists*. 32.  
<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/parasitologynews/32>

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## **CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR THE ASP DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD**

Calling for nominations for Distinguished Service Award (DSA) for 2001. The selection criteria for the DSA are as follows: (1) To be presented by the ASP to honor one of its members who, through dedicated efforts and sustained giving of time and talents, has significantly enhanced the effectiveness of the Society and promoted the discipline of parasitology. (2) In choosing the awardee, the collective criteria for determining service contributions may include: (a) longevity as an active ASP member as evidenced by continuous membership and regular attendance at annual meetings; (b) active participation on ASP committees; (c) exceptional service in positions of leadership in promoting parasitology through active participation in regional parasitology societies or in the awardee's geographical area, or both. (3) Required documentation for the DSA nomination will include: (a) nomination letter summarizing the nominee's qualifications for distinguished service recognition; (b) two additional letters of support; (c) updated Curriculum Vitae of the candidate with an appended detailed description of the candidate's contribution to ASP, or to the field of parasitology, or both. Please send nomination package to: Dr. Rebecca Cole, USGS, National Wildlife Health Ctr., 6006 Schroeder Road, Madison, WI 53711. Tele: (608) 270-2468. Fax: (608) 270-2415. Members of the DSA Committee are: D. Wittrock - [Wittrod@uwec.edu](mailto:Wittrod@uwec.edu) ; V. Connors - [connors@vm.sc.edu](mailto:connors@vm.sc.edu) ; A. Choudrhury - Anindo [Choudhury@usgs.gov](mailto:Choudhury@usgs.gov) ; R. Cole (Chair) - [Rebecca\\_Cole@usgs.gov](mailto:Rebecca_Cole@usgs.gov)

The Stoll-Stunkard Memorial and Eminent Parasitologist Lectureships Committee invites nominations for the 2001 Eminent Parasitologist Lectureship. The nominee should be a person whose prominence in basic research is evident, and who is not necessarily a parasitologist, but one whose research might enhance investigations on parasites, hence cross-fertilizing ideas and approaches. The award consists of travel to the annual meeting, meeting registration and accommodation expenses, a \$2,000 honorarium and a certificate presented during the Annual Meeting of the Society. Selection criteria for the Eminent Parasitologist Award are: (1) Eminence and international visibility for a substantial contribution to parasitology over a substantial period of time, (2) Eligibility is not limited to ASP members, and (3) Nominations or selection committee initiatives are acceptable. In order for the committee to properly consider a nominee, sufficient supporting documentation should be provided (e.g. Curriculum Vitae plus supporting letters, if the latter are desired). Nominations should be sent to Dr. George Cain, Secretary-Treasurer of the American Society of Parasitologists, Department of Biological Sciences, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA 52242, USA. Tele: (319) 335-1329. Fax: (319) 335-1069. E-mail: [george-cain@iowa.edu](mailto:george-cain@iowa.edu). Members of the Stoll-Stunkard Memorial and Eminent Parasitologist Committee are: John Barta (Chair) - [jbarta@uoguelph.ca](mailto:jbarta@uoguelph.ca) ; Burt Bogitsh - [bogitsbj@ctrvax.vanderbilt.edu](mailto:bogitsbj@ctrvax.vanderbilt.edu) ; Dolores Hill - [dhill@lpsi.barc.usda.gov](mailto:dhill@lpsi.barc.usda.gov) ; Judy Sakinari - [jsak@itsa.ucsf.edu](mailto:jsak@itsa.ucsf.edu)

## **GAMBLE HONORED**

On May 10, zoologist H. Ray Gamble with the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) received from the Federal Laboratory Consortium at its annual meeting in Charleston, S.C., a year 2000 award for excellence in technology transfer.

Gamble is among 26 federal research individuals and teams being honored by the consortium – a network of more than 700 federal laboratories—which helps to move new technologies into the marketplace. The scientists received a letter of appreciation from Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman and a trophy at a banquet held on the U.S.S. Yorktown.

Gamble is being recognized for promoting a new system of food safety assurance for meat—one that will certify pigs as free from *Trichinella* and other parasites at the farm. “The possibility of *Trichinella* in pigs has closed most foreign markets to U.S. pork, in addition to perpetuating a negative image of the meat here at home,” said ARS administrator Floyd P. Horn. Consumers are still concerned about getting trichinosis—a concern that is now almost entirely unwarranted—and this leads to overcooking, making the meat less palatable.”

“Dr. Gamble’s research and collaboration with three other USDA agencies as well as the National Pork Producers Council is leading to a national ‘on-the-farm’ certification process for *Trichinella*-free.” Horn said, noting that the concept of certifying the safety of meat in the living animal is new to the food animal industry. Gamble collaborates with USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Food Safety and Inspection Service and the Agricultural Marketing Service.

“A national program will have a major impact on the demand for fresh pork and will help ensure long-term U.S. competitiveness in foreign markets,” Horn continued. “This system has been touted as a model for future on-farm food safety initiatives by USDA administrators as well as by the U.S. pork industry.”

Gamble heads the Parasite Biology and Epidemiology Laboratory at the agency’s

Beltsville, Md., Agricultural Research Center. ARS is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's chief research agency.

Gamble collected data on the prevalence of *Trichinella spiralis* in domestic pigs and the management practices that favor pig infection. He then helped develop an audit system, based on risk analysis, that veterinarians can use to identify animals raised in low-risk environments. After his study of the audit system on farms in three states showed its soundness, the National Pork Board voted last year to proceed with a national program to certify U.S. pork as free of the parasite.

Gamble has also collaborated with two commercial laboratories to introduce products to check the infection status of pigs originating from *Trichinella*-free herds. A rapid -test kit produced by one of the companies has been licensed by USDA.

His efforts are also helping to overcome trade barriers to U.S. pork. Through an agreement with USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, he designed, implemented and maintains a training and quality assurance system for inspection of pork for *Trichinella* in U.S. slaughter plants. In his Beltsville laboratory he trains and certifies as analysts technical personnel from packing plants around the country. And he periodically evaluates their work to maintain the quality of their inspection methods.

Today, 10 major packing plants that together produce more than 20 million hogs annually are enrolled in the program.

ARS has recognized Gamble's performance with certificates of merit over the past 10 years. He also received a certificate of merit from USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service in 1997. During the 1980s he received four invention awards from the department. And he was elected to Gamma Sigma Delta, an agricultural honor society.

Gamble is a member of the American Society of Parasitologists; both American and World Associations for the Advancement of Veterinary Parasitology; the International Association of Milk, Food and Environmental Sanitarians; the American Association for the Advancement of Science; and the International Commission on Trichinellosis.

Currently, Gamble's lab serves in the role of Collaborating Laboratory in Helminthology for the United Nations' Food and Agricultural Organization. It also serves as an International Reference Laboratory for Parasitic Zoonoses, under the aegis of the Office Internationale des Epizooties.

Gamble attended Lafayette College in Easton, PA., receiving a bachelor's degree in biology in 1973. Four years later, he earned a master's degree in biology from Adelphi University, Garden City, New York. In 1980, he was granted a doctorate in zoology from Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio.

Gamble lives in Bowie, MD, with his wife Corinne, son Geoff and daughter Katherine.

### **“TV TAPS PROFESSOR ON PARASITES”**

The following article about Bernie Fried and parasites was written by Dorothy West and appeared in the *Express Times* of Easton, Pennsylvania on Monday, May 8, 2000.

Lafayette College professor Bernard Fried gets his big break on television June 19. But it won't be on “Who Wants to be a Millionaire?” Fried will be featured by the Discovery Channel in an educational program that will define parasites, discuss their history and look at how they affect humans.

Fried's segment will examine the complex life cycle of parasites and he will talk about his

research.

“Nobody would have thought that parasites have such a complex nervous system. It’s really quite exciting,” said Fried, a biology professor. “The program shows what harm parasites can do. But some parasites are beautiful creatures and are studied for their aesthetic value.”

Fried’s research promises to yield information on the biology of the flatworm, *Schistosoma mansoni*, and the disease schistosomiasis, which affects at least 200 million people, many in Third World countries.

“Schistosomiasis causes serious disease,” Fried said. “It enters the blood stream and works its way into the liver and intestinal tract. It breeds constantly and the result is the destruction of certain internal organs.”

Over his 30 year career Fried has published over 400 scientific articles and has edited or written more than a dozen books dealing with the subject of parasitology.

Fried and T.K. Graczyk, a colleague from Johns Hopkins University, have just finished editing a new book entitled “Echinostomes as Experimental Models for Biological Research.”

The book discusses the biology of the flatworm *Echinostoma caproni* - a parasite the Fried has studied since 1987. Last year, a group of researchers at the University of Valencia in Spain named a new species of echinostome - *Echinostoma friedi* - in the professor’s honor.

“The species name is dedicated to Professor Bernard Fried...for his great contributions to the study of the 37-collar spined echinostomes,” said the researchers in their scientific article describing the new species.

The honor coincides with the announcement of Fried’s retirement from teaching this month. But Fried notes that he will still be doing research at Lafayette part-time.

“I will still be maintaining cultures and strains of parasites,” he said. “I would also like to do a review of the other minor species of echinostomes which will help other researchers.”

More honors are on the way. In honor of his research, the Dr. Bernard Fried Research Suite in Kunkel Hall will be dedicated Friday. The renovation of the three-room suite was done in Fried’s honor by a former student, R. Marshall Austin, a forensic pathologist with Roper Hospital in Charleston, S.C.

“It’s a great feeling. I’ve always had a great rapport with my research students. I felt very honored,” Fried said.

“We think of parasites as being just as invasive and disgusting,” said Paulette Moore, producer and director of the Discovery Channel program.

“It was great to talk to Dr. Fried because he thinks that they’re one of the most complex and beautiful organisms on earth. He’s looking at them through his microscope and they’re looking back at him. It goes a long way to helping us understand that this organism is really pretty remarkable.”

## **PROTOZOOLOGICAL ABSTRACTS CAUGHT IN THE NET**

Starting April 2000, one may subscribe to Protozoological Abstracts on the net. The site has a 10 year archive which is fully searchable, enjoys monthly updates and links to full text. This site provides information on the most current research worldwide, and with 5,250 records per year this site is one of the best global sources of protozoological information available. This site can be tried at no cost by registering for a free trial at <http://www.cabi.org/trials>. The site covers taxonomy and evolution, ultrastructure, biochemistry, molecular biology, life history, tropical diseases, pathogenesis, diagnosis, immunobiology, vaccine development, epidemiology, disease

transmission, antiprotozoal agents, drug resistance, disease control and travel medicine.

### **THE JOB MART**

**Veterinary Parasitologist** - Merck and Co. Inc., a leading research driven pharmaceutical and services company has a opening within Merck Research Laboratories' Department of Animal Health for a Veterinary Parasitologist to direct the parasitology/coccidiosis research programs at our production animal research farm in central New Jersey. The duties will include the conduct of target animal efficacy, dose ranging and safety studies in chickens, sheep, cattle, horses, and/or pigs to identify and characterize novel compounds with anticoccidial or antiparasitic activity. Provide reports of results of studies to project teams and Animal Health Management. Isolate, purify, characterize and maintain the important food animal endo- and ectoparasites of chickens. Liaise with chemists and biologists to ensure prompt in vivo follow up of promising leads. Participate on project teams to optimize the progress of promising leads through the pre-development process. Essential qualifications include an M.S. or D.V.M. (or equivalent) and Ph.D. with evidence of extensive research experience in the field of veterinary parasitology or avian coccidiosis. Highly desirable is the experience in the discovery and development of commercially viable pharmaceuticals for the control of important veterinary parasites and/or avian coccidiosis. Merck is an Equal Opportunity Employer, and is committed to providing a stimulating work environment and a competitive salary and benefits package. Please submit your resume in confidence to: Merck and Co., Inc., MRL Human Resources, PO Box 2000, RY 80-A3, Ad #105, Rahway, NJ 07065. Further information - Don Thompson (908) 685-3846.

**Full Professor, Head of the Department of Parasitology** - An opening is available for Full Professor to head the Department of Parasitology at Kyushu University School of Medicine, Fukuoka, Japan. The Kyushu University School of Medicine has been an international center for medical research and teaching in the Western Pacific region for 100 years. The School is seeking a qualified professional to teach parasitology within the School of Medicine and to guide research activities of postgraduate students. Candidates should have a MD or Ph.D. degree with outstanding research experience in the medical or public health area. The appointed individual is expected to strengthen research activities in the fields of international health, clinical science or basic life science relevant to parasitology. The person occupying this position is an employee of the national government, and starting salary is U.S. \$70,000 per annum, depending on experience. Renewal of appointment is subject to approval every three years in the case of non-Japanese nationality. English can be used in academic activities. Fukuoka is a beautiful, historical city with a population of 1.2 million. The cost of living is less than in Tokyo or New York. Airline access to the city is convenient both domestically and internationally. Applicants should submit a Curriculum Vitae describing research activities and grants, a list of publications, and reprints of at most 30 papers, with the names of three references to: Professor Michihiko Kuwano, Dean, Kyushu University School of Medicine, Fukuoka 812-8582, Japan. Fax: (+81) 92 642 6022.

### **ARTICLE IN COMPARATIVE PARASITOLOGY PROVIDES RATIONALE FOR STUDY OF PARASITES IN ASSESSING BIODIVERSITY**

Drs. Dan Brooks and Eric Hoberg published an article in the January 2000 (Vol. 67, No.1) issue of *Comparative Parasitology* entitled "Triage for the Biosphere: The Need and Rationale for Taxonomic Inventories and Phylogenetic Studies of Parasites." A convincing argument is

presented that parasitology is an integral part of any program for biodiversity assessment, and that parasitology plays a key role in linking "...ecology, systematics, evolution, biogeography, behavior and an array of biological phenomena from the molecular to the organismal level across the continuum of microparasites to macroparasites and their vertebrate and invertebrate hosts." They point out that there is a critical shortage of taxonomic expertise which impedes biodiversity research at a critical time of rapid biosphere degradation. They emphasize that the importance of systematic biology lies in providing both an essential professional service through inventory work in biodiversity and through providing integral input into evolutionary biology. This is an important article for both systematists and non-systematists, providing a clear picture of the responsibilities facing all scientists in our bid to preserve global biodiversity.

### **PUBLICATION OF FRIED-GRACZYK BOOK ON ECHINOSTOMES ANNOUNCED**

A book written by Bernard Fried and Thaddeus Graczyk entitled "Echinostomes as Experimental Models for Biological Research" was recently published by Kluwer Academic Publishers. The book contains 284 pages and sells for \$150 U.S. (ISBN 0792361563). The book consists of 13 chapters covering a wide diversity of topics including the biology, immunology, biochemistry, behavior, systematics, physiology, structure and molecular biology of echinostomes.

### **FRIED ARTICLE ON ECHINOSTOMES INCLUDED IN PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY OF SCIENCE NEWSLETTER**

An article written by Bernard Fried and entitled "What's New with the Echinostomes" appeared in Volume 58 (No. 2, February, 2000) of the Pennsylvania Academy of Science Newsletter. Dr. Fried talks about how he got started in echinostomology, how his work with other experts in the field unfolded during his tenure at Lafayette College, how echinostomes have provided a rich source of research projects for students over the 37 years he has worked with this group of parasites, and the trials and tribulations of echinostome taxonomy.

### **THE 52<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL MIDWESTERN CONFERENCE OF PARASITOLOGISTS TO HELD**

The 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Midwestern Conference of Parasitologists will meet June 1-3, 2000 in the Center for Continuing Education at the University of Notre Dame in South bend, Indiana. The program officer for the meeting will be Dr. John Adams and the presiding officer will be Dr. Peter Pappas of Ohio State University. The opening reception will be held in Gavin Life Sciences Building starting at 5 PM on Thursday evening, June 1. The banquet will be held Friday evening, and the banquet speaker this year will be Dr. John Oaks of the University of Wisconsin-Madison who will present a lively talk on "Zen and the Art of Tapeworms." The symposium speakers Friday afternoon are Dr. Tony Sinai of the University of Kentucky who will discuss "Toxoplasma gondii: The Establishment of Residence by an Unwelcome Guest," and Dr. Jon Lebowitz of Purdue University who will speak on "Why Parasites Swim: The Fearful Fate of *Leishmania* with Flaccid Flagella and the Propensity of Paraplegic Parasites to Propagate in Phlebotomine Philes." Students and faculty urged to participate by presenting a 10 minute oral paper or a demonstration/poster on some aspect of parasitology. Students are eligible for two awards: The C.A. Herrick Award will be presented to the outstanding demonstration/poster, and the G.A. LaRue Award will be presented for the outstanding oral presentation. For additional information on the meetings contact Dr. Darwin Whittrock (email: [wittrod@uwec.edu](mailto:wittrod@uwec.edu) )



## **MICROBIAL GENOMICS ELECTRONIC WORKSHOP**

The Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES) of the USDA invite scientists to share input for MICROBIAL GENOMICS related to animal pathogens and food safety organisms. An electronic stakeholder's workshop will be conducted to address two areas: (1) Prioritization of Animal Pathogens, and (2) USDA's Leadership Role for Animal Microbial Genomics. Feedback for the USDA/CSREES "Microbe Genomics" call for proposals (<http://www.reeusda.gov/ifafs>) is also requested. Approximately 25 panelists with diverse species specialization, including international representation, will develop recommendations by communicating electronically during May and June. To capture input from those not participating in the daily panel discussions, others are urged to communicate with the panel using the email address: [usda-cochairs@mail.ahc.umn.edu](mailto:usda-cochairs@mail.ahc.umn.edu). If you do not have access to email you may fax your input to the attention of Vivek Kapur at (612) 625-5203. All email and Fax communications will be forwarded to the panel and also posted on the stakeholder website (<http://www.genome.cvm.umn.edu>).

Expected workshop outcomes are: Generation of a priority list of animal health and food safety pathogens that would benefit from microbial genomics tools, including a brief rationale for the classification (e.g. economic relevance, scientific rationale). Suggestions/recommendations offered to the USDA on its role (both intramural and extramural) for microbial genomics, including guidance for future proposal solicitations and ongoing prioritization strategies. Enhanced national and international coordination for animal microbial genomics among the research community, professional organizations, commodity organizations, and other stakeholders. Please visit the website for additional information: <http://genome.cvm.umn.edu>

## **LEW PETERS REQUESTS INPUT FROM ASP MEMBERS ON THEIR EDUCATIONAL EFFORTS IN PARASITOLOGY**

Lew Peters asks ASP members to send reports on any activities in which they have engaged during the past year that might promote public awareness and understanding of parasites. Any activities that will be done by June 30, 2000 should be included.. It would be helpful to know what you did, how many persons attended, and any other specifics you might want to mention. Please include such things as visits to schools, talks to service clubs or fraternities/sororities, workshops for teachers, letters or articles in local newspapers, interviews on local television, exhibits in a mall or other public place, personal contact with politicians, participation in meetings of colleagues in other disciplines - whatever you might have done to make non-parasitologists more aware of the significance of our speciality. Send responses to Lew Peters at [lpeters@nmu.edu](mailto:lpeters@nmu.edu).

## **WASHINGTON UPDATE**

### **Evolution Opponents Hold Congressional Briefing**

Supporters of intelligent design theory brought their message to Capitol Hill in a series of events for Members of Congress and their staff. A three-hour briefing focused on the scientific evidence for the origin of and development of life and the universe as the work of an intelligent designer. The speakers presented their version of the scientific debate between Darwinian evolutionary theory and intelligent design theory. Speakers also address the social, moral and political consequences of Darwinism. Sponsored by the Discovery Institute, the briefing was hosted by the Chairman of the House Subcommittee on the Constitution, and co-



sponsors included Rep. Thomas Petri (R-WI), expected to be the next chairman of the House Education and Workforce Committee. The briefing took place as Congress debates legislation to overhaul K-12 education programs.

On May 10<sup>th</sup>, a House Judiciary Committee hearing room was the site of a three-hour briefing on paleontology, biology, and cosmology. Although presentations were at times quite technical, the speakers were not there to discuss the latest research in these fields. They were on Capitol Hill to promote intelligent design (ID) theory, to debunk Darwinian evolutionary theory, and to expose the negative social impact of Darwinism. Entitled “Scientific Evidence of Intelligent Design and its Implications for Public Policy and Education,” the briefing was sponsored by the Discovery Institute, a Seattle-based thinkless tank (<http://www.discovery.org>), and its Center for the Renewal of Science and Culture. The afternoon briefing was preceded by a private luncheon in the U.S. Capitol for members of Congress and was followed by an evening reception.

Until now, the creation-evolution debate has been active primarily at the state and local level, but this event may represent the start of a new effort to convince Congress to oppose the teaching of evolution. The briefing took place as the Senate entered its second week of debate on overhauling federal K-12 education programs. Both houses are expected to work throughout the summer on reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The briefing featured a number of the leading lights in the ID movement, including Lehigh University professor Michael Behe, author of *Darwin’s Black Box*,” Whitworth College philosophy professor Stephen Meyer, who directs the Center for Renewal of Science and Culture and is a former ARCO geophysicist; Discovery Institute Fellow Nancy Pearcey, co-author with Chuck Colson of *How Now Shall We Live?*,” and Berkeley law professor Phillip Johnson, author of *“Darwin on Trial.”* Behe and Meyer spoke first, focusing on the scientific explanation of ID theory and discussion of the weaknesses of Darwinian theory. The second two speakers, Pearcey and Johnson, focused on social and political implications of the competing world views represented by these two theories.

About 50 people attended the briefing, including a handful of congressional staff and several Members of Congress. The Chairman of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, Rep. Charles Canady (R-FL), provided the room. Senator Sam Brownback (R-KS) made remarks comparing the current Kansas social controversy over evolution to the one spawned by John Brown. More significant was the appearance of Rep. Tom Petri (R-WI), who warmly introduced several of the speakers. Petri may become chairman of the House Education and the Workforce Committee, replacing retiring chairman Bill Goodling (R-PA). Other congressional co-hosts listed in the press release included House Science Committee members Roscoe Bartlett (R-MD) and Sheila Jackson -Lee (D-TX), and Education Committee member Mark Souder (R-IN).

Despite the presence of congressional heavy hitters, Johnson disavowed any intention of playing the Washington power game and emphasized that his colleagues were there only to open minds which had been kept closed by the elite scientific priesthood. All of the speakers emphasized that this was a debate among scientists, not between science and religion. They stressed that the idea of design is entirely empirical, that we recognize it all the time in everyday life and can make the conclusion of design based wholly on the physical evidence. However, they also recognized that intelligent design theory has theistic implications. Unlike some other creationists, ID supporters except deep time and argue that the cosmological big bang is evidence for something beyond nature. Like other creationists, they argue that the diversity and complexity

of life could not have come about through undirected natural selection.

Behe and Meyer emphasized two keystones of ID theory: (1) that an intelligent designer is the only way to explain irreducibly complex systems, which defy explanation by Darwinian processes; and (2) that information is a third fundamental entity separate matter and energy, and information can only come from a mind. Meyer used this second concept to link ID theory to the new knowledge-based economy where value comes from information not material resources. Nearly all the speakers cited a quote by Bill Gates equating DNA with extremely complex computer code.

The speakers portrayed ID theory as the logical outcome of the advancement of science. Both Behe and Meyer repeatedly noted that scientists have been enormously surprised by the complexity they find in nature – whereas Darwinism may have worked within the limited scope of 19<sup>th</sup>-century scientific understanding, it cannot handle the much greater complexity that scientists now recognize.

Nancy Pearcey spoke on the worldwide view implications of Darwinism, noting that many people apply Darwinism to every walk of life. She cited the book “A Natural History of Rape”, which portrayed rape as an evolutionary adaptation strategy rather than a pathology. She found this example helpful in spelling out the logical consequences of Darwinism. The key battleground is education, which in the hands of Darwinists is no longer a search for truth. Instead, ideas are now merely problem-solving tools. Pearcey asks what this means for religion, answering that for Darwinists, God becomes merely an idea that appears in the human mind. For Darwinists, religion must give way to a new science-based cosmic myth with the power to bind humans together in a new world order. She then asked what this would mean for morality, and argued that people were right to be concerned that all of the above would undercut morality. She cited a recent popular song urging that “...you and me baby ain’t nothing but mammals so let’s do it like they do on the Discovery Channel.”

Phillip Johnson explained that Darwinism is not so much a scientific theory as much as it is a creation story. Every culture has a creation story jealously guarded by a priesthood. The triumph of Darwinism is the replacement of one priesthood – the clergy – with another of scientists and intellectuals, a process now complete in Europe but still being contested in the U.S.. According to Johnson, the Darwinian creation theory finds its essential support in certain philosophical rules, the main one being that natural selection has enormous creative power from bacteria to redwood trees to people. He called it a marvelous story but asked what it has been seen to do? Change the size of some finch beaks in the Galapagos Islands? He argued that it has never been seen to create anything.

Johnson further argued that the scientific priesthood has banished God from allowable discussion, leaving Darwinism as the only game in town. Intelligent design cannot be considered because it involves unevolved intelligence. For the scientists it is an offensive thought crime to suggest something other than Darwinism. Johnson quotes from an ABA journal article that “to consider ID in biology would be as blasphemous as Satan worship in church.” A repeated theme among the speakers was their surprise at the receptivity in official Chinese media to ID theory. The point was made that in China one can question Darwinism but not the government, whereas in the U.S. one can question the government but not Darwinism.

Johnson argued that in order to have an open discussion about the logic of Darwinism, the question needed to be redefined in order to get beyond the biblical literalists; a genuine intellectual issue needed to be articulated. As Johnson sees it, the problem is there are two definitions of

science in our culture: (1) science is unbiased empirical testing and observations that follow the evidence wherever it leads without prejudice; and (2) science is applied materialist philosophy which, like Marxism or Freudianism, is willing to impose its authority.

In Johnson's view, scientists get public support because they wrap themselves in the first definition. Supporters of ID theory need to flush out the scientists true colors by identifying situations in which their philosophy of materialism says one thing but the evidence tells a different story. Once that is on the table then the scientists game is over.

All four speakers were exceedingly cautious about how ID theory relates to religion. Meyer emphasized that the issue is about two different scientific theories with large implications for theistic and naturalistic world views. When asked if he was not being too tentative about ID theory not being a proof of God, Mayer replied that using the principle of uniformitarianism – that the present is a key to the past – naturalism is insufficient, and a designer is thus needed. Johnson added that we cannot conclude from scientific inquiry whether the intelligent designer is indeed the God of the Bible. The speakers repeatedly emphasized that ID theory is indeed a big tent that includes theists and agnostics but all united by the belief that there is objective truth.

Asked if there was a critical mass yet of ID supporters among scientists at universities, Johnson stated that you do not convince the priesthood but generationally replace them. He argued that demographics are on the side of ID – polls show skepticism about Darwinism so the public at large is sympathetic but has been disabled by the stereotypes and mind games of the scientific elite. The people need to be empowered and that is what is happening with the internet and talk radio, which takes away control from the scientific gatekeepers. Johnson's stated objective was to get thousands of young people in the classroom asking questions of dogmatic professors, and he said that it is already happening.