

Natural Selections

A NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

NATURAL SELECTIONS TELLS YOU TO TAKE A HIKE!

With the coming of spring, the editorial board wanted to share some of our favorite day trips with the Rockefeller community. Here is a compilation of some of our ideas and experiences.

Peaceful Abode

MANUEL CASTELLANO-MUÑOZ

This is a suggestion for a day trip if you want to find something new and have a long walk outside the stress of Manhattan living. It is especially good if you need to reflect and think deeply.

You can begin by taking the R subway line to South Brooklyn. Get off at the 25th Street Station and walk east for a block, and you will reach the Green-Wood Cemetery (<http://www.green-wood.com>), located at Fifth Avenue and 25th Street. You can get a map at the front desk, then you are introduced into never-ending walks with the expanse of endless rolling hills, dales, and ponds. This cemetery was a popular tourist attraction in the 1850s and is the place where most famous New Yorkers who died during the second half of the nineteenth century were buried. Even today, it is still a functioning cemetery. If things are not going well in the lab and you are obsessed with results and publications, this is a great opportunity to process your thoughts and keep things in perspective.

Leave the cemetery before you get too hungry, and again take the R subway line and get off five stops later at the Bay Ridge Avenue Station. Walk along Third Avenue and enjoy the peaceful atmosphere of the neighborhood of Tony Manero, the character from *Saturday Night Fever*. If you need a haircut, this is your opportunity. Last time, I counted one million hair salons in this locality. They are everywhere, don't ask me why. You can get a very nice lunch at 79 (pizzeria and restaurant, at 79th and Third Avenue) or at Mezcal's (Mexican restaurant, 75th and Third Avenue).

If you walk south along Third Ave and reach Shore Road, and if you go down to the riverside, you will be blessed with a spectacular view of the Verrazano Bridge. This place is very historic since this is exactly where the British arrived to force George Washington out of New York after the Declaration of Independence. It will now be time to return back, so track your path back to the R line at the 95th St-Bay Ridge Station. ☉

Ocean, Beaches and Lazy Hikes

REVATHY U. CHOTTEKALAPANDA AND MELINA HERMAN

If you want to get away from crowded New York City and want to be close to the ocean, hop onto the Long Island Railroad (LIRR) and get a ferry connection to one of the destinations on Fire Island. The Fire Island ferries are very frequent during summer, but less frequent in winter. One can take the LIRR to Bayshore or Sayville, and take ferries to the respective destinations. You can get all the information for the LIRR connections and ferry crossings from www.fireisland.com.

With the Sayville ferry, you could visit Cherry Grove or the Fire Island Pines, which is a hot bed for gay culture and expression. Cherry Grove also has a strong artistic community portrayed by their murals, paintings, mosaics and landscaping. This is usually the place where nude sunbathers are normally bound. Sunken Forest is particularly beautiful, with boardwalks parallel to the ocean. There is also a good collection and description of the flora and fauna in the region there. The beaches are quite deserted in winter, and more occupied in the summer. There are no ferries to Sunken Forest, but it is a pleasant hike

from Cherry Groove or Sailor's Haven, with the ocean on both sides as you walk. Don't forget to try the ice-cream in Sailor's Haven. Watch Hill is yet another interesting place managed by the Fire Island National Seashore that offers camping, country trails, nature tours, and camping grounds.

If you take the Bayshore ferry, you can visit the beautiful Fire Island Lighthouse near Kismet, which was originally built in 1857 and now harbors a museum and an observatory. Ocean Bay Park on

the other hand is a good locality for socializing. Ocean Beach is a happening place with many bars and restaurants and officially the capitol of Fire Island. Also, it is the only provider of bicycle rentals. If you love to swim and feel the ocean, go to Fair Harbor. Fair Harbor has spectacular harbor views and also offers lifeguard-monitored swimming in the bay side as well as on the ocean shore.

Another destination if you're in need of peace and quiet is Old Greenwich, CT. From Grand Central, it's only an hour away: just hop on the New Haven Line and get off at Old Greenwich. Right off the station, you'll already be able to find places to have lunch, like Macken-



Image provided by Isabel Garcia-Almagro



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zie's Grill Room. The first pleasant change of scenery is provided by their delicious lobster chowder. Once reinvigorated, you can head down South Beach Avenue for an enjoyable 20-minute walk. Along the road are beautiful houses from the early and mid-20th century, and lovely boutiques. At the southwest end of the town, which is the end of South Beach Avenue, you'll reach a long, thin peninsula where the town's largest beach is located. An important point is how few tourists come there during the off-season, allowing you to spend a serene afternoon at the beach, away from the noise and pollution of the city. On the peninsula, you will not find any businesses. However, you can use the many conveniently located picnic tables to have an outdoor meal, if the weather allows it, or to relax and enjoy the view on the ocean. At that point, you'll be able to see the Manhattan skyline from afar, ready to welcome you back home. ☉

My Perfect NYC Day Trip:

Jackson Heights

AILEEN MARSHALL

Jackson Heights is a very diverse neighborhood that's an easy ride from Manhattan and has lots of great restaurants. Just take the E, F, R, V or 7 Queens bound to the Roosevelt Ave/Broadway/74th Street Station. From there you can walk east along either Roosevelt Avenue, or go one block north to 37th Ave or another three blocks north to Northern Boulevard for plenty of great places to eat. The roots of Jackson Heights are mainly Colombian, with a mixture of many other South and Central American groups. There is an Indian enclave right along 74th Street. The neighborhood

has become much more diverse in recent years as more people are fleeing Manhattan rents.

Right on 74th Street, off of Roosevelt Avenue is a very good Indian restaurant called Jackson Diner (37-47 74th St). There is also an Indian grocery store and some very interesting shops on the same block. For some authentic Colombian cuisine, go to Tierras Colombianas, on Roosevelt, at 83rd Street.

Moving on to 37th Avenue, La Boina Roja Steak House (80-18 37th Ave), is a genuine Argentinean steakhouse. The place is small, but great for those on the Atkins diet. Pollos A La Brasa Mario, on the corner of 83rd Street and 37th Avenue is always busy, even late into the night. The rotisserie chickens in the window are sure to get anyone salivating like Pavlov's dogs. One can get a half of a chicken and a very generous portion of rice and beans for just a few dollars.

Working your way north to Northern Boulevard, Cafe Salamanca (7905 Northern Blvd), is a well-established Spanish restaurant, recognized for their sangria. Pio Pio (8415 Northern Blvd, serves Peruvian food) is known for its ceviche.

This is just a small sampling of the many great restaurants in this neighborhood. Come and see for yourself. ☉

Red, White, and You

EUGENE MARTIN

North Fork Long Island will never be mistaken for Burgundy, Mosel, or Napa Valley, but, despite being so close to RU it provides an enjoyable day of swinging from vineyard to vineyard and enjoying the grape products along the way. First of all, don't worry, North Fork isn't too close to NYC; the wine's *terroir*

is not dog urine and cab exhaust. But the distance does provide a slight hindrance: for small groups, the wine-tours are over-priced and the distance between vineyards is prohibitive to a pedestrian. The best option is to treat the day as a wine tasting, not a party (although note that visitors in the larger tour busses lean towards the latter). Rent a car, establish a designated driver, and go east. There are 35 tasting rooms in the North Fork region and wonderful cheese and produce at the local farms. Most places are open from 10 am until 5 pm, on almost every weekend.

I'd recommend first stopping off at Catapano Dairy Farms¹ or another dairy to purchase a few cheeses to eat with your wine sampling. After that, a good starting point is Jamesport Winery (from Catapano Dairy Farms, Jamesport is three turns and six minutes away); followed by exploring whatever catches your eye as you travel east on Main Road. There are no great lunch places, but grab some produce, cheese, and bread along the way and picnic with the vineyards as a backdrop. If you'd like to finish the evening with some food before the trip back—and nobody wants to drive in Long Island between 5 and 6 pm on any day of the week—one suggestion is following Main Road all the way east until it reaches its end and having a bite at the Frisky Oyster. Then, inhale the harbor's air for a few breaths, and head back to the city. ☉

1. For directions go to <http://www.catapandairyfarm.com/direct.htm>. From RU, the trip takes approximately two hours under pleasant traffic conditions.

2. For directions go to www.jamesportwines.com/directions.html.

DUMBO Calling

CARLY GELFOND

If the name “Dumbo” conjures up images for you of a small, gray elephant with a big heart, it’s time you got out more. We’re in New York City, people! There’s no time to waste, and much to do! The neighborhood of DUMBO (Down Under the Manhattan Bridge Overpass) in Brooklyn is a pulse of activity these days, and you’re going to want to be able to say you were there. From January through March 29th, the Fort Greene Brooklyn Flea migrates indoors to two “pop-up” markets at 76 and 81 Front Street in DUMBO. Head over (A/C to High Street or F to York Street) on Saturdays or Sundays from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. to either of the two loft-like spaces. At 76 Front, you’ll find 25 top vintage and antiques dealers. At 81 Front, you’ll find 35 (mostly) non-vintage vendors of clothes, jewelry, art, and handmade crafts. But wait! There’s more! If you love to get your groove on whilst you shop, you’ll be pleased to note that the record shop Halcyon and other guest DJs will be spinning at the markets every weekend. Dying to explore your inner fashionista? Make your way over to the “Curated Corner,” where the Flea partners with guest curators to bring in their favorite designer/shop/artist/dealer to hold a one-time-only show/sample sale/trunk show. All that dancing and shopping can build up quite an appetite, and lucky for you, the DUMBO markets have more to offer than peanuts. Food vendors include Kumquat Cupcakery, McClure’s Pickles, Hot Blondies Bakery, and Choice Market. Stop over at the table of Fine + Raw Chocolate for some unbelievably rich and delicious raw hot cocoa. And while we’re on the subject of dining, if you know what’s good for you, you’ll stay in the area well into the evening. Might I suggest you check out the charming Hecho en DUMBO (111 Front Street between Washington and Adams) for some well-priced authentic Mexican cuisine, or head over to Rebar (147 Front Street between Jay and Pearl Streets), a reclaimed factory loft-space with 15 taps, beautiful bottled Belgian

beers, an extensive by the glass wine list, and a great bar menu. The Disney movies will still be there when you get back. ☉

Skiing, the Cheap and Easy Way

ADRIA LE BOEUF

An easy day-trip in the winter time is Thunder Ridge Ski Area, though only if you are not such a demanding skier. Thunder Ridge is a small ski resort approximately an hour and a half outside of New York City. It is very good for kids and beginning skiers. But what makes it really fantastic is the Metro North deal (http://www.mta.info/mnr/html/getaways/outbound_thunderridge.htm). Price: From Grand Central Terminal or Harlem-125th Street: adults, \$49.75; seniors, \$33.50; children 12, \$37.75; children 6-11, \$19.50; children age 5, \$6.50; children under 5, \$5.00.

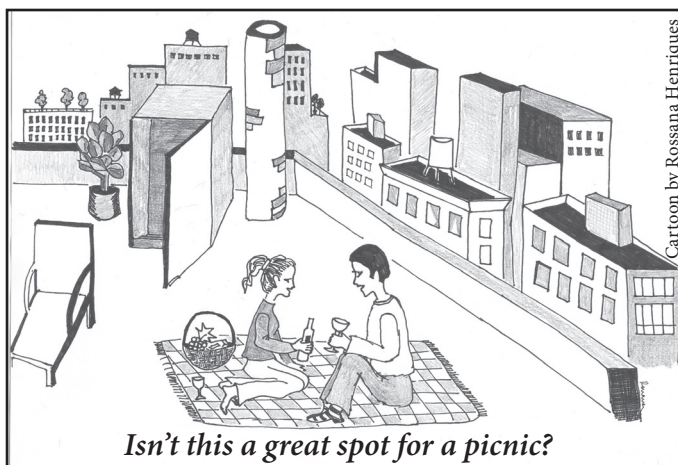
Package includes: Discount round-trip rail fare, all-day/all-night lift ticket (night skiing not available on Sundays); shuttle to/from the train station to the ski area; \$5 discount on rental equipment.

Travel information: You can buy the package at the ticket window in Grand Central. Take Metro-North’s Harlem Line to Patterson

Station where a shuttle bus meets designated a.m. trains to take you to the ski area. Later in the day, a shuttle bus will return you to Patterson Station to meet designated p.m. trains returning to Grand Central Terminal.

In the end, the train, lift ticket and rentals all together cost only \$75! And better yet, up in the lodge, while the food is not amazing, there is a small 21 and over section (to escape the screaming children and frantic parents), where they sell tasty and cheap beer after a long day

of skiing. Also, across the way from the Patterson train station, before your train home, you can grab a warm cup of tea at the tiny convenience store. One major caveat: before you go, check the snow conditions (www.thunderridgeski.com). ☉



Cartoon by Rossana Henriques



Campus Talk

ADRIA LEBOEUF

Recently there has been something of a ruckus in the 81st St building of postdoc housing. The Rockefeller University’s Housing Department suddenly, and without notice, began installing a new key-card based security system in the small and peaceful building. The old system consisted of a front door accessible by key or buzzer, and then an elevator to the various apartments. The new system has key-card locks on the front door of the building, the elevator, and the stairwell, and a given resident’s access is limited only to the floor they live on. The elevator cannot be

used unless one has a key-card that permits entry to a given floor. After the system was already installed, the tenants were notified of the impending change, and many people had significant complaints and concerns. Here at Campus Talk, we asked the Housing Department why this is happening, trying to get some answers.

Campus Talk: Why is a new security system being installed in the 81st St building? As far as many of the residents there understand, there have been no security issues in the building recently. This new security system will restrict access to the elevator and will restrict residents to their own floors. This is very isolating and furthermore, quite inconvenient, especially in regards to deliverymen and having friends

over. The residents of the building are quite upset about this. They are upset that they will be forced to purchase extra key-cards for spouses, etc. They are upset that money is being spent on this gratuitous security system when there are other problems, like the inefficient and noisy heaters in the building, which could use the help much more.

Housing Department (via John Ulmer): We are trying to provide a higher level of security for the tenants as well as being proactive against any incidents occurring in the future. This type of system is currently installed at 220 East 70th Street and we have plans, in the future, to install the same type of system at 325 East 84th Street. Faculty House and Scholars Residence are

staffed 24 hours a day by 2 doorpersons. This would give all the buildings that are part of the Rockefeller University housing this added security. We have decided to institute this type of system for several reasons listed below:

Delivery persons would no longer have access to any floors in the building. In the past we have had incidents where delivery people go floor to floor distributing menus and we have had thefts because tenants have left doors open. The delivery person will try opening doors while distributing their notices.

If a tenant loses a key for the front door, or if when a tenant moves out, they do not return their key to us, we now do not have to replace the front door lock and distribute all new keys to the tenants. We can simply just delete their card out of the system. This will save the university a great expense in the replacement of keys and locks and deny entry to whoever might come across that lost/not returned key.

If something major was to happen (theft, burglary, etc), we could track what happened by simply accessing a history of who entered/exited the building and compare this data with the video camera system.

It is very common for a person to enter an apartment building by just pushing all the doorbells. Usually one person will buzz the person in to shut them up. Now this person is restricted to only the lobby. This will prevent this from happening.

We have contractors working in the building and we can restrict the time their

ID's work to working hours. We could make sure that their ID expires at a given date. This way if we did not get the ID back we would not have to worry that this person still has access to the building.

We are not expecting for the tenants to have to pay for any additional card/keys. If a tenant needs 2 extra cards we can supply them initially. If they lose the ID they will then have to purchase another one. If a tenant wants access to another floor they can request it and we can give them access, they can always use the staircase to go floor to floor also.

Although we have not had any major security incident, that does not mean we should not be diligent in preventing future incidents. Many times a deterrent is more important than the actual security. We only need one incident to happen, e.g. theft, rape, burglary, etc, then we will be asked why we were not more proactive. I am sorry that this will inconvenience the tenants, but we are only trying to protect them better.

p.s. If you are having problems with your heaters we would be happy to replace them. I have not received any of these complaints. Thank you.

Followup: Later, after this exchange, a meeting was held with a few members of the Housing Department, a representative from the PDA, and approximately half of the residents of the 81st Street building. Many concerns were aired. It was bought up that while this system seems to work fine in the 70th Street building, that building also has

a part-time doorman. This alleviates the problems that come up for relatively immobile people, like pregnant women or early parents, and the problems that would occur if one tried to have multiple people over for dinner. Unfortunately, the 81st Street building has no doorman, and thus the same system cannot work as well in this context. The residents proposed a number of possibilities during the meeting to make the system mutually acceptable. While the members of the Housing Department did not make any proposals or specific concessions themselves, they said they would try to find a creative solution which would take the residents' needs into account.

Two things were brought up in the course of this meeting which are of interest to everyone living in Rockefeller University housing:

- If there is any problem in your apartment, report it, either through the online maintenance request system for those living in the Faculty, Scholars, 70th Street, 81st Street or 84th Street buildings (accessible from the Housing Department's Website), or through studentrepairs@rockefeller.edu for those living in Sophie Frick or GSR. This sort of documentation is the only way anything can be accomplished.

- There will soon be tenant boards set up for the various buildings which will meet consistently with the Housing Department. This will hopefully alleviate some of the issues between the residents and the Housing Department by increasing communication and transparency. ☺

In Our Good Books

The reading suggestions have been kindly provided by staff members of the downtown bookstore McNally Jackson.

The Commoner by John Burnham Schwartz

A gorgeous novel that reads like a beautiful bamboo brushstroke. Burnham Schwartz courageously evokes the pathos and beauty of Haruko who in 1959 became the first commoner to marry the Crown Prince of Japan. Her privileged exile is ironically echoed by her daughter-in-law Keiko who similarly sacrifices her unique identity to the harrowing demands of the throne.

Sex Sleep Eat Drink Dream by Jennifer Ackerman

Did you know that you probably have a single neuron in your brain that corresponds to the face of your grandmother, and one for Jennifer Aniston? Did you know that you're slightly taller when you wake up, or that your alcohol tolerance is highest during happy hour? Ackerman's accessible, irresistible book is chock-full of such fun facts to know and tell, as she outlines human biology and psychology over the course of a single day, and the effect that daily circadian rhythms have on almost

everything we do. Read it for sure-fire cocktail party chatter, or if you want to know how to get the biggest kick out of your morning coffee.

Everyday Food: Great Food Fast by Martha Stewart

This book has changed my life. I never thought I'd say this about a cookbook, let alone a Martha Stewart cookbook, but I cannot keep it to myself. It really is what it says it is: great food fast. Very great, and very, very fast. I didn't get this book until January, but, no matter, I am going to give a copy to everyone I care about next Christmas and every Christmas for ever and ever.

Grapefruit by Yoko Ono

I love the openness of her mind in these tiny pieces. Just thinking about the proposed actions challenges how one sees the world. Don't miss this collection of text-based art, proposals and propositions for thoughts about reality.

McNally Jackson independent bookstore is well worth a visit, they have a fantastic selection of books on their shelves. The store is located in NoLIta at 52 Prince Street between Lafayette and Mulberry. Visit them on the Web at <http://mcnallyjackson.com>.



This month, Natural Selections features Bregtje Hartendorf-Wallach, Assistant to Occupational Health Service Office.

New York State of Mind

How long have you been living in New York? I've lived here since 1993.

Where do you live? I live in the East Village.

Which is your favorite neighborhood?

There is not really one neighborhood I like best in the five boroughs. Since I ride my bike all over town, I (re)discover interesting neighborhoods and streets all the time. On a bright day, seeing the sun set over Astoria is beautiful, for instance. Although I generally stay clear of midtown as much as possible, I recently happened to walk on 55th street between 6th and 7th Avenue and noticed that on this block time seems to have stood still since the late 1980s. There are old, yellowed awnings stuck against dirty brown building facades and grimy storefronts. There is no direct sunlight on this block, but the street is somehow brightened by an enchanting reflective glare. With a little imagination, you can picture wood-paneled station wagons and other boxy American cars lining the city streets. It's a slice of New York that has somehow remained unaffected by the area's Disneyfication. In the same vein, I like to walk around the East Village early in the morning and see the elder Polish and Ukrainian inhabitants do their neighborhood shopping at the few old-fashioned butchers and bakeries that are left.

What do you think is the most overrated thing in the city?

And underrated? Broadway shows are the most overrated thing in NYC. The art of knowing how to walk on any New York City sidewalk without bumping into someone holding a cup of coffee while talking on the phone is one of the most essentially underrated skills in this city.

What do you miss most when you are out of town? When I'm away, I really miss the city's energy and pace.

If you could change one thing about NYC, what would that be? It would be great if New York City would truly commit to creating safe bike lanes all over the city. The so-called "green ways" that exists now is certainly a start, but as long as bike lanes are not separated from the rest of traffic and there is no police enforcement to prevent cars from using these bike lanes as additional parking space, biking in the city remains pretty dangerous. Also, I would take those long accordion style buses off the streets! They tend to travel in convoys of a least three and as they inch along the avenues,



they take up too many lanes at once.

Describe a perfect weekend in NYC. To me, the perfect weekend would include getting out of the city for a few hours during the day to go for a sunny spring-day mountain bike ride with my husband Larry and some of our friends at the Rocky Point trail out on Long Island. It's a beautiful, fun wooded trail and it gives me a much needed nature fix. After the ride, we drive back to the city for a shower, and then go out for dinner and on to see a band or an exhibit. On Sunday, we might do it all over again!

What is the most memorable experience you have had in NYC? Meeting my husband Larry for the first time.

If you could live anywhere else, where would that be? It's always fun to think about other places I might like to live, like Austin TX or Boston or Amsterdam or Montauk, but when it comes down to it, I'm not so sure I'd really want to leave NYC at all unless I absolutely have to. Nothing compares to New York.

Do you think of yourself as a New Yorker? Why? I do. New York completely feels like home to me. I came to New York as a young adult and the city has played a great part in my overall formation. Plus, I appreciate the directness and spunk of New Yorkers. ☺

Charles Darwin, the Quintessential Observational Biologist

CAROL FELTES

In 2009 we mark the 200th anniversary of the birth of biology's most celebrated theorist. Charles Robert Darwin was born at the right time and in the right place in history to become a pivotal figure in the advancement of the life sciences. It was a time of innovative thought and invention; the industrial revolution was in full swing. The British Empire

was the dominant world power and was leading the exploration of the globe.

Charles was born the son of a highly successful physician. Robert Darwin expected his son to follow him in medicine, but young Charles could not tolerate even observing surgeries without benefit of anesthesia, much less conduct



Courtesy of the Royal College of Surgeons and George P. Darwin

them. He was much happier roaming the English countryside collecting things, like insects, and studying their endless varieties and behaviors. Following his lack of success studying medicine, he was sent to Cambridge to study theology. Instead he found a kindred spirit and mentor in Professor John Henslow, who encouraged Darwin's explorations of the natural world. It was Henslow who set him upon the path that changed his life, and the biological sciences, by suggesting that Darwin take the position of naturalist, and gentleman companion to the captain, on the H.M.S. Beagle.

It was this five year voyage that was Darwin's true education. His natural curiosity, his keen powers of observation, data collection, and organization, and his ability to think deeply with insight resulted in the development of habits for experiment and analysis that enabled him to make notable contributions for the rest of his life to geology, zoology and botany.

After 5 years, filled with excitement and discovery, Charles Darwin returned to England and settled into a sedate lifestyle that was the complete opposite of his years on the Beagle. He married his first cousin, Emma Wedgwood, who had patiently waited for Charles to analyze the pros and cons of the married state, and to conclude that marriage was preferred.

Charles had spent the first few years upon his return from the voyage of the Beagle in London, working with his collections of specimens as well as writing and publishing his first book - all about the Beagle adventures. Emma and Charles were not happy in London, and longed for a quieter environment, so they shopped for a suitable home, and selected a small estate just outside the rural hamlet of Downe. Here, they lived for the rest of their lives, producing 10 chil-

dren, seven of whom survived to adulthood.

Charles and Emma were comfortably well off with family money on both sides and with the success of their own investments in modern engineering projects. Charles never had to take employment, and spent his life in science. Emma was a devout Christian, who was frequently distressed by Charles' "lack of faith" and ideas, that she felt were in opposition to her beloved Church. Charles was sensitive to her feelings, and did not discuss his theories with her. Emma was also an accomplished pianist, and Charles went to considerable effort to select a very fine piano for her, and had it brought from London to their home. Emma frequently played for Charles during the evenings, and her music thus accompanied some of his deepest thoughts, and internal debates.

Throughout the years at Downe in England, Darwin appeared to be living in relative isolation. But in fact, he carried on extensive correspondence with scientists around the world. He sent and received specimens and data, ideas and debate. He wrote on many topics, including an exhaustive study of barnacles. His work was often presented at the Royal Society meetings by others, including his theory of descent with modification by natural selection.

A signature attribute of a powerful scientific theory is that it enables future research and understanding. Two hundred years later we are still interpreting our world in light of Darwin's theory. It provides a test against which we measure our ideas today. In the words of Theodosius Dobzhansky in 1964, "Nothing in biology makes sense except in the light of evolution."

Happy Birthday, Charles Darwin. ☉



Drawing by Anthony Ravielli

Frederick Seitz

KEVIN MCBRIDE

Pro bono humani generis (for the good of humankind), the long time motto of The Rockefeller University (RU) is the basis of its mission. The motto is ubiquitous on campus: on the front gates, on lab coats, and on the Caspary Auditorium stage, where this past February the university hosted a symposium to honor recently deceased RU president emeritus, Frederick Seitz. Dr. Seitz was an eminent physicist, president of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) and president of RU from 1968-1978. However, in the following years, his work was controversial, where he stood accused of selling out science to tobacco and oil interests.

Following his retirement, Dr. Seitz became chief scientific consultant for R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, the second largest US tobacco firm. Over the next decade he was responsible for the dispersal of \$45 million in funds donated for research. Following a monumental legal settlement against tobacco firms in the 1990s, internal documents were released that shed light on the true nature of this seemingly altruistic funding. The funding was part of a strategy to obfuscate the true health effects of smoking—a public relations campaign to correct “irresponsible statements made by scientists regarding smoking and health,” to “look into the scientifically stated possibility that ninety percent of cancer is caused by the environment,” and to refute the American Cancer Society’s position “that lung cancer would be virtually eliminated by the elimination of smoking.” Internal memos described it as “a public relations plus” and some research produced “was beneficial to the industry.”¹

The tobacco industry in those years frequently trumpeted their research funding as a commitment to science, arguing that additional research was needed since the health effects of smoking were still uncertain. This was done, despite the fact that tobacco companies had known the health effects for decades, and independent studies corroborated the negative impact of smoking. Seitz was a seemingly willing party to the deception, having stated, “They didn’t want us looking at the health effects of cigarette smoking.” Regarding the source of his funding, Dr. Seitz commented, “as long as it was green, I’m not quite clear about this moralistic issue. We had absolutely free reign to decide how the money was spent.” Did the research give the tobacco industry political cover? “I’ll leave that to the philosophers and priests.” For his troubles Dr. Seitz received \$585,000 from R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company.²

In the 1990s his campaign to cast scientific doubt about global warming resulted in *BusinessWeek* labeling him as “granddaddy of global-warming skeptics.” He worked for numerous industry lobby groups, including the George C. Marshall Institute (GMI), one of the leading think tanks focused on debunking the science of global warming, which he co-founded and chaired. Prominently funded by petroleum interests, the GMI served as advisor

or home for skeptics, such as Michael Crichton, while producing no science of its own. While at GMI, Seitz published reports such as *Global Warming and Ozone Hole Controversies: A Challenge to Scientific Judgment*, questioning the scientific consensus. He attacked the integrity of the 1995 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC.) report and its authors in an Op-Ed piece in the *Wall Street Journal*. He signed letters to the Clinton Administration accusing it of misrepresenting the science and was featured in Republican Senate reports on the uncertainty of global warming. The GMI was described in a 2007 report by the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) as a “clearinghouse for global warming contrarians” funded by Exxon Mobil Corporation. The UCS detailed how the GMI employed the same strategy used by tobacco companies to challenge the science of global warming, by obfuscating the issue by repeatedly attacking the science of global warming. The goal was to convince government representatives and the public that there was uncertainty regarding its cause.³

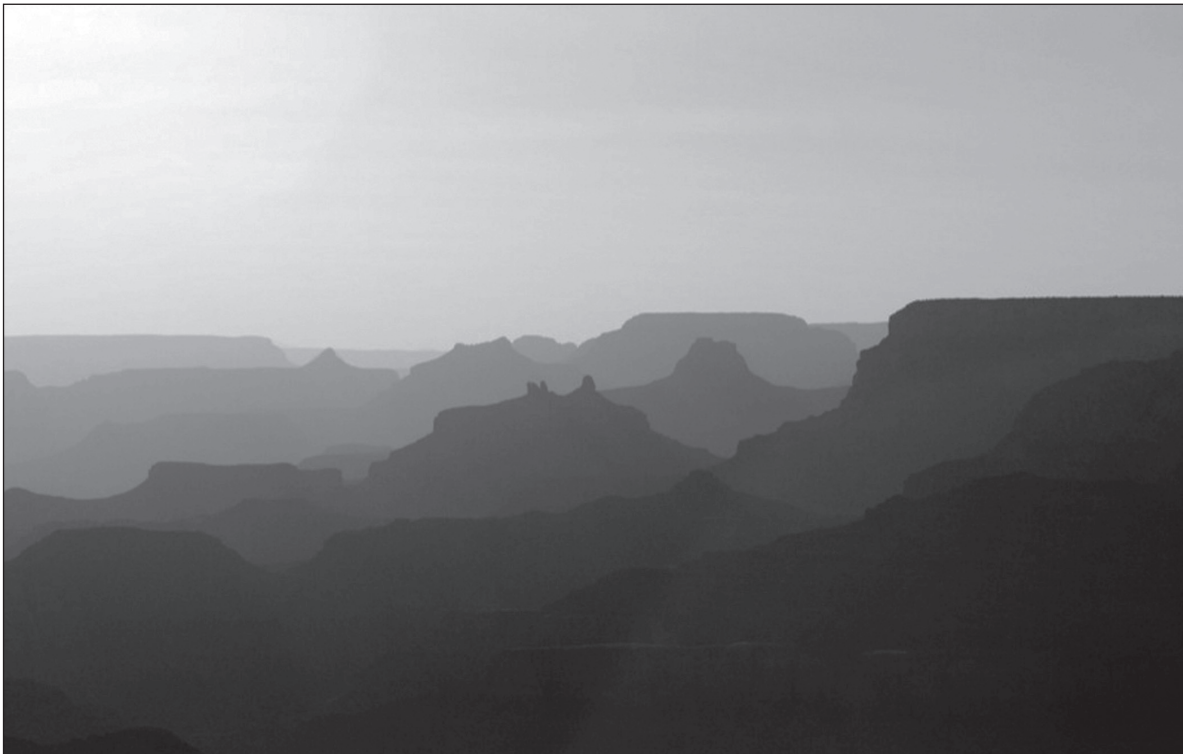


In 1998, Dr. Seitz collaborated with the Oregon Institute of Science and Medicine to circulate an open anti-global warming petition among scientists. It was deceptively packaged to look like legitimate *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science* (PNAS) literature. Seitz wrote the cover letter including his NAS and RU credentials in a manner that made it look like it could be the position of these institutions. The petition, signed by 31,000 self-described scientists, brought a stinging rebuke from the NAS for its seemingly NAS origin, its deception, and position. Subsequent analysis by *Scientific American* found few of the signatories were climatologists or even scientists, and of those who were, many misunderstood the petition’s actual position. Nonetheless, the petition is the crown jewel of skeptics often quoted by the Bush administration and the press. Ironically, Seitz himself quoted the petition as proof of lack of consensus. In order to justify this, he accused climate researchers of faking their science and claiming many told him, “I would take your side, but I would cease to be funded if I did.”³

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) annual US smoking-related health issues cost \$167 billion. In a recent survey of 3,000 scientists involved in climate warming > 97% agree that human activity has caused warming.⁴

References:

1. <http://tobaccodocuments.org>.
2. “While Washington Slept”, *Vanity Fair* May 2006 & *PBS Frontline* interview April 3, 2006.
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Layers by Adria LeBoeuf



Hop On by Daniel Andor

