



Think & Believe

A Publication of Alpha Omega Institute

Mar./Apr. 1991; Vol.8 No.2

HE'S A CREATIONIST? YIKES!

by Dave and Mary Jo Nutting

Many creationists have experienced discrimination because of their beliefs, but for once even the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), and the liberal press have reacted. Case in point ... science writer, Forest Mims III, and his dispute with *Scientific American*.

Mims is a well-known science researcher and writer. Over the past 20 years, he has published more than 70 books about computers, electronics, and lasers. In addition, he has written hundreds of articles in newspapers, magazines and journals and has had regular columns in several popular scientific periodicals.

Mims had always dreamed of writing "The Amateur Scientist" column in the prestigious journal, *Scientific American*, so he was thrilled when the offer came in 1989. The editorial staff was enthusiastic about his work and his proposals for future columns ... enthusiastic, that is, until they found out that Mims did not believe in evolution. Then everything changed. Mims was out a job and the staff at *Scientific American* was told not to communicate with him.

Mims was certainly well-qualified for the job. In addition, his articles were strictly technical or experimental, and did not even hint at the question of origins. However, the editor was afraid that Mims would publish something somewhere which would "embarrass" the staff of *Scientific American*. He was afraid of the "public relations nightmare" that could result if word got out that they had hired a **creationist**. (Oh, horrors! Not one of **them!**)

The feared "nightmare" came about in a different form when newspapers around the country picked up the story. Some, of course, have supported the journal, but this time, many have sided with this▲

competent creationist including the AAAS. The Texas Branch of the ACLU has actually urged *Scientific American* to reconsider its position.

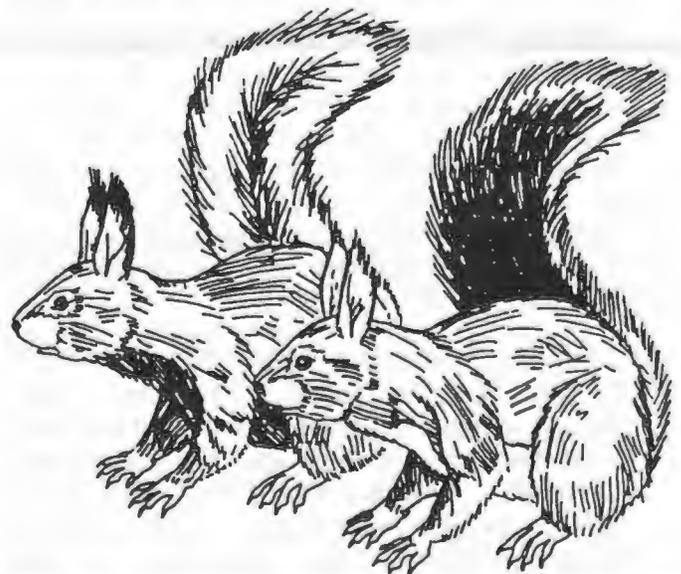
Allan Hall, the executive editor of *Scientific American*, has defended their action, saying:

"As far as we're concerned, the refusal to accept the theory of evolution is nonscientific thinking. The magazine has a right to select a staff that agrees with our basic idea of what science is."

While we agree about their right to hire staff which agrees with their philosophy, we strongly disagree with their definition of science. Ironically, Rufus Porter, the founding editor of *Scientific American*, wrote in their premier issue:

"First, then, let us, as rational creatures, be ever ready to acknowledge God as our Creator and daily Preserver."

What would he think of the policy today?



What do squirrels have to do with the age of the Grand Canyon? See Spotlight on Science!

NOTES & QUOTES

It has been interesting to follow media reports of creationist science writer, Forrest Mims III's, rejection by *Scientific American*. The editor, Mr. Jonathan Piel, denies discrimination:

Scientific American has never discriminated against anyone on the basis of their religious beliefs and it never will. (Jonathan Piel, as quoted in *The New York Times National*, Oct. 24, 1990, A19)

Despite Piel's denial of discrimination, there seems to be evidence to the contrary. Mims said Piel had praised his work, but when he mentioned that he had also published in Christian magazines:

Piel's "facial expression changed." . . . Piel appeared to be dismayed, Mims said, and then asked if he accepted the Darwinian theory of evolution. "I said 'no,' . . . The rest of the day went downhill." (*Human Events*, Dec. 1, 1990, p. 10)

Later, the editor "pointed his finger at me and stated that if I ever wrote anything about creationism for any magazine I would be disciplined and that would involve either a cut in pay or dismissal from the magazine." (Mims, as quoted in *Austin American-Statesman*, Oct. 26, 1990)

According to two former editors who were on the staff of *Scientific American* at the time, there was quite a debate as to what to do about Mims:

Scientific American is a science magazine . . . We're completely dependent on the good will of working scientists for those articles, so there's a question of whether or not this could conceivably threaten the credibility of the magazine. You have to understand that creationism is sort of a shibboleth for scientists. (Armand Schwab, Jr., former managing editor of *Sci. Amer.*, in *Origins Research*, 1990 Double Issue, P. 6)

There was concern that *Scientific American* might be linked to a Flat Earther or something. There was no question in anyone's mind that he would have been a good columnist for the *Amateur Scientist*. . . Without a doubt, (Christianity) led to his not being offered the job of the *Amateur Scientist* column, and specifically it was creationism. (Tim Appenzeller, former associate editor of *Sci. Amer.*, in *Origins Research*, 1990 Double Issue, p. 6)

Mims' scientific qualifications were not in question. In fact, *in a phone conversation with Mims (Oct. 27, 1989)*, Piel nervously stuttered:

There's no, there's no question that, that on their own merits the columns are **fabulous** [Piel's emphasis]. If you don't do them for us you ought to do them for somebody because they're great. . . In its own, in its own right what, what you've written is, is first rate; it;s, it;s not an issue. It's the, it's the public relations nightmare that's keeping me awake.

Some outsiders have ridiculed Mims and dogmatically dismissed his scientific qualifications:

If he believes in creationism, he has established that he doesn't have credibility to write about science. . . . Creationism can be judged on scientific grounds and this guy has judged wrong. (Robert Park, physicist at the University of Maryland and head of the Washington office of the American Physical Society, in *The Washington Post*, Nov. 1, 1990, D6)

It's really a matter of scientific competency. What you might consider is that evolution is not just that man descended from apes. . . . It's a grand unifying principle that runs across all scientific fields. . . . This man would not be able to write about a wide variety of scientific topics because of his views which are basically religious. (Dr. Eugenie Scott, Executive Director of the National Center for Science Education in an interview on CNN's *Crossfire*, as quoted in *Origins Research* 1990 Double Issue, p. 7)

. . . the author of such a column serves as a role model to younger scientists and a key source of information for the general public. No budding scientist or curious layman should get even the faint impression that the world's most influential science magazine thinks creationism is science. (Arthur Caplan, professor of philosophy and director of the Center of Biomedical Ethics at the University of Minnesota as quoted in *The Scientist*, Feb.18, 1991, p. 13)

And so the old bias surfaces again. Instead of offering real scientific evidence, evolutionists just rule out creationism and then make sure that students don't ever hear the other side or even suspect that some scientists disagree. Considering the lack of evidence for evolution, what else can the faithful do?

SPOTLIGHT ON SCIENCE

TASSEL-EARED SQUIRRELS AND THE AGE OF THE GRAND CANYON

Tassel-eared squirrels are named for the prominent tufts of hair on their ears. They live near the rim of the Grand Canyon in Arizona, feeding on the cones and terminal buds of the Ponderosa pines. These agile little creatures have become famous in textbooks as evidence of evolution. However, according to some scientists, they fit well with the creation model and provide independent evidence for a young age of the Canyon.

The Canyon acts as an effective barrier which separates the squirrel population of the north rim from that on the south and prevents interbreeding of the two isolated squirrel populations. The squirrels on the north are different enough in appearance from those on the south that they are classified as separate varieties, though not as separate species. The northern variety, the Kaibab squirrel, is characterized by a flashy white tail and black belly, whereas the southern variety, the Abert squirrel, has a white belly and a dark tail. Otherwise they are quite similar.

Dr. John Meyer, who has studied these squirrels extensively, has made some interesting observations. He found "Abert-like Kaibabs" on the north rim and "Kaibab-like Aberts" on the south. Thus, while the overall populations showed distinctive coloration differences between the north and south, some exhibited intermediate characteristics. This suggests that the squirrel population is genetically one continuous population. Dr. Meyer argues, through the use of the Hardy-Weinberg Law (a widely accepted principle used in population genetics) that if the mechanisms for evolution really work, we should certainly see the results here. However, the relatively minor differences indicate only a fairly short period of isolation.

If the Canyon is really several million years old, as stated in most textbooks, we would expect much more distinction between the two populations. **Dr. Meyer's analysis of the data presents fascinating evidence for a fairly recent cutting of the Grand Canyon.** It would be interesting to see if other animals living near the Canyon would support similar conclusions.

(Ref: *ICR Grand Canyon Field Study Tour Guidebook*, 1990 and J. R. Meyer, 1985, "Origin of the Kaibab Squirrel," *Creation Research Society Quarterly* Vol. 22.)

THE ORIGIN OF DIVERSITY

Evolutionists believe the tremendous variety of life on earth has resulted from millions of years of change due to natural processes. They usually rely heavily on mutations (accidental changes in genetic structure), and natural selection ("survival of the fittest") to explain how new characteristics arise and are subsequently saved in a population.

Most creationists today also acknowledge that changes do occur within animal populations, but they differ from evolutionists on the extent of change possible. While they believe that mutation and natural selection processes can be partly involved in diversification, creationists usually question **how much** change these processes can bring about and suggest there are **limits** to that change.

Take, for example, the tassel-eared squirrels. It seems reasonable to assume that these squirrels were once part of the same interbreeding population. Creationists would say the differences observed today can be explained in terms of an initially created potential for genetic variation within the squirrel kind coupled with geographic isolation, inbreeding, genetic drift, and perhaps a small amount of mutation. These processes, they say, cause variation among squirrels, but will not lead to different kinds of animals. Evolutionists, however, believe that, given millions of years, squirrels could eventually evolve into something fundamentally different. Of course, no one will be around that long to watch!

Clear examples demonstrating the origin of new types (or even new structures) **have never been** demonstrated in either the fossil or living world. Selective breeding has, however, clearly demonstrated the tremendous variety in details that can be produced in just a short time from an existing gene pool.

So how did all the variety originate? Evolution from one kind to another has never been demonstrated. Creation of the basic kinds with potential for variation within those kinds is consistent with both science and Scripture. "In the beginning, God created . . ."

Think and Believe is published bi-monthly by Alpha Omega Institute, P.O. Box 4343, Grand Junction, CO 81502. Editors: Dave & Mary Jo Nutting. Single copies are free upon request. Please write for permission to reprint material in this publication. Alpha Omega Institute is a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Your donations are tax deductible.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- April 5-6: Pagosa Springs, CO**, Our Savior's Lutheran Church, 303-731-4668
- April 7-9: Pueblo, CO**, Prairie Avenue Baptist Church, 719-561-3334
- April 10-13: Colorado Springs, CO**, Peter Sebald, 719-495-0558
- April 14: Ellicott, CO**, Open Door Community Church, 719-541-2430
- April 20-28: ICR Grand Canyon Adventure**, Grand Canyon, AZ, Contact ICR, 619-448-0900
- May 3,4: Paonia, CO** Public Seminar, Dawn Ullrey, 303-527-4602
- May 5: Crawford, CO**, Crawford Friends Church, 303-921-5335
- May 19-21: Frisco/Dillon, CO**, Area Seminar, Patti Clark, 303-468-5381
- June 2: Clifton, CO**, Clifton Christian Church, 303-434-7392
- June 12,13: Conifer, CO**, Grace Bible Fellowship, 303-838-0120
- June 14,15: Denver, CO**, Christian Home Educator's Conference, 303-777-1022
- July 14-19: Cimarron, CO**, YWAM Discipleship Training School, 303-249-7004
- August 4-7: Joplin, MO**, Villa Heights Christian Church, 417-624-6771
- August 25-30: ICR Summer Institute at the Summit**, Manitou Springs, CO, Contact ICR 619-448-0900
- September 8 & 15: Grand Junction, CO**, Messiah Lutheran, 303-245-2838
- September 26 - November 14: Midwest/Eastern Speaking Circuit**. Some dates are still available. Contact us immediately 303-245-5906.
- October 17-20: Creation Adventure for Homeschool Families**, Pere Marquette Park ICHE 708-662-1909

PLEASE KEEP THIS SCHEDULE AND PRAY FOR US!

Alpha Omega Institute

P.O. Box 4343
Grand Junction, CO 81502
(303) 245-5906

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

IMPORTANT!!!!

**We are updating our mailing list!
If you wish to continue receiving
Think and Believe,
please return the enclosed card!
Thank You!**

CREATION ADVENTURES

Plan now to **JOIN DAVE AND MARY JO** for one of our unique creation adventures -- **stimulating creation teaching and exciting recreation** for the whole family. **Don't miss out! Call or write today: 303-245-5906!**

May 25-27: NEW THIS YEAR!! Canyon Country Adventure, Moab, UT: A relaxed, informal time of exploring Utah's famous canyons and arches from a creation perspective. Bring your RV, tent, or call about cabins. Perfect for jeeps and mountain bikers, but plenty to see for the less adventuresome too. **COMING UP FAST. CALL NOW!**

August 11-16: Twin Peaks Family Science Adventure, Colbran, CO: Especially for homeschoolers, but anyone welcome. Explore western Colorado's famous dinosaur country, Colorado National Monument, and beautiful Grand Mesa with its 200 mountain lakes.

August 18-23: Redcloud Family Mountain Adventure, Lake City, CO: Enjoy Colorado's spectacular San Juan Mountains -- rappelling, mountain biking, horseback riding, jeep trips, fishing, much more. Fills quickly -- **RESERVE YOUR SPOT TODAY!**

ATTENTION: WESTERN COLORADO READERS!

Alpha Omega Institute is co-sponsoring the **Back-to-Genesis Seminar** in Grand Junction, March 20-21, 1992. Here's your chance to hear ICR speakers. Yes, that is a year away, but we need to begin work now. If you would like to help, call Terry at 303-434-3036.

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Grand Jct., CO
Permit No.393