

CRYONICS INSTITUTE

NEWSLETTER

Cryonics insights and
information for members
and friends of the
Cryonics Institute



CI BULLETIN



Hello all,

It's that time of year again! We're coming up on Ci's Annual General Meeting & elections where members will be electing four candidates for the Board of Directors. Currently we have four incumbents and three new challengers who have tossed their hats in the ring. I remind all would be candidates that it is your responsibility to understand the bylaws regarding eligibility and to meet the requirements and deadlines for your submission to run for office. (See guidelines later in this issue.) Candidates who want to be printed on the official ballots mailed out to CI members must be submitted before July 31st. Candidates applying after that date will not be included on the official mail ballots. If you are interested in running for a CI Board position, please don't hesitate to get your information in asap. If you have any additional questions you can call or email CI directly.

It is always encouraging to see new people willing to serve as Directors and also as volunteers in general. CI relies on its members to serve on the Board, to invest their time as volunteers and to donate in order to keep the organization strong, insuring we last long into the future.

Annual General Meeting

I'm pleased to report we will be safely and carefully bringing back the in-person AGM this year, in addition to the popular

online Zoom meeting option for those who can't attend in person or are hesitant to travel due to covid concerns. The meeting is open to the public, so it is also a great opportunity for prospective members to meet fellow cryonicists and learn more about the Cryonics Institute. If you subscribe to our magazine but are not a member, let me personally invite you to attend this year's meeting either in person or online to get to know CI, our Team and our Members.

The year's AGM will be held Sunday, September 12th. There will be tours of the CI main facility as well as "CI West," our new additional facility location prior to the main meeting. Full details can be found on page 8, as well as on cryonics.org.

Facility Expansion

Structural renovations have been completed on the new facility, and late this year or early next year we will be installing the bulk liquid nitrogen tank, LN2 delivery lines and begin adding cryostats ready to start storing additional patients as needed. It is in our business model to be ready and able to expand as we grow.

And grow we have! We continue to exceed expectations as both our general membership and our patient counts increase. While we would like to see greater interest among the general public for cryonics and potentially faster growth, it's also not a bad thing that we are growing steadily and at a manageable pace that allows us to keep up and prosper. In this edition we will share some pictures of our new facility and the upgrades we have made to date. Sincere thanks to our dedicated facility staff of Andy, Michael and Kristen for all the hard work they are doing for our members and our organization. Keep up the great work!

New Collaborations

I am pleased to also report recent instances of renewed cooperation & kinship within the cryonics community to combine efforts and to better the entire cryonics industry together. CI, Alcor, SA and ICE have joined efforts to compile a shared database of funeral directors good, bad and in-between. Knowing who to trust and who not to trust is critical and this new data-

base will help guide all cryonicists and CSOs to the funeral directors we are most likely to get the best results with.

In addition, we're looking at another collaboration regarding early notification for potential cryonics emergencies. CI and Alcor have both developed apps that can be used on a smart-phone to notify family and subsequently Cryonics Service Organizations when a member may need help or is possibly in a life-threatening situation. As we all know, rapid response is critical to a successful cryonic suspension, so knowing immediately if someone is hurt, unconscious or worse is paramount.

CI has developed a free android-based app that is basically a timer alert system, where you can set the app to notify you with a simple alarm at regular intervals. If you are unable to or otherwise fail to respond to these alarms, after a short interval the app will automatically send a text message to pre-selected contacts to alert them something may be wrong and to check on you immediately. The text message includes a GPS location so responders can quickly get to the person in trouble.

The app is great for free but it is not perfect. What if none of your friends or family are available to answer the emergency text? It just so happens that Alcor has developed a very similar app, but that app is connected to a 24/7 call center answering service. Of course, this answering service option costs money to pay for staffing and this expense could be a drawback to people who don't want another monthly bill.

There are advantages and disadvantages to both apps, but we would like to be able to offer the choice to all of our members.

With this in mind, CI and Alcor have come to an agreement that benefits everyone.

CI will offer our app free of charge to any Alcor member who

wants to use it. In fact, the free CI app is available at the Google Play store for anyone, including the general public who may want to use it as a basic emergency alert tool.

In return, Alcor will offer CI Members the ability to use the Alcor app at the same cost as regular Alcor Members. Note, this special arrangement is not available to the general public.

I believe that every cryonicist should take advantage of any and all free emergency notification tools and if you have the desire and financial capability, then you can also take advantage of the "at cost" Alcor app with 24/7 call center service. We are in beta testing and will let you know when this is available for all CI members. I am excited and happy to see the CSOs working together to bring improved patient care to the cryonics industry as a whole. After all, we share the same vision of extended life and that makes us all one giant family of futurists and optimists.

In closing, as always I will ask all members to take a moment to reflect and seriously ask yourselves "what can I do to improve cryonics, CI and most importantly the state of my own cryonics arrangements?" Take some time to look through the CI resources and to upgrade your planning and prep work. How much work and planning you put in now will determine how your eventual suspension will turn out.

We all want the best possible chance for a successful preservation, and hopefully revival, so we have to roll up our sleeves and put in the time and effort to get there.

Best wishes and we'll see you in September.

Dennis Kowalski

CI President

CRYONICS INSTITUTE MAGAZINE

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24355 Sorrentino Ct.
Clinton Township, MI 48035-3239

Phone: 1 (586) 791-5961
Toll-free: 1 (866) 288-2796 (North America)
FAX: 1 (586) 792-7062
Email: info@cryonics.org

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ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS

Cryonics Institute or cryonics-related articles are welcome. Submissions: dg@cryonics.org

E-SUBSCRIPTIONS

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Membership Benefits

Why join the Cryonics Institute?

The choice is clear: Irreversible physical death, dissolution and decay, or the possibility of a vibrant and joyful renewed life. Don't you want that chance for yourself, your spouse, parents and children?

1) **A Second Chance at Life**

Membership qualifies you to arrange and fund a vitrification (anti-crystallization) perfusion and cooling upon legal death, followed by long-term storage in liquid nitrogen. Instead of certain death, you and your loved ones could have a chance at rejuvenated, healthy physical revival through cryopreservation.

2) **Affordable Cryopreservation**

The Cryonics Institute (CI) offers full-body cryopreservation for as little as \$28,000.

3) **Affordable Membership**

Become a Lifetime Member for a one-time payment of only \$1,250, with no dues to pay. Or join as a Yearly Member with a \$75 initiation fee and dues of just \$120 per year, payable by check, credit card or PayPal.

4) **Lower Prices for Spouses and Children**

The cost of a Lifetime Membership for a spouse of a Lifetime Member is half-price and minor children of a Lifetime Member receive membership free of charge.

5) **Quality of Treatment**

CI employed a Ph.D level cryobiologist to develop CI-VM-1, CI's vitrification mixture which can help prevent crystalline formation at cryogenic temperatures.

6) **Standby Options and Assistance**

CI's use of Locally-Trained Funeral Directors means that our members can get knowledgeable, licensed care. Or members can arrange for professional cryonics standby and transport by subcontracting with [Suspended Animation, Inc](#) or [International Cryomedicine Experts](#) (I.C.E.) CI also offers Standby

Training Materials and Kits for members who choose to perform Local Standby.

7) **Affordable Funding Options**

Cryopreservation with CI can be funded through life insurance policies issued in the USA or other countries. Prepayment and other options for funding are also available to CI members.

8) **Cutting-Edge Cryonics Information**

Members receive a free e-subscription to the Cryonics Institute Newsletter, as well as access to our Facebook page, Twitter feed, YouTube channel and an official members-only forum.

9) **Helpful, Professional Support**

CI's professional staff is available to answer any questions and address any concerns you may have about CI, your membership or Cryopreservation.

10) **Additional Preservation Services**

CI offers a sampling kit, shipping and long-term liquid nitrogen storage of tissues and DNA from members, their families or pets for just \$98.

11) **Support Education and Research**

Membership fees help CI to fund important cryonics research and public outreach, education and information programs to advance the science of cryonics.

12) **Member Ownership and Control**

CI Members are the ultimate authority in the organization and own all CI assets. They elect the Board of Directors, from whom are chosen our officers. CI members also can change the Bylaws of the organization (except for corporate purposes).



To get started, contact us at:

(586) 791-5961 • email: info@cryonics.org

Visit us online at www.cryonics.org

Member Readiness Checklist

*You've signed up for cryonics -
what are the next steps?*

Welcome Aboard! You have taken the first critical step in preparing for the future and possibly ensuring your own survival. Now what should you do? People often ask "What can I do to make sure I have an optimal suspension?" Here's a checklist of important steps to consider.

- Become a fully funded member through [life insurance](#) or easy pre-payments
Some members use term life and invest or pay off the difference at regular intervals. Some use whole life or just prepay the costs outright. You have to decide what is best for you, but it is best to act sooner rather than later as insurance prices tend to rise as you get older and some people become uninsurable because of unforeseen health issues. You may even consider making CI the owner of your life insurance policy.
- Keep CI informed on a regular basis about your health status or address changes. Make sure your CI paperwork and funding are always up to date. CI cannot help you if we do not know you need help.
- Keep your family and friends up to date on your wishes to be cryopreserved. Being reclusive about cryonics can be costly and cause catastrophic results.
- Keep your doctor, lawyer, and funeral director up to date on your wishes to be cryopreserved. The right approach to the right professionals can be an asset.
- Prepare and execute a Living Will and Power of Attorney for Health Care that reflects your cryonics-related wishes. Make sure that CI is updated at regular intervals as well.
- Review the [CI Standby Manual](#) and other materials designed to help you with you Standby Planning. Also, consider joining or forming a local standby group to support your cryonics wishes. This may be one of the most important decisions you can make after you are fully funded. As they say-"Failing to plan is planning to fail".
- Always wear your cryonics bracelet or necklace identifying your wishes should you become incapacitated. Keep a wallet card as well. If you aren't around people who support your wishes and you can't speak for yourself a medical bracelet can help save you.
- Get involved! If you can, donate time and money. Cryonics is not a turnkey operation. Pay attention and look for further tips and advice to make both your personal arrangements and cryonics as a whole a success. The stronger our organization is, the stronger your chances of success.
- Keep your records, contact information and contracts up to date. It is recommended you review your relevant information annually at a minimum. One way is to schedule time to review all your materials at the same time you submit your required Annual Proof of Funding to CI. Also, Be especially aware of easy to forget things like a new email, phone number or address. Remember, you can also contact us at any time to ask if you have any outstanding paperwork or other info that needs to be updated.

The online [CI Members' Information Form](#) is a great resource for updating your current information on file.

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CI NEWS

What's happening at the Cryonics Institute



2021 Cryonics Institute Annual General Meeting SUNDAY - SEPT 12, 2021

AGM Location: Infinity Hall & Sidebar

16650 E 14 Mile Road
Fraser, MI 48026
phone: 586-879-6157
website: infinityhallsidebar.com



2021 AGM Details

Sunday, September 12, 2021
Event start time: 3:00 pm
Event end time: 6:30 pm

Facility Tours

Tours of the Main and new Ancillary Facilities will be conducted from 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. at 24355 Sorrentino Court, Clinton Township, MI.

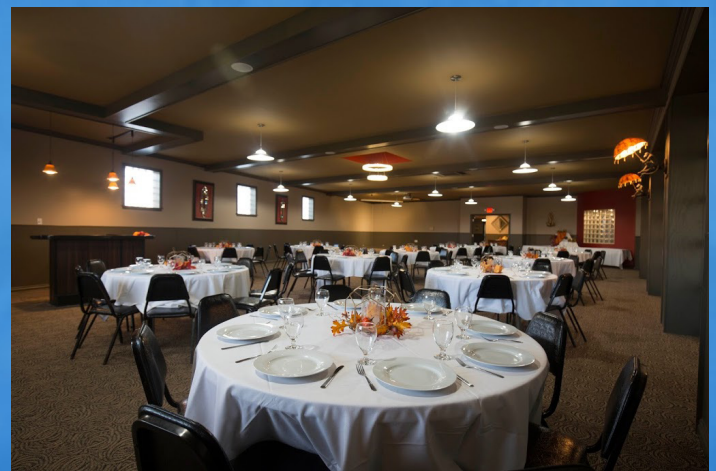
* Doors open at approximately 12:30 pm. Note the facility is not open to guests prior to this time, so please do not arrive early to visit with staff as we will be preparing for the tours and the meeting.

Night Before Dinner

For those who come a day early, an informal dinner will be held at 6 pm on Saturday evening at Sajo's Restaurant. 36470 Moravian, Clinton Twp., MI 48035. Phone: (586) 792-7256. www.Sajos.net.

ZOOM Virtual Meeting

CI will be live-streaming the meeting on Zoom. Please see our website on or around August 1 for the specific link and more details.





CI Board of Director: Call for Candidates

July 31 Deadline

Board Members serve three-year terms, with four positions up for election each year on a rotating basis. Board positions are open to Voting Members only. To qualify as a Voting Member of the Cryonics Institute a CI Member must be age 18 or over and either be a Lifetime Member or have been a Yearly Member for at least three years. Additionally, only CI Members with an executed Cryonic Suspension Agreement and having full funding for the Cryonic Suspension Agreement may be Voting Members.

Interested parties can submit their Ballot statements if they wish to be considered for election to the CI board of Directors. **Ballot statements must be postmarked or received by email at the CI Facility no later than Saturday, July 31, 2021.**

If the candidates wish to be included on the paper ballot before the election they must submit a bio / candidate statement of 150 words or less before this date. A photograph is optional, but encouraged. Please see previous issues of CI Magazine for examples of candidate statements.

All voting members will receive their ballot and voting instructions via mail prior to the 2021 AGM.

2021 Elections: Voter Eligibility Reminder

With the Annual General Meeting coming up in September, we would like to take the opportunity to remind CI Members they must have a funded contract and either be a Lifetime Member, or an Annual Member for at least three years to be eligible to vote. This also means that your funding information must be up to date. Our contract requires annual proof of funding be provided by the member, unless CI owns your insurance policy or you have prepaid your suspension fee. If it has been over a year since you provided proof of funding, please do so as soon as possible to ensure you are able to vote in this year's Director Election. If your funding is outdated, you will not be sent a ballot for voting.

The most important reason for providing proof of funding is so we can act without hesitation during an emergency. If your funding is not current, we will have to verify your funding before we can accept you as a patient. This can cause unnecessary delays and potentially affect your cryopreservation.

You are welcome to mail, email, or fax in your updated proof of funding documentation. Our address is 24355 Sorrentino Court, Clinton Township, MI 48035 USA. Our email address is info@cryonics.org. Our fax number is 586-792-7062.

We appreciate your cooperation and we look forward to seeing those who plan to attend the meeting!

CI NEWS

What's happening at the Cryonics Institute



Board of Directors
2021 CANDIDATES



Shannon Blevins

I Shannon William Blevins, have decided to run for a director's position at the Cryonics Institute. I have been a life member of CI since July 2002. My wife, Heather Ann Blevins, has been a life member since January 2020, and is currently a volunteer for the CI Facebook group. I strongly believe CI is moving in the right direction, and I would like to contribute more of my time helping CI grow. I am currently the Administrator of the CI Facebook group, editor of the CI Facebook page, an Administrator of the CI Twitter and Instagram, and creator and Administrator of CI merchandise at CafePress. I have been a senior member of Civil Air Patrol Auxiliary USAF since 2006; in which I currently have an active 2nd Lieutenant's rank. My positions in Civil Air Patrol have been Safety Officer and Observer.

Sincerely,
Shannon William Blevins



Constance Ettinger

Connie Ettinger (BGS, JD, 1977, 1979, respectively, University of Michigan) lives in Franklin, Michigan with her husband of 40 years, David Ettinger, CI's attorney and son of Robert Ettinger, founder of the Cryonics movement. She has been actively involved in CI since 1979 and is CI's longstanding Contract Officer. Her proudest accomplishment at CI to date was coordinating the end of life care and suspension of Robert Ettinger. "We were prepared for every imaginable contingency and gained the cooperation of local law enforcement and health officials so there was zero delay in his suspension. I learned that preparation and simple explanations about what Cryonics actually entails opened the doors to the cooperation we needed, a lesson I hope everyone heeds."



Paul Hagen

Paul Hagen lives in Waupaca, Wisconsin and is employed as a Senior Financial Specialist with the State of Wisconsin. He assists Veterans with financial counseling, Medicaid claims and funeral trusts. He is happily married with two wonderful children. Paul is in his thirteenth term serving on his city council. He has also volunteered in his community in numerous civic and charitable organizations. Paul has a strong connection to CI as his Dad, Jerry Hagen, is Patient #81. "My only agenda is to foster the long term safety and prosperity of CI. I believe in respectful discourse and common sense solutions."

CI NEWS

What's happening at the Cryonics Institute



Board of Directors
2021 CANDIDATES



Patrick Heller

Joined CI 1979, elected director and treasurer 1980 (while working as a CPA). At 41 years, the senior member of the board of directors. Personally knew 5 of CI's 6 founders who are now patients at CI. As treasurer, prepare CI's financial statements and consult on investments and major transactions. Use my business skills to help CI's financial operations, freeing up others to handle cryonics-related matters. Hard-nosed advocate that CI's finances continue to be conservative and fiscally strong. From 1981-2014 owned Liberty Coin Service in Lansing, Michigan's largest rare coin and precious metals dealership. 18 national honors include 2012 ANA National Coin Dealer of the Year. Still work part-time as Liberty's Communications Officer, mostly writing and speaking. Have been quoted in the Wall Street Journal and Lansing State Journal on cryonics. CI needs a mixture of old and new directors for continuity and fresh ideas.



Joseph "Joe" Kowalsky

I've been involved with the Cryonics Institute since the 1980's (high school). I am proud to have been part of CI's growth - in size, knowledge and worldwide respect - as a member, Board Member (over 25 years), vice-president (two years), and secretary (two years). I have learned from pioneers, including Robert Ettinger and Andy Zawacki, and from others who have championed cryonics for decades. I have spoken before groups and media from around the world about what cryonics is, and what makes CI a superior institution. Outside of CI, under the auspices of the Immortalist Society, I co-ordinate the Organ CryoPreservation Prize, an effort to make organ transplants safer, less costly and more available via short and long term cryopreservation of organs. I would be honored to serve for another term if you think I can be of further service.

CI NEWS

What's happening at the Cryonics Institute



Board of Directors
2021 CANDIDATES



Nicolas Lacombe

I care a lot about the long term future, notably about existential risks. I am also a member of the Long Now Foundation.

I'm 30 years old, and would like to increase my involvement in cryonics long term.

I have worked in the software development industry for 8 years in various roles such as developer, team lead and software architect. I would like to offer my expertise and skills to help CI improve computer security and user experience.

I would also like to help CI in any other way I can, which might include things like improving its processes, assessing the quality of CI's protocols (ex.: using electron microscopy), helping with membership growth, improving standby/stabilisation/transport services, and improving CI's long term sustainability.

Arthur B. Zahreciyan

(No photo available
at press time)

Arthur B. Zahreciyan

I, Arthur B. Zahreciyan, would you like to thank you for providing me the opportunity to serve on the board of directors for the Cryonics Institute.

I currently serve on the board of directors for Black Diamond Homeowners Association as the Treasurer for 2 years managing a 2+ million dollar budget. I acquired an AS in Biotechnology in 2015 alongside becoming a lifetime overfunded member of CI. I have associated with numerous Cryonics members in the South Florida area from the Life Extension Foundation, The Church of Perpetual Life, Teens & Twenties meetings. I will continue in the direction of developing more effective methods of cryonic preservation to allow for efficacious means of cellular preservation. I aim to serve on the board of directors to ensure we continue our due diligence in attaining reanimation for our fellow members in the hopefully near future.

Thank you for your consideration,

Arthur B. Zahreciyan



DNA and Tissue Sample Preservation Services

Lifetime and Annual Members of the Cryonics Institute can have DNA / Tissue Samples cryopreserved by CI. Annual Members must have fully paid for no less than one year, i.e. have paid \$120 yearly dues (plus the initial \$75 initiation fee if it is their first year) for a full year's Membership.

CI provides a DNA sampling kit for hair, skin, and/or inner cheek samples from living persons or pets. Tissue samples may be extracted from a deceased person or pet by a funeral director or veterinarian, respectively. A CI Member may store DNA/tissue for \$98 for four samples that will each fit into a 1.8ml sample vial. Some members choose to store larger samples, which cost more and that cost is calculated based on the size of the sample. The cost includes a DNA sampling kit which consists of four 1.8-milliliter nalgene vials, swabs, instructions, tissue storage contracts and labels that can be placed on the vials, along with a mailing envelope. Each nalgene vial can be individually labeled for content. Each full kit is labeled, identified by a tissue storage contract and stored in liquid nitrogen at the Cryonics Institute.

Tissue samples need not be sent to CI in the DNA sampling kit. Any small vial or container can be used, and CI will transfer samples to nalgene vials for storage in liquid nitrogen.

For more information on DNA and Tissue Storage Cryopreservation, please contact us at info@cryonics.org or visit cryonics.org:

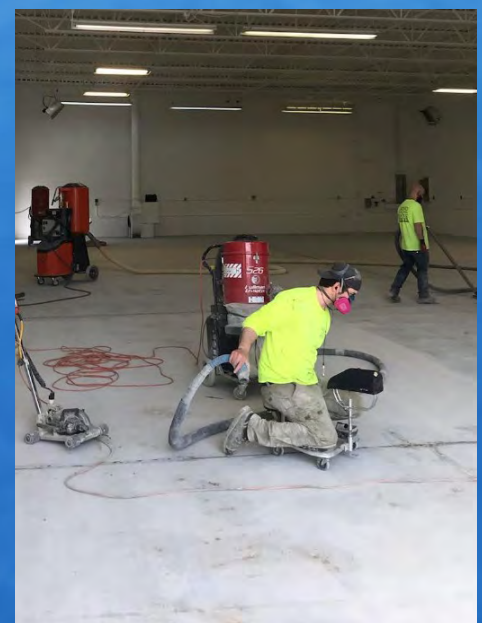


Building Renovations Complete

Building renovations have been completed at CI's auxiliary facility. The next step will be to install the Bulk Liquid Nitrogen Tank and LN2 Delivery Lines to service cryostats. CI expects to have these upgrades installed late this year or early in 2022, at which time the new facility will be fully operational and ready to receive cryostats and store patients. Thanks for all the great work done by Mike McCauley and Andy Zawacki. We've come a long way since the project started in October of 2017!



Preparations and work on the floor. A cryonics facility requires special attention to the floor, considering the massive weight of multiple cryostat units. Cracks in particular can cause major issues when moving a cryostat into position, so a smooth, even surface is essential. Pictured are workers from the company "Grind and Shine" fixing cracks, grinding and preparing for polish and seal.

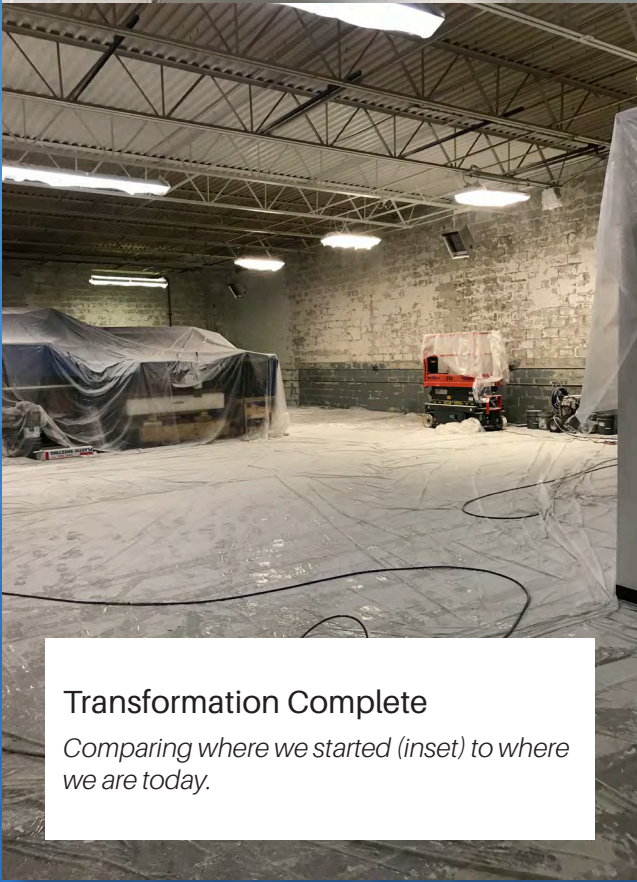




Inset: Tearing out the old parking lot for re-paving.

Below, framing and pouring the Liquid Nitrogen Bulk Tank. foundation.





Transformation Complete

Comparing where we started (inset) to where we are today.



Reckoning the Ages of Revived People

Contributed by Chris Manning

A person who is revived from cryopreservation will have at least three possible ages and three “birthdays”. I will call them your breathing, chronological and revival birthdays, or B, C and R birthdays.

Your B birthday is the date on which the total amount of time you have been breathing is a whole number of years, your C birthday is your ordinary chronological birthday, and your R birthday is the anniversary of the day of your revival.

I have done some calculations using Robert Ettinger as an example.

Bob was born on 4 December, 1918 and deanimated on 23 July, 2011 aged 92 years and 231 days.

Suppose he is revived on 14 January, 2072. Then his breathing birthday B would be 28 May and he would celebrate his 93rd breathing birthday on 28 May, 2072.

His chronological birthday C would remain 4 December and he would celebrate his 154th chronological birthday on 4 December, 2072.

Finally, his revival birthday R would be 14 January and he would celebrate his 1st revival birthday on 14 January, 2073.

I can't think of any other birthdays a revived person would be able to celebrate, but if I do I will let you know!

10 Worst Mistakes in Cryonics



1) Not signing up ahead of time

Becoming a member, having contracts in place, and having paperwork in order should not be a last minute decision. Waiting until the last minute or after death results in an unnecessary delay of care or worse- No suspension at all! Don't wait. Sign up here and be prepared. <https://www.cryonics.org/membership/>

2) Not providing proof of funding

Some people believe that they can worry about funding later or if they have funding, they have put off providing proof of funding to CI. This should be done annually. Failing to provide this can result in a delay of care while the funding clears, which can take weeks. Send your proof of funding to CI now to be prepared.

3) Not telling anyone your plans

Being reclusive or not telling family or friends your wishes is not recommended. You should not be afraid to tell those around you what your wishes are, especially your next of kin. Wearing a bracelet, necklace or having identification or other items in view can speak to your wishes. This is all you have when you can't speak for yourself. Disasters have resulted in the past from not sharing. Talk with your family, close friends and your estate attorney, so you can be prepared.

4) Not planning

Many think cryonics is a turnkey service where you can just sign up and let fate take over. No matter how much you pay for cryonics, you are the only one who can make sure that you will have the best chance by planning. CI has provided a lot of information on our website and in our standby manuals. Those who plan succeed those who don't fail.

For more information visit: <https://www.cryonics.org/resources/ci-standby-kits-and-instructions>

10 Worst Mistakes in Cryonics

5) Not notifying CI of Emergencies

There is no way that your cryonics provider can help you if they do not know of your emergency. Your family, friends, standby group or next of kin must immediately contact CI when you are having health issues or worse. It is also important for CI to know if you have up and coming surgeries or procedures, including terminal illness. Patients with a diagnosed terminal illness could enter hospice care, which might help your cryonics situation vastly. Any delay in notifying us directly could result in a poor suspension. Those helping you must have simple and clear instructions.

Here are some tips... <https://www.cryonics.org/resources/category/C57/57>

6) Committing suicide

Anyone who commits suicide who is not terminally ill or breaks a local law in doing so is potentially putting both themselves and our organization at great risk. CI will not risk itself for people who engage in behavior that goes against our mission to preserve life. Such activity will likely lead to an autopsy and long delays, rendering the suspension process substandard or impossible to carry out.

Do not consider cryonics as a way out of your problems. You are likely to not get suspended under those circumstances. If you do not have a terminal illness and are considering suicide, you should seek mental health advice and treatment as soon as possible. <https://www.mentalhelp.net/articles/depression-hotline/>

7) Engaging in Risky or illegal activities

Risky behaviors or associations that lead to the patient dying around suspicious circumstances will also likely lead to mandated autopsies that will also stand in the way of your cryonics wishes. It is best to use common sense and not put yourself in harm's way. Not only could your life be ended, so too could your chances of cryonics suspension or future reanimation. Use common sense and stay safe.

8) Providing financial or legal incentives that encourage your not being suspended.

Leaving all of your insurance or cryonics money to family if you are not suspended is certainly an option at CI, but ironically it does provide financial incentive for hostile family members to block your suspension. As often is the case, people will make sure you are not suspended to get a hold of your money.

One suggestion is to leave family and next of kin some separate money from cryonics funding while suggesting that Cryonics funding go to cryonics as a donation no matter if you are buried or suspended. In addition, family or next of kin can be further compelled to cooperate if they will actually lose the money that is allocated to them for not cooperating. It is also suggested that your family be made fully aware of your wishes and stipulations, so they know what the results of their actions will be. You want to make sure you put incentives and disincentives in the correct place, so that

your wishes are honored. It is suggested that your will and cryonics documentation reflect this and get reviewed by an attorney. See <https://www.cryonics.org/resources/protect-yourself-from-legal-threats>

9) Not removing a hostile next of kin from rights to your remains and finances

In many states and areas you can legally remove a hostile family member or next of kin from your estate. You can reassign someone who is sympathetic to cryonics and who has the legal authority to disposition of your remains, as well as your assets. In some states and locations there are disposition of remains reassignment documents, as well as powers of attorney, both in regards to financial as well as medical decisions. The executor of your will or anyone involved with making decisions should be sympathetic to your cryonics wishes. It is your responsibility to make your wishes very clear and to remove any doubt or potential legal resistance from family or next of kin.

We suggest seeking legal advice to help you in this regard. Some members have even made a video statement of their wishes and given it to both their cryonics organization as well as their attorneys. Not being careful could mean that you don't get suspended, despite your wishes. Many are surprised to learn that they lose their rights upon legal death. See an attorney and prepare.

10) Dying under less than favorable conditions

This seems harder to control than the other situations, but there are some things you can do to make your situation more favorable. You can diet, exercise and follow the latest official medical advice to stay healthy longer. The longer you are alive, the better the technology will probably be for suspending you and the closer we will be to a future that may be able to reverse your condition.

You can also avoid travel to remote or hostile places where such travel is risky. Some overseas travel can result in long delays both logistically and bureaucratically. In general, dying near your cryonics provider or cryonics standby group helps your chances. Living a healthy lifestyle and staying sociable, while surrounding yourself with people who will act on your behalf is paramount. Building solid, positive relationships with good people is probably one of the most important things you can do to have your wishes honored. Take care of yourself and maintain social connectivity.



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U of M hopes to create a human organ bank for transplants, with cryogenic research

The University of Minnesota is part of a major nationwide research effort aimed at stopping time during the transplant process.

Author: Kent Erdahl | Published: 10:31 PM CDT April 28, 2021

MINNEAPOLIS — It might sound a bit like science fiction, but a multi-million dollar investment in cryogenic organ and tissue preservation at the University of Minnesota could help countless people in need of a transplant buy a precious resource: time.

Ask the CEO of LifeSource, which has facilitated organ and tissue transplants in Minnesota for more than 30 years, and she'll tell you that every single day is a battle with the clock.

"We have restrictions of just a few hours from the time the donor donates organs until we can get them into the recipient," said LifeSource CEO Susan Gunderson.

That's why Gunderson says she's excited to see a \$100 million investment by government and private donors happening just a few miles away at the University of Minnesota.

"What we're really trying to do is stop biological time," said John Bischof, Director of the University of Minnesota Institute for Engineering in Medicine.

John Bischof is the Director of the University of Minnesota's Institute for Engineering in Medicine, which has just launched a new Organ and Tissue Preservation Center, with the goal of using cryogenic - or extreme sub-zero - storage, to create a human organ bank.

"The lower you go in temperature, the longer your preservation time," Bischof said. "So what we're trying to do is put these tissues and organs into a glass. We basically add biological antifreeze molecules and then we lower the temperature in such a way that we don't crystalize, but we go into a glass and the metabolism essentially stops. Then



you're able to preserve that biological system essentially indefinitely."

Kent Erdahl: "I'd imagine it's one thing to freeze it, but it's another thing to thaw it out and make it work again. Is that where this research comes in?"

Bischof: "Absolutely, bringing back these systems that are in a glassy state, bringing them back has been a problem."

Much like an ice cube dropped in a glass of water, Bischof says if a frozen organ is reheated too quickly and unevenly, it will crack. To avoid that, he says the organs are perfused with iron oxide nanoparticles.

"Without touching the organ, we can have a radio frequency field that basically activates those nanoparticles and then uniformly and rapidly returns the organ, or the tissue, from this glassy state without cracking," Bischoff said.

He says the reanimation process has already (*continues*)

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DNA: The Ultimate Data-Storage Solution

The double helix can archive a staggering amount of information in an almost inconceivably small volume

By Latchesar Ionkov, Bradley Settlemyer on May 28, 2021

In a world flooded with data, figuring out where and how to store it efficiently and inexpensively becomes a larger problem every day. One of the most exotic solutions might turn out to be one of the best: archiving information in DNA molecules.

The prevailing long-term cold-storage method, which dates from the 1950s, writes data to pizza-sized reels of magnetic tape. By comparison, DNA storage is potentially less expensive, more energy-efficient and longer lasting. Studies show that DNA properly encapsulated with a salt remains stable for decades at room temperature and should last much longer in the controlled environs of a data center. DNA doesn't require maintenance, and files stored in DNA are easily copied for negligible cost.

Even better, DNA can archive a staggering amount of information in an almost inconceivably small volume. Consider this: humanity will generate an estimated 33 zettabytes of data by 2025—that's 3.3 followed by 22 zeroes. DNA storage can squeeze all that information into a ping-pong ball, with room to spare. The 74 million million bytes of information in the Library of Congress could be crammed into a DNA archive the size of a poppy seed—6,000 times over. Split the seed in half, and you could store all of Facebook's data.

Science fiction? Hardly. DNA storage technology exists today, but to make it viable, researchers have to clear a few daunting technological hurdles around integrating

different technologies. As part of a major collaboration to do that work, our team at Los Alamos National Laboratory has developed a key enabling technology for molecular storage. Our software, the Adaptive DNA Storage Codex (ADS Codex), translates data files from the binary language of zeroes and ones that computers understand into the four-letter code biology understands.

ADS Codex is a key part of the Intelligence Advanced Research Projects Activity (IARPA) Molecular Information Storage (MIST) program. MIST seeks to bring cheaper, bigger, longer-lasting storage to big-data operations in government and the private sector, with a short-term goal of writing one terabyte—a trillion bytes—and reading 10 terabytes within 24 hours at a cost of \$1,000.

FROM COMPUTER CODE TO GENETIC CODE

When most people think of DNA, they think of life, not computers. But DNA is itself a four-letter code for passing along information about an organism. DNA molecules are made from four types of bases, or nucleotides, each identified by a letter: adenine (A), thymine (T), guanine (G) and cytosine (C). They are the basis of all DNA code, providing the instruction manual for building every living thing on earth.

A fairly well-understood technology, DNA synthesis has been widely used in medicine, pharmaceuticals and bio-fuel development, to name just a few (*continues*)

ARTICLE CONTINUES AT [SCIENTIFICAMERICAN.COM](https://www.scientificamerican.com)

Credit: Getty Images

ScienceDaily®

from SCIENCE DAILY.COM

**Summary:**

Scientists fed fruit flies with a combination of probiotics and an herbal supplement called *Triphala* that was able to prolong the flies' longevity by 60 percent and protect them against chronic diseases associated with aging.

Credit: Getty Images

Secret to longevity may lie in the microbiome and the gut

Experiments in fruit flies show increased lifespan thanks to a combination of probiotics and an herbal supplement

May 31, 2018 | Source: McGill University

You are what you eat. Or so the saying goes. Science now tells us that we are what the bacteria living in our intestinal tract eat and this could have an influence on how well we age. Building on this, McGill University scientists fed fruit flies with a combination of probiotics and an herbal supplement called *Triphala* that was able to prolong the flies' longevity by 60 % and protect them against chronic diseases associated with aging.

The study, published in *Scientific Reports*, adds to a growing body of evidence of the influence that gut bacteria can have on health. The researchers incorporated a symbiotic -- made of probiotics with a polyphenol-rich supplement -- into the diet of fruit flies.

The flies fed with the synbiotic lived up to 66 days old -- 26 days more than the ones without the supplement. They also showed reduced traits of aging, such as mounting insulin resistance, inflammation and oxidative stress.

"Probiotics dramatically change the architecture of the gut microbiota, not only in its composition but also in respect to how the foods that we eat are metabolized," says Satya Prakash, professor of biomedical engineering in McGill's Faculty of Medicine and senior author of the study. "This allows a single probiotic formulation to simultaneously act on several biochemical signaling pathways to elicit broad beneficial physiological effects, and explains why the single formulation we present in this paper has such a dramatic effect on so many different markers."

The fruit fly is remarkably similar to mammals with about 70 % similarity in terms of their biochemical pathways, making it a good indicator of what would happen in humans, adds Prakash.

"The effects in humans would likely not be as dramatic, but our results definitely suggest that a diet specifically incorporating *Triphala* along with these probiotics will promote a long and healthy life." (*continues*)

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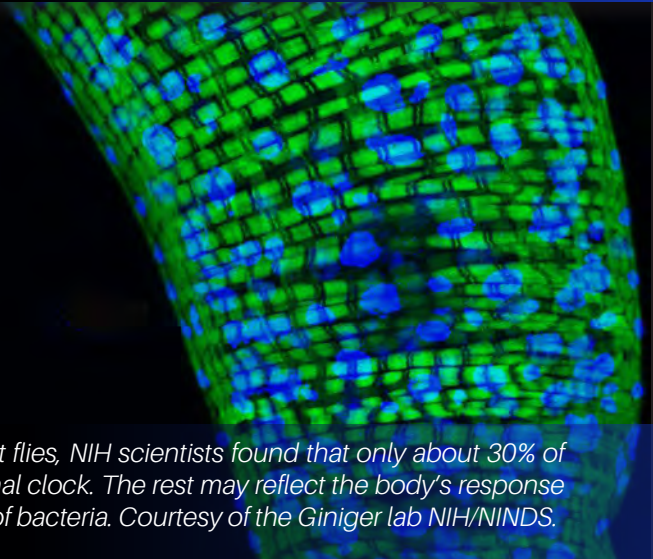
National Institute of
Neurological Disorders
and Strokefrom [NINDS.NIH.GOV](https://www.ninds.nih.gov)

Study suggests scientists may need to rethink which genes control aging

Thursday, June 24, 2021

NIH scientists discover that bacteria may drive activity of many hallmark aging genes in flies

Genes, Bacteria and Aging Flies: In a study of *Drosophila* fruit flies, NIH scientists found that only about 30% of the genes that are hallmarks for aging may set an animal's internal clock. The rest may reflect the body's response to bacteria. Above is a picture of a *Drosophila* gut, a key source of bacteria. Courtesy of the Giniger lab NIH/NINDS.



To better understand the role of bacteria in health and disease, National Institutes of Health researchers fed fruit flies antibiotics and monitored the lifetime activity of hundreds of genes that scientists have traditionally thought control aging. To their surprise, the antibiotics not only extended the lives of the flies but also dramatically changed the activity of many of these genes. Their results suggested that only about 30% of the genes traditionally associated with aging set an animal's internal clock while the rest reflect the body's response to bacteria.

"For decades scientists have been developing a hit list of common aging genes. These genes are thought to control the aging process throughout the animal kingdom, from worms to mice to humans," said Edward Giniger, Ph.D., senior investigator, at the NIH's National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) and the senior author of the study published in *iScience*. "We were shocked to find that only about 30% of these genes may be directly involved in the aging process. We hope that these results will help medical researchers better understand the forces that underlie several age-related disorders."

The results happened by accident. Dr. Giniger's team studies the genetics of aging in a type of fruit fly called *Drosophila*. Previously, the team showed how a hyperactive immune

system may play a critical role in the neural damage that underlies several aging brain disorders. However, that study did not examine the role that bacteria may have in this process.

To test this idea, they raised newborn male flies on antibiotics to prevent bacteria growth. At first, they thought that the antibiotics would have little or no effect. But, when they looked at the results, they saw something interesting. The antibiotics lengthened the fly's lives by about six days, from 57 days for control flies to 63 for the treated ones.

"This is a big jump in age for flies. In humans, it would be the equivalent of gaining about 20 years of life," said Arvind Kumar Shukla, Ph.D., a post-doctoral fellow on Dr. Giniger's team and the lead author of the study. "We were totally caught off guard and it made us wonder why these flies took so long to die."

Dr. Shukla and his colleagues looked for clues in the genes of the flies. Specially, they used advanced genetic techniques to monitor gene activity in the heads of 10, 30, and 45-day old flies. In a previous study, the team discovered links between the age of a fly and the activity of several genes. In this study, they found that raising the flies on antibiotics broke many of these links. (*continues*)

[ARTICLE CONTINUES AT NINDS.NIH.GOV](https://www.ninds.nih.gov)



from **EUREKALERT.ORG**

AI spots healthy stem cells quickly and accurately

Researchers from Tokyo Medical and Dental University (TMDU) have designed an artificial intelligence system that rapidly identifies stem cells for growing skin grafts

TOKYO MEDICAL AND DENTAL UNIVERSITY

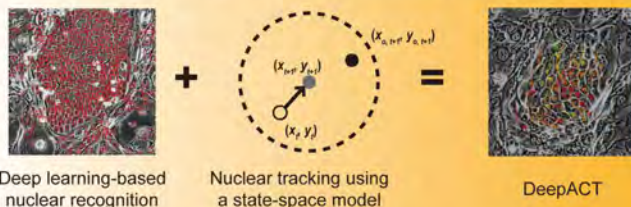
Tokyo, Japan - Stem cell therapy is at the cutting edge of regenerative medicine, but until now researchers and clinicians have had to painstakingly evaluate stem cell quality by looking at each cell individually under a microscope. Now, researchers from Japan have found a way to speed up this process, using the power of artificial intelligence (AI).

In a study published in February in *Stem Cells*, researchers from Tokyo Medical and Dental University (TMDU) reported that their AI system, called DeepACT, can identify healthy, productive skin stem cells with the same accuracy that a human can.

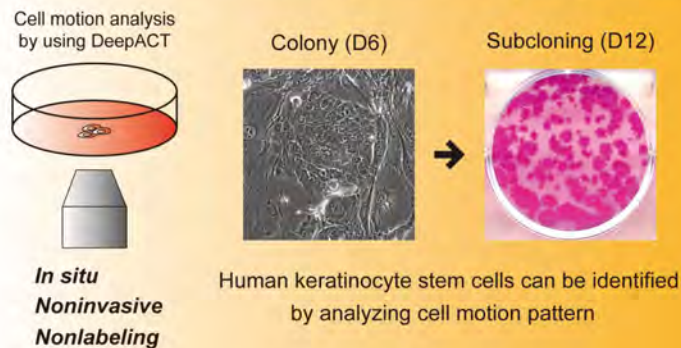
Stem cells are able to develop into several different kinds of mature cells, which means they can be used to grow new tissues in cases of injury or disease. Keratinocyte (skin) stem cells are used to treat inherited skin diseases and to grow sheets of skin that is used to repair large burns.

"Keratinocyte stem cells are one of the few types of adult stem cells that grow well in the lab. The healthiest keratinocytes move more quickly than less healthy cells, so they can be identified by the eye using a microscope," explains Takuya Hirose, one of the lead authors of the study. "However, this method is time-consuming, labor-intensive, and error-prone." *(continues)*

Deep learning-based automated cell tracking (DeepACT)



Identification of human keratinocyte stem cells by using DeepACT



CAPTION

DeepACT comprises two main modules: identifying human keratinocytes at single-cell resolution from phase-contrast images of cultures through deep learning and tracking keratinocyte motion in the colony using a state-space model. As human keratinocyte stem cell colonies exhibits a unique motion pattern, DeepACT can distinguish keratinocyte stem cell colonies from non-stem cell-derived colonies by analyzing the spatial and velocity information of cells. This system can be widely applied to stem cell cultures used in regenerative medicine and provides a platform for developing reliable and noninvasive quality control technology.

CREDIT

Department of Stem Cell Biology, TMDU

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VentureBeat

from VENTUREBEAT.COM



DeepMind says reinforcement learning is 'enough' to reach general AI

by Ben Dickson | @BenDee983

June 9, 2021 4:40 PM

Credit: Getty Images

In their decades-long chase to create artificial intelligence, computer scientists have designed and developed all kinds of complicated mechanisms and technologies to replicate vision, language, reasoning, motor skills, and other abilities associated with intelligent life. While these efforts have resulted in AI systems that can efficiently solve specific problems in limited environments, they fall short of developing the kind of general intelligence seen in humans and animals.

In a new paper submitted to the peer-reviewed *Artificial Intelligence* journal, scientists at U.K.-based AI lab DeepMind argue that intelligence and its associated abilities will emerge not from formulating and solving complicated problems but by sticking to a simple but powerful principle: reward maximization.

Titled "Reward is Enough," the paper, which is still in pre-proof as of this writing, draws inspiration from studying the evolution of natural intelligence as well as drawing lessons from recent achievements in artificial intelligence. The authors suggest that reward maximization and trial-and-error experience are enough to develop behavior that exhibits the kind of abilities associated with intelligence. And from

this, they conclude that reinforcement learning, a branch of AI that is based on reward maximization, can lead to the development of artificial general intelligence.

Two paths for AI

One common method for creating AI is to try to replicate elements of intelligent behavior in computers. For instance, our understanding of the mammal vision system has given rise to all kinds of AI systems that can categorize images, locate objects in photos, define the boundaries between objects, and more. Likewise, our understanding of language has helped in the development of various natural language processing systems, such as question answering, text generation, and machine translation.

These are all instances of narrow artificial intelligence, systems that have been designed to perform specific tasks instead of having general problem-solving abilities. Some scientists believe that assembling multiple narrow AI modules will produce higher intelligent systems. For example, you can have a software system that coordinates between separate computer vision, voice processing, NLP, *(continues)*

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Experts Weigh In on Pentagon UFO Report

The vast majority of examined incidents were not caused by U.S. advanced technology programs, the forthcoming report concludes. So what's going on?

By Leonard David on June 8, 2021

For more than a decade, the U.S. Department of Defense has been quietly cataloging and investigating scores of bizarre encounters—most from the U.S. Navy—of ships and fighter jets tangling with, or being tailgated by, unidentified flying objects (UFOs). Beginning in 2017, videos and eyewitness accounts of these weird sightings found their way into public view, ultimately spurring Congress to demand that the Pentagon produce a report summarizing all that the U.S. government knows about so-called unidentified aerial phenomena, or UAP (an alternate term with considerably less stigma than the much maligned “UFOs”).

Produced under the auspices of a Pentagon group called the UAP Task Force, an unclassified version of the report is expected to be released later this month. Upon establishing the task force, the DOD released an accompanying statement explaining the justifications for its existence: “The safety of our personnel and the security of our operations are of paramount concern. The Department of Defense and the military departments take any incursions by unauthorized aircraft into our training ranges or designated airspace very seriously and examine each report. This includes examinations of incursions that are initially reported as UAP when the observer cannot immediately identify what he or she is observing.”



Still from a video released by the U.S. Department of Defense showing an encounter between a Navy F/A-18 Super Hornet and an unknown object. Credit: U.S. Department of Defense

Times to 13,000-word articles in the New Yorker, as well as prominent coverage on 60 Minutes and other prime-time television programs. Through it all, a sizable contingent of true believers have steadily proclaimed, “We told you so,” insistent in their conviction that, whether called UFOs or UAP, the entities seemingly slipping through our skies are actually alien spacecraft—and have been visiting Earth for a very long time.

Those deeply entrenched public beliefs, paired with the apparent reinvigoration of investigative interest in these incidents at the highest levels of government, can lead to dazzling speculations. Might we be on the verge of *(continues)*

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Beijing will intensify the crackdown on bitcoin mining to protect the country's financial system, as well as meet its clean energy and reduced carbon emission goals. Photo: Reuters

China to crack down on mining of cryptocurrencies, delivering a one-two punch to digital tokens after triggering global sell-off

- *The State Council, China's cabinet, has targeted bitcoin mining enterprises for the first time*
- *The latest initiative seeks to protect the country's financial system, as well as meet its clean energy and reduced carbon emission goals*

China will crack down on bitcoin mining, according to an announcement by the government's cabinet three days after regulators reiterated their ban of digital tokens in financial transactions, delivering a one-two punch that may further weigh on the cryptocurrency industry after triggering last week's global sell-off.

The government will "crack down on bitcoin mining and trading behaviour, and resolutely prevent the transfer of individual risks to the society", according to a statement by the State Council's Financial Stability and Development

Committee chaired by Vice-Premier Liu He, the Chinese president's top representative on economic and financial matters.

China is the world's largest cryptocurrency mining location, accounting for 65 per cent of the bitcoin hash rate, a unit of measure for the processing power used by the bitcoin network to verify transactions and mine new tokens of the cryptocurrency, according to estimates by Cambridge Bitcoin Electricity Consumption Index. The government, which has banned financial transactions of bitcoin and other tokens since 2019, had turned a blind eye towards the cryptocurrency mining farms in Inner Mongolia, Sichuan, Xinjiang and other mainland locations until now.

"The wording of the statement did not leave much leeway for cryptocurrency mining," said Li Yi, chief *(continues)*

ARTICLE CONTINUES AT SCMP.COM

RT

from RT.COM

Bill Gates backs tiny robotic surgeons that operate from inside a patient's body

Bill Gates has thrown \$10 million behind the development of tiny camera-wielding surgical robots that can be placed inside a person's body through a small incision and controlled by a surgeon anywhere in the world via VR.

The innovative technology uses miniscule robots combined with virtual reality to carry out a groundbreaking new concept for minimally invasive surgery.

The human-like bots consist of two arms and a head. The arms are controlled by a surgeon as they move their own arms, while the head acts as the surgeon's eyes so they can see inside the patient's body and virtually perform the procedure from within. The operation can theoretically be carried out from hundreds of miles away – providing there's a strong internet connection, of course.

The idea is for surgeons to feel like they have been shrunk down to pocket size and transported into a patient's body. The technology has the ability to cut the cost of major surgeries and also given people access to the best surgeons regardless of location.

"We've been working on ways to miniaturize robotics and put all of the motion of surgery into the abdominal cavity," said Vicarious Surgical co-founder Adam Sachs, 27, to TechCrunch. "If you put all of the motion inside the abdominal cavity you are not confined to motion around the incision sites."

Vicarious Surgical, the Massachusetts-based company developing the technology, announced the funding led by the billionaire's 'Gates Frontier' on Thursday. They said the investment gets them one step closer to their long-term goal of bringing the groundbreaking technology to patients in remote parts of the world.



FILE PHOTO: Bill Gates at the 2019 World Economic Forum. © Reuters / Arnd Wiegmann

"A lot of our long-term vision is about growing and scaling our technology to the point where it's accessible not just to big cities and major hospitals in the US [but] also the small cities and towns in the rural US and around the world as well," said Sachs.

Most hospitals can't afford the \$2-million robots needed to perform today's robotic surgeries, says Sachs, but by making the devices much smaller, the technology will be more widely available. "Long-term, it's about the democratization of surgery that can come from surgical robotics," he said.

[ORIGINAL ARTICLE AT RT.COM](#)



Worldwide Cryonics Groups

AUSTRALIA: The Cryonics Association of Australasia offers support and information for Australia & nearby countries. caalist@prix.pricom.com.au. Their Public Relations Officer is Philip Rhoades. phil@pricom.com.au GPO Box 3411, Sydney, NSW 2001 Australia. Phone: +6128001 6204 (office) or +61 2 99226979 (home.)

BELGIUM: Cryonics Belgium is an organisation that exists to inform interested parties and, if desired, can assist with handling the paperwork for a cryonic suspension. The website can be found at www.cryonicsbelgium.com. To get in touch, please send an email to info@cryonicsbelgium.com.

BHUTAN: Can help Cryonics Institute Members who need help for the transport & hospital explanation about the cryonics procedure to the Dr and authorities in Thimphu & Paro. Contacts : Jamyang Palden & Tenzin Rabgay / Emails : palde002@umn.edu or jamgarnett@hotmail.co Phones : Jamyang / 975-2-32-66-50 & Tenzin / 975-2-77-21-01-87

CANADA: This is a very active group that participated in Toronto's first cryopreservation. President, Christine Gaspar; Vice President, Gary Tripp. Visit them at: <http://www.cryocdn.org/>. There is a subgroup called the Toronto Local Group. Meeting dates and other conversations are held via the Yahoo group. This is a closed group. To join write: csc5@cryocdn.org

QUEBEC: Contact: Stephan Beauregard, C.I. Director & Official Administrator of the Cryonics Institute Facebook Page. Information about Cryonics & perfusion services in Montreal for all cryonicists. Services available in French & English: stephan@cryonics.org

CHILE: Community oriented to provide reliable information on human cryopreservation, as far as technical scientific as well as other practical aspects. Dissemination, awareness and education on issues related to the extension of life in general and cryonics in particular. Contact José Luis Galdames via galdamesh.jl@gmail.com.

FINLAND: The Finnish Cryonics Society, (KRYOFIN) was established in 2008 and is an organization collaborating with all nearby groups and organizations. Contact them at: kryoniikka.fi Their President is Ville Salmensuu ville@salmensuu.fi

FRANCE: SOCIETE CRYONICS DE FRANCE is a non profit French organization working closely with European cryonics groups. For more information: J.Roland Missionnier: phone: 33 (0) 6 64 90 98 41 or email: cryonicsnews.inpi@gmail.com • **Facebook group**

Francecryonics-Webnode Vivien Gruss, member of Cryonics Institute, has opened a web site for the information of persons interested in cryonic suspension.

GERMANY: DGAB There are a number of Cryonicists in Germany. Their Organization is called "Deutsche Gesellschaft für Angewandte Biostase e.V.", or short "DGAB". More information on their homepage at www.biostase.de. If there are further questions, contact their Board at vorstand@biostase.de

GERMANY: CRYONICS-GERMANY is an active group providing cryonics support, including a special 8-member Standby Response Team. Members from Germany or Internationally are welcome to join. at <http://cryonics-germany.org>. Direct inquiries to contact@cryonics-germany.org.

INDIA: Can help Cryonics Institute Members who need help for the transport & hospital explication about the cryonics procedure to the Dr and authority in Bangalore & Vellore Area. Contacts : Br Sankeerth & Biooster Vignesh / Email : vicky23101994@gmail.com Phones : Biooster / 918148049058 & Br Sankeerth / 917795115939

ITALY: The Italian Cryonics Group (inside the Life Extension Research Group (LIFEXT Research Group)) www.lifext.org and relative forum: forum.lifext.org. Contact Giovanni Ranzo at: giovanni1410@gmail.com

Kriorus Italy: Representative Filippo Polistena, email: filippopolistena45@gmail.com. phone: +39 334 298 9378

JAPAN: Hikaru Midorikawa is President Japan Cryonics Association. Formed in 1998, our goals are to disseminate cryonics information in Japan, to provide cryonics services in Japan, and eventually, to allow cryonics to take root in the Japanese society. Contact mid_hikaru@yahoo.co.jp or <http://www.cryonics.jp/>

NEPAL: Can help Cryonics Institute Members who need help for the transport & hospital explanation about the cryonics procedure to the Dr and authorities in Kathmandu. Contact : Suresh K. Shrestha / Email : toursuresh@gmail.com Phone : 977-985-1071364 / PO Box 14480 Kathmandu.

THE NETHERLANDS: Dutch Cryonics Organization is the local support group since 2002 and able to provide advice, standby, perfusion and shipment 24/7, in case of need. We are an active group utilizing the latest equipment. New members from The Netherlands welcome.

E-mail: info@cryonisme.nl
website: <http://www.cryonisme.nl>

NORWAY : Can help Cryonics Institute Members who need help for the transport & hospital explication about the cryonics procedure to the Dr, funeral home and authority at Sandvika. Contacts : Gunnar Hammersmark Sandvika Begegravelsesbyraa / Phones : 011-47-2279-7736

RUSSIA: KrioRus is a Russian cryonics organization operating in Russia, CIS and Eastern Europe that exists to help arrange cryopreservation and longterm suspension locally, or with CI or Alcor. Please contact kriorus@gmail.com for additional information or visit <http://www.kriorus.ru>. Phone: +7 962 947-50-79

SWEDEN: www.kryonik.se or Facebook: Svenska Kryonikföreningen. Initially, the society will focus on providing information and assistance to those who wish to sign up for cryonics. Eventually, we also hope to provide practical assistance in cases, possibly in collaboration with other European groups.

SWITZERLAND: www.cryosuisse.ch
CRYOSUISSE The Swiss Society for Cryonics is an active group with over 30 members. To join, [email info@cryosuisse.ch](mailto:info@cryosuisse.ch)

UNITED KINGDOM: Cryonics UK is a nonprofit UK based standby group. www.cryonics-uk.org Cryonics UK can be contacted via the following people: Tim Gibson: phone: 07905 371495, email: tim.gibson@cryonics-uk.org. Victoria Stevens: phone: 01287 669201, email: vicstevens@hotmail.co.uk. Graham Hipkiss: phone: 0115 8492179 / 07752 251 564, email: ghipkiss@hotmail.com. Alan Sinclair: phone: 01273 587 660 / 07719 820715, email: cryoservices@yahoo.co.uk

Can help Cryonics Institute Members who need help, funeral home, transport at London. Contact : F.A. Albin & Sons / Arthur Stanley House
Phone : 020-7237-3637

INTERNATIONAL: The Cryonics Society is a global cryonics advocacy organization. www.CryonicsSociety.org. They publish an e-newsletter *FutureNews*. Phone: 1-585-643-1167.

HELP US STAY UP-TO-DATE!

Please send any corrections or changes to the address below. If you know of, or are considering starting a support, standby or other cryonics-related group in your area, please send details to

dg@cryonics.org.



Please note, this list is provided as an information resource only. Inclusion on the list does not constitute an endorsement by the Cryonics Institute or our affiliated organizations. We urge our readers to use this list as a starting point to research groups that may meet their own individual needs. We further note that readers should always use their own informed judgment and a reasonable amount of caution in dealing with any organization and/or individual listed.

Bulletin Board



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Chapter 1

Wisdom & Windbags: Previous Philosophy

Philosophers and cuttlefish are much alike, I think. When challenged they recoil and hide behind a cloud of ink. —Anon.

Reminder—Personal Benefit: One of the most ancient aims of philosophy is to help guide the individual through life by providing explicit criteria for thought and action, with your personal benefit the focus. Most philosophers of past and present have been dismal failures here.

Disrespect? Some may be offended by my treatment (or lack of treatment) of well-known philosophers, but I don't apologize. Most of them, besides aiming at the wrong targets, have been mostly just plain wrong, and this opinion is not mine alone. Peter Unger, professor of philosophy at NYU, recognizes the extreme shortcomings of most philosophy to date, and notes that most of the main propositions offered in most of the greatest classics of philosophy are quite incredible and very wildly false. Names in this connection include Plato, Descartes, Berkeley, Hume, Kant, and Wittgenstein. (See his book in my bibliography below.)

Certainly I'll ignore most of the esoterica. Sample question: If Medusa were cross-eyed, would her own nose turn to stone?

Effing the Ineffable: F.P. Ramsey remarked that: What we can't say, we can't say, and we can't whistle it either.

Another caution of many: Philosophy is hope-

fully communicated, and sometimes understood, through the medium of language—and yet words constitute only a part of the clues available to us. There are meaningful sounds that are not words, and there are meaningful sights and smells and tactile sensations for which we have few if any words.

Some (primarily Oriental) “philosophies” claim that the highest understanding cannot be put into words. If you can say it, you have missed it—but that doesn't stop them writing about it, and trying to sell what they write. Many Europeans have arrived at essentially the same place by a different route—they produce fumes of “philosophy” so dense and noxious that rational people steer clear.

Branches & Doctrines or schools of philosophy include these:

Metaphysics (“beyond physics”)—study of the fundamental nature of all reality. Historically, it has been mostly an excuse for confusions of language, rambling on about pseudo-problems. Overlaps ontology.

Ontology has no agreed precise definition, but mainly refers to existence, what it means to be.

Epistemology is the study of what we know and how we know it. It is subsumed under physics and philosophy (or science) of mind.

Philosophy of Science has been regarded as (more or less) distinct from science itself, the study of how a scientist works and can work and ought to work.

Logic and Philosophy of Language

These are intertwined studies that lay the groundwork for mathematics and for informal proofs of propositions.

Philosophy of Mind is one of the most recent and most important studies. Again, however, it is only convention that distinguishes philosophy of mind from science of mind.

Axiology is not a well-known term to laymen, but it is the study of value or values. It is sometimes said to be divided into ethics and aesthetics. One might say that axiology is the core of this book.

Ethics is approximately the same as morality, with the emphasis on the "ought" of interpersonal behavior. The conventional view has been that you can't get an "ought" from an "is", that is, there is no objective basis for moral decisions. I claim that you can indeed derive criteria of right behavior from an understanding of the objective world.

Aesthetics is the study of how we perceive beauty and all that. It is really a branch of psychology.

Theology: Most, if not all, of those called theologians are grinding an axe for a particular religion. Some theologians were and are very bright, but their "philosophy" and "logic", as we shall see in the next chapter, have fundamental flaws. As one egregious example, it has been seriously submitted that God may be defined as the highest being, and since there must be a highest being, God must exist. (It is left to the reader to prick this balloon.) This is not to deny that for some people, some of the time, religious belief may have practical benefits in psychological comfort or social integration.

Other branches sometimes mentioned include philosophy of education, of history and of religion. That last differs from theology in that the latter usually has an agenda or advocacy (apologetics), while philosophy of religion attempts a neutral study of what religions are and how they arise and their demonstrated effects.

Materialism: Materialism is primarily the idea that everything is physical or stemming from the physical, in contrast to dualistic or "spiritual" notions. As usual, there are many variations and shadings, but as far as I am aware, there is no antimaterialist credo that has proven fruitful or useful, except in the sense that self-delusion is sometimes comforting. Most of them are not even comprehensible, at least by me.

Hedonism is the "pleasure principle"—that the only goal of living is to maximize pleasure and minimize pain. In the popular mind, hedonism has long been thoroughly discredited, but the only target demolished was a straw man. Even in antiquity, when hedonism originated and was widely discussed, no one ever claimed that only the immediate physical pleasures were important. It was always recognized among thoughtful people that "pleasure" and "pain" come in many degrees and flavors, some of them in seeming contradiction and most of them very hard to quantify. It is clear to me that Hedonism is still not only viable but irrefutable, when suitably modified to take recent information into account, and in particular to recognize that our aim is the future maximization of benefits that we ought to want, not necessarily what we currently think we want. Perhaps I could call myself a neohedonist.

Epicureanism: Others from ancient history

that got a bad rap included the Epicureans, descended (or ascended) from the Hedonists. Most dictionaries still define Epicureanism as "devotion to sensual pleasures" or some such. Again, this was never true. It was always realized that pleasure and pain are complicated ideas, not identifiable only with simple physical sensations.

Egoism (not to be confused with egotism) is the idea that your self is, or should be, the motivation and the goal of your own action. Variants are the descriptive and the normative. The descriptive variant conceives egoism as a factual description of human affairs. That is, people are necessarily motivated by their own interests and desires. The normative variant proposes that people should be so motivated, regardless of what presently motivates their behavior.

My view is a refinement of both of these.

Skepticism: Today every sensible person is a skeptic, in the sense of demanding evidence for claims and grounds for assumptions, and this was always true. Yet there was a time—and for many people the time is now—when habit and authority could override good sense, so skepticism was actually a recognized school of philosophy.

Perhaps the most illustrious of recent skeptics was Willard Quine, who repeatedly made the case that nothing is exempt from examination and possible revision or rejection. This includes your most cherished beliefs.

Sophism: "Sophistry" in recent times has meant subtle or cunning deceit in argument, false logic. But the Sophists of ancient Greece made valuable contributions, with attention to relativism, evidence and human-centered investigation.

Cynicism: A cynic in recent usage means someone who has a pessimistic view of human nature and tends to ascribe the worst motives even to apparently good deeds. In antiquity, however (5 century BCE), cynicism was a school of philosophy; its best-known proponent was Diogenes. Cynicism gets a few good marks mainly for its repudiation of the useless babble of metaphysics, and for asserting that the welfare of the individual should be the focus of philosophy. However, they tried—not the first nor last—to sell simplicity and abstemiousness as the keys to contentment. Diogenes is said to have owned nothing except his cloak and a cup for drinking; but after he saw a child drinking from a stream by using his hands, he threw away the cup.

Empiricism may be considered a branch or variant of logical positivism, or vice versa. The emphasis is on the use of observation to obtain sensory data that can be interpreted for at least tentative understanding of the presumed outside world. In other words, we use what we have and we try to get useful results, and not just spin fancies or speculate in a vacuum.

Logical Positivism: Developed by the 'Vienna Circle' during the 1920s and 30s, the term Logical Positivism was first used by Albert Blumberg and Herbert Feigl in 1931. Its central enduring tenet, in its weak form, is that a statement or question is meaningful if it can be verified or answered by observation or experiment. In the less secure strong form, it says that only those statements or questions are meaningful that can be verified or answered by observation or experiment. It has faded in popularity, but only as a label. It is still the working rule of virtually all scientists. After all, if a statement or question cannot be verified or answered by observation or

experiment, well, even if we can't say for sure that it is meaningless, we can certainly say it is something of little practical interest, aside from entertainment. (All right, to be sure, show business is big business, and a case could be made that entertainment is our primary good.)

Existentialism focuses primarily on such things as choice, individuality, subjectivity, freedom and the nature of existence itself. Its best-known exponent was Jean Paul Sartre. His major work was *Being and Nothingness*. This title alone should be a warning of endless obfuscations and posturings to come.

Possibly his main "insight" was that we are "condemned to be free" because we did not create ourselves. We must choose and act from within whatever situation we find ourselves. This is news? His influence was mainly psychological and political, and stemmed from his skill as a writer, not as a philosopher.

Idealism argues that reality is somehow dependent upon the mind. Extreme versions deny that the 'world' even exists outside of our minds. Narrow versions argue that our understanding of reality reflects the workings of our mind first and foremost - that the properties of objects have no standing independent of minds perceiving them. Again, this is mostly mental masturbation. It is the most obvious common sense that our only choice is to behave as though there is an objective universe, of which we are part, and try to work things out.

Platonism: Plato's main philosophical idea was that the reality we think we see is only a reflection or shadow of essences or ideals in a higher realm, outside of space and time. As an introductory example, the number "three"

is the essence of threeness, and exists apart from any groupings of three objects or ideas. If there were no people, there would still be a number three. The concept has also been applied to properties and relationships—for example the property of redness and the relationship of higher.

This notion, or variants of it, persists in modern times and is, in some sense, seriously entertained by eminent scientists and philosophers. We'll visit this in more detail later on, but I have found these ideas of very little use except as a possible aid to understanding thought.

Nominalism in a sense is the opposite of platonism, holding that only physical things or physical attributes are real, while "universals" and abstractions are just names. To many, this has the appeal of common sense. The issue has levels or aspects of subtlety, but if compelled to choose, I would vote for nominalism over platonism.

Conventionalism cuts across several "schools" including subjectivism and relativism. The idea is that such notions as truth, good and beauty arise through social convention.

Instrumentalism is a word sometimes applied to scientific theories. All an instrumentalist demands of a theory is that it be fruitful, meaning mainly that it yields accurate and reliable predictions.

Nastikism & Charvakism were related Indian schools of philosophy that featured skepticism, materialism and human-centered interests, denying and even ridiculing "spirituality" and religion, including reincarnation. They are older than Buddhism.

One might be puzzled by this. Will Durant

has called India's Hindus the most religious of all peoples, and estimated the number of their gods at thirty million. And what we know of the Nastikist and Charvakist schools is based almost entirely on the writings of their detractors, who saw them as heretics. But some will consider it refreshing to realize that, even this far back—at least five centuries BCE, and perhaps much more—you couldn't fool all of the people all of the time, and there were periodic outbreaks of mental health, even if they didn't last long.

Some of the names remembered, who preceded the Buddha and influenced him, include Brihaspati, Kashyapa and Kasakambalin. Doubtless, many more have been forgotten.

According to Will Durant, Brihaspati's sayings included the following, in paraphrase:

Truth can only be known through the senses. Reason is unreliable, since it assumes the future will have the same rules as the past. The soul is a delusion. We observe no supernatural forces. Matter is the one reality, the body being a combination of atoms. There is no immortality or rebirth. Religion is an aberration, a disease, or a chicanery. Morality is a social convention and a convenience. Nature is indifferent to morality and to us. The purpose of life is living and the only wisdom is happiness.

Buddhism: Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha, around the sixth century BCE, was the source, or a source, of a philosophy, sometimes called a religion, which has taken a great variety of forms, in some of which Buddha is regarded as divine. But what did he actually believe and disbelieve?

Apparently he disbelieved in gods and personal immortality, i.e. survival of the personality,

and thought vain all attempts to understand the mechanics of the universe.

At the same time, despite the inconsistency, he believed in metempsychosis (transmigration of souls or reincarnation). He believed that life is mainly sorrow, and was one of several historical figures who opined that it is better never to be born. He taught that your chief goal should be freedom from desire, a state of nirvana which possibly means extinction of the self and some kind of unclear merging with the infinite.

Sankhya was an Indian system attributed in its earlier versions to the sage Kapila, who may have lived around the fifth century BCE, or perhaps even earlier, or perhaps much later, or perhaps he is only a mythical figure. Kapila started off on more or less the right track: "The complete cessation of pain is the complete goal of man." But then he went completely off the tracks, building just another "system" on fanciful speculations using ill-defined words and concepts, on which we need not waste time. The system is no longer extant, but left its mark on subsequent Hindu systems. I mention it only because it has afflicted the "thinking" of large numbers of intelligent people.

Vedanta or Vedic philosophy is another Indian spiritual tradition and school (or collection of schools) of philosophy based on the teachings of the Upanishads and is concerned with the self-realization by which one understands the ultimate nature of reality (Brahman). Even though several European philosophers have paid homage to it, and it includes several kindly and well-intentioned viewpoints, it is basically gibberish.

Yoga is another oddity of India, a "philosophy" only by the most tolerant stretch. It

antedates Jesus by at least five hundred years, perhaps much more. Its principal "philosophical" tenet seems to be abjuration of material desire and self-seeking, except the desire of understanding. A Yogi seeks understanding by a regimen of self discipline, which can take many forms, some bizarre, such as sitting on the same rock for twenty years or holding the hands clenched until the fingernails grow through the palms. But there are apparently documented accounts of amazing bodily feats achieved, such as slowing down one's respiration and heartbeat to the verge of suspended animation, just by thought or act of will.

If you are a shameless skeptic, you may ask, what is this understanding that the yogi seeks and that some claim to have reached? That, you will be told, cannot be communicated, but only experienced by those willing to pay their dues.

Confucianism: See below.

Taoism: See below.

Humanism is a broad category of ethical philosophies affirming the dignity and worth of humanity, appealing to universal human qualities, particularly rationality. Antecedents appear in ancient Greece (e.g., Thales, Xenophanes, Protagoras), in the Moslem world, and in Renaissance Italy. It can also be called a religion.

Getting Along —The "Philosophy" of Social Behavior: Many so-called philosophers were primarily social theorists with a focus on ethics (interpersonal morality) and community values. For example, Confucius (Master Kung) is widely regarded as one of the two most influential Chinese philosophers, yet virtually all he did was promote some of the obvious social virtues. He also spoke of ceremonies associated with sacrifice to ancestors and deities of vari-

ous types, and the etiquette of daily behavior. You might almost as well say that Miss Manners is a philosopher.

Lao Tse, the other most influential "philosopher" of China, also worked in the sixth century BCE and founded Taoism (or Daoism). His emphasis was also on propriety and ethics, emphasizing the Three Jewels of the Tao—compassion, moderation and humility. There is a focus on "non-action", spontaneity, humanism and emptiness, and on the link between people and nature. Non-action and emptiness could be considered philosophy of a primitive and speculative sort, but social interaction was the main practical effect of Taoism.

A Glance at Some Philosophers: This will be selective and perhaps sometimes unfair, but the lens is mine.

Thales of Miletos (or Miletus, in Greek Ionia, now Turkey, in the sixth century BCE), the first of the "seven sages", is regarded by many as the first philosopher in the Greek tradition, while some also consider him the "father of science". Bertrand Russell wrote, "Philosophy began with Thales."

He had almost everything wrong, except for some contributions to geometry and astronomy. But he was the first (that we know about) to begin framing questions about the composition of matter and the interactions of matter. This was a huge achievement.

Anaximander of Miletos, the Ionian philosopher (ca. 611 - 546 BCE), a student of Thales, has also been called the first scientist. Like Thales, most of his ideas were wildly wrong, just fancies and speculations, but his head was in the right place, looking for natural causes and mechanisms, rejecting the supernatural. A polymath, he made contributions in car-

tography and explained eclipses, and probably originated evolutionary theory. Very little is known about his life, but it is known that he wrote a long poem of six books, *On Nature*, summarizing his researches. This poem is now lost, and has survived only in extracts quoted in other works. Enough survives, however, that Anaximander's thought can be reconstructed with some confidence. For Anaximander, the world had arisen from an undifferentiated, indeterminate substance, the *apeiron*. The Earth, which had coalesced out of the *apeiron*, had been covered in water at one stage, with plants and animals arising from mud. Humans were not present at the earliest stages; they arose from fish. This poem was quite influential on later thinkers, including Aristotle.

Had Anaximander looked at fossils? Did he study comparative fish and human anatomy? Unfortunately, we have no way of knowing what evidence Anaximander used to support his ideas. His theory bears some resemblance to evolutionary theory, but also seems to have been derived from various Greek myths, such as the story of Deucalion and Pyrrha, in which peoples or tribes are born from the Earth or from stones. His concept of the *apeiron* seems similar to the Tao of Chinese philosophy and religion, and to the "formless and void" Earth of the Hebrew creation account and other creation myths. However, even though Anaximander's ideas drew on the religious and mythical ideas of his time, he was still one of the first to attempt an explanation of the origin and evolution of the cosmos based on natural laws.

Pythagoras of Samos in Ionia, 6 century BCE, is known to every child today through his theorem about right triangles. He did not discover the relationship, which had been known at least

to the Babylonians and to scholars in India, but his school was apparently the first to prove the theorem. He was one of the first to propose that thought and feeling occur in the brain rather than the heart. He also made discoveries in musical theory. He taught that number is at the root of everything, and this idea, although he expressed it vaguely, may still have some merit. He is thought to have influenced Plato. But like almost everyone else, he wandered off the reservation frequently and vented religious vapors.

Empedocles of Agrigentum (or Acragas), a Greek colony in Sicily, fifth century BCE, followed Pythagoras and like him believed in reincarnation. But he was one of several proto-evolutionists. He taught that change is an illusion, which may seem an affront to common sense but is partly mirrored in Einstein's four-space, in which past, present and future coexist. His main value was in his rationalist and empiricist (sometime) tendencies.

He claimed that the Earth had given birth to living creatures, but that the first creatures had been disembodied organs. These organs finally joined into whole organisms, through the force of Love, but some of these organisms, being monstrous and unfit for life, had died out.

The theory seems a bit bizarre today, but Empedocles had come up with a sort of evolutionary theory: past natural selection is responsible for the forms we see today. Empedocles also ascribed the origin of the life of today to the interplay of impersonal forces, in which chance, not the gods, played the major role. There are, however, major differences between Empedocles's ideas and natural selection in the modern sense: Empedocles conceived of his "natural selection" as a past event, not as an ongoing process. We do not know whether

Empedocles had actually found supporting evidence for his theories. He may have been influenced by existing accounts of mythological creatures that seemed to be "put together" out of the parts of different animals, such as centaurs, sphinxes and chimeras. But perhaps he had also seen deformed animals, or examined "monstrous-looking" fossil bones.

Xenophanes of Colophon (died ca. 490 BCE), who was a disciple of Anaximander, developed Anaximander's theories further. He observed fossil fishes and shells, and concluded that the land where they were found had been underwater at some time. Xenophanes taught that the world formed from the condensation of water and "primordial mud"; he was the first person known to have used fossils as evidence for a theory of the history of the Earth.

Herodotus, the Greek historian (484-425 BCE), also observed fossil shells in Egypt, and cited them as evidence that Egypt had once been underwater. He also described a valley in Arabia, in the Mokattam mountains, where he saw "the backbones and ribs of such serpents as it is impossible to describe: of the ribs there were a multitude of heaps. He ascribed these bones to winged serpents that had been killed by ibises. We now know that these are the bones of fossil mammals that wash out of the rocks every rainy season. Several other ancient historians briefly mentioned fossils in their writings.

Hippocrates of Cos, the famous Greek physician (460-357 BCE), is known to have collected fossils; in fact, modern excavations at Asklepion, the famous medical school of Hippocrates's day, unearthed a fragment of a fossil elephant molar.

Protagoras was the leading name among the

sophists of Greece. He was a contemporary of Socrates, who himself was sometimes ascribed Sophist ties. His best remembered proposition: "Man is the measure of all things." Indeed.

Democritus, as every school child knows, was a pre-Socratic Greek materialist philosopher, fifth and fourth centuries BCE, a student of Leucippus and co-originator of the belief that all matter is made up of imperishable, indivisible elements, which he called atoma (sg. atomon) or "indivisibles", from which we get the English word atom.

Lucretius (Titus Lucretius Carus, first century BCE) was a Roman poet and philosopher, an Epicurean materialist. His only known work is the epic philosophical poem *De Rerum Natura, On the Nature of Things*. The poem addresses issues of being and nothingness, matter and space, the atoms and their movement, the infinity of the universe in time and space, the regularity of reproduction, the nature of mind and spirit as material bodily entities, and their mortality, since they and their functions (consciousness, pain) end with the bodies that contain them and with which they are interwoven. The last three books give an atomic and materialist explanation of phenomena such as the senses, sex and reproduction, agriculture, the heavens and disease. (But, like Empedocles, he considered evolution only in the sense of past extinction of unfit forms, not as an ongoing process.) An outstanding intellect.

Socrates (5 century BCE) was the first of the Greek "big three." He discoursed on ethics, but his main contribution was his insistence on clear definitions and the "Socratic method"—teaching by asking pointed questions and drawing answers out of the student.

Plato followed Socrates. See previous.

Aristotle was the most famous and influential of all philosophers; his views dominated scholarly thought for almost two thousand years. He was certainly not a windbag—one of the exceptions of ancient times. His two major contributions were in logic and in the use of observation in nature. He also thought that happiness is the goal of life (hear! hear!), but seems to have done little further with the thought, other than the quotations below. There was unfortunately also a negative contribution: his influence was so great that it established an orthodoxy that stifled later work for a long time.

He did important work in classification of living things, and was impressed with the infinitesimal gradations between lower life and higher, and noted that “nature makes so gradual a transition from the inanimate to the animate kingdom that the boundary lines which separate them are indistinct and doubtful.”

It is somewhat surprising that he did not anticipate Darwin, but in fact he rejected Empedocles’ doctrine that all organs and organisms are a survival of the fittest, and Anaxagoras’ idea that man became intelligent by using his hands for manipulation.

Some of Aristotle’s shrewd comments on happiness, paraphrased from Durant:

The good life is the happy life. The question is not how to make men good (as Plato thought) but how to make them happy. All things other than happiness are sought with some other end in view, happiness alone is sought for its own sake.

For lasting happiness, we need such things as good birth, good health, good looks, good luck, good reputation, good money ... and goodness.

It is hard to be happy if you are very ugly.

Goodness will not make you happy if you are being tortured on the wheel. Those who say one can be happy if good despite misfortune, talk nonsense.

It is better to be rich than to be wise, for we see the wise spending their time at the doors of the rich. Yet wealth is merely a means, and does not of itself satisfy any but the miser, and since it is relative, it seldom satisfies for long.

The secret of happiness is action, energy applied in away suited to one’s nature and circumstances. Virtue is in practical wisdom, intelligently appraising one’s own good. Intelligence is needed to find the golden mean, and discipline to practice it. Virtue is a habit of doing the right thing.

One of the greatest pleasures—and one of the few not demanding wealth or the help of others—is constructive thought.

Medieval style philosophers deserve a glance, if only for amusement.

Marcus Aurelius: “Is your cucumber bitter? Throw it away.” Also: “Do you have foul breath and a stench in the armpits? Such is man’s fate.”

St. Augustine: “Credo ut intelligam.” (“I believe so that I may understand.”) And he prayed that God might give him chastity—” but not yet.”

Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius—one of the great names of medieval philosophy, although not one of the great philosophers. He said God is “a substance that is super-substantial.” Aren’t you glad that’s clarified?

St. Anselm (11th Century England), the “father of scholasticism.” He “proved” there is a god by defining God as the greatest conceivable being. Since there is a greatest conceivable being, there must be a God. (Actually, there doesn’t have to

be a greatest being, let alone a greatest conceivable. After all, there is no largest number.)

We might ask whether the mental muddle of the medievalists had serious consequences. In some cases, I should say, very likely they did have pernicious influence by permitting if not encouraging outrageously sloppy thinking. Just a few centuries ago, if you asked a medical professor why opium makes people sleepy, he might answer, "Because it has dormitive virtue." Translation: "Because it makes people sleepy."

Yes, I know there are similar stories to this very day. Old lady says, "I go to my doctor because I got pains in the chest. He orders all kinds of tests, and finally tells me, 'You have angina pectoris.' I ask him, 'What's angina pectoris?'" He says, 'It's Latin. Means pain in the chest.'

Gottfried Leibniz is best known as a contemporary of Newton and co-discoverer, independently, of the calculus, but he wore several other hats, some with dignity and flair. His "philosophy" hat, however, was more like a dunce cap.

He was a would-be rationalist, but fell short, having been rightly ridiculed by Voltaire and others for pronouncing ours the best of all possible worlds. What he meant was that even deity has limited options—as a trivial example, even God cannot create a four-sided triangle. Our world, the argument goes, is not the best conceivable by our criteria, but the best compromise among all logically possible variants, using God's criteria, whatever those may be. This "comfort" persists.

His main purported contribution to philosophy was also badly flawed, the notion of monads. In *Monadology* 67, 69, he wrote, translated:

"Every portion of matter can be thought of as

a garden full of plants, or as a pond full of fish. But every branch of the plant, every part of the animal, and every drop of its vital fluids, is another such garden, or another such pool.... Thus there is no uncultivated ground in the universe; nothing barren, nothing dead."

If we are to excuse something like this, it can only be on the ground that most of the other "philosophers" were also audacious and shameless enough to indulge in mere speculation and offer it as discovery and profundity.

Baruch Spinoza said little or nothing that was unique and lasting, and he was often obscure or self-contradictory. Yet he had some insights that were useful, and unusual for his times—17th Century—even if in the end he betrayed them. In particular, he attained at times a relatively clear understanding of the mechanistic nature of the universe and the necessity for being self-centered.

Part of his work was just to show that the Bible should be interpreted allegorically or metaphorically—that its literal interpretation was nonsense on both a material and moral plane. To most of us nowadays (leaving aside certain Christian and Moslem and Jewish fundamentalists), these propositions are merely platitudes, too obvious to merit much attention. But Spinoza was excommunicated (1656) from the Dutch Jewish religious community for this work, and his life was at risk from the Christian state.

His next work, *On the Improvement of the Intellect*, starts out with a very frank statement of his original ambition: "...to inquire whether I might discover and attain the faculty of enjoying throughout eternity continual supreme happiness."

(Cf. Art Quaipe's recent formulations. Can any

honest person deny that this—how to feel good and keep on feeling good—is the natural quest, the nearly self-evident starting point of philosophical investigation?)

Of course, he is quick to qualify and renounce this ambition, for reasons both practical and moral, and concludes finally that the greatest good is to be wise in—surprise!—the sense in which he himself was thought wise.

His major work was the *Ethics*, which Will Durant has called the “most precious production in modern [sic] philosophy.” Leaving aside the tortured language and pretensions of mathematical reasoning, he appeared to make the following points of interest.

The laws of nature are the will of God, and the universe is deterministic in the Laplacian sense of a great machine. This is (on a classical level) the same as Gell-Mann’s “totalitarian principle”—whatever is not compulsory is prohibited. He saw a unitarian world of perfect order, in the best scientific spirit of the time (and possibly of our time too).

He puts psychic drives in an evolutionary context of self-preservation. “Everything... endeavors to persist in its own being.” Every instinct is a device developed by nature to preserve the individual [or, we would add, the group or species]...Pleasure and pain are the satisfaction or hindrance of an instinct; they are not the causes of our desires, but their results; we do not desire things because they give us pleasure, but they give us pleasure because we desire them; and we desire them because we must.

Thus, free will is an illusion. “Men think themselves free because they are conscious of their volitions and desires, but are ignorant of the causes by which they are led to wish and desire.”

In some passages, he makes fairly clear the basic prime motivation of the individual, which I have called me-first and feel-good. He says the goal of conduct is happiness; happiness is the presence of pleasure and the absence of pain. “...each man must love himself, and seek what is useful to him, and desire whatever leads him truly to a greater state of perfection...” (You’re right—happiness is not characterized just by the presence of pleasure and absence of pain, but that’s close enough for starters.)

This is all very fine—splendid!—but he soon becomes confused by the complexities of defining and measuring pleasure and pain, happiness and sorrow, and before long, like Nietzsche, he has done nearly a complete about-face. We are to find satisfaction in some abstract sense of communion with the universe, or sense of contribution to something greater; we are to settle for some symbolic immortality (even though he acknowledges that memory ends with our bodies). He settles finally for the pabulum of happy-little-cog: “Men who are good by reason...desire nothing for themselves which they do not also desire for the rest of mankind.”

Who knows—perhaps the high esteem for Spinoza among philosophers arises for just this reason: that he starts with determinism, me-first and feel-good, and somehow ends with state-sponsored conformist morality. Later, I’ll show the path he should have taken.

Immanuel Kant was the Prussian-born Scot best known for his *Critique of Pure Reason*, which has been praised as the greatest work of German literature, scorned for its lack of style; and also denounced, if not as the ravings of a lunatic, as a work likely to drive the reader crazy. Certainly it was dense, subtle and demanding, and Kant’s own claims for it were not modest:

"In this book, I have chiefly aimed at completeness; and I venture to maintain that there ought not to be one single metaphysical problem that has not been solved here, or to the solution of which the key at least has not here been supplied."

Reminds us of a similar boast by Wittgenstein a couple of centuries later. Well, as Kant himself once wrote, philosophers inhabit the high towers of metaphysics, where there is a lot of wind. But we should not look for a philosopher's soft spots, or for imperfections as a person, but for his strengths and contributions if we can find any.

Kant did contribute something of value, viz., a higher level of argument and a broader outlook than was previously common. His actual conclusions, however, as far as I can tell, were nowhere notably advanced.

Perhaps his best-known claim was the categorical imperative, the notion that humans per se possess a moral instinct that is prior to experience and deserving of first priority in every situation. This appears to have been the result of his early exposure to the influence of Rousseau, who glorified feeling or sentiment over logic or reason.

In a certain sense, Kant was not completely wrong even here. Our values are, and indeed should and must be, informed by our biology. But the notion that this is a moral principle, or that everyone can find it just by introspection, is flatly false.

Georg W. F. Hegel is perhaps the second best known German philosopher, after Kant, or perhaps he is in a three-way tie with Schopenhauer and Nietzsche—but Hegel yields nothing to Kant in opacity and convolution. While I hesitate to say that Hegel never had an interesting

thought, it requires a hardy soul to seek it in his work.

He has been called "perhaps the most abstruse of the Teutonic philosophers", and his *Philosophical History* has been called "concededly his most lucid essay". Following is a portion near the beginning of that:

"The only Thought which Philosophy brings with it to the contemplation of History, is the simple conception of Reason; that Reason is the Sovereign of the World... It is [in philosophy] proved by speculative cognition, that Reason—and this term may here suffice us, without investigating the relation sustained by the Universe to the Divine Being—is Substance, as well as Infinite Power; its own Infinite Material underlying all the natural and spiritual life which it originates, as also the Infinite Form—that which sets this Material in motion."

That is Hegel at his "most lucid." Any questions? You can seek answers; there are still students of Hegel, and his opinions are still quoted and discussed.

Friedrich Nietzsche was the man who popularized the word "superman" (ubermensch), and who became a patron saint of the Nazis. He spoke of "...blond beasts of prey, a race of conquerors and masters..." However, he was not anti-Semitic, and he regarded not the Germans but the Russians as the archetypical blond beasts of Europe, and said:

"A thinker who has at heart the future of Europe will in all his perspectives concerning the future calculate upon the Jews and the Russians as above all the surest and likeliest factors in the great play and battle of forces."

From my point of view, he had some things right, or partly right. He was a materialist,

and taught that we must give up our gods and any reliance on supernatural salvation. He recognized the potential genetic disaster in encouraging, or even allowing, the unrestrained breeding of disproportionate numbers of the mentally, physically, or temperamentally inferior.

(He had no way of guessing that later advances in science and politics might allow other alternatives than forcible eugenics. And from our viewpoint, of course, he probably was sadly deficient in appreciation of the way we can maim ourselves by trampling on others.)

His "morality" (wrong word) was centered on the self. An action is "right" or "wrong" from the point of view of the one who effects the action, not others affected by it. But he made a purely arbitrary choice in identifying the most important drive, which he says is power in a rather narrow sense, power over people. Yet, if "power" be given a broader interpretation such as "sense of purpose" or "self actualization", he may have been near the mark.

He despised the "slave morality" of Christians and any kind of Heerden-moral, morality of the herd, espousing instead a Herren-moral or morality of the master.

"What is good? ... To be brave is good....What is good? All that increases the feeling of power, the will to power, power itself, in man. What is bad? All that comes from weakness."

Well, Judeo-Christian traditions do include some odd inversions of value, but that does not justify Nietzsche's arbitrary focus, which George Orwell's oligarchs in the book 1984 carried to its reductio ad absurdum in an imaginary totalitarian state, where the object of power is power. How does one man assert his power over another? By making him suffer.

Obedience is not enough. Unless he is suffering, how can you be sure that he is obeying your will and not his own? Power is in inflicting pain and humiliation.

We are also reminded of the lines from Shakespeare's Richard III:

"Conscience is but a word that cowards use; Devised at first to keep the strong in awe; Our strong arms be our conscience, swords our law."

Let's look at a few more paraphrases from various Nietzsche writings:

Man is a rope, fastened between animal and Superman—a rope over an abyss. Again, right and wrong. Right that humanity represents only a botched beginning; wrong (along with almost everyone else to this day) in looking for ends beyond yourself, in this case posterity.

The richest and most complex forms of animal and vegetable life perish more easily; only the lowest preserve an apparent indestructibility. In other words—somewhat contrary to many laymen's impressions of Darwinian evolution—he says the "higher" forms of life are the most vulnerable and transient. (This is only sometimes true.) "Noble" species (predators) require myriad "subordinate" species (prey). Of course, almost all species, including parasites, are both predator and prey relative to other species. But as far as I can tell, besides making generalizations that are too sweeping, Nietzsche in such passages is not making any very useful point, just brandishing his pen and showing off his acumen.

The will to power can only manifest itself against resistance; therefore it seeks that which resists it—this is the primeval tendency of the protoplasm when it extends pseudopodia and feels about. And this, perhaps, is prototypical

Nietzsche. He is not basically a scientist, nor logician, nor philosopher, but a poet, dealing in metaphors, a maker of phrases. (He was factually wrong in this passage too; the simple organism seeking food isn't looking for resistance, just for the right smell or taste.)

David Hume is another relatively modern philosopher (18th Century), most of whose ideas are seen today as either obvious or incorrect and outdated. What we need to remember, of course, is that while most of the good ideas of Hume and other philosophers ought to have been obvious all along, in fact they were recognized only by exceptional minds after long cultural germination. Hume was an exceptionally clear thinker for any era, and truly outstanding for his day.

'An example of reasoning that seems obvious to us today, but was rare for most of history (and is still rare in most circles!), is Hume's dismissal of claims of "miracles":

"No testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle, unless the testimony be of such a kind that its falsehood would be more miraculous than the fact which it endeavors to establish."

Perhaps his greatest enduring fame stems from his distinction between correlation of events and causation, or inductive reasoning; we cannot in logic be sure the sun will rise tomorrow, merely because it always has. But he recognized the weight of probabilities as reflections of past experience, and acknowledged that we do and must act as though causality exists.

In attempting to analyze mind and "the passions" (emotions), he had to rely mainly on logic and introspection, since biology and neurology scarcely existed. Here he seems to have produced little or nothing that was novel and lasting, but he joined others in putting certain

aspects of morality in a biological /evolutionary perspective— which, again, is still rare today outside of academic circles. He recognized certain aspects of the feel- good principle: "We tend to give the name of virtue to any quality in others that gives us pleasure by making for our advantage, and to give the name of vice to any human quality that gives us pain."

Nevertheless, he said, that does not mean that our altruistic or other social feelings are consciously or directly related to our own pleasure; rather, the impulse arises out of social instincts, and the good feeling is the result or accompaniment of our obedience to the instinct. (Cf. Spinoza above.)

Speculating on mind and identity, he was struck by the apparent importance of continuity of consciousness:

"When my perceptions are removed for any time, as by sound sleep, so long am I insensible of myself, and may truly be said not to exist. And were all my perceptions removed by death, and could I neither think, nor feel, nor see, nor love, nor hate, after the dissolution of my body, I should be entirely annihilated; nor do I conceive what is further requisite to make me a perfect nonentity."

Jeremy Bentham: "Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure." Famous in the early part of the nineteenth century, a mentor of John Stuart Mill, Bentham's best-known slogan (for the conduct of government) was "the greatest good for the greatest number." He was essentially a hedonist and utilitarian: he held that our moral goal is to maximize the balance of pleasure over pain.

So here was another in a long line of people who had it basically right...but couldn't get very

far because they lacked the technical tools, the biology and mathematics and electronics and so on. Bentham actually worked on a "hedonic calculus" to quantify pleasure and pain, but it wasn't good enough.

A delightful footnote. Bentham left a substantial bequest to University College, University of London, on condition that they embalm his body and once a year seat him at the head table at dinner, holding his brain in a jar, before a full meal.

Although Bentham gets the most frequent mentions, his maxim of "the greatest good for the greatest number" was anticipated, verbatim, about 60 years earlier, by Francis Hutcheson. David Hume also anticipated him in essence, somewhat after Hutcheson.

Nikolai Fyodorovich Fyodorov (1829-1903) was a Russian Orthodox Christian philosopher, who was a precursor of transhumanism. Fyodorov advocated radical life extension, physical immortality and even resurrection of the dead, using scientific methods. His great "moral imperative" was the eventual physical resurrection of all the generations of the dead.

"Deconstruction" is a school of philosophical (and literary, and artistic) criticism—but what is it, exactly? I'll tell you in a moment, but first let's look at some of the things its leading proponent, Jacques Derrida, has said about it. "It is neither an analysis, a critique, a method, an act, nor an operation."

Also: "Deconstruction is not an enclosure in nothingness, but an openness to the other;" and an attempt "to discover the non-place or non-lieu which would be [that] 'other' of philosophy."

In its most extreme variations, found in some

English and Social Science departments, the claim is that the foundations of western philosophy and science are rotten, and in fact nothing "scientific" can be trusted farther than you can pitch a pig, It's all just interpretation, and everybody's entitled to her own opinion.

Some deconstructionists have emphasized the importance of "phallogocentrism", meaning literally the central character of the penis and other "privileged, central" terms.

Hey, sex sells, and now I will disclose, to those few who haven't already guessed, the essence of deconstructionism. It is a way of making money for academics who haven't a clue as to how to do anything meritorious. In other words, it's blowing smoke, and what they have been smoking is anybody's guess.

Oversimplified? Not at all. Certainly deconstructionists can whine that the inability of the average person to understand proves only the reader's shortcomings, not those of the system; noting, e.g., that quantum theory is also beyond the comprehension of ordinary mortals, yet is accepted by both laity and experts. The difference between deconstructionism and (say) ordinary theories of physics is profound—namely, that the latter are testable and the former is not; the latter admit no significant differences of opinion on what is predicted, whereas the former rarely finds any agreement.

It's true that some of the deconstructionists have made some trenchant comments, e.g., on the works of Husserl and Heidegger. But those were soft targets. They were confused and confusing, and no very sharp wit is needed to burst their bubbles.

In short, the deconstructionists have demonstrated only one thing, viz., that words and sentences are sometimes obscure or misleading.

This is not exactly new, or even approximately new, nor has their approach helped solve the problem. Instead, it has created a problem—how to protect the young and innocent against these parasites.

Miguel de Unamuno was not a philosopher in the academic sense, but rather a writer of poetry and lyrical prose. But in his day (early 20th Century), he was regarded as Spain's preeminent writer, and his aphorisms are worth more than most of the writings of the professional philosophers. The following are paraphrased from his magnum opus, *The Tragic Sense of Life*.

Knowledge is not for the sake of knowledge, nor truth for the sake of truth—but for the sake of real people.

The real starting point of all philosophy is self love, the effort to persist in one's own being.

The longing not to die, as Spinoza said, is our essence and the affective basis of all knowledge.

If we all believed we could avoid death, we should all be better.

"Love thy neighbor as thyself" presupposes that you love yourself.

I am given reasons against immortality, but it is not with reasons that the heart is appeased.

To live is not my right, but it is my necessity.

The age of greatest intellectual grandeur was that of Lucretius—man alone, without gods.

In time, all human consciousness will cease to exist—wherefore, then, your consolations?

I will not abdicate my life—my life must be wrested from me.

Walpole said life is comedy for those who

think, and tragedy for those who feel. Even so, better to feel.

The supreme human need is the need of not dying.

Serenity is not my end, but disquiet and passion-ate striving.

Despair is the master of impossibilities.

We need warmth, not light! It is not the night kills, but the frost.

May God deny you peace, but give you glory!

Viktor Emil Frankl (M.D., Ph.D.) was not formally a philosopher, but deserves mention all the same.

I obviously don't buy his thesis that: "Happiness cannot be pursued; it must ensue, and it only does so as the unintended side effect of one's personal dedication to a cause greater than oneself or as the by-product of one's surrender to a person other than oneself." Yet, as already acknowledged, this conventional wisdom does have its occasions and its beneficiaries.

Frankl had much success as a psychiatrist in preventing suicides—even in the horrendous conditions of a Nazi concentration camp, where he spent several years as an inmate, and despite losing most of his family in other camps. His book *Man's Search for Meaning* (1946) chronicles his experiences as a concentration camp inmate and describes his psychotherapeutic method of finding meaning in even the most sordid existence, and thus a reason to continue living. He was a key figure in existential therapy. This "philosophy" is essentially religious, and in my view spurious, despite its sometime usefulness.

Willard van Orman Quine, who died a few years ago, was of the analytic and pragmatic

school, his views sometimes being called functionalism. He believed the scientific approach is the one best suited to all types of investigation. Another outstanding intellect.

Nick (Niklas) Bostrom in 2005 was appointed Director of the recently formed Future of Humanity Institute at Oxford University. He was co-founder with David Pearce of the World Transhumanist Association, and co-founder with James Hughes of the Institute for Ethics and Emerging Technologies. Regardless of the merits of particular positions or arguments, he is clearly a forward force.

Peter Albert David Singer is an Australian philosopher, the Ira W. DeCamp Professor of Bioethics at Princeton University and laureate professor at the Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics (CAPPE), University of Melbourne. He is an animal rights promoter, comparing "speciesism" to racism. At times he argues that altruism tends to benefit the altruist and therefore has a self-interested rationale; but at other times, he seems to elevate charity and other forms of altruism to independent status.

A Few Notable Quotables:

Martha Washington: The greatest part of our happiness depends on our dispositions, not our circumstances.

Mark Twain: Sanity and happiness are an impossible combination.

Ludwig Wittgenstein: I don't know why we are here, but I'm pretty sure that it is not in order to enjoy ourselves.

Henry David Thoreau: That man is richest whose pleasures are cheapest.

George Burns: Happiness is having a large, loving, caring, close-knit family in another city.

Albert Schweitzer: Happiness is nothing more than good health and a bad memory.

'Abd Er-Rahman III of Spain: I have now reigned about 50 years in victory or peace, beloved by my subjects, dreaded by my enemies, and respected by my allies. Riches and honors, power and pleasure have waited on my call, nor does any earthly blessing appear to have been wanting to my felicity. In this situation, I have diligently numbered the days of pure and genuine happiness which have fallen to my lot. They amount to fourteen. (960 C.E.)

Next Issue:

Chapter Two: Apostasy Anyone? Religious Whys and Wherefores

