

## Let's Move Silent Sam from Civil War to Civil Discourse

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill needs to turn the publicity and controversy over Silent Sam into something positive and even enlightening. It can do so by establishing its own Museum of History.

One part of this museum would of course feature Silent Sam, including pedestal, along with an easily-legible copy of Julian S. Carr's now-notorious speech at the statue's dedication. The story of Silent Sam, from its dedication to its toppling, would be shown with photos. An exhibit on Carr might also be included—Confederate Colonel, textile magnate, philanthropist, Jim Crow racist. That same part would feature the portraits of Confederate Officers that once lined the wall of a circular executive conference room adjoining Morehead Planetarium: who they were, how did they serve the Confederacy, how did they serve UNC. Past UNC bigwigs, from the Civil War through Jim Crow, would have their stories told, truthfully and unsparingly.

Another part could feature the African-Americans of that epoch, and their perseverance despite their suffering at the hands of Jim Crow. Exhibits would include stories of local lynchings, including memorials for those so murdered. While there is no record of any lynchings in Orange County, there were some in Chatham County. It would celebrate African American creativity and cultural contributions, including Carrboro's Libba Cotton and her song "Freight Train", still beloved after 100 years. She was a contemporary of Julian S. Carr, for whom Carrboro is named.

The museum would also feature exhibits from the Civil Rights era, the integration of UNC as well as Chapel Hill and surrounding counties. Local leaders, among them true visionaries, would have their stories told too: Pauli Murray, Julius Chambers, Terry Sanford, Floyd McKissick, Dean Smith.

The museum would host lectures, discussions, conferences and symposia. It could be a forum to pursue our elusive national conversation about race.

*Julian Sereno MA '88*

*Julian Sereno is editor and publisher of Chatham County Line.*

*Editor's note: I emailed this idea to the UNC decision-makers at an address for just such suggestions—uncmonument@unc.edu. The deadline for them to agree on plan is November 15. If you find mine a good idea, please use the UNC email address to tell them so. If you have a better idea, so much the better—share it with them.*



PHOTO BY JULIAN SERENO

## Longevity: US vs Europe

by Don Lein

When people compare life expectancy rates at birth between U.S. and Europe they find Europe is better. They frequently attribute this to the presence of socialized medicine in Europe and no similar government program in the U.S. To suggest that the government can do anything better than private enterprise (except, perhaps the military/public safety) is delusional. In the British healthcare system BBC headlines earlier this year indicated that patients are "Dying in the Corridors" while waiting to be treated—some patients remained on gurneys in corridors for up to 12 hours, patients were treated in corridors, gynecological exams were done in full view of other patients, etc. Until the English system is overhauled and taken out of government control these problems will continue to exist and worsen. The American experience has proven beyond purview that the best government is the least government.

What then is the reason for the U.S. having shorter life spans? There are several areas where the U.S. differs from its economic compatriots—the prevalence of smoking, physical activity levels, the use of opiates and obesity, among others. Thus, the daily habits of the U.S. citizenry produce more overweight, drug-abusing people to start out with, before considering any treatment options. Obesity itself has contributed to the shorter life span in the U.S., as compared to other wealthy countries. Some hypothesize that if more health care were provided at a cheaper price, it might improve outcomes, however it has been observed that immigrant groups with less access to healthcare are less obese than native-born population. Unfortunately, the longer they are in the country, increase their income, and adopt American ways, they become more obese.

What is the chief culprit—the lack of physical activity. Let's look at Cuba, which provides some insight into the problem. Cuba underwent a severe economic crisis following the demise of the USSR—there was less wealth which resulted in fewer cars. Fewer cars in turn meant fewer car deaths, but equally important it meant that people had to use more strenuous activity (walking, bicycling) to get from one place to the other. Cuba was well below the average car usage in Latin America and well below the U.S. figures, which in turn translates into longer life expectancy. How does the fatter and more accident-prone U.S. catch up—by injecting more physical activity into our daily regimen.

On a personal level, I faced this predicament 35+ years ago. At the time I was working 60-80 hour weeks, appearing in Federal Courtrooms across the fruited plain. The stress level was high and running up and down courthouse stairs hardly provided the exercise a healthy body needed. At the behest of my older brother and a partner from one of our outside law firms, I took up jogging/running. It helped relieve the stress—I ran early in the morning, before work in such venues as Boston, San Francisco, Richmond, Philadelphia, Chicago, and even at dawn's early light etc. at Fort McHenry. I was full of endorphins and ready to go to work—serendipitously, I turned out to be quite good at road racing. My first road race on July 4, 1984 resulted in a trophy with my last trophy coming 20 years later in the Army 10 miler where I won a loving cup for being the fastest male over 70. In between were dozens of other trophies/medals/awards. Also 20+ years ago when I was in my early 60s, I held very state running record from the 800 meters to the marathon—alas, all except my 3:04 marathon at age 61 have been bettered. There still remains some hope for a fitter nation.

These performances brought attention from the National Governing Body, USATF, where I was elected to the Board of Directors, served as Masters Committee Chair for Road Running for 10 years staging Masters Championships all over the U.S., I also became a columnist for National Masters News and Running Times magazine. In the latter two roles I became directly involved with the running public, especially the Running Times where my wife and I ranked the top 20 Masters runners in each 5-year age groups beginning at age 40. Some of their stories of how running had changed their lives were truly inspiring. I especially liked the ones of the athletes over 90—one lived in a nursing home in Maine and all her annual awards were presented in the conference room at the home. At 97 she asked the doctor is she should quit running and he said—"absolutely not". Had a lady in her 80s who suffered a broken back and as therapy the doctor prescribed walking, which turned into running and in her 90s she was running with her great grandchildren. Had another lady in her 60s from Tennessee whom we had ranked in Running Times and she inquired as to how she could improve her times. I corresponded with her, provided some tips and she did improve—we ranked her in the top three for several years. Her greatest thrill was not standing on the podium to receive her awards, but just the joy of being addressed as an athlete which she was not allowed to be as a teenager where she said: "I had to stand on the sidelines—now you are treating me as an athlete—that is reward enough!" Staging a race near New Haven featuring three 90 year old men competing against each other—it dominated the media and was enjoyed by all! Just a few of the joyous memories.

As I said, 20+ years ago when Bob Garner came to my home and interviewed me for a show called "Seniors Doing Unusual Things" for PBS, I told him it was just a matter of each of us taking responsibility for our own health. While each of us cannot walk to work or take public transportation, we do not have to sit and watch TV for endless hours—"Get up off the couch and go outside and be active." It was a bitter enough pill to lose the Ryder Cup to Europe—let's not continue to lose the longevity battle!

*Don Lein is a regular contributor to Chatham County Line. A Chatham resident, he is involved in a variety of civic activities.*

## The Size and Scope of the Universe

by Jeff Davidson

Galaxies, it is now known, appear in irregular shapes and sizes, and among them, many dwarf galaxies exist. These galaxies, the smallest in the universe, contain only a few hundred or a few thousand stars.

Dwarf galaxies routinely lose their stars to their much larger neighbors via gravity. As stars stream across the sky, dwarf galaxies frequently are ripped apart.

### ENTER THE MILKY WAY

Our own galaxy, the Milky Way, rotates at about 560,000 miles per hour and completes one full revolution every 200 million years or so. One Milky Way revolution ago, dinosaurs ruled planet Earth and the emergence Homo erectus was 196,000,000 years in the future.

The Milky Way has nearly 300 billion stars, however, this is atypical. Most galaxies have fewer stars, perhaps around 100 billion.

If galaxies were reduced in size to that of apples, neighboring galaxies would only be a handful of meters apart. The relative proximity of galaxies means that galaxies occasionally emerge. Around 4 billion years from today, the Milky Way will merge with the Andromeda galaxy.

The merging process itself will require at least 100 million years. During this transition, all life on earth will be irrevocably altered and most likely obliterated, as will virtually all life everywhere else within both galaxies. Stars and their orbiting planets—solar systems—will be subjected to enormous changes in gravity, orbit, rotation, revolution, and motion down to the molecular level. Hence, nothing alive will remain unscathed.

### THE VASTNESS OF IT ALL

The observable universe is estimated to have between 200 million and 2 trillion galaxies. Each star has at least one planet orbiting around it. Most stars have more than one planet, as does our Sun. Thus, the observable universe likely contains 200,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 or more stars (to break the number down: 200 trillion times 100 trillion).

Since each star has at least one planet rotating around it, if even one in 100 trillion stars has an orbiting planet that contains life, that sums to 200 trillion planets in the known universe which contain life.

If only one in one million of these 200 trillion planets

contain intelligent life, perhaps even hominoid-shaped life, that means that 200 billion planets contain intelligent life. Said another way, not only are we not alone, the odds are overwhelming that there is intelligent life elsewhere. The distances are too vast for us to ever encounter such life, but UFO enthusiasts like to keep up the dialogue.

### THE CREATOR BEHIND IT ALL

The notion that some supreme or divine being appeared on Earth tens of thousands of years ago, or 2018 years ago, or last week, and has some direct, familial connection to the deity (who I regard as God) makes one pause when you consider that there are likely a minimum of 200 billion other planets that contain intelligent life.

It is comforting for many people on Earth, all of whom have no experience anywhere else in the universe, to think that God sent his emissary (a son most often cited) to Earth. It is not my place, however, to dislodge their faith or belief system. One might conclude that if God sent his emissary to earth, this phenomenon happened on multimillions, if not billions, of other planets as well. Did it all happen at the same time? Did it all happen 2018 years ago? Who would dare to speculate?

We can conclude that the vastness of the known universe, added to whatever else is in the universe currently unknown, all but precludes that the existence of the cosmos is a result of some spontaneous, chemical, physical reaction without a driving force behind it.

Some entity, spirit, first driver, or, if you prefer, deity, had to have been behind it. A single infinitesimally small atom, sufficiently dense to contain matter equal to between 200 billion and two trillion galaxies, exploding via the phenomenon we call the Big Bang, was put in motion, somehow, somehow, by a force as powerful, if not more powerful, than the energy in the universe itself.

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