



*The North Texas*

# Skeptic

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## Prasad Golla presents *Expelled*

**B**en Stein's creationist video *Expelled* was such a great hit last year, we felt it deserved a closer look. At the NTS meeting in March Prasad Golla brought along a copy of the DVD and gave members an analysis of the plot. Prasad has a Ph.D. in computer engineering, which automatically makes him an expert movie critic. Here are some of his points:

### The video has a principal theme:

Freedom is at stake—the USA is fundamentally built on freedom.

Darwinists are dogmatic—they expel anyone who doesn't conform to their dogma.

Darwinism is blind towards evidence—it is non-Democratic.

Open-minded academics were expelled for crossing the line.



Prasad Golla

### The video attacks Darwinism:

Darwinism doesn't explain the "origin of life" itself.

There is "a lot of controversy" among scientists about Darwinism.

Darwinism leads to Atheism.

It devalues life and its finer qualities and devalues morals.

Atrocities committed in Nazi death camps can be attributable to Darwinism.

## EVENTS CALENDAR

### April Program

Saturday 18 April 2009

2 p.m.  
Center for Nonprofit  
Management  
2900 Live Oak Street in Dallas

### Evolutionary Psychology

Presentation by Rogrigo Neely  
on Biological/Evolutionary  
Psychology

Essential arguments would include whether or not I.Q. really determines intelligence as unchangeable biological feature of a human being. Or whether or not some social problems may be an inherited biological scar from our evolutionary background.

see Events on page 3.

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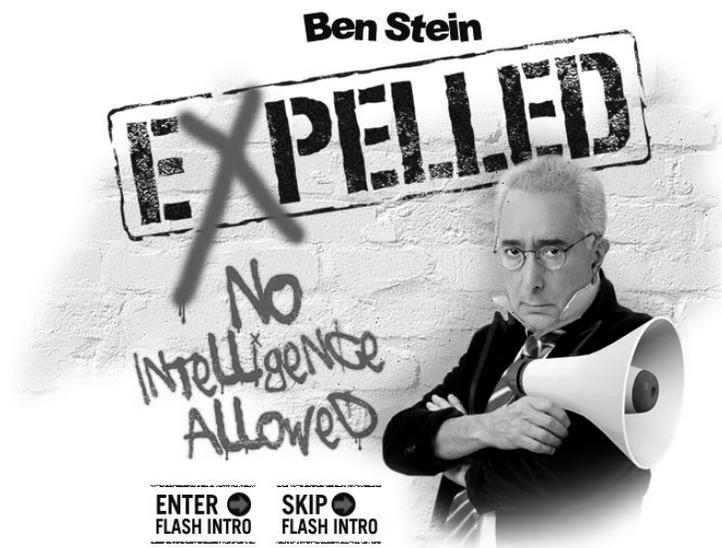
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### The movie does get some things right:

Darwinism doesn't attempt to explain the "origin of life."

"Origin of life" is a different subject in Science.

Media are against ID probably because:

ID is non-Scientific.

ID is not evidence based.

### Some troubling facts plague the Darwin-Nazi-racism connection:

The Nazis put Darwin's books on their burn list.

The Holocaust was made convenient by European Christianity's antipathy toward Jews.

Christian churches often preached racism from the pulpit.

We seldom see a KKK marcher without his Christian cross.

And finally, a review of the evidence shows the title premise of the video is flatly wrong. The academics and others cited were not actually expelled for honest belief in creationism. A government agency did not really take away the lab key of a researcher and expel him from his office. Richard Sternberg had to move his lab at the National Institutes of Health, and he had to turn in his metal key in exchange for a key card. A teacher at the Iowa State University Astronomy Department failed to obtain tenure because his publication activities slipped after he began to devote more time to advancing creationism. A journalist was not blacklisted for espousing creationism. After Pamela Winnick submitted several news items that effectively endorsed creationism, her opinion pieces were still accepted for publication, and her book *A Jealous God*:

*Science's Crusade Against Religion* was published by her former employer, the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, which gave the book a negative review.

### Prasad summarized the real world:

We don't see any danger to freedom from science.

Since it is not a political or justice system, there is no democracy in science.

The concept of "equal time" doesn't exist in science.

Science doesn't drag anyone to court—science resolves evidence-based court cases.

In fact, a "free society" is closely tied to how it views science.

He summarized "Truth is truth, let's deal with it." □

#### Events -- continued from front page.

## NTS Board meeting and social dinner

**Saturday 25 April 2009**

7 p.m.  
Good Eats  
3888 Oak Lawn #101  
Dallas, TX 75219  
Phone (214) 522-3287

## May Program

**16 May 2009**  
2 p.m.  
Center for Nonprofit Management  
2900 Live Oak Street in Dallas

Danny Barnett will present material from his book on the history of homeopathy in America.

## An IDEA whose time has passed

by John Blanton

*The World Wide Web is a wonderful source of information and news. Some of it is true, and some of it is not.*

This continues the special series of Web News devoted to the 200<sup>th</sup> birthday of Charles Darwin. 150 years after Darwin published his seminal work *On the Origin of Species*, his ideas and those of scientists who do research into evolution continue to come under attack.

Opposition to evolution comes partly from those who sincerely dispute the idea that natural selection is the complete answer. Most opposition, however, comes from creationists, who believe only supernatural forces can account for the origin of life and the diversity of modern life forms.

Some opponents to evolution proudly call themselves creationists, but a growing number, in the interest of advancing their cause, distance themselves from the absurdities of Genesis. *Intelligent Design* is the name preferred by these modern day creationists, who need to maintain an appearance of objective science. No matter. An analysis to any depth reveals a religious basis.

*Nothing is as powerful as an idea whose time has come.* Victor Hugo did not actually write these words, but they are worth mentioning.

Five years ago Wilston Nkangoh introduced us to the IDEA Club at the University of Texas at Dallas (UTD). IDEA stands for Intelligent Design and Evolution Awareness, and it is a wonderful public relations idea spawned by those industrious folks from the Discovery Institute. It would appear the goal of Discovery Institute is to have an IDEA chapter on every major campus in the country. See the write-up in the April 2004 newsletter.

<http://ntskeptics.org/2004/2004april/april2004.htm>

IDEA clubs are a creation, in part, of Discovery Institute staffer Casey Luskin.

Casey Luskin is an attorney with a B.S. and M.S. in Earth Sciences from the University of California, San Diego. His Law Degree is from the University of San Diego. He is co-founder of the Intelligent

Design and Evolution Awareness (IDEA) Center ([ideacenter.org](http://ideacenter.org)), a non-profit helping students to investigate evolution by starting "IDEA Clubs" on college and high school campuses across the country.

<http://ideaclubok.org/casey-luskin>

Luskin recently posted an interesting note on Evolution News, a Discovery Institute site devoted to propagandizing for Intelligent Design:

#### **Confused Darwinists Play Coroner with IDEA Center**

[http://www.evolutionnews.org/2009/01/confused\\_darwinists\\_play\\_coron.html](http://www.evolutionnews.org/2009/01/confused_darwinists_play_coron.html)

*[Author's Note: This is a fun statement that I recently posted on the IDEA Center's website. Since it discusses the latest Darwinist rhetorical trends regarding the entire ID movement, I thought readers of ENV would be interested in reading it as well. The original article is posted on the IDEA Center's website, here.]*

<http://www.ideacenter.org/contentmgr/showdetails.php/id/1478>

<http://www.ntskeptics.org/news/news2009-03-21.htm#coroner>

Luskin takes "Darwinists" to task over recent proclamations of the death of IDEA Clubs.

But IDEA Clubs are certainly not "dead." In fact, the IDEA Center's primary program is helping students to start extra-curricular IDEA Clubs on university and high school campuses around the United States and the world. In August of 2008, the IDEA Center hired its first full-time staff member, Mr. Brian Westad, as its new IDEA Club Director, to oversee the IDEA Club program.

Right now, as of January 2009, there are about a dozen IDEA Club chapters that are active or in-formation. In fact, since the Darwinists first started proclaiming the false death of IDEA, we've received over eight inquiries into starting new IDEA Clubs. Not only are rumor's of IDEA's death greatly exaggerated, but the more the internet Darwinists declare IDEA to be dead, the more IDEA seems to be growing. If you're interested in learning more about starting an IDEA Club, please contact Brian at [brianw@ideacenter.org](mailto:brianw@ideacenter.org).

It's interesting that Luskin should bring up the topic just now. I have recently been investigating the apparent demise of

his IDEA. For background, let's go back to our story from 2004.

Wilston was a senior at the time of our meeting and was president and point man for the UTD chapter. In fact, a closer examination showed Wilston was just about the entire UTD operation. An invitation from Wilston to view the *Privileged Planet* video at a monthly meeting found only Wilston and one other interested student in attendance.

With Wilston's graduation and departure, his club appears to have gone into deep freeze. A check of the IDEA Web site at UTD shows every club position to be "OPEN." If you are a serious student on the UTD campus, and if you simultaneously happen to be an Intelligent Design advocate, you can possibly find yourself heading up one of these responsible positions:

President

Vice president

Secretary

Historian

Treasurer

Webmaster

Presidential assistant

Vice presidential assistant

Secretarial assistant

Special events coordinator

Colloquium events coordinator

Public events coordinator

Also, the six chairs on the Committee for Constructive Criticism are now "CLOSED." However, Club Adviser #2 and #3 are still open. The position for Club Adviser #1 is filled by Peggy Sanders.

It would appear the intersection between "serious student at UTD" and "ID advocate" is a very small one.

Certainly the outlook for IDEA on campus can't be all that bleak. A recent check on the IDEA Club Web site showed the following for the United States:

24 university chapters

6 high school chapters

2 community chapters

<http://www.ideacenter.org/clubs/locations.php>

The page also lists a chapter in Canada, one on the Philippines, one in Kenya and one in Ukraine.

Maybe there really is something to all this. Another chapter in Texas is at Midwestern State. Clicking on the link brings up this:

**IDEA Club formed at Midwestern State University, Wichita Falls, Texas - April 13, 2004**

As of April 12, 2004, an IDEA Club was founded at Midwestern State University in Wichita Fall, Texas. Founded by undergraduate Vincent (“Vinny”) McMullen, this IDEA Club marks the 15th founded to date, and the second IDEA Club at a public university in Texas.

There doesn’t seem to be any more about this chapter on the Web. Maybe it’s time to check out the remaining sites.

A search of the remaining links shows little or no activity. Generally these links point back to the main IDEA Center Web site—to varying pages.

Often these are archival pages carrying a press release from the time of the club’s creation. Several of the links are broken, indicating the club’s site has moved or has been taken down.

The link for the University of California at Berkeley club was to a page with a more direct banner: “You don’t have permission to access / on this server.” Well, OK then.

Three of the links pointed to pages with contact information. I sent e-mail to the addresses requesting information about the clubs. As of this writing I have received no responses.

A search for links on Google was more productive. One led to an active site for the University of Oklahoma. This site contains fresh information, but there does not seem to be much of an anti-Darwin slant. A current activity is an essay contest with the theme: “Explain why Darwin’s views remain so important today.” I find it interesting that the IDEA Center site does not provide any links to this page. Their link to the University of Oklahoma IDEA chapter is broken.

It would seem the Oklahoma chapter has been evolving for some time. Three years ago Intelligent Design critic Ed Brayton blogged on the beginnings of this process:

**Creationist Speciation: A Case Study**

To those who claim that we’ve never seen one species turn into another, I give you the Oklahoma University IDEA Club. It used to be known as the Creation Science Society. In fact, their webpage initially said:

*Welcome to the University of Oklahoma IDEA Club website! We are no longer the Creation Science Society. Our new name is Intelligent Design & Evolution Awareness Club. That’s IDEA Club for short!*

<http://www.ntskeptics.org/news/news2009-03-18.htm#speciation>

I did check out some of the high school and community chapters. I am glad to report the Poway High School in California has an active page. Unfortunately the page has no current information.

Luskin also mentions the following:

The internet Darwinists’ main piece of evidence that IDEA is “dead” was their claim that our IDEA Club chapter locations page is out-of-date. It is out-of-date, and we’re actually working on revamping the entire page which is a long-term project requiring the production of new hyperlinked maps that we hope to complete in the coming months.

I take note the IDEA locations page seems to have been static for several months. We can only hope the creationists make more progress with their Web page than they have been making with Intelligent Design. The “coming months” will tell. In the case of Intelligent Design, I observe that months are the chief constituent of years.

To be fair, I took Tracey Luskin’s advice and submitted my application to join the IDEA Center Member’s listserve. The level and quality of traffic on the list may provide a clue to the vitality of Luskin’s IDEA. I would like to report on this, but so far my application has not been approved.

The shelf life for Intelligent Design expired 150 years ago. Modern creationists seem intent on keeping it on life support, mainly by updating the date stamp. An earnest reading of Casey Luskin indicates his approach is to do the same for the IDEA clubs. Perhaps IDEA clubs are an idea whose time is past.



## What's new

by Robert Park

*[Robert Park publishes the What's New column at <http://www.bobpark.org/>. Following are some clippings of interest.]*

### Cold fusion: twenty years later, it's still cold.

Monday was the 20th anniversary of the infamous press conference called by the University of Utah in Salt Lake City to announce the discovery of Cold Fusion. The sun warmed the Earth that day as it had for 5 billion years, by the high temperature fusion of hydrogen nuclei. Incredibly, the American chemical Society was meeting in Salt Lake City this week and there were many papers on cold fusion, or as their authors prefer LENR (low-energy nuclear reactions). These people, at least some of them, look in ever greater detail where others have not bothered to look. They say they find great mysteries, and perhaps they do. Is it important? I doubt it. But I think it's science.

### Canada: election did not go well above the 49th parallel.

Stephen Harper, newly elected Conservative-Party Prime Minister, named Gary Goodyear, an obscure Member of

Parliament, to be Minister of Science and Technology. Already this year Goodyear oversaw a series of massive science funding cuts, including zeroing out the Genome program. A chiropractor and acupuncturist with no science background, he is known for opposing same-sex marriage and favoring full legal rights for fertilized eggs. Asked in an interview if he believed in evolution, he objected to being questioned about religion. Later that day he said he believed in evolution. He should have stopped there, but expanded with an example from chiropractic about women's shoes and the spine. He clearly confused genetic inheritance with adaptation of an individual, or perhaps he believes in Lamarckian evolution.

### Turkey: Islamization of Turkish society.

The Editor of Science and Technology magazine was fired over her plan to mark the Darwin year with a magazine cover showing Darwin and the HMS Beagle. Instead it marked the sad end of a secular society in Asia.

### Lie detector: all we need now are liars that stink.

Homeland Security is soliciting sources to look (or sniff) into human odor as an indicator of deception. It's not totally crazy. Sweat due to nervousness comes from different glands than sweat due to exertion, and has a stronger odor. But this has the same flaw as the polygraph. It's not clear whether liars or innocents will be more nervous.

### The anthropic principle: is the universe designed for life?

In 2000 Sir John Templeton had an epiphany; instead of "spiritual progress," the Templeton Prize would henceforth be given for "spiritual discoveries." The next six winners were all physicists who justified their spirituality by the anthropic principle and the moral law. The moral law states that people know right from wrong. Darwinians would not disagree; knowledge of right and wrong has an obvious survival value for social animals. It's an instinct wired into our brains by natural selection. Catholic theologians would say the knowledge of right and wrong is planted in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. The anthropic principle, is another matter, it contends that the universe is designed for life. If so, it's a shockingly inefficient design; vast regions of the universe are clearly unsuited to life as we know it. Stated another way, the anthropic principle

### Future Meeting Dates

18 April 2009	8 August 2009
16 May 2009	12 September 2009
13 June 2009	10 October 2009
11 July 2009	14 November 2009
	12 December 2009

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merely says that "if things were different, things would not be the way things are." Everything we have learned tells us that there is no plan. We have some control over our life, but no clear instructions on what to do with it. Consider the stem cell issue.

### Disaster: did string theorists make a financial black hole?

Last year a federal court refused to enjoin the Large Hadron Collider from being turned on lest the enormous energy create a black hole that would devour Earth  
<http://bobpark.org/WN08/wn040408.html> .

Earth survived this reckless adventure by experimental physicists, but could theoretical physicists be behind the financial black hole that's sucking up all of the world's wealth? The CBS News program 60 Minutes has warned repeatedly that mathematicians and theoretical physicists are being recruited by Wall Street Wall Street to concoct complicated financial "derivatives" that no one can understand  
<http://bobpark.org/WN95/wn031095.html> .

The current favorite, assembled by the geniuses in the financial products division of AIG, is the credit default swap, or CDS. You can think of a CDS as the financial equivalent of an IED. For this they got millions in bonuses?

### Enlightenment: spring arrives for American science.

"The Enlightenment Returns," a guest editorial by Kurt Gottfried and Harold Varmus in today's *Science*, reminds readers that the founders of our nation were children of the Enlightenment. They "understood the power that flows from combining human reason with empirical knowledge." President Obama's Memorandum on Scientific Integrity directs administration officials to neither suppress nor alter scientific and technological findings, and make information developed for the government available to the public. Our long winter is over.

### Weight-loss: science confirms the "physics plan."

Atkins, Pritikin, Jennie Craig, South Beach, NutriSystem . . . all had one thing in common: they made their inventors very rich. But how could it be that every diet plan seems to work? It's nothing but consciousness- raising; any plan will make people aware of how much they're shoveling in. Nine years ago, however, WN came out with the "physics plan." The plan is based on the Conservation of Energy: "burn more calories than you consume" <http://www.bobpark.org/WN00/wn022500.html> . Don't be fooled by cheap imitations. On Wednesday, the *New England Journal of Medicine* published the results of a two year study of 800 overweight adults. Headed by Frank Sacks of the Harvard School of Public Health, the study confirmed that people lose weight if they cut calories; it doesn't matter if the calories are fat, carbohydrates, or protein. That, of course, is the WN "physics plan."

North Texas Skeptics  
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**FIRST CLASS**

Address Correction Requested

**Application for Membership**

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Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Occupation \_\_\_\_\_  
Special expertise and/or interests \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Membership agreement:

Yes, I agree with your purposes in exploring paranormal and pseudoscientific claims from a responsible and scientific point of view, and while I do not endorse the a priori rejection of paranormal phenomena and pseudoscientific claims, I believe that such claims must be subjected to the fair and systematic testing which rational enquiry demands.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

The North Texas Skeptics, P.O. Box 111794, Carrollton, Texas 75011-1794 (972) 306-3187

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