

**Minutes of the 1,451st meeting of the SPHEX Club
September 10, 2020**

President Jim Wright called the 1,451st meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 10. This was a virtual meeting (Zoom).

Active members present were: Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Doyle, Edwards, Foster, Frantz, Gillette, Hendricks, Langhorne, Light, Lucas, Manian, Marion, McDonald, Payne, Roberts, Schewel, Sigler, Stinnett, Tiller, West, Wilson, Wright, and Emeritus Member, Dr. Ken Garren.

Unable to Attend Were: Delzingaro, Spencer-Hester, Wodicka

Sphex's special guest for the evening: Bonnie Svrcek

2020-2021 Election of Officers

Dr. Jeff Wilson reported on the election of officers for the 2020-2021 Sphex year.

President – Cham Light

Vice President – Arelia Langhorne

Treasurer – Marc Schewel

Secretary – Dr. Ken West

Assistant Secretary -- Joe Stinnett

President Cham Light presided over the meeting following the election report.

Committee Chairs for 2020-2021

President Light asked all chairs of committees to remain as chairs until we can resume live meetings.

Two Members were awarded Emeritus Membership

President Light read the requirements for eligibility for Emeritus Membership from the Sphex Constitution and Bylaws. Dr. Ken Garren and Theodore J. Craddock, Esq. were elected unanimously by the Sphex membership.

Continuation of Virtual Meetings

President Light reminded members that there will be a vote after the second presentation to see if the membership would prefer to continue with virtual meetings or suspend them until January or until we can meet together safely.

Special Report: Dr. James Wright, Ad Hoc History Committee

The Sphex Ad Hoc History Committee was appointed by Dr. James Wright at the beginning of his term as president. The committee was given several charges: to digitize the records of the Sphex Club, which now reside at the Jones Memorial Library, and to find the best way to make those records available to the membership and/or the public. The committee met at the library on

February 22 to review the records and their organization. Wright offered to begin scanning the minutes and to date has scanned those from 1910 to 1960. Nancy Marion agreed to begin scanning the talks. She has scanned some without much difficulty and plans to scan them all. Wright may help after the minutes are completed. Dr. Ken West and others volunteered to review the talks as they are scanned and prepare a précis of each, identifying key words so that talks might be located using standard computerized search techniques. The committee has not yet addressed the best way to make the records, once scanned, readily available.

Members -- Ad Hoc History Committee

Ted Delaney, Chair

Jim Wright

Ken West

Tom Tiller

Nancy Marion

President Light introduced Mr. L. Kimball Payne, III, our speaker for the evening:

Kim Payne has been married to his wife Leslie for 45 years. They have five children and nine grandchildren. The tenth is expected in February 2021. Kim spent his early years in Lynchburg, grew up in Lexington, attended Duke University and then the University of Virginia. He served in the U.S. Navy, both on active duty and in the reserves, retiring as a Commander. His local government service started in Spotsylvania County, Virginia, where he spent seventeen years as Assistant County Administrator and then County Administrator. Kim returned to Lynchburg in 2001 and served as its City Manager until his retirement in 2016. He now spends his time serving on several non-profit boards, teaching, coaching, consulting, gardening, practicing yoga, playing softball in season, and learning to fly-fish; all of which can be interrupted to spend time with his grandchildren. As if that isn't enough, Kim has agreed to serve as Interim Town Manager for the Town of Amherst, while current Town Manager Sara Carter recovers from a serious accident. This is Kim's seventh SPHEX presentation. Its title is, "A Notable Centennial."

Our presenter provided this abstract of his presentation entitled "*A Notable Centennial*"

For nearly a hundred years from its incorporation in 1805 the City of Lynchburg was governed by a unicameral council. That changed with the adoption of a new State constitution in 1902 that, among other things, required cities of over 10,000 population to be governed by a bicameral council and a mayor with veto power. Lynchburg's bicameral council, formed in 1904, consisted of a nine-member Board of Alderman and a fifteen-member Common Council. Each branch had nine standing committees that oversaw the operations of the City. In addition, there were six administrative boards with citizen appointees.

By 1919 frustration with an unwieldy, cumbersome and hopelessly intricate system of government reached a tipping point and business leaders in the City formed a campaign club to

promote an election to change the form of government to one that, since its origination in 1908 in Staunton, had been adopted in many Virginia cities and in over 400 municipalities across the nation. That was the city manager form of government; with a unicameral council of five, a mayor with mostly ceremonial powers, and no veto, and the hiring of a professional manager to oversee the administrative affairs of the government.

This presentation provides background on the bicameral council in Lynchburg and then focuses on the campaign for the city manager form that took place starting in July 1919 until the successful election on November 4, 1919. Utilizing excerpts from Lynchburg's daily newspaper, *The News*, the presentation outlines the arguments, sometimes heated, of community members and the newspaper for and against the proposed new plan. After withstanding a challenge to the majority vote for the plan, a new City Council was elected, took office on September 1, 1920, and hired Lynchburg's first City Manager, Edward A. Beck. September 2020 is the centennial of that notable event.

After a question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by President Light at 8:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
G. Kenneth West, Ph.D.
Secretary

(Because of the COVID-19 Pandemic, Sphex Presentations in the fall of 2020 were presented virtually to protect members and their guests from the virus.)

Minutes of the 1,452nd meeting of the SPHEX Club

September 24, 2020

President Cham Light called the 1,452nd meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 24. This was a virtual meeting (Zoom).

Active members present were: Cook, Cyphert, Delaney, Doyle, Edwards, Foster, Gillette, Hendricks, Langhorne, Light, Lucas, Manian, Marion, Payne, Roberts, Schewel, Sigler, Stinnett, Tiller, West, Wilson, Wodicka, Wright.

Emeritus Sphex Member: Dr. Ken Garren

Unable to Attend Were: Dawson, Delzingaro, Frantz, McDonald, Spencer- Hester

President Light and members congratulated Dr. Reid Wodicka for his appointment as Interim City Manager.

Minutes for September 10, 2020 were approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report by Marc Schewel

As you might expect, the past six months have been a busy time for the Sphex Club Treasurer. I'm pleased to report that the current balance in the Treasury is \$31,293.66. Now obviously all this money didn't accumulate from the collection of dues, since we had only twenty-six members paying their \$30 dues, which amounts to \$780. I'm sure you are wondering just where did this money come from.

Well, when the pandemic struck around the end of March and Congress in its ultimate wisdom passed the Cares Act, it created the Payroll Protection Program, which made forgivable loans available to any business or non-profit with fewer than five hundred employees. So, when I looked around and saw law firms, investment advisors, insurance companies, accountants, colleges, and every non-profit organization from here to Honolulu feeding at the government trough, I figured what the heck. I wandered down Main Street to the Bank of the James, filled out a few forms, and lo and behold, qualified the Sphex Club for a \$30,000 loan.

After all, if one man can set up five new companies in two weeks and get \$3.65 million, why shouldn't Sphex be entitled to a measly \$30,000?

Realizing that some of our members might feel uncomfortable about such a brash move and question its ethics, I decided to take a poll. I didn't want to embarrass anyone who might actually endorse the loan, including myself, so I conducted it by secret ballot. But since in-person voting was not possible, I had to resort to mail-in voting. This actually enabled me to reach a larger constituency. Obtaining a list from our Club Historian, James Elson, I sent ballots to all past Sphex Club members, both living and deceased.

The Postal Service was slow, but efficient. I got an amazing response. Three hundred twenty-six members, mostly the dead ones, voted in favor of keeping the loan; twenty-five members, all the current ones except for one stubborn outlier, voted to return it.

Well, this is a democratic organization, and the "ayes" have it. The Sphex Club now has enough money in its Treasury to cover its dues and annual meetings for the next fifteen years.

President Light introduced Dr. Tom Tiller, our speaker for the evening:

Tom and his wife of 63 years, Mary Frances, have two sons, Thomas and Craig, and four extraordinary grandchildren.

A long-term supporter of the Lynchburg City Schools through service for three terms on the School Board in the 1970s during the incorporation of annexed neighborhoods and implementation of a court-ordered unitary, integrated K-12 system, and after the School Board as a member of a committee of citizens to recommend a career ladder to retain and benefit broadly from excellent teachers, on an advisory committee concerning the drug-free schools program and from the 1990's until 2012 on the Board of Education Foundation.

He also served three terms on the Lynchburg Planning Commission in the 1980s and was a facilitator for a group in the 2008 Lynchburg Dialogue on Race and Racism. He served in the US Army for two years and the Virginia National Guard for an additional two.

Following a long and active career at Lynchburg College, Tom retired into an enjoyable later career as a grandpa.

Until Covid-19 struck, Tom enjoyed playing weekly (that's weekly, not weakly) in two tennis contract groups. He still enjoys frequent walks on the Blackwater Creek trails.

Our presenter provided this abstract of his presentation entitled "Hearing Voices."

This paper presents thoughts about the current effort to advance equality and justice in the context of race relations in our country, triggered this time by cell-phone videos of killings of unarmed and/or subdued Black individuals by officers of the law.

In an effort to gauge the importance of the current movement, the author begins by establishing the paradigm of three reconstructions of American democracy. That framework begins with the federally enforced post-Civil War-Reconstruction era, which accomplished the

end of legal slavery and established citizen and voting rights for Blacks, but which soon lost its vigor, especially after the presidential election of 1876. It left in place a legacy of racism and segregation.

Then, in this paradigm the second reconstruction came in the form of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950's and 60's, which, after making progress in school desegregation, enforcement of voting rights, and fair housing was ground down from friction with such things as in-fact re-segregation of schools, assaults on voting rights, and backlash against affirmative action. It left behind de facto segregation in many spheres of life, and (generally less overt) racism.

And now, with this history of advances and backsliding, some claim the third reconstruction of our polity is arriving in this time, and that, "It is about the transition from a certain kind of White dominated America to a diverse America and that some will do anything to stop it."

The speaker thinks we should not be surprised by outbreaks of protests about the harm inflicted by inequalities because for many years we have been sent many messages about it. Examples of voices or messages from the past—both national and local—are cited.

Possible post-vote conflict from an election with racial overtones is briefly considered.

Members are invited to add their thoughts and questions, especially about such things as the likely achievements and emergence of the current reform movement and the possibility and desirability of reparations for past racial wrongs from the 1619 institution of slave holding in the US to now, and possibilities for policing reform.

The paper closes by quoting a protest leader's response to the question of what is the next step, "To identify actionable items and have a lasting impact."

After a question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by President Light at 8:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
G. Kenneth West, Ph.D.
Secretary

Because of the COVID-19 Pandemic, SpheX Presentations in the fall of 2020 were presented virtually to protect members and their guests from the virus.

**Minutes of the 1,453rd meeting of the SPHEX Club
October 8, 2020**

President Cham Light called the 1,453rd meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 8. This was a virtual meeting (Zoom).

Active members present were: Cook, Delaney, Delzingaro, Doyle, Edwards, Frantz, Gillette, Hendricks, Langhorne, Light, Manian, Marion, McDonald, Roberts, Schewel, Sigler, Stinnett, Tiller, West, Wodicka, Wright, and Emeritus Member Dr. Ken Garren.

Unable to Attend Were: Cyphert, Dawson, Foster, Lucas, Payne, Wilson.

SpheX's special guests for the evening: Marty Wright, Beau Wright, Naomi Amos, Bob Gillette and Marsha Gillette.

Minutes for the September 24, 2020 meeting were approved.

Membership Committee Report

Judge John Cook reported that at this time SpheX has 27 members and eight slots available to fill when SpheX returns to meeting in person.

President Light introduced our speaker for the evening, Dr. Jim Wright.

Jim Wright is a Lynchburg native, a graduate of E.C. Glass High School and the University of Virginia. An English major, he required additional undergraduate science training, which he obtained at William & Mary before a return to UVA for medical school. He did his postgraduate medical training, including a fellowship in endocrinology and serving as chief resident in internal medicine, at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston. He has practiced medicine in Austin, Texas, and Lynchburg, and left a solo practice in 1992 to join the medical department at First Colony Life. He is still employed by Genworth Financial. He is a past president of the Lynchburg Academy of Medicine and is currently the president of the board of the Free Clinic. He is very happily married to Marty, whom he found in Galveston. They have four adult children, of whom he is very proud.

Our presenter, Dr. Jim Wright, provided this abstract of his presentation entitled: "Two Doctors and the Hospital That Wasn't."

Dr. Wright told three loosely connected stories. The first dealt with efforts between 1935 and 1939 to build a hospital for Blacks in Lynchburg. He reviewed briefly the history of hospitals for Black patients between the end of the Civil War and 1940, from the Freedmen's Bureau hospitals established just after the war to the Negro Hospital Renaissance between 1920 and 1940. He mentioned briefly hospitals for Blacks established in Richmond in 1902 and 1932 and in Roanoke in 1915. The Lynchburg story began in 1935, when Amos Carnegie, an immigrant from Jamaica who had a degree from Lincoln University in Maryland, came to Lynchburg to propose the construction of a 50-bed hospital for Blacks. Carnegie had worked to establish Rosenwald schools for Blacks in South Carolina and Marion, Virginia. In 1935 he established the National Negro Hospital Foundation. The plan he proposed in Lynchburg was to raise \$50,000 here and another \$100,000 from donors in New England. Local money was to come from white supporters and from Blacks who would contribute the equivalent of a penny a week. Nationally, Carnegie hoped to raise a similar amount from the nation's 13 million Blacks over 20 years to build a hospital in all 90 US cities with a Black population of greater than 10,000. The fund-raising campaign began in November 1937. Carnegie appears to have spent 1936 and most of 1937 raising support in both the White and Black communities, and in seeking a charter to operate the Foundation in Massachusetts. Massachusetts denied him a charter twice on the grounds that the Foundation did not have the support of the Black population of the state. (Wright explained that Blacks were divided between those who favored separate institutions for Blacks, labeled "accommodationists" by their foes, and integrationists, who saw all-Black hospitals as Jim Crow institutions.) After the start of the Lynchburg campaign, Carnegie was largely absent for the next year. During that time, he was organizing similar campaigns in Newport News, Virginia, Wilmington, Delaware, and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Fundraising efforts stagnated at either \$6000 or \$16,000 and in March 1939 it was halted and donors' money returned. Carnegie continued to pursue a similar effort in Louisville, Kentucky. By the early 1950s he had dropped "Negro" from his foundation's name and championed biracial hospitals, and was seeking funds to construct a hospital in Washington, D.C. He returned to Lynchburg to pitch the idea of a Black hospital again in 1952.

The Lynchburg hospital for Blacks was to be the Henry A. Christian Hospital. Dr. Christian, a member of the National Negro Hospital board of directors, was a native of Lynchburg who was a 1900 graduate of the Johns Hopkins Medical School, where he studied under William Osler, one of the most famous doctors in US history. Christian went on to a successful career as professor and dean of faculty at the Harvard Medical School and Physician-in-Chief of the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital. Christian hired Samuel Levine, who developed the cardiology division at the Brigham and in turn trained W. Proctor Harvey, another Lynchburg native. Together, he and Harvey published a famous book before Harvey was recruited to establish the cardiology division at Georgetown University. Harvey went on to become one of

the most famous cardiologists of the twentieth century. Like his mentors, he was dedicated to teaching and trained many of today's most prominent cardiologists.

After a question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by President Light at 8:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
G. Kenneth West, Ph.D.
Secretary

Because of the COVID-19 Pandemic, Sphex Presentations in the fall of 2020 were presented virtually to protect members and their guests from the virus.

Minutes of the 1,454th meeting of the SPHEX Club

October 22, 2020

President Cham Light called the 1,454th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 22nd. This was a virtual meeting (Zoom).

Active members present were: Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Foster, Frantz, Gillette, Hendricks, Langhorne, Light, Marion, McDonald, Payne, Roberts, Schewel, Stinnett, Tiller, West, Wilder, Wilson, Wodicka, Wright and Emeritus Sphex Member, Dr. Ken Garren.

Unable to Attend Were: Delzingaro, Doyle, Edwards, Lucas, Manian, Sigler,

Sphex's special guest for the evening: Dr. Allison Morrison-Shetlar, President of the University of Lynchburg.

Gift to Sphex Members from Emeritus Sphex Member, Dr. Jim Elson

Dr. Jim Elson donated 24 of his books entitled "Lynchburg, Virginia: The First 200 Years" to Sphex members. These will be distributed to those who do not have a copy but wish to have one when we begin meeting together again. As a personal note from the secretary, this book is interesting and well written.

Ted Delaney invites Sphex members to attend a small gathering at John Lynch's gravesite on Saturday, October 31st. People will gather at 12 noon at the Quaker Churchyard, right beside the old meetinghouse and the modern Quaker Memorial Presbyterian Church on Fort Avenue. It will be very informal, so no special pomp or ceremony is planned. If you feel moved, bring flowers to leave at the grave. We are asking all attendees to wear masks and maintain a respectful distance from others.

President Light introduced Ted Delaney our speaker for the evening:

A native of Charlottesville, Ted Delaney's family moved to Lynchburg when he was two-years-old. He graduated from the University of Virginia with a B.A. in Anthropology, and returned to Lynchburg to work at the Old City Cemetery as its first Archivist and Curator. Ted served as Executive Director of the Cemetery for four years before being named Director of the Lynchburg Museum System and Chief Public History Officer for the City of Lynchburg in 2018.

Ted is the co-author of *Free Blacks of Lynchburg, Virginia, 1805–1865*, and he currently serves on the boards of Historic Sandusky, the Dante Alighieri Society, and *Lynch's Ferry* magazine. This is Ted's third Sphex presentation.

Our presenter, Ted Delaney, provided this abstract of his presentation entitled "WWJD?"

The dramatic reckoning with race that our nation experienced in 2020, stemming from the death of George Floyd in late May, has meant a reevaluation of the name of the city of Lynchburg. For many, especially outsiders and younger residents, the name immediately evokes the act of lynching and the racialized brutality and trauma associated with it. For many others, it is a source of pride that honors John Lynch, Sr., the humble Quaker abolitionist and entrepreneur who established the town in 1786.

In one of several ironies in this story, John Lynch remains one of the most mysterious and invisible figures in local history. Recent research has shown him to be a savvy businessman and developer, generous civic patriarch, and devout man of faith. As a member of the "Society of Friends," Lynch manumitted all of his slaves and openly supported abolition and recolonization. He even refused to take revenge on an enslaved man in his possession who murdered his own son, Dr. John C. Lynch.

Lynchburgers have questioned—and been forced to defend—the town's name since at least the 1850's. In the 21st century's new climate of racial sensitivity and "anti-racism," will Lynchburg's name put it at an increasingly competitive disadvantage and hold it back from reaching its fullest potential? Purely from the perspective of marketing and branding, the city would benefit from renaming. This could be done first by City Council approval, and then

through an act of the General Assembly amending the City's charter. However, the financial costs associated with renaming, combined with the alienation of those who already love the city and its history, will likely keep a name change only a theoretical debate.

What would John Lynch do? The ever-humble and modest "Friend" would likely support his name being removed from the city he founded, especially if it promoted inequality or suffering in any way. On the other hand, he would also likely appreciate the many opportunities it creates to discuss his Quaker values and the life he led, to quote his epitaph, "promoting whatever advanced the general good of his community."

**After a question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by President Light
at 8:32 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,
G. Kenneth West, Ph.D.
Secretary

Because of the COVID-19 Pandemic, SpheX Presentations in the fall of 2020 were presented virtually to protect members and their guests from the virus.

Minutes of the 1,455th meeting of the SPHEX Club

November 5, 2020

President Cham Light called the 1,455th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, November 5th. This was a virtual meeting (Zoom).

Active members present were: Cook, Delaney, Delzingaro, Doyle, Edwards, Foster, Frantz, Hendricks, Langhorne, Light, Lucas, Manian, McDonald, Payne, Roberts, Schewel, Sigler, Stinnett, Tiller, West, Wodicka, Wright and Emeritus Member, Dr. Ken Garren.

Unable to Attend Were: Cyphert, Dawson, Gillette, Marion, Wilson.

President Light introduced Joe Stinnett, our speaker for the evening:

Joe Stinnett is a retired journalist who lives in Lynchburg with his wife, Ellen, a retired Lynchburg City School teacher. He was a reporter and editor with the Lynchburg, Roanoke, Amherst and Nelson newspapers for 40 years, after graduating from the University of Virginia with a degree in English. He and Ellen have two grown sons and three grandchildren. He is still working on his book about the hundreds of Lynchburg people colonized to Liberia in the 19th century. This will be Joe's fourth SpheX paper.

(The following comments were added by the secretary, Dr. Ken West. These comments appeared in the News and Advance and were written by columnist Darrell Laurant. They might give an interesting picture of our valued member Joe Stinnett.)

“Joe left his post in 2013 as managing editor of The News & Advance to become editor of The Roanoke Times. The thing is, Joe was perfect for Lynchburg. He grew up in Amherst County and graduated from the University of Virginia, which gave him some insight into two different strains of Virginians.

Moreover, to show that he was above mindless prejudice, he married a Virginia Tech graduate. What emerged from this alchemy was an editor with a certain level of UVA sophistication, coupled with a laidback Amherst County attitude.

Every summer, Joe likes to take off by himself and hike the Appalachian Trail, presumably leaving his cell phone off and his mind disconnected from occasionally angry readers and onrushing deadlines. More than anything else, though, Joe knew a good story when he saw it, and he knew what readers would consider a good story. To me, that's the core of being a good editor. Everything else is window dressing."

Our presenter provided this abstract of his presentation entitled: *Into the Vasty Deep*

Stinnett's paper was a look at METI, which stands for Messaging Extra Terrestrial Intelligence, the effort to send messages to any alien intelligences that, or who, may inhabit some far-flung corner of deep space. This is a serious scientific effort run by reputable astronomers, professors, and thinkers—it's not the X-Files or Q-anon or UFOs. It's an offshoot of SETI, the Search for ExtraTerrestrial Intelligence, which was originally devoted to analyzing radio radiation from the far reaches of space. His title, "Into the Vasty Deep," was a quote from Shakespeare about summoning spirits from the underworld.

METI raises concerns because many astronomers, scientists, and thinkers see it as dangerous, something that could attract the attention of a malevolent intelligence out there somewhere. Most of the messages have been transmitted as bursts of radio waves, but one of the most interesting, the Golden Record, was bolted to the side of a NASA spacecraft. The most recent message was transmitted in 2017, from a radar station north of the Arctic Circle, which has a signal so powerful it's like a planetary lighthouse.

The paper focused on Carl Sagan, who died in 1996, and Frank Drake, two Cornell astronomers and scientists who were behind many of these messages. Drake, now 90, no longer believes METI is worth the time and expense it involves.

Despite frequently asserting that METI was not science fiction, Stinnett did resort to multiple analogies from sci-fi books and movies to illustrate his points.

Stinnett's paper concluded with a look at the Fermi Paradox and the Drake Equation. The paradox, first stated by Nobel Prize winner Enrico Fermi, asks why there is no evidence of alien intelligence despite the billions of stars, like grains of sand, that likely include habitable planets. Frank Drake's equation uses variables based on that paradox, starting with the number of stars suitable for the development of intelligent life, and winnowing that down through other factors including stars with planets, planets with the right conditions, and so forth. It's more of a way of thinking about the possibilities than an actual calculation because most of the variables are still unknown.

Our speaker said his own view that certainly intelligent life existed elsewhere had been tempered by his research, and now, he's not so sure.

After a question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by President Light at 8:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
G. Kenneth West, Ph.D.
Secretary

Because of the COVID-19 Pandemic, Sphex Presentations in the fall of 2020 were presented virtually to protect members and their guests from the virus.

Minutes of the 1,456th meeting of the SPHEX Club

November 19, 2020

President Cham Light called the 1,456th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, November 19. This was a virtual meeting (Zoom).

Active members present were: Cook, Delaney, Edwards, Frantz, Gillette, Hendricks, Light, Manian, Marion, McDonald, Roberts, Schewel, Sigler, Stinnett, Tiller, West, Wilson, Wodicka, Wright and Emeritus Sphex Member, Dr. Ken Garren.

Unable to Attend Were: Cyphert, Dawson, Delzingaro, Doyle, Foster, Langhorne, Lucas, Payne.

The Minutes of the November 5 meeting were passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report by Marc Schewel:

Well, we haven't had a treasurer's report in several weeks, so I thought I should stop by the Bank of the James, and see how we were doing. When the teller looked at the account, she found that it had been closed out and all the money withdrawn.

"There must be some mistake," I said. "Who took it out, because I know I didn't."

"We don't know either," she said. "I think you need to talk to Bob Chapman, our president." So I did.

"This has been very strange," he said. "The money in your account mysteriously disappeared exactly two weeks ago. We traced this thing all the way to the Federal Reserve in Washington, D.C. and got no answers. Finally we were referred to NASA, who then advised us to consult the folks at SETI, which I am sure you know stands for Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence. Naturally, I was a little skeptical about that. And you're not going to believe what they told me."

“Maybe I will,” I said, “since I recently heard something about this.”

“We have concluded,” said Bob, “that your account was penetrated by radio waves emanating from an alien intelligence 25,000 light years away, and the money was stolen.”

“Joe Stinnett told me something like that could happen,” I said. “But why with all the trillions of dollars floating around in government, business, and personal accounts, would these aliens pick on the SPHEX Club?”

“Actually, there are two reasons,” he said. “If you look closely at the Arecibo Message which was transmitted toward the globular cluster Messier 13 in 1974, you will see a startling configuration resembling both the SPHEX insignia and the anagram S-P-H-E-X, which of course stands for Science, Philosophy, History, Education, and the X Factor, words that are certain to resonate with any intelligent beings. And, besides that, you had in the account exactly \$1679, which is a semi-prime number, the product of the two prime numbers, 23 and 73, and the number of horizontal and vertical pixels used to construct the Arecibo bitmap.”

“Hmmm, I see,” I said. “So, what do we do now? I assume the bank is going to reimburse us.”

“As it turns out, that won’t be necessary,” said Bob. “Apparently, these aliens are a very advanced civilization, and they are only interested in communicating with similar advanced civilizations. Having watched news feeds from Planet Earth over the last two weeks, they have concluded that our civilization is woefully primitive, and they want nothing to do with us. Consequently, they have decided to return your money, minus a small service charge.”

So, I am happy to report that as of tomorrow morning, the SPHEX Club account will stand at \$1293.56.

President Cham Light – Reflections and the Future

1. President Light reflected upon the wonderful nature and character of our esteemed member Nancy Marion’s husband Dave Marion who died earlier in the week. The SpheX club sends its warmest thoughts to Nancy and her family.

2. President Light shared his thanks and appreciation for the speakers, officers, committee heads and Sphex members who have made this the best experience possible during these difficult times when virtual meetings protected the health of Sphex's members. President Light then asked for a collective round of applause.
3. What will happen in 2021? The executive committee will decide before our next meeting on January 7 whether it is safe to meet in person. The president's sense at this moment is that we will need to remain virtual, but he is hopeful that in April or May we might be able to hold an Annual Meeting outdoors. However, President Light noted that these decisions will be made at a later time.

President Light introduced Dr. Julius A Sigler, our speaker for the evening:

Dr. Julius Sigler, a Florida native, earned his BS in Physics from Lynchburg College in 1962. He earned both his M.S. and Ph.D. in Physics from The University of Virginia. He also completed additional graduate study at UNC-CH and did research at Duke University. Dr. Sigler returned to his alma mater, Lynchburg College, to teach physics in 1967. He has also served the College as the Dean of the School of Sciences, Associate Dean of the College, and Vice President and Dean for Academic Affairs.

Dr. Sigler continues to teach part-time at the University of Lynchburg. He has been married to his college sweetheart and suitemate, Jan, for 55 years. They have three sons. Jon is a computer security engineer who lives in Colorado, James is an Environmental Engineer at BWXT and Jeff is an Atmospheric Scientist who teaches in Hartford, CT.

This additional information about Dr. Sigler has been provided by the Sphex Secretary Dr. Ken West: "In 2015 the University of Lynchburg rededicated its science building as the Thomas Gibson Hobbs and Julius A. Sigler Science Center. Dr. Ken Garren, President of the University of Lynchburg, first announced the new name at the 2015 Commencement, where the College also presented Dr. Sigler with an honorary doctorate."

Our presenter provided this abstract of his presentation entitled "The Invisible Man."

This is a tale about an amateur scientist—an individual who stood in the tradition of leading-edge scientific thinkers that dates back to Aristotle, and continues through recorded history to Kepler, Galileo, Newton, Franklin, Humboldt, Mendel, and Darwin, to name a few. Alfred Lee Loomis was born into a wealthy Connecticut family in 1887. He attended Yale, where he excelled in mathematics while choosing to study the liberal arts before entering Harvard Law School. As a young lawyer, he joined a prominent Wall Street law firm and almost immediately became one of its most accomplished attorneys, specializing in complicated corporate financial transactions.

During World War 1 he joined the Army, and was assigned to the Aberdeen Proving Ground where he was in charge of development and experimentation. There he met and formed a lifelong friendship with Robert William Wood, a physicist who shared Loomis' passion for learning about the world. Loomis was also interested in the measurement of time and he invented a device called the Aberdeen Chronometer, which could measure the muzzle velocity of the largest guns, along with other instruments that would be used long after he left the Army.

After the war, they formed an investment banking partnership and led the way into the creation of holding companies that would finance much of the nation's electrification, essentially creating the modern electrical power industry. They also amassed an enormous fortune and, fearing the instability of the stock market, the partners cashed out of the stock market in 1928 and were able to profit handsomely in the months and years following the collapse.

While he was growing wealthier by the day, in the evenings Loomis was pursuing his scientific bent. During the war, his interest in science was rekindled, as was his intrinsic interest in how things work. He created a well-equipped laboratory, literally in his garage, where he and Robert Wood, along with a professional staff which he hired, could pursue various interests. Loomis funded the equipment in the lab and, what he couldn't buy, he either had made to his specifications or built himself. He was, by all accounts, a brilliant inventor. In addition to the previously mentioned Aberdeen chronometer, he invented a microscope that for the first time allowed direct observation of specimens that were being spun at high speeds in a centrifuge.

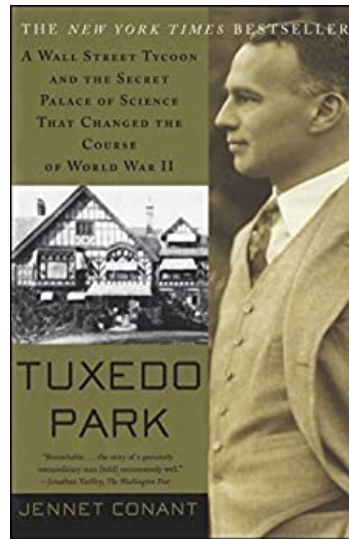
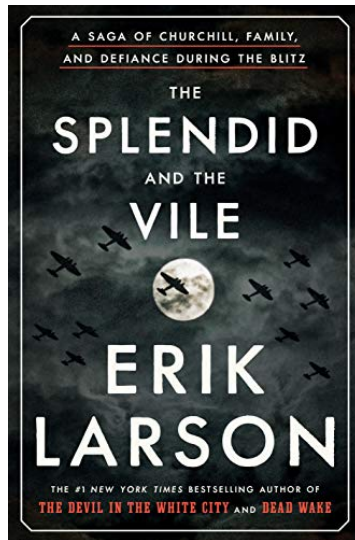
Dr. Sigler then briefly described Loomis' research on underwater sound waves, laying the groundwork for modern ultrasound technologies, along with experiments in the physical effects of radio waves, spectrometry and precise time measurements. Some of this research led to Loomis' invention of the electroencephalograph, to study brain waves. Loomis and his collaborators were also doing pioneering work on the effects of electromagnetic waves on humans.

In 1926, Loomis moved up the street into the exclusive Tuxedo Park neighborhood, where he converted the lower floor into a state-of-the-art research laboratory that not only contained well equipped laboratories, but also accommodations to host visiting scientists, of whom there were, by now, many. Loomis authored and co-authored 29 scientific papers between 1927 and 1939, all with established scientists; the papers were published in leading journals. Loomis gained the respect and admiration of the physics community and was subsequently elected to the National Academy of Sciences as a physicist. In 1930, he resigned from his business interests and turned to science full time.

As WWII approached, Loomis realized the nation was woefully behind in terms of technology, and devoted his attention to the development of a microwave radar system to detect airplanes. While working on the radar problem, Loomis conceived of and patented the LORAN (Long Range Aid to Navigation) system of navigation that coupled radio transmitters with receivers, and high precision clocks. The LORAN patent is one of six patents held by Loomis and the patent application clearly states that its use is free to the public.

The remainder of the talk described Loomis' leadership in the creation of the Radiation Laboratory, the nation's first public-private research partnership. Loomis brought together the nation's top physicists—10 future Nobel laureates in a lab that employed nearly 4,000 workers by war's end. They succeeded brilliantly, creating radars for the hunting of U-boats, navigation and bombing, fire control, search and early warning, and air-to-air fighter interception. Loomis personally championed the development of ground based radar-controlled landing systems for aircraft.

Alfred Lee Loomis was the last of the citizen scientists.



After a question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by President Light
at 9:03.

Respectfully submitted,
G. Kenneth West, Ph.D.
Secretary

Because of the COVID-19 Pandemic, Sphex Presentations in the spring of 2021 are being presented virtually to protect members and their guests from the virus.

Minutes of the 1,457th meeting of the SPHEX Club

January 7, 2021

President Cham Light called the 1,457th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, January 7. This was a virtual meeting (Zoom).

President Light welcomed all of the Sphex members back. He mentioned that the officers had recommended that for the safety of our members, presenters would continue to present on Zoom. Our attendance at Zoom meetings in the fall was excellent. And, a special thanks was given to The Rev. Dennis Roberts, who makes the Zoom link available and helps to coach presenters on how to present on Zoom.

The minutes from November 19, 2020 were approved unanimously.

Active members present were: Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Delzingaro, Doyle, Edwards, Foster, Gillette, Hendricks, Langhorne, Light, Lucas, Manian, Marion, McDonald, Payne, Roberts, Schewel, Sigler, Stinnett, Tiller, West, Wodicka, Wright, and Emeritus Member, Dr. Ken Garren.

Unable to Attend Were: Frantz, Wilson

Sphex's special guest for the evening: Dr. Allison Morrison-Shetlar, President of the University of Lynchburg.

President Light introduced Hermina Walthall Hendricks, our speaker for the evening:

A native of Lynchburg, Virginia, Hermina earned her undergraduate degree in music education from Defiance College in Ohio, a Masters of Music Education degree from JMU, and an advanced degree in Curriculum and Instruction specializing in Music at Randolph College in

the doctorate program at Virginia Tech University. She presently is a Senior Lecturer in Music, and has been serving as the Interim Chief Diversity Officer for the past six months at the request of Brad Bateman, President of Randolph College. Hermina is also the Organist and Choral director of the Senior Choir and Artistic/Choral Director of the “Soulsters from the Hill” at Diamond Hill Baptist Church.

During the early 1990s, Governor Gerald Baliles appointed Ms. Hendricks to the Virginia Commission for the Arts and later our speaker was appointed to serve on the National Endowment for the Arts ‘Arts Education Review Board’ in Washington, D.C. Most recently, Hermina was invited to serve on the Virginia Humanities Advisory Board Committee that was created to deliberate about a special grant funding program entitled, “Virginia Women Making History: Past and Present.” This fund is in honor of Rosel Schewel’s contribution to education, arts, and social justice in the State of Virginia. This is Hermina’s sixth paper presentation.

Our presenter provided this abstract of his presentation entitled “Katie, where does your garden grow?”

“Katie, Where Does Your Garden Grow?” begins with a narrative about Hermina’s maternal grandmother, Katie Elizabeth Carter Logan, who was born in 1895 and raised in an area of Pittsylvania County that eventually became known as Gretna, Virginia. Katie Elizabeth’s parents were Lovell and Clementine Carter, born in 1873 and 1876, respectively. She married John B. Logan, a tobacco farmer. Hermina’s reflection on her grandmother’s life explores how she survived living in a segregated rural area of Virginia as an African American woman at the turn of the 20th century. With Jim Crow laws in effect during her lifetime, she gave birth to thirteen children, with eleven surviving, and maintained daily tasks as a mother, wife, and eventually a grandmother.

Katie Elizabeth’s life in southern Virginia was very similar to many agricultural wives living in the southern states, below Washington, D.C. from the late 19th to the mid-twentieth centuries. She maintained a calm home with the kitchen and family rooms being the center of major activity in the farmhouse. She labored over vegetable gardens, fruit trees and berry patches, while daily retrieving eggs from the chicken coops, canning all vegetables and the

seasonally yielded fruits. Katie Elizabeth cooked three meals daily – breakfast at 6:00 a.m., dinner at 1:00 p.m., and supper at 7:00 p.m. She prepared meals for my grandfather and others who worked in the tobacco fields on the 104 acres.

Hermina concluded that to date there is very limited if any research about Southern black women in the 19th century and into the mid-20th century who were farmers' wives and mothers. Hermina wondered – “Why was that?” Were black women not significant enough during that time period for writers to highlight their lives and personal stories? Were Southern black rural women invisible to American life and culture in the late 19th century? Did their lives not matter to Virginia historians in the 20th century?

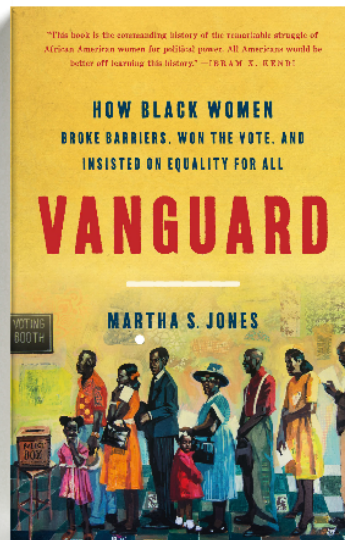
In the essay, ‘Twentieth Century Rural Southern Black Women’s History,’ Professor Cherisse Jones Branch, faculty member at The University of Arkansas, focused on research about Southern rural black women. The point of her research, rewritten as a monograph, is important because: “Black women have been overlooked in much of the extant historical scholarship on rural women. When they do appear, with the exception of Fannie Lou Hamer, they have been discussed in the context of African Americans’ migration out of the South. Or, they have been portrayed as oppressed and disempowered agricultural laborers. I assert that many rural Black women chose to remain in the South, etc.”

The September/October 2020 issue of Essence Magazine authored by Ashley Nkadi, states, “August 2020 marks a century since the ratification and official adoption of the Nineteenth Amendment. This landmark law proclaimed that ‘the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by a State on account of sex.’” Nkadi further states, “This legislation should have granted every American woman the right to vote. However, this amendment did not fully protect the voting rights of women; it primarily guaranteed the rights of White women.”

Professor Martha S. Jones, the Society of Black Alumni Presidential Professor and professor of history at Johns Hopkins University wrote in a recently published book, by Vanguard entitled “How Black Women Broke Barriers, Won the Vote, and Insisted on Equality for All.” It gives a thorough history lesson and voice to many African American women who challenged laws, rules, and codes about racism and sexism, beginning in the 18th century to the

present. Jones introduces us to many women of color who were political activists primarily in the Northern states of America, that were not celebrated and highlighted in traditional history books. These women of significance were invisible to major American historians. Names such as Jarena Lee, Susan Paul, Mary Miller Stewart, Mary Ann Shadd, Sojourner Truth, Mary Church Terrell, and many others were omitted. Jones acknowledges that most of the women of color who were active in the suffrage movement were not included in the written history of the suffragist movement that not only began in Seneca Falls, New York but also in many mid-western states across America.

Hermina's paper begins with honoring her grandmother, Katie Elizabeth Carter Logan, but discovers and highlights the existence and activism of many women during this era. Until the recent research of Professor Jones, these women's lives, like the lives of Southern farmers' wives such as Katie Elizabeth Carter Logan, were invisible to authors, historians and modern day readers.



After a question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by President Light at 8:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
G. Kenneth West, Ph.D., Secretary

Because of the COVID-19 Pandemic, Sphex Presentations in the fall and spring of 2021 were presented virtually to protect members and their guests from the virus.

(A recording of the presentation is available courtesy of The Rev. Dennis Roberts. Please click on the link or cut and paste it into your browser to access the presentation. The links can be found below the minutes.)

Minutes of the 1,458th meeting of the SPHEX Club January 21, 2021

President Cham Light called the 1,458th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, January 21st. This was a virtual meeting (Zoom).

Active members present were: Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Delzingaro, Doyle, Edwards, Foster, Frantz, Gillette, Hendricks, Langhorne, Light, Lucas, Manian, Marion, McDonald, Payne, Roberts, Schewel, Sigler, Stinnett, Tiller, West, Wilson. Guest: Dr. Alison Morrison-Shetlar

Unable to Attend Were: Wodicka, Wright

President Light welcomed everyone back and noted the excellent attendance at the virtual meetings this year.

Recordings to be made available: At the request of one or more members, The Rev. Dennis Roberts will make recordings of the members' presentations available with the permission of the speakers.

Archives in Jones Memorial Library: President Light highlighted the excellent work of Dr. Jim Wright and Nancy Marion in archiving speeches presented throughout the history of the Sphex Club.

President Light introduced Dr. Jeff Wilson our speaker for the evening:

Jeff was born in Charleston, West Virginia but lived in Connecticut, Kentucky, Florida, and Pennsylvania while growing up. He is Duke inbred receiving a BS in Zoology (1968) and his M.D. in 1972. He continued post-graduate medical training at Duke including internship, internal medicine residency, and rheumatology fellowship from 1972 till 1979. This was interrupted by two years of active duty Navy service (1974-1976).

He and his wife Sandra have been married since June 20, 1969. They have two children, Elizabeth and Melissa and three grandchildren. They discovered Lynchburg looking for access to the Appalachian Trail. Sandra is hiking the AT piecemeal. The longest they have lived in any one place has been Lynchburg where he practiced rheumatology from July 7, 1979 until December 15, 2014. He saw rheumatology patients two afternoons a month in the Free Clinic and has prepared a Rheumatology Primer for the Free Clinic.

He served as President of the Lynchburg Academy of Medicine, 6th District Councilor to the Medical Society of Virginia, and was the tenth recipient of the William Barney Award in 2007.

He has published two books and authored chapters on vitamin D and Environmental Triggers which relates to tonight's presentation, "How It All Works (or Getting a Toe in the Water)."

Our presenter provided this summary of his presentation entitled: "How It All Works (or Getting a Toe in the Water)."

Autoimmunity, the body's immune system acting against itself, has been noted since the early 1900's; called **Horror Autotoxicus** by Dr. Paul Ehrlich. There is evidence that autoimmune diseases are becoming more frequent. The varied forms of autoimmune diseases follow a similar model, typified by the HLA B27 story. Our **Inherited Genetics** include **Inherited Susceptibilities (e.g. HLA B27)** which are **Unexpressed**. The next question was what acted as **Triggers** resulting in **Expressed Inherited Susceptibilities**. In the case of HLA B27, an infection (Shigella dysentery) triggered the development of the autoimmune disease, Reiter's Syndrome. While the **treatment** using medications such as methotrexate and hydroxychloroquine may control the Reiter's Syndrome disease manifestations, the real goal for a model is to allow **Prediction** and **Prevention** of these diseases. In the case of HLA B27 triggered to Salmonella, a vaccine to be developed would be indicated.

A more current concern relates to Covid-19 infection. Patients with **Inherited Suceptibilities** detected by GWAS (Genome Wide Association Studies), ABO blood group for Type A blood and a multi gene locus pattern, are more likely (**predicted**) to have greater morbidity and mortality when **triggered directly** by the Covid virus. **Preventive** measures including vaccination, mask use, social distancing, and crowd avoidance would be especially important in this group. If the disease is not prevented, this identified group would be a candidate for earlier **Treatment** with dexamethasone and monoclonal antibody plasma plus more careful monitoring by an intensive care unit.

There is some concern that global warming may represent an **Indirect Trigger** in many conditions associated with expanded range of tick and viral diseases.

The role of vitamin D and hydroxychloroquine in immunomodulation needs further investigation.

After a question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by President Light at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
G. Kenneth West, Ph.D.
Secretary

A recording of the presentation is available. Please click on the link or cut and paste it into your browser to access the presentation. A special thanks goes to The Rev. Dennis Roberts for making these recordings available.

Here are the links to our January presentations:

Hermina Hendricks -

<https://youtu.be/3lzZ4snSQYs>

Dr. Jeff Wilson

<https://youtu.be/8UTkCZkLMS0>

Because of the COVID-19 Pandemic, Sphex Presentations in the fall and spring of 2021 were presented virtually to protect members and their guests from the virus.

(A recording of the presentation is available courtesy of The Rev. Dennis Roberts. Please click on the link or cut and paste it into your browser to access the presentation. The links can be found below the minutes.)

Minutes of the 1,459th meeting of the SPHEX Club

February 4, 2021

President Cham Light called the 1,459th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 4. This was a virtual meeting (Zoom).

Active members present were: Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Delzingaro, Doyle, Foster, Frantz, Gillette, Hendricks, Langhorne, Light, Lucas, Manian, Marion, Payne, Roberts, Schewel, Stinnett, Tiller, West, Wilson, Wright.

Unable to Attend Were: Edwards, McDonald, Sigler, Wodicka

Sphex's special guests for the evening: Jodi Gillette, Bob and Marsha Gillette, Maria Roberts, Tracy and Helen Wheelock, Rachel Piscette, and Emeritus Member, Ken Garren.

There were no formal presentations by committees at this time.

President Light introduced Dr. Michael Gillette, our speaker for the evening:

Tonight's speaker is Dr. Michael Gillette. Michael grew up in Connecticut and then headed to Boston to earn his Bachelor's degree with majors in Philosophy and Classical Greek at Brandeis University where he was elected Phi Beta Kappa. He then went on for his Master's and Ph.D. in philosophy at Brown University. Michael and his wife Jodi, who have been married for 35 years, moved to Lynchburg in 1990 when Michael accepted a position in the philosophy

department at Randolph-Macon Woman's College. After earning tenure and promotion to Associate Professor, Dr. Gillette promptly resigned his position to pursue a full time career as an ethicist concentrating in clinical ethics, but also providing services in organizational ethics and ethics in local government. Michael served for twelve years on Lynchburg City Council and served two terms as the City's mayor. He and Jodi have two daughters, Rachel who lives in Boise, Idaho and Becca who lives outside of Boston, Massachusetts. Michael will present his eighth SPHEX paper this evening, entitled "The Swiss Cheese of the Century".

Our presenter, Dr. Michael Gillette, provided this abstract of his presentation entitled "The Swiss Cheese of the Century."

In his eighth paper to the SPHEX Club, Dr. Gillette presented a brief overview of the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the series of efforts that have been offered between 1967 and 2021 to deal with the issue. Dr. Gillette began by reviewing the history of the region from pre-Roman times to the present in order to illustrate the claims to the land made by the relevant parties. He then explained the genesis of the "occupation" of the West Bank and the Gaza strip that is attributable to the 1967 Six Day War. After reviewing this background history, Dr. Gillette offered a summary of the various peace plans that have been developed, beginning with the Allon Plan and including the Oslo Accords, the Saudi Initiative, the Geneva Accords, the Olmert Offer, and the Trump administration's "Deal of the Century". After examining the Trump plan, and pointing out its fatal flaws, conversation then turned to the more hopeful efforts currently referred to as the Abraham Accords. While these more recent diplomatic developments signal a change in regional attitudes toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Dr. Gillette concluded that the current political situation on both sides of the equation make an imminent solution unlikely.

After a question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by President Light at 8:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
G. Kenneth West, Ph.D.
Secretary

A recording of the presentation is available. Please click on the link or copy and paste it into your browser to access the presentation. A special thanks goes to The Rev. Dennis Roberts for making these recordings available.

Here is the link to Dr. Gillette's presentation:

<https://youtu.be/NuQvPlmrFRY>

Because of the COVID-19 Pandemic, Sphex Presentations in the fall and spring of 2021 were presented virtually to protect members and their guests from the virus.

(A recording of the presentation is available courtesy of The Rev. Dennis Roberts. Please click on the link or copy and paste it into your browser to access the presentation. The links can be found below the minutes.)

Minutes of the 1,460th meeting of the SPHEX Club

February 18, 2021

President Cham Light called the 1,460th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 18th. This was a virtual meeting (Zoom).

Active members present were: Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Delzingaro, Doyle, Edwards, Frantz, Hendricks, Langhorne, Light, Lucas, Payne, Roberts, Schewel, Sigler, Stinnett, Tiller, West, Wodicka, Wright.

Unable to Attend Were: Foster, Gillette, Manian, Marion, McDonald, Wilson.

Sphex's special guests for the evening: Megan Lucas, Angela Romero, Meredith Baker, Dr. Alison Morrison-Shetlar, and Sphex emeritus member Dr. Ken Garren.

The Sphex Minutes for February 4 were approved.

Treasurer's Report – Marc Schewel offered yet another hilarious treasurer's report. This one was unique in that it never mentioned any numbers.

Ad Hoc Sphex Archives Committee Report – Ted Delaney, Chair

1. The committee has completed the scanning of the minutes and talks housed at the Jones Memorial Library, from the club's founding in 1910 to 2020. All have been made keyword searchable except for the first 20 years of the minutes which were handwritten.

2. We will come back to the membership soon with recommendations for hosting the digital archives and making them available to members and possibly others.
3. We will also make recommendations about maintaining paper copies of all minutes and papers in the future.
4. We ask that, going forward, all speakers provide, in addition to the usual abstract and printed copy of their talk, a digital file, including the text and images. If a PowerPoint presentation was used, that file should be provided as well. The text file format is not important because the secretary will convert those files to pdf format for archiving.

President Light introduced Tory Lucas, our speaker for the evening:

Professor Tory L. Lucas has served on the faculty of Liberty University School of Law since 2011. During his legal career, Tory has been a trial lawyer in private practice, served as a judge advocate in the U.S. Air Force, earned an LL.M. degree in a distinguished fellowship, clerked for two federal judges on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, published sixteen articles, and taught law at Creighton University School of Law, Stetson University College of Law, the University of Nebraska College of Law, and Liberty Law. Tory was the first person in his family to attend college, and he now serves on the Board of Trustees of his alma mater Culver-Stockton College. Tory is married to Megan A. Lucas, who serves as the CEO and Chief Economic Development Officer of the Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance. This is Tory's second SpheX presentation, which is entitled *Dissing Ability*.

Our presenter provided this abstract of his presentation entitled *Dissing Ability*.

When you read the word disability, do you envision ability? When you see a person with a disability, do you focus on the disability before you recognize the person's ability? Regrettably, it is common to ignore a person's ability when blinded by an incessant focus on disability. Three little letters—D I S—placed in front of ability can zap it of its power. Put simply, a misdirected focus on disability can diss ability. Diss is a slang term that means “to treat with disrespect or contempt.” It is an insult. For centuries, America has dissed—or disrespected—ability through its misguided focus on disability. A societal emphasis on people's disabilities ensures that they never

enjoy equal access to equal opportunity. Casting a vision to end America's propensity to diss ability, this Article looks backward to understand how society has mistreated people with disabilities and forward with a plan to permanently change course. Explaining that disability is a common experience, Part I challenges society to focus on ability over disability. Looking backward, Part II details historical horrors that have befallen people with disabilities when society incessantly focused on disability without seeing ability. This long and cruel history recounts structural exclusion and societal elimination of people with disabilities. The Article then transitions from the horrors of the past to hope for the future. Part III catalogues major civil rights milestones that began to fulfill the promise of equal access to equal opportunity for people with disabilities. Part IV features the historic and hope-filled Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 that ensured national civil rights for people with disabilities. Even though this part unleashes enduring hope for equal opportunity, it cautions that America's historically misguided focus on disability is not easily corrected and continues to diss ability. Part V concludes with a profile of The Reverend Harold H. Wilke, a disability rights pioneer who proved that ability trumps disability when imagination is engaged. America's incessant focus on disability must recede permanently from view so that ability may emerge in full view. Hoping to end the disabling view that disability means inability, this Article envisions a future in which America no longer tolerates prejudicial views of disability. If America follows this Article's hopeful prescription for a clear vision of ability that is not blurred by a horrifically misdirected view of disability, it will no longer diss ability.

After a question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by President Light at 8:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
G. Kenneth West, Ph.D.
Secretary

A recording of the presentation is available. Please click on the link or copy and paste it into your browser to access the presentation. A special thanks goes to The Rev. Dennis Roberts for making these recordings available.

<https://youtu.be/2MhQ-4BeCzo>

Because of the COVID-19 Pandemic, Sphex Presentations in the fall 2020 and the spring of 2021 were presented virtually to protect members and their guests from the virus.

(A recording of the presentation is available courtesy of The Rev. Dennis Roberts. Please click on the link or copy and paste it into your browser to access the presentation. The links can be found below the minutes.)

Minutes of the 1,461st meeting of the SPHEX Club

March 4th, 2021

President Cham Light called the 1,461st meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 4th. This was a virtual meeting (Zoom).

Active members present were: Cook, Dawson, Doyle, Edwards, Foster, Frantz, Gillette, Hendricks, Langhorne, Light, Lucas, Manian, Marion, McDonald, Payne, Roberts, Schewel, Sigler, Stinnett, Tiller, West, Wilson, Wright, and emeritus member, Dr. Ken Garren.

Unable to Attend Were: Cyphert, Delaney, Delzingaro, Wodicka

Sphex's special guests for the evening: Judy Frantz (spouse of the speaker), Mary-Katherine Taylor (Dr. and Mrs. Frantz's daughter who lives in Los Angeles.)

Sphex Minutes were approved without change.

Nominating Committee Report - Dr. Jeff Wilson, Chair, Hermina Hendricks, Kimball Payne Nominations for Sphex Officers 2021-2022

President	Katie Cyphert
Vice President	Dr. David Frantz
Treasurer	Marc Schewel
Secretary	Dr. Ken West
Assistant Secretary	Joe Stinnett

President Light introduced David Frantz, MD, FACS, our speaker for the evening.

Dr. Frantz grew up in Silver Spring, MD and attended the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee where he was a member of Phi Beta Kappa. He then went to Tufts University in Boston for his medical degree, then began his first residency at the University of Vermont in Internal Medicine.

Dr. Frantz moved to Portland Maine to train in General Surgery at the Maine Medical Center. He completed his final residency at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, training in Cardiothoracic Surgery.

Dr. Frantz began practice in St. Louis where he remained for 4 years.

In 1989, however, he came to Lynchburg to establish the Cardiac Surgery Program for Centra Health, which began at Virginia Baptist Hospital. He served as the Director until his retirement from surgery in 2015 and he now works regularly for Centra's Center for Wound Care and Hyperbaric Medicine.

Accomplishments in Lynchburg Include:

- Established a private practice group performing all adult cardiac and thoracic surgery in 1989.
- Helped design and opened Centra's new cardiac OR's and ICU at Lynchburg General Hospital 1995.
- Personally performed approximately 5000 open heart surgeries during his career in Lynchburg.

Honors in the 21st Century include:

Hearts of Fame Award – Mended Hearts Chapter 16 - 2002

Honoree, Sackett Heart Ball - 2014

Best Bedside Manner - Our Health Magazine - 2015

Dr. Frantz is a past president of the Lynchburg Academy of Medicine.

Serves on the Board of Centra Specialty Hospital and the Vestry at St. John's Episcopal

He has two grown daughters in Atlanta and LA, and is accompanied tonight by his wife, Judy.

Our presenter David Frantz, MD, FACS provided this abstract of his presentation entitled “Need a Haircut?”

The origins of the craft of surgery are not among the physicians of antiquity or even the academics of the great universities of Europe. Rather, surgery arose from the practice of barbers in the Middle Ages. The first accounts of barber-surgeons appear in the records of the monasteries of Europe about 1000 AD. They performed haircuts and did simple procedures such as bloodletting, pulling teeth, lancing boils, and caring for simple wounds. Very little progress was made over the centuries although the role and abilities of surgeons advanced in times of war. This is a recurring theme throughout surgical history. Surgeons remained of lower class than physicians, serving only apprenticeships rather than having academic training.

The barber pole remains as a vestige of this common origin of barbers and surgeons, thought to represent the bloody bandages of their practice of bloodletting. The tradition in Great Britain to refer to male surgeons as “Mr.” rather than “Dr.” is a remnant of their separate origins.

Ambrose Pare in 1545 observed on the battlefield that hot cautery to treat amputations was detrimental and devised a turpentine salve and the direct ligation of blood vessels. But 300 years later surgical procedures were still very limited and gruesome in their execution. Amputations were performed in 30 seconds or less to minimize the patients’ agony.

The three barriers of pain, infection and bleeding prevented progress.

Sir Humphrey Davy, in England, discovered the effects of nitrous oxide in 1800, but his suggestion it be used in surgery went unheeded and it became popular only for entertainment as “laughing gas.” Forty years later Horace Wells, a dentist in Hartford, Conn. used it successfully in his dental practice, but a demonstration in Boston was a failure. William Morton, another dentist and surgeon, used ether for the famous demonstration of surgical anesthesia at Massachusetts General Hospital in 1847. Chloroform, much better tolerated and non-flammable, was discovered as an anesthetic by a Scot, Sir James Young Simpson and became the preferred agent. Deaths occurred due to its toxicity, however, and ether once again became the dominant anesthetic for the next 100 years.

With the luxury of time to operate, surgeons vastly expanded the procedures they attempted. This led to frequent devastating infections and surgery was banned from many hospitals. Infection became so common that the term “laudable pus” entered the lexicon, denoting that with pus draining, rather than forming an abscess, a wound might eventually heal. There was no understanding of the contamination and infections caused by surgeons’ hands, instruments, and frocks.

Louis Pasteur studied bacterial contamination and spoilage, ultimately making the link between the bacteria and disease with his treatise, *Germ Theory of Disease* in 1862. Joseph Lister, working in Glasgow, applied this theory to open wounds, using the antiseptic carbolic acid as an aerosolized spray in his operating room. “Listerian” techniques gradually spread as antiseptics were accepted. Dramatic improvements occurred in surgical care and infection rates. Listerine was named in honor of Joseph Lister in 1888.

John Halsted, an icon of American surgery, championed the Listerian techniques and advanced the ideas of gentle handling of tissues, meticulous dissection, and minimal blood loss to improve results. He had gloves designed for his scrub nurse, who had developed a rash from the antiseptic sprays. These became the first surgical gloves and spread to the rest of the operating team to protect the patient from the bacteria of the surgeons’ hands.

Robert Koch, a German physician, and microbiologist, photographed bacteria and directly linked specific bacteria with their diseases, applying Koch’s Postulates. He identified the bacteria on the hands of the surgeons as the same as in the patients’ wounds. We now moved from an era of “antiseptics” into an era of “asepsis,” requiring the development of gloves, designated operating rooms, sterile instruments, operating gowns and hats, and masks.

Two of the three barriers had been overcome, but the mystery of blood loss remained.

The injury to General Stonewall Jackson at Chancellorsville provides one of the first descriptions of hemorrhagic shock, although this was poorly understood. Blood transfusions from animals had been attempted as early as 1667 without success. Transfusions from husband to wife for postpartum hemorrhage were again tried by James Blundell in London in 1818, but were often fatal due to immune reactions. Karl Landsteiner, an Austrian physician discovered blood groups in 1900 and Ludvig Hektoen, in Chicago showed that blood could be cross-matched. WW I saw the advance of transfusion technology with the citrate-glucose additive to preserve and anti-coagulate donations. Durable plastic bags replaced glass bottles in 1955

The three barriers had now been breached.

Advances during WWII included formal blood banks, penicillin, and the development of balanced anesthesia using separate agents for sedation, muscle relaxation and pain relief. Specialization in surgery accelerated and surgeons developed advanced expertise in their fields.

As a result of these transformative changes, surgery evolved from a gruesome and dangerous craft into an integral part of our medical armamentarium, dramatically expanding our ability to intervene in the course of disease. Patients could now go into the operating room not with existential fear and desperation, but with hope. They might even be happy to show off their scar with some pride.

After a question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by President Light at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
G. Kenneth West, Ph.D.
Secretary

A recording of the presentation is available. Please click on the link or copy and paste it into your browser to access the presentation. A special thanks goes to The Rev. Dennis Roberts for making these recordings available.

Here is the link to Dave Frantz's presentation.

<https://youtu.be/0JZAocx9jbo>

[Preview YouTube video Dr. David W. Frantz - "Need a Haircut?"](#)



Because of the COVID-19 Pandemic, SpheX Presentations in the fall and spring of 2021 were presented virtually to protect members and their guests from the virus.

(A recording of the presentation is available courtesy of The Rev. Dennis Roberts. Please click on the link or copy and paste it into your browser to access the presentation. The links can be found below the minutes and special attachments.)

Minutes of the 1,462nd meeting of the SPHEX Club

March 18, 2021

President Cham Light called the 1,462nd meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 18. This was a virtual meeting (Zoom).

Active members present were: Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Delzingaro, Doyle, Edwards, Foster, Frantz, Gillette, Hendricks, Langhorne, Light, Lucas, Manian, Marion, McDonald, Roberts, Schewel, Stinnett, Tiller, West, Wilson, Wodicka, Wright and Emeritus Member, Dr. Ken Garren.

Unable to Attend Were: Payne, Sigler

The minutes for March 4 were approved without modification.

Treasurer's Report: Marc Schewel

Having been accused by our illustrious secretary of delivering reports on the status of the SpheX Club Treasury absent the mention of any numbers, I have decided to address that criticism tonight by providing not only our bank balance but a laundry list of some other sobering numbers:

\$1.9 trillion: the amount of public money authorized by Congress for spending in the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021; 19,000: the number of years it would take for Schewel Furniture Company to accumulate \$1.9 trillion in sales revenue;

\$300 million: the amount of public money authorized by Congress to monitor and survey susceptible animals for incidents of Covid-19; \$1.01 billion: the amount of public money authorized by Congress to assist socially disadvantaged farmers, ranches, forest land owners, operators, and groups; \$40 billion: the amount of public money authorized by Congress to support tax-exempt colleges and universities; \$7.6 billion: the amount of public money allocated by Congress to the Department of Health and Human Services for grants to and cooperative

agreements with community health centers for Covid-19 vaccine distribution, testing, contact tracing, equipment, staffing, infrastructure, education, and outreach; \$26 billion: the amount of public money allocated by Congress to urban transit systems to allow them to recover 132 percent of their 2018 operating costs; \$570 million: the amount of public money authorized by Congress for paid leave up to six hundred hours each for federal employees unable to work due to quarantine related to Covid-19 including caring for family members (maybe this is why we can't get our mail delivered on time); \$7 billion: the amount of public money allocated by Congress to airports for costs related to preventing the spread of pathogens, including personnel, cleaning, sanitation, janitorial service, and debt service; \$86 billion: the amount of public money authorized by Congress to enable multi-employer defined benefit pension plans—those operated, or shall we say, mismanaged, jointly by corporations and labor unions—to cover their obligations through 2051; \$200 billion: the amount of public money processed and paid by state governments in 2020 for fraudulent unemployment claims; \$960,855: the amount of public money Tom Brady's company TB12 received in 2020 in the form of a Paycheck Protection forgivable loan, a hefty sum for most people but a mere pittance to Mr. Brady and his wife Gisele Bundchen who together are worth \$600 million;

And finally, \$1293.56, the amount of money in the Sphex Club account at the Bank of the James as of 3/18/2021.

Nominating Committee's Election of Officers:

Dr. Jeff Wilson, Chair

Hermine Hendricks, Kimball Payne members

Sphex Officers 2021-2022

President	Katie Cyphert
Vice President	Dr. David Frantz
Treasurer	Marc Schewel
Secretary	Dr. Ken West
Assistant Secretary	Joe Stinnett

Dr. Jeff Wilson presented “A Resolution of Appreciation for Stuart Horsley Harris, Jr., M.D.”

Following Dr. Wilson's presentation of this resolution, many members spoke of the meaningful relationships Dr. Harris created with his patients, Sphex members and people of all races throughout Central Virginia. The resolution is attached to these minutes.

Report of Ad Hoc Sphex Archives Committee

Ted Delaney wrote a detailed summary of the work of his committee that will soon allow members to read each of the presentations in the Sphex archives at Jones Memorial Library. The committee's full report is attached to these minutes.

Reflections about the 2020-2021 Sphex Year, Virtual Presentations and Leadership

Dr. Ken West, Secretary

Two individuals and one committee were recognized for their major contributions to Sphex during our Covid19 pandemic year. Having been fortunate to follow the work of all three, I would like to place a few brief reflections in the minutes of our final meeting of the year.

In August of 2020 the executive committee met as Covid19 was spreading dangerously. It was obvious we could not meet together as Sphex members have for over 100 years. We were unsure how successful virtual meetings would be. President Cham Light's optimism and positive leadership gave us the determination to attempt virtual meetings. They went wonderfully. And, President Light's constant optimism and appreciation for the extra work each presenter took on was inspirational to the entire membership. President Light proved to be the right leader for a year like no other.

One member, The Rev. Dennis Roberts, possessed the technical ability to help every presenter feel comfortable presenting virtually. Fortunately, Dennis Roberts also proved to be an exceptional teacher with endless patience and good will. He not only helped presenters, but he also provided a link to each virtual meeting and eventually created YouTube links to presentations so that people unable to attend the virtual sessions could still learn from each presenter.

The Ad Hoc Sphex Archives Committee (Ted Delaney--Chair, Dr. Jim Wright, Nancy Marion and Dr. Tom Tiller) scanned the club's entire archives including over 100 years of papers delivered by members at meetings, club constitutions, meeting minutes, club histories, and membership records. Almost all of this material has been indexed using 'optical character recognition' software." Soon these documents will be available to all emeritus and present members. What an incredible accomplishment to achieve in this pandemic year when so many projects did not move forward!

President Light introduced Joan Foster, our speaker for the evening:

Joan Foster is a graduate of the University of Lynchburg and holds three degrees (B.A., MAT and MEd) in Elementary and Early Childhood Education, as well as Special Education. The University awarded Joan an Honorary Doctor of Humanities degree.

She just retired from the position of Director of Development for Lynchburg Beacon of Hope, an organization which strives to instill in all Lynchburg City Public School students the aspiration to pursue and attain a post-secondary education.

Joan was elected in 2002 to Lynchburg City Council as an At-Large Member. She served on Lynchburg City Council from 2002-2018. In her position as council member, she served as Vice Mayor and Mayor of the City of Lynchburg.

Joan was the first female Mayor of the City. During her tenure as Mayor, Joan advocated for and helped lead the following initiatives:

- Dialogue on Race and Racism (Lynchburg Beacon of Hope originated from this initiative)
- Pre-school literacy initiative (The Amazing Mayor's Book Race handed out more than 2500 books to elementary school students)
- Live Healthy Lynchburg (www.LiveHealthyLynchburg.com), a challenge she issued to the community to lose 12 tons in 2012, which they did by the summer of 2012.
- Poverty to Progress initiative that she kicked off during the State of the City in 2017, along with Vice Mayor Tweedy

Joan is married to Bob Foster and has three grown children and seven grandchildren.

Joan Foster provided this abstract of her presentation entitled “A Culture of Care... Walking in Another’s Shoes.”

This presentation was on poverty in Lynchburg, specifically over the last ten years, and how the community responded by creating a culture of care to address intergenerational poverty in Lynchburg. Intergenerational poverty was defined as poverty that persists from one generation to the next; in other words, households in which daily needs are not consistently met, and the individuals in these households remain in poverty over a lifetime. (Weldon Cooper Center's report to Lynchburg Council, 2015). Much has been written about poverty and about those living in poverty. Although, the presentation was about what has happened in the community over the last few years, the speaker did mention that our history in Lynchburg has not always been a culture of care for everyone, when we look at the percentages of those living in poverty in our community there is a racial dimension and a glance back at our history reveals that racial injustices have played a role. Red-lined African American neighborhoods, New Deal programs that excluded African Americans, and funding that helped with education and business start-ups for whites only again excluded our African American neighbors. (Dr. John Abell, *Redlining in*

Lynchburg, August 25, 2020). The presenter stated that this is unacceptable and should not define who we are in Lynchburg, Virginia in 2021!

However, the goal of this presentation was to present information on the intergenerational poverty rate in our City and share with the audience some of the efforts that City government and Lynchburg citizens have initiated to reduce the poverty level and increase the median income. At the end of this presentation, some of the early outcomes were shared but the speaker pointed out that COVID 19 may have changed all that was reported in regard to the poverty rate and the median income. The speaker began the presentation with three individual stories of Lynchburg citizens living in poverty in the City; however, the endings of these individual stories were not revealed until the end of the presentation.

Highlights and background information was enumerated on concerning actions that Lynchburg City Council took to obtain an accurate measurement of poverty in Lynchburg. Funds were allocated from the general fund to employ the Demographics Research Group of the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service at the University of Virginia to conduct an actual analysis of poverty in the City of Lynchburg.

The Weldon Cooper Center study concluded the following after their study:

- Although, Lynchburg is distinct from other college towns in Virginia, poverty remains high even after accounting for postsecondary students
- The poverty rate among African Americans and Asians living in Lynchburg is higher than the overall 22.6%. Caucasians make up 63.1% of the Lynchburg population, however their rate of poverty is 19.0% whereas African Americans comprise about 30% of the population and have a poverty rate of 34.7%. In addition, Asians comprised 2.8% of the population and have a poverty rate of 45.3%. The study stated with a high degree of certainty that the poverty rate among whites is significantly lower than rates among African Americans and Asians. Approximately 30% of the City's children (who account for 21.7% of the population) are poor, that is 3 out of 10 children.

The recommendation from the Weldon Cooper Center to the City was:

- Consider *targeted* efforts to encourage employment and educate residents about social safety net programs, also there should be city-wide efforts to create job opportunities (Weldon Copper Center's study Poverty in Lynchburg, Virginia -An analysis presented to Lynchburg City Council on December 8, 2015)

City Council's response to this recommendation occurred in February of 2017 at The State of the City address when Mayor Foster and Vice Mayor Tweedy kicked off a City initiative, **Poverty to Progress**, and issued a call to action for the 23% poverty rate. This call asked the community to come out to a meeting on May the 4th 2017 to help design a plan to tackle poverty. It was stressed in the call to action that poverty is a community issue, and it will take the community to make a difference. They urged the community to work together; government, faith leaders, non-profit organizations, schools, private citizens, and design the plan and work through tasks forces together. (Lynchburg State of the City Address, February 2017. On May 2017 over 800+ citizens answered this "Call to Action" meeting and brainstormed solutions to lower the generational poverty rate. Nine community task forces of citizens were formed to tackle the identified problems. These tasks forces met throughout the summer and fall of 2017 to create action plans with goals and measurements. Prior to this meeting a regional effort had been occurring called Bridges to Progress tackling the same problems but more regionally. In the fall of 2018 Poverty to Progress merges with Bridges of Central Virginia and forms Bridges to Progress, with 10 task forces. The task forces deal with the barriers that are faced by those living in poverty: Early Childhood Care, Education, Community, Education, Housing, Legal System, Mental Health, Faith Community, Food Disparity, Transportation, Workforce. The task forces continue to meet and a Bridges to Progress Steering Committee was appointed to oversee the work; 5 Steering committee members were appointed by Mayor Tweedy and City Council and 5 were appointed by Bridges of Central Virginia.

This merger represented a collective effort by the citizens of Lynchburg to reduce poverty in the City of Lynchburg. The merger resulted in the development of action items focused on eliminating barriers for our low-income citizens. It was also a catalyst for the civic engagement of faith-based organizations, non-profits, individuals, businesses, schools, and others to rally around the cause of creating a community of care with empathy and understanding the citizens in our community that are living in poverty. (Bridges to Progress website).

Throughout discussions on poverty both by local government agencies and grassroots citizens three main components continually came up in community conversations:

- education (i.e., family dysfunction that prevents their involvement in a child's life that encourage the culture of cradle to graduation/college/career)
- jobs/workforce (lack of employable skills, education, history that prevents being employable, etc.)
- knowledge of and access to resources (to decrease homelessness, overuse of medical emergency services, mental health issues, substance abuse, etc.).

Meanwhile, the grassroots community was establishing their own community response to the growing problem of poverty in the Lynchburg community. The speaker related that during the last ten years many important grassroots initiatives and programs came about to activate citizens to respond and become a part of the solution. Lynchburg Beacon of Hope, Stay Close Go Far Scholarships, Bridges Out of Poverty's Getting Ahead Classes, The Holcomb Hughes Community Health Center (CAN on Fifth Street), Parkview Mission, Open Table, No Walls Ministry were named. These non-profits came about as cultures of care to assist with the educational endeavors of public-school youth, to provide a pathway to address the physical and mental health needs of the uninsured and underinsured, to provide a safety net for food needs for children and families, as well as mentoring and assisting citizens living in poverty by building their social resources and assisting with financial stability.

In January of 2020, Lynchburg City Council approved all nine Bridges to Progress Task Forces grant applications, over \$112,000 was allocated in response to action plans that included some of the following goals:

- Services will be provided through Getting Ahead classes, training through Virginia Career Works, and ongoing social support through Community Connected Open Table model.
- Smart Beginnings Central Virginia, a partner in the Early Childhood Care and Education Workgroup, will provide intensive classroom-based coaching at the White Rock Head Start Center.
- The Faith Taskforce will partner with approximately 25 families of the Fairview Community Center to offer three sessions of a four-week program to enhance family money management skills as well as family soft skills necessary to secure and maintain gainful careers.
- The Food task force will purchase 100 transit folding shopping carts for citizens regularly utilizing food agencies that are challenged with transporting groceries via walking or public transportation

In closing the speaker related that our community has stepped up and worked together to find real, sustainable solutions to our poverty numbers, however this has been and will continue to be a difficult journey. There are no easy fixes to systemic poverty, it is important to remember that when we talk about poverty we are also talking about economic development and the financial well-being of all of our citizens. When people are able to move out of poverty, work in jobs that pay living wages, and are able to enjoy what most of us take for granted, the entire community becomes stronger. A graph was shared from the U S Census Bureau that reflected the poverty rate and the median income from 2015 (24.8% and \$39,589) to 2019(19.5% and \$46,409). The speaker asked this question; is this a direct correlation from what has been done over the last 10

years? Hopefully, it is. However, in the next few years we will see the impact of COVID on our poverty rate and our median income.

The presentation was concluded with the outcomes of the three individual stories, two ended incredibly well.

After a question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by incoming president Katie Cyphert.

It was noted that President Cyphert follows the strong tradition set in the modern era by the first two women to serve as the president of SpheX: Hermina Hendricks and Julie Doyle.

Respectfully submitted,
G. Kenneth West, Ph.D.
Secretary

Report of Ad Hoc SpheX Archives Committee
March 18, 2021

Committee Members

Ted Delaney, *Chair*
Nancy Marion
Tom Tiller
Jim Wright

The Ad Hoc SpheX Archives Committee has met to discuss how to make our club's 100 years of records and papers more accessible, which we feel is an important way to honor the hard work and scholarship of our members. We have now scanned the club's entire archives, including papers delivered by members at meetings, club constitutions, meeting minutes, club histories, and membership records. Almost all of this material has been indexed using "optical character recognition" software.

The SpheX Archives Committee recommends that the club allow Jones Memorial Library of Lynchburg to host its complete archives in electronic format, through a password protected database on the library's website (jmlibrary.org), available to both active and emeritus members. The database will be fully searchable, and search results will link directly to files in PDF format.

Jones Memorial Library has generously offered to host this digital archive on its website free of charge, at no cost to the club.

The committee recommends revisiting the database at a meeting in the fall or winter of this year to consider several important questions:

1. Should the database be made available to the general public (i.e., remove the password protection)?
2. Should members be asked to opt-in or opt-out of their papers being added to a public archive?
3. How do we address the use of copyrighted images as illustrations or visual aids in members' papers?
4. Do we need a disclaimer that the papers were intended for club consideration only, and may no longer reflect the opinions, attitudes, scholarship, etc. of the author?
5. Should members continue to submit paper copies of their papers, since they are now being asked to submit digital versions, too?

We felt the club needed to see and use the archives—and give us more feedback—before we could answer these questions or make further recommendations.

Our committee will work over the spring and summer to develop guidelines for club secretaries for adding papers, minutes, and other records to the database in the future.

Respectfully submitted, Ted Delaney

A Resolution of Appreciation for
Stuart Horsley Harris, Jr, M.D.
(1931-2021)

Whereas Stuart Horsley Harris, Jr was born in Roanoke, Virginia, grew up in Lynchburg, Virginia and
Whereas Stuart graduated Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Virginia in 1953, where he excelled in athletics and academics and
Whereas he graduated from the University of Virginia School of Medicine in 1957 and
Whereas he served in the United States Army Medical Corps in Munich, Germany from 1958 to 1960 and
Whereas he completed training in general, thoracic, and vascular surgery at the University of Virginia in 1964 and
Whereas he moved to Lynchburg in 1965 and founded Seven Hills Surgical Associates and
Whereas he served two months in 1969 on the ship U.S. Hope in Tunisia and
Whereas he was an active member of SPHEX from 1992 until becoming an Emeritus Member in 2011 and
Whereas his presentations were always scholarly, informative, and entertaining and
Whereas his convivial presence will be missed by the members of the SPHEX Club who were fortunate to know him,

Now be it resolved that the members of the SPHEX Club express their sincere appreciation for the life and membership of Stuart H. Harris, Jr., share the sorrow of his death, and extend condolences to his family.

(A recording of the presentation is available courtesy of The Rev. Dennis Roberts. Please click on the link or copy and paste it into your browser to access the presentation. The links can be found below the minutes.)

Minutes of the 1,463rd meeting of the SPHEX Club

September 9th, 2021

President David Frantz called the 1,463rd meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 9th. This was a virtual meeting (Zoom).

President and Vice President switch leadership years:

It was announced by David Frantz that he and Katie Cyphert would switch years as SPHEX President. Because of the Covid pandemic's unpredictable but already disruptive influence on Katie Cyphert's teaching and leadership roles with the Lynchburg City Schools, it became necessary for Dr. David Frantz to assume the role of president of The Sphex Club in 2021-2022. Katie Cyphert will be vice president this year and president of The Sphex Club in 2022-2023.

Active members present were: Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Delzingaro, Doyle, Edwards, Foster, Frantz, Gillette, Hendricks, Manian, Marion, McDonald, Payne, Roberts, Schewel, Sigler, Stinnett, Tiller, West, Wilson, Wodicka, Wright.

Unable to Attend Were: Langhorne, Light, Lucas

Sphex's special guest for the evening: Cyndi Lee, spouse of President Bateman.

Change in SPHEX Bylaws (to change 5 d. below)

President Frantz recommended, with the unanimous agreement of SPHEX's officers, that a change be made to the SPHEX Bylaws concerning the reading of the minutes.

Below (highlighted) is the former wording of 5 d.:

5. The order of business of regular meetings shall be as follows: a. Call to order; b. Introduction of new members, if any; c. Introduction of guests, if any; d. **Reading of the minutes of the last meeting by the Secretary**; e. Reports of committees; f. Old business; g. New business; h. Reports of regrets to the speaker from members unable to be present; i. Introduction of the speaker by the president to include a brief background identification and announcement of the speaker's topic; j. Reading of the paper or equivalent (ordinarily limited to forty-five minutes); k. Discussion of the paper; l. Adjournment.

This change to 5 d. was approved by a majority vote:

Amend item d., replacing it with text as follows: "Reading of the minutes of the last meeting by the Secretary. He/she may abbreviate or omit the reading provided a digital copy of the minutes has been submitted for approval to the membership prior to the meeting."

Treasurer's Report and Membership Dues Discussion – Marc Schewel

The pandemic has seen many changes to the normal order of things, including unprecedented largesse by the federal government, permitted suspension of certain contractual obligations such as rent and student debt, and of course the radical move of the Sphex Club from in-person to virtual meetings.

As President Biden's executive order to extend the moratorium on landlord evictions even though rents may have not been paid for over a year has come under judicial scrutiny, it occurred to me as your treasurer that the Sphex Club also may

be facing a constitutional crisis. After all, the Club has not collected any dues for over two years, while all members have enjoyed – from the comfort of their homes, no less – the privileges granted by membership, that is, being educated, enlightened, and entertained by scholarly papers carefully crafted and professionally presented by their peers.

I began to suspect and fear that the Club might find me culpable of failing to collect the dues as required by the Constitution and in fact seek redress. What form might this take? Might I be required to make up the lost revenue personally? Even worse, might I suffer the embarrassment of possible impeachment, a word that seems to be thrown about these days with reckless abandon? On the other hand, maybe impeachment wouldn't be a bad idea, since it would relieve me of the obligation of concocting these ridiculous reports every month or so.

I asked the noted jurist, the Honorable John Cook, if he could render an opinion, to which he responded, "Marc, I wouldn't touch that with a ten-foot pole." I went to our esteemed secretary, Ken West, to see if he could help, but all I got from him was: "I'm just a retired professor and newspaper columnist. This is way out of my league."

So, I come before the Club this evening to plead leniency and forgiveness for my dereliction of duty. I am not sure what is the proper procedure for a constitutional amendment, but am hopeful that the members in their ultimate wisdom will, with sympathy, approve the motion I humbly bring before them this evening: "That Sphex Club dues shall be understood as waived for the sessions 2020-2021 and 2021-2022."

Results of the Survey Monkey -- President David Frantz

Dr. Frantz reported that toward the end of July the membership voted on whether to meet live or on Zoom. The vote was split almost evenly between the two

options. But within a week, the pandemic worsened with the advent of the new Delta Covid variant. Several additional members reconsidered and expressed a preference to have Zoom meetings only. To maximally protect all members, the decision was made to begin the 2021-2022 SPHEX year on Zoom.

A second question on the survey asked members whether they would prefer to meet at 7:30 p.m. or 8:00 p.m. Almost unanimously the membership chose 7:30.

Update from the Ad Hoc SpheX Archives Committee – Ted Delaney, Chair

(Committee Members include Nancy Marion, Tom Tiller, and Jim Wright.)

The club's digital archives were delivered to Jones Memorial Library in April, but library staff have not been able to post the files to their website yet. Several questions still need to be resolved by the club, including whether future presentations should be submitted in digital and/or analog format, and whether the public will have access to the digital archives once they are available online. The committee will continue to explore these issues and make recommendations to the full membership later in the fall or winter.

Nomination of New Members – Judge John Cook, Chair

(Nomination Committee members: Christina Delzingaro and Cham Light)

Following a lengthy delay in the election of new members due to the Covid 19 virus, Judge John Cook led a discussion about the election of members that will take place in the next meeting on September 23rd. There are 9 nominations for the 7 slots that are open for membership. The biographies of these 9 candidates have been sent to the voting membership of the SPHEX Club.

On September 23rd a Certification Ballot will be held. Each nominee must receive 75% of the vote on the Certification Ballot in order to be placed on the ballot that

will determine membership. Members can vote to certify all nine or fewer. On the final ballot the 7 nominees who receive the most votes will be offered membership into SPHEX.

President Frantz introduced our speaker for the evening: Dr. Brad Bateman

Brad Bateman became the tenth president of Randolph College in 2013. He will retire at the end of the 2021-22 academic year.

Before becoming an academic administrator, Bateman held the Gertrude B. Austin Chair of Economics at Grinnell College, where he taught for twenty years. He also served as Provost and Executive Vice President at Denison University. He is a scholar of the work of the British economist John Maynard Keynes and has also written extensively on the religious roots of American economic thought.

He is married to Cyndi Lee, an internationally recognized teacher of yoga and meditation who is also an ordained Buddhist chaplain.

Dr. Bateman provided this abstract of his presentation entitled: “Thy Kingdom Come?”

From its earliest days, the American college was a Protestant enterprise. Harvard and Columbia, Yale and Princeton, were all founded to educate Protestant ministers and the men who would sit in the pews of their churches. A funny thing happened, however, as colleges and universities started to secularize themselves: the role of religion in shaping America’s history started to disappear from our narratives about ourselves. In the attempt to secularize the university, the story of the way that things had been done in the past was largely ignored and forgotten.

But the system was built by Protestants, for Protestants. But our ignorance of our past hides much from us besides the history of overt discrimination. It is impossible to understand much about American culture without understanding its Protestant underpinning.

One unlikely example of the Protestant influence in American culture is the formation of economics as an academic discipline in the United States. The American Economic Association was founded in 1885 by young evangelical Protestants who wanted to shape the emerging discipline of economics into a tool for making the economy more fair and equitable.

Prior to the 1880s, almost all colleges had a required senior year course taught by the president of the college; this course was meant as a capstone that prepared the seniors to understand their roles they were to assume in American society. The texts used in these courses were not analytically sophisticated, but they helped to spread a gospel of free trade and free markets.

Some of the difference between the older Protestant economists and the young evangelicals who founded the A.E.A. was that they were describing different economies. The older ministers had known the mercantile economy of the early nineteenth century that consisted largely of farmers and small town merchants. The economy that the young evangelicals described was very different from the rural idyll of the older ministers. The emerging factory production in the large cities was not only drawing America's young men and women off the farm and into urban areas, it was also drawing central and southern Europeans to work in America. Working conditions in the factories were squalid and, despite the opportunities available in America's cities, urban poverty was rampant.

Richard T. Ely, the man who is most responsible for organizing the young evangelical economists, and who we think of today as the founder of the A.E.A., saw the new industrial economy quite clearly. Ely's purpose in organizing the

A.E.A. was in large part to provide an institutional home for the young Christian economists who saw the world as he did and, thus, to define the emerging discipline.

The ultimate failure of the A.E.A. to protect these young men, however, and the vulnerability of the young evangelicals was a reflection of the failure of the new “Social Gospel” message to resonate with the people in the pews at the end of the nineteenth century. Protestants were generally unmoved. The great Social Gospel theologian Walter Rauschenbusch called this era a “dark time” for progressive Christianity.

The great church historian Martin Marty has described this underlying tension in the Protestant world as “two-party Protestantism”. The “private party” saw the world as largely corrupt and was primarily concerned with saving individual souls. The “public party” saw society itself as sinful, so turned their attention to redeeming it through social action. Seen through this lens, the older Protestant ministers appealed to the private party, whereas the Social Gospellers were a manifestation of the public party.

In the first decade of the twentieth century, however, the public party suddenly swung into prominence. For Protestants, the desire to address the new industrial reality was most obvious in the Social Creed of the Churches, a document approved first by the Methodists in 1907, and approved in 1908 by virtually every other mainline Protestant denomination. The Creed called for an end to child labor, a ten hour work day, no work on Sundays, and compensation for the families of the victims of industrial accidents. These were exactly the kinds of “government interventions” that the young evangelical economists had been calling for in the 1880s and 1890s.

Although they had lived through a “dark time” in the 1890s, they would become a dominant force in American economics in the first two decades of the twentieth

century. Clark, Ely, Adams, and Commons would eventually become well known giants of the discipline and influenced important moments in the evolution of American economic policy. They liked wealth well enough, but they felt that America produced enough of it to take care of children and laborers.

Below is the Zoom link for Dr. Bateman's presentation. The link is provided by The Rev. Dennis Roberts.

<https://youtu.be/11-EHItWv3U>

Our presenter Dr. Brad Bateman furnished this link to an essay in the Atlantic Magazine connected to his SpheX presentation.

This is a revision of an essay that I published in the online version of The Atlantic magazine a few years ago. The finally edited version is here (the link to the essay online):

<https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2016/02/evangelical-american-economics/460455/>

After a question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by

President Frantz at 8:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
G. Kenneth West, Ph.D.
Secretary

A recording of the presentation is available. Please click on the link or copy and paste it into your browser to access the presentation. A special thanks goes to The Rev. Dennis Roberts for making these recordings available.

Minutes of the 1,464th meeting of the SPHEX Club September 23, 2021

President David Frantz called the 1,464th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 23rd. This was a virtual meeting (Zoom).

Active members present were: Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Delzingaro, Doyle, Frantz, Gillette, Hendricks, Manian, Marion, Roberts, Schewel, Sigler, Tiller, West, Wilson, Wright.

Unable to Attend Were: Bateman, Payne, Stinnett, Edwards, Foster, Langhorne, Light, Lucas, McDonald, Wodicka.

Treasurer's Report – Marc Schewel

At our last meeting, Dr. Bateman astutely observed that the tolerable amount of time for a presentation delivered by Zoom is twenty minutes. That being the case, after a hasty calculation on my handy mobile phone using a ratio of one to three, I have determined that I need to reduce the length of my treasurer's reports from six minutes to two minutes.

I know many of you will be disappointed to hear that, but rest assured that this contraction will only last until November 18th, when I am scheduled to deliver a Sphex Paper. As it now stands, that paper will probably take eighty minutes, so I am humbly requesting that the Club allow me to carry over the sixteen minutes saved by the next four meetings' truncated Treasurer's Reports and apply them to my November 18th presentation.

If anyone needs any help with this math, you can contact me or Julius Sigler after the meeting.

By the way, the Club's bank account now stands at \$1293.56. Nothing's changed in two years other than the fact that in 2019 the Club could have bought a reclining sofa and a recliner for that amount from Schewel's Home, but today it can only get the sofa.

Nomination of New Members – Judge John Cook, Chair

(Nomination Committee members: Christina Delzingaro and Cham Light)

Judge John Cook led members in completing both a Certification Ballot and a Membership Ballot. Seven people will be invited to join Sphex.

(A special thanks to The Rev. Dennis Roberts for making the arrangements needed for the membership to vote anonymously during the Zoom meeting.)

President Frantz introduced Christina Delzingaro our speaker for the evening

Christina Delzingaro is the Chief Executive Officer of the Free Clinic of Central Virginia and of the Community Access Network. In this shared leadership collaboration, Christina works to increase access to healthcare for uninsured and under-insured community members.

She has been CEO of the Free Clinic of Central Virginia since 2014 and CEO of Community Access Network since its founding in 2015. Christina's previous positions include Director of Programs for the AIDS/HIV Services Group, the Director of Mission Services for the Goodwill of Central and Eastern Virginia, Executive Director of The Arc of the Piedmont for over 12 years and Director of the Richmond County Department of Social Services.

Christina received her BA from Randolph-Macon Woman's College and her MBA from Averett University. She has been a member of the Blue Ridge Institute of Southern Human Services Executives for over 30 years and currently serves as President-elect. Her service also includes the Board of Directors of the Virginia Association of Free and Charitable Clinics where she also serves as President-elect, the Board of the Greater Lynchburg Community Foundation, the Board of Roads to Recovery, a founding Board member of Pierce Street Gateway, as well as serving on the Lynchburg Department of Social Services Advisory Board. Christina lives in the Garland Hill neighborhood in Lynchburg with her husband Larry Lacina.

Our presenter, Christina Delzingaro, provided this abstract of her presentation entitled "Yet Another Thing I Never Learned in School"

Shortly after the Civil War, during the Reconstruction Era, blacks made significant economic and political advances. White physical violence against blacks in the form of massacres, as well as legal and policy violence against blacks that began during Jim Crow and continue into this century, destroyed these advances and blacks' ability to amass generational wealth.

Reconstruction was intended to provide a means for readmitting Southern states into the Union and to define how whites and blacks could live together in a non-slave society after the Civil War. Sherman's Special Orders Number 15 provided land to newly freed slaves. Granting freedmen land confiscated from ex-Confederates was an attempt at reparations and provided hope that newly freed blacks would join the landowning class. When President Johnson overturned the Special Orders, and blacks were driven from the land granted by the orders, it became clear that public policy would also create significant obstacles to blacks achieving economic equality.

There were over 175 racially motivated massacres in the United States between 1863 and 1951. There were over 65 massacres in 1919 alone. They took place not just in the South, but in over 22 states, including Nebraska, Maryland, Michigan, New York, and Pennsylvania. These massacres left thousands of blacks murdered, tens of thousands of black citizens displaced and resulted in incalculable damage to black property.

This presentation summarized the impact of hundreds of race riots and described the specific effects of 13 of these massacres on the lives, rights and property of black Americans. The review demonstrated that while the immediate cause of these massacres was often vigilante justice, the real motivation was typically white anger and frustration with competing for jobs, housing and political power with blacks. The presentation also outlined the public policies and practices that blocked the growth of wealth and political power for blacks, including Jim Crow laws, restrictive covenants, redlining, crime control, and community development.

The economic impact of white racial violence in the form of massacres, along with the effect of Jim Crow laws and other public policy, has been widespread and long-lasting. In the United States in 2019, the typical white family had a net worth of almost eight times the net worth of a typical black family. The destruction of black towns, homes, and businesses over nearly 100 years hampered black American's ability to amass financial assets – particularly housing – and to pass them down to their children and grandchildren to help build wealth. While race massacres are no longer mechanisms of racial suppression, the goals of the massacres – furthering white supremacy; winning the capitalist zero-sum competition for jobs, housing and other resources; and suppressing voting rights – have continued on in politics and public policy. As a result, the ability of former slaves to create intergenerational wealth and political power has been systematically destroyed.

After a question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by President Frantz.

Respectfully submitted,
G. Kenneth West, Ph.D.
Secretary

**Minutes of the 1,465th meeting of the SPHEX Club
October 7th, 2021**

President David Frantz called the 1,465th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 7th. This was a virtual meeting (Zoom).

Active members present were: Bradford, Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Delzingaro, Edwards, Foster, Frantz, Gillette, Hansen, Hendricks, Light, Manian, Marion, Payne, Roberts, Salmon, Schewel, Sigler, Stinnett, Tiller, West, Wilson,

Unable to Attend Were: Bateman, Doyle, Langhorne, Lucas, McDonald, Wodicka, Wright

Emeritus Member Present: Dr. Ken Garren

Sphex's special guests for the evening: Jacquie Glanz and Mary Hapala

Welcome to New Members:

Mike Bradford was introduced by Cham Light:

Mike Bradford was born and raised in Lynchburg, graduating from E.C. Glass and then obtaining a degree in Economics from Duke and an MBA from UNC-Chapel Hill. Returning to Lynchburg he embarked on a 34 year career in commercial banking with Central Fidelity and all of its successors by merger through Wells Fargo. Looking to make an impact in a different field, he enjoyed spending the last six years of his career as VP of Advancement at CVCC. Mike has served on many community and civic boards during his career and currently is a long term director for Centra Health. Mike and his wife Pam (also a Lynchburg native and banker) have three grown children living and working across the country.

Dr. Nina Salmon was introduced by Dr. Ken West:

Nina Salmon is a graduate of Randolph-Macon Woman's College. After college she married a wonderful teacher and coach, Jerry Salmon, and they moved into the house across the street from Patty and me on Huron Avenue. Nina earned her masters from the University of Lynchburg and her Ph.D. from Virginia Tech. She has taught at the University of Lynchburg since 1997. Nina teaches English and is the current director of Senior Symposium. Always on the move and growing, Nina studied at Sewanee Seminary and received ordination as an Episcopal priest. She currently serves as the part-time Associate for Youth and Families at St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Jerry and Nina have three adult sons, and they are now raising an "entitled" standard poodle named Grace.

Treasurer's Report – Marc Schewel

Those of you following the contentious negotiations in Congress regarding a proposed \$3.5 trillion reconciliation bill may be familiar with a provision that would allow the IRS to monitor bank accounts over \$600. Since the Sphex account currently stands at \$1293.56, guess what? I received a visit from an IRS agent, Mr. Hugh B. Ware. Here's how the conversation went.

Hugh: This Sphex account looks very suspicious to me.

Marc: Why? As you can see, Hugh, there's been no activity for two years.

Hugh: That's what's suspicious. Besides, the name of this organization is very disturbing.

Marc: And why is that? It's just an acronym: Science, Philosophy, History, Education, the X factor.

Hugh: Are you denying any association with your Mexican branch, also named Sphex, a secret drug smuggling operation with its own cultish acronym: Syndicate for the Preservation of Heroin Exporting? Its *patron* is the notorious David Francisco, known to torture rivals and enemies by ripping their hearts out. Even worse, in order to intimidate any others who might challenge his rule of terror, every violent death is dutifully recorded for public distribution by his loyal *asesor*, Carlos Ouest.

Mr. Schewel, what we have here is a serious case of Sphex trafficking. Someone from Lynchburg is shipping boxes of old Sphex Club papers to Guadalajara and someone from Guadalajara is shipping those boxes back filled with packages of pure heroin. What do you have to say to that?

Marc: What the heck have you been smoking?

Hugh: In fact, I am summoning you to appear in federal court before the Honorable Judge John Cook to testify in this matter.

President Frantz introduced Nancy Marion, our speaker for the evening:

Nancy Marion has been collecting old photos of Lynchburg since about 1999. Her digital collection contains more than 30,000 images of the area gathered from library and newspaper archives, city and agency collections, and private sources. She has posted many of these photos and maps on her website, LynchburgHistory.com, where they are available to view and download. She also writes a weekly column for the *News & Advance* called "Mystery Picture of the Week."

A native of Amherst County and graduate of Sweet Briar College, Nancy is an experienced graphic designer, having been a partner at The Design Group since 1977.

In 2003 she founded Blackwell Press to publish non-fiction books and the history magazine, *Lynch's Ferry*. In 2006 she compiled and published Gibson Hobbs' book, *The Canal on the James*, and in 2018 she revised and published a new version of *Hill City Trolleys* by Harold Cox. She has also worked closely with regional authors, designing and publishing books about places such as the Old City Cemetery, the Anne Spencer Garden, Virginia Episcopal School, Wintergreen, Hogtown, Elon, and Nelson County. She has published art books featuring local luminaries including Queena Stovall, Georgia Morgan, Brookie Abbot, Edward Beyer, Sarah Raessler, and Stanhope Johnson. She is an avid photographer as well, and has a remote pilot's license for aerial drone photography.

Nancy Marion, provided this abstract of her presentation entitled: "Telling Time."

Having been introduced to the concept of "histograms" by a neighbor, and then meeting Jacquie Glanz, the granddaughter of John Sparks, author of one of them, Nancy Marion became intrigued by these methods of charting history.

Basing her talk on the book, *Cartographies of Time* by Daniel Rosenberg and Anthony Grafton, and freely admitting no affinity for learning history or memorizing dates, Marion attempts to give a short overview of the history of time charts.

She begins with the Roman Christian scholar Eusebius, who developed a matrix to organize chronologies in the fourth century. The Eusebian model of charting history with empires or religions in parallel columns across the top and dates down the side became the standard for 1400 years.

Some genealogical trees, such as Hartmann Schedel's 15th century Nuremberg Chronicle, were created out of whole cloth to make patriarchs and rulers seem more legitimate by inventing ancestry reaching back to Noah. Later in the Chronicle, Schedel illustrated current events that had been published in newsletters, such as a naked witch riding a horse with the devil. (She commented that the tendency of modern media to spread false information is not a new concept.) The end of the Chronicle included events foretold in the Book of Revelation. Schedel gave readers a few blank pages between their own time and the Apocalypse to fill in with what he thought would be the short remaining history of the world.

Schedel was not alone in creating backstories for his patrons. Dominican theologian and con-man, Annio of Viterbo, published a set of "ancient" texts tracing the lineage of the Borgia Pope Alexander VI and the Catholic kings of Spain to Isis and Osiris.

Legitimate chronologers sometimes faced more problems than fake ones. When Jean Rou published his first set of historical and genealogical tables of ancient history in the 1670s, he met great success. But when he published volume two on modern history, including the Reformation, it was so controversial that it was banned, and Rou had to flee to the Netherlands.

During the 1600s fine engraving emerged, along with inventive sizes and shapes, including pocket-sized 'cheat sheets,' circular charts, and 54-foot long chronologies that rolled into custom wooden cases.

In the 1700s Thomas Jeffreys published "A Chart of Universal History" that broke out of the Eusebian matrix by focusing on the larger temporal boundaries of events and empires. Joseph Priestley soon after published his own version but switched the axes so that time ran along the top and countries or empires on the vertical axis.

Cartographers got in on the act as well when Edward Quinn demonstrated the growth of historical knowledge with a series of maps of the world beginning with "The Deluge" (BC 2348, he says) showing only the Garden of Eden. Successive maps show the clouds gradually clearing away to reveal the known world at key moments in history (founding of Rome, the first Crusade, the empire of Kublai Kahn, discovery of America, etc.).

In America, chronologies became weapons in the struggle of Christians to convert the souls of Native Americans. A Catholic priest created a “visual catechism,” a pictogram relating stories in the Bible, including the Protestant Reformation. The wife of a Presbyterian missionary created her own “Protestant Ladder” to compete with the “Catholic Ladder,” showing in her version the martyrdom of Protestants, and the Pope as Antichrist falling into the flames of perdition.

In the 19th century, millennialists produced time charts predicting that the Apocalypse would occur in 1843. When that didn’t happen, they recalculated and produced new charts.

Mnemonic systems such as Mark Twain’s visual association drawings to remember English kings (hens for Henry, whale for William, etc.) were discussed.

The twentieth century works of John Sparks were shown, including his published (world history, religions, history of the universe) and unpublished (history of the arts) histograms.

Other creative methods of telling time included Olaf Stapledon’s timeline devised for his science-fiction book, *Last and First Men*; a giant sequoia tree section showing events since the birth of Mohammed in 570; and Buckminster Fuller’s chart showing the relative shrinking of the planet based on the speed of travel of the day, were displayed.

And lastly, she showed a couple of “timelines” she had created: a box of Lynchburg history containing accordion-fold versions of six panoramic views of Lynchburg at approximately 50-year intervals, and a “poodle-skirt” genealogical chart that she printed and folded into an accordion-fold book.

After a question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by President Frantz at 8:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
G. Kenneth West, Ph.D.
Secretary

Minutes of the 1,466th meeting of the SPHEX Club October 21st

President David Frantz called the 1,466th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 21st. This was a virtual meeting (Zoom).

Active members present were: Bradford, Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Doyle, Edwards, Frantz, Gillette, Light, Marion, Payne, Roberts, Schewel, Sigler, Stinnett, Tiller, West, Wilson, Wodicka, Wright.

Emeritus Members Present: Dr. Ken Garren

Unable to Attend Were: Bateman, Delzingaro, Foster, Hendricks, Langhorne, Lucas, Manian, McDonald.

SpheX's special guests for the evening: Brian Edwards (Dr. Edwards' husband), Jean Munford (Dr. Edwards' mother), Denise Spinner (Assistant to Superintendent Edwards), Leonard Payne

A summary of the October 7th minutes was read by the secretary, Dr. Ken West

The minutes for October 7th, 2021 were passed without amendment.

Treasurer's Report – Marc Schewel delivered Part II of his treasurer's report. See Part I in the October 7th Minutes.

Part II

Well, that really shook me up. As I might be facing a possible fine or jail time, the first question that came to mind is what to wear.

I decided to get some advice from some folks whose opinion I really respect.

First, I went to retired banker Mike Bradford. He said, "Marc, wear your best suit, so you will appear prosperous, important, and confident that you haven't done anything wrong."

Then I went to the esteemed attorney Cham Light. He said, "Marc, wear your oldest, most ragged tee shirt and dungarees. Maybe the judge will be sympathetic if you look destitute."

Now I was really confused. I decided to consult the distinguished former professor of Counseling and Human Development at the University of Lynchburg, Dr. Ken West. I explained my dilemma.

He said, "Marc, this situation reminds me of the young virgin who came to me a few years ago on the eve of her wedding. She had asked her mother what she should wear that night. Her mother said, 'Wear a long flannel nightgown.' Then she had gone to her sister, who told her to wear a short, sheer negligee. Finally, she came to me with the same question."

"And what did you tell her?" I asked. "'My dear,'" said Dr. West, "'It doesn't matter what you wear . . . [See the minutes for the punchline, Marc advised] You're going to get screwed.'"

President Frantz introduced our speaker for the evening: Dr. Crystal Edwards

Dr. Crystal M. Edwards began her career as a high school science teacher in 1987 and has been a teacher leader, math and science supervisor, cheerleading coach, curriculum, director, assistant band director, school administrator, assistant superintendent, and superintendent. She currently serves as the Lynchburg City Schools' Superintendent and teaches a leadership course for the Doctor of Healthcare Administration program offered at Virginia University of Lynchburg. She earned a B.S. in Secondary Education (Penn State), an M.S. in Chemistry (Rutgers), and an Ed.D in Educational Leadership, Management and Policy (Seton Hall).

One of the tenets of Dr. Edwards' leadership is giving back and developing the next generation of educational leaders. She serves as a mentor for aspiring administrators and new superintendents. More recently, Dr. Edwards has spent considerable time focusing on equity and inclusivity. In 2016, Dr. Edwards was invited to Sliema, Malta as the keynote speaker on educational equity for the Unlocking Learning Potential Summit. As a part of the 2019 VSBA Fall Conference, Dr. Edwards presented a workshop for superintendents and school board members entitled *Confronting the "Unspeakables," Let's Talk About That*, a look at inequities in schools. She also serves on the boards of the YMCA of Central Virginia and the Lynchburg chapter of the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities. In 2019, Dr. Edwards was appointed by Governor Northam to the Virginia Commission on African American History Education.

Dr. Edwards is happily married to Brian Edwards, owner and CEO of Serenity Property Management LLC. They have five children, Robyn (VCU grad - kindergarten teacher), Trey (William Paterson University grad - marketing), Miracle (self-starter – business management), Malcolm (soon to be a University of Lynchburg business graduate), and Laila (senior in high school). They have one adorable 3-year-old granddaughter who is the real boss of the family. When Dr. Edwards is not working, teaching, or attending school and community events, she enjoys doing outdoor activities such as hiking, bike riding, running half marathons, and simply relaxing in the pontoon on the lake.

Dr. Edwards provided this abstract of her presentation entitled: "The Power of Three Little Letters"

The Power of Three Little Letters was an exploration of an over 50-year journey that Dr. Edwards has had with the letters C, R and T. The journey began incredibly early with a simplistic view of the act of tracing the letters C, R, and T as a toddler. A deeper look at this mundane experience of tracing letters revealed analogous examples of inequities that exist today based on race, gender, and economic status. While the subtle differences between uppercase and lowercase Cc, Rr, and Tt may be acknowledged by some, and overlooked by others, these differences seldom result in discourse that necessitates change. Similarly, several of the struggles for equality and equity over the past century have faced a similar fate.

The journey continued with a stop during the middle and high school years where Dr. Edwards was introduced to the scientific version of CRT, the cathode ray tube. With the help of a few amazing science teachers and a curiosity about the structure of the atom, Dr. Edwards

studied physicist J.J. Thompson's Plum Pudding Model and his early experiments with the cathode ray tube (CRT) that led to the discovery of the electron. She became fascinated with the use of CRTs in computer screens, TVs, radar screens, and oscilloscopes. Hooked on STEM, Dr. Edwards pursued a career in teaching science and mentoring young women and people of color.

Determined to make a difference and encourage more minority students to pursue STEM careers, Dr. Edwards continued her journey and honed her practice by incorporating the rich CRT pedagogies in the form of Gloria Ladson-Billings' Culturally Relevant Teaching, Geneva Gay's Culturally Responsive Teaching, and Gholdy Muhammad's Historically Responsive Literacy. These educational CRTs dominated much of her professional career. Each of these frameworks, have at their core a purposeful and intentional focus on and incorporation of culture as a necessary foundation for student success. Acknowledging the legitimacy of the cultural heritages of different ethnic groups and their contributions to society is essential as a means of fostering student identity, skill, and intellectual development. Further, each of these frameworks teaches students to understand power, privilege, social justice, and oppression with the goal to have the agency to build a better world for all.

After spending over 30 years in education using CRT pedagogies to develop criticality skills in children, Dr. Edwards was introduced to yet another CRT, critical race theory. Unlike the previous CRT experiences which brought enlightenment and hope, this new CRT was shrouded in a cloud of divisiveness and despair. Critical race theory which evolved in the 1970s on university campuses to help law students think critically about the impact of racism on the legal system, soon became a political weapon aimed directly at public school systems. At a time when schools had thriving diversity, equity and inclusion programs that were built on the tenets of culturally relevant and responsive teaching (CRT), extremists accused school officials of delegitimizing whiteness, attempting to rewrite history, and teaching white students that they are inherently racist. Across the country, school board meetings erupted with citizens demanding answers to the CRT question. CRT even carved a space for debate during the 2021 gubernatorial election in Virginia.

As much as critical race theory dominated headlines, the next stop on the journey revealed that there was something more powerful demanding the media spotlight, the COVID-19 virus. With the virus came a new CRT in schools, the COVID Response Team. These new CRTs were essential to the operation of a school and without them schools would struggle to stay open. Teachers, administrators, nurses, support staff, and HR professionals were drafted to become members of the CRT. Apart from the school nurses, few educators and support staff were trained in addressing the spread of this infectious disease; yet they were expected to implement timely and effective mitigation strategies, conduct contact tracing, manage quarantines, and administer vaccines and booster shots. And while the CRTs devoted time, talent and energy to these new duties, communities questioned schools as to the "extra" efforts they would put in place to mitigate learning loss.

Despite the challenges and struggles we faced with the most recent CRT experiences, the last stop on this journey provided us with our "why we do this work," and that is simply because kids deserve it.

After a question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by President Frantz at 8:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
G. Kenneth West, Ph.D.
Secretary

**Minutes of the 1,467th meeting of the SPHEX Club
November 4, 2021**

President David Frantz called the 1,467th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, November 4th. This was a virtual meeting (Zoom).

Active members present were: Bradford, Cyphert, Dawson, Doyle, Edwards, Frantz, Hansen, Light, Lucas, Marion, McDonald, Morison-Shetlar, Payne, Roberts, Salmon, Sigler, Stinnett, Tiller, West, Wodicka, Wright.

Emeritus Member Present: Dr. Ken Garren

Unable to Attend Were: Bateman, Cook, Delaney, Delzingaro, Foster, Gillette, Hendricks, Langhorne, Manian, Schewel, Wilson.

Sphex's special guests for the evening: Al and Bettye Chambers, Dr. Allison Jablonski

New member Billy Hansen was introduced by Kim Payne.

Billy Hansen has an undergraduate degree in Economics from the University of Virginia and a Master of Business Administration from the University of Lynchburg. Billy is the principal of Hansen Realty Advisors, a real estate company in Lynchburg that provides commercial and residential brokerage, appraisal, and consulting services. Billy has earned the MAI designation from the Appraisal Institute. He also holds a Certified General Appraiser License and a Real Estate Broker License from the State of Virginia. Billy has also taught Real Estate Appraisal and Personal Finance as an adjunct professor at Longwood University. Billy has written a regular commercial real estate column for Lynchburg Business Magazine for several years. He is active in the community and has served on many boards including the Board of Equalization for the City of Lynchburg, Jones Memorial Library, Downtown Lynchburg Association, Virginia Commonwealth Chapter of the Appraisal Institute, and Lynchburg Morning Rotary Club. Billy also hosts The Lynchburg Neighborhood Podcast, a public oral history project that seeks to help neighbors feel more connected to one another and to their community.

New member and President of the University of Lynchburg, Dr. Alison Morrison-Shetlar, was introduced by the University's past President, Dr. Ken Garren. The following presents several highlights provided by Sabita Manian.

On August 1, 2020, Alison Morrison-Shetlar became the 11th President at the University of Lynchburg. As the university moves towards development of a new strategic plan, three areas of distinction have emerged: Leadership Development, Innovation and Collaboration, and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. These areas are already in the DNA of the University and will be expanded and inclusive of our greater Lynchburg community. Morrison-Shetlar is also proposing the development of a comprehensive campaign that will focus on increasing the number of student scholarships, seeking across campus programmatic support, and funding for renovating the Hobbs-Sigler Natural Science Building and Athletics facilities.

Dr. Morrison-Shetlar came to the University of Lynchburg from Western Carolina University where she was Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. While leading Western Carolina's academic program through a time of expansion, she also served in other capacities including 18 months as Interim Chancellor and nine months as Interim Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Engagement.

Dr. Morrison-Shetlar also has held leadership roles as Dean of Elon College of Arts and Sciences at Elon University, Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Studies at the University of Central Florida, and Director of Faculty Development at Georgia Southern University.

Dr. Morrison-Shetlar brings a wealth of international experience to the presidential post. A native of Scotland, Morrison-Shetlar earned a bachelor's degree in Biology and Chemistry, and a Doctorate in Biomedical Science from Dundee College of Technology (now Abertay University).

She was the founding chair of the Molecular Biology unit at the Max Planck Institute in Dortmund, Germany, and a teacher-scholar at Bochum University in Bochum, Germany, and at the Kennedy Institute of Rheumatology in London.

The Minutes for the October 21st, 2021 meeting were approved without modification.

President Frantz introduced Travis McDonald, our speaker for the evening:

Travis McDonald is a native of Galveston, Texas, an island on the third coast. He received a degree in American history from the University of Texas in Austin and received his Master's degree in architectural history from the University of Virginia's School of Architecture, which has just awarded him their Distinguished Alumni Award for 2021. Travis was hired in 1989 to start the restoration of Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest where he still serves as the Director of Architectural Restoration. He formerly worked for the Chief Historical Architect of the National Park Service where he was awarded a Special Achievement Award. He began directing museum quality restorations at Colonial Williamsburg. Awards for his work at Poplar Forest include The Architecture Medal for Virginia Service, by the Virginia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, and a Virginia Senate Commendation for Preserving the Heritage of Virginia. He serves on several advisory boards including the Historic Preservation Committee that oversees Thomas Jefferson's buildings at the University of Virginia. Travis recently wrote an architectural history of Poplar Forest that will be published by the University of Virginia Press in 2022. He is working on a second book that will document the 30-year restoration of Poplar Forest. Travis is married to Denise McDonald who is the Executive Director of the Old City Cemetery and the proud father of two married daughters, one of whom is expecting the first grandchild around Christmas time.

Our presenter, Travis McDonald, provided this abstract of his presentation entitled "Oh Rats!"

In 1991 while investigating the evolutionary architectural changes to Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest retreat Travis McDonald found the first of many rats' nests in the hollow walls and floors. Since the house had burned in 1845 and was rebuilt in 1846, this material, which spanned 1847 to the 1970s, was from the Hutter and Watts families occupancy. While initially examining the

material (wood, paper, fabric, fruit, nuts, metal) for material culture clues of what the humans had done in and around the house (food, letters, newspapers, furniture, clothes, music, games, crops), questions arose regarding the collectors- the rats. Research on rats and their behavior and their nests led to nothing but laboratory rats and outdoor rats that lived in burrows. Information regarding rats living inside buildings and how they constructed their nests could not be found. Why did they take certain things? How did these things get arranged in the nests? Were different parts of a nest used for different purposes? What was the use of other materials that seemingly had no practical function? The questions pushed the boundaries of ethology (study of animal behavior) and whether rats had a culture as well as a society. Rats' nests have been useful for certain architectural restorations where they have provided clues for restored features or furnishings. While rats are venerated in some ancient and modern cultures, they have more often been made into cute mice stories in children's books, movies, and on television. In literature they have been infamously portrayed as themselves. Rats have been responsible for many human deaths and food losses. They arrived in America with the first settlers and are one of the most wide-spread and recognizable animals on earth. Farmers and home owners have over the centuries tried various methods to trap and exterminate them, including modern gadgets that are listed in current 2021 Christmas catalogs. The research and academic paper the author wrote in 2005 (*Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*) are still the only known published works on this subject.

After a question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by President Frantz at 8:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
G. Kenneth West, Ph.D.
Secretary

**Minutes of the 1,468th meeting of the SPHEX Club
November 18, 2021**

President David Frantz called the 1,468th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, November 18th. This was a virtual meeting (Zoom).

Active members present were: Bradford, Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Delzingaro, Edwards, Foster, Frantz, Hansen, Hendricks, Manian, Marion, McDonald, Morrison-Shetlar, Payne, Roberts, Salmon, Schewel, Sigler, Tiller, West, Wilson, Wright.

Emeritus Members Present: Dr. Ken Garren

Unable to Attend Were: Bateman, Doyle, Gillette, Langhorne, Light, Lucas, Stinnett, Wodicka

SpheX's special guests for the evening: Jacquie Glanz

The Minutes for November 4th were approved without modification.

Membership Decisions: Dr. Allison Jablonski and Michael Elliot will decide on membership in January.

Next Year's Officers will be selected early in 2022.

Treasurer's Report: Mr. Schewel declined to give a report in order to afford the speaker more time.

President Frantz introduced Marc Schewel our speaker for the evening:

Marc Schewel is a native of Lynchburg, Va. He graduated from E.C. Glass High School in 1965 and from Washington and Lee University in 1969. Except for a brief teaching tenure at Appomattox High School, Mr. Schewel has worked all of his adult life at Schewel Furniture Company, where he is currently President. Schewel Furniture Company is a retail furniture chain with 50 stores in Virginia, North Carolina, and West Virginia. Mr. Schewel, his brother, and his son are the fourth and fifth generations to own and operate this family business which will celebrate its 125th Anniversary in 2022.

Mr. Schewel is involved in numerous community service activities. He is the past Chair of the United Way of Central Virginia, past Chair of New Vistas School, past Chair of the YMCA, past Chair of the National Conference for Community and Justice, past Chair of the Salvation Army Advisory Board, past Chair of the Family Alliance, and past President of the National Home Furnishings Association. He currently serves on the Boards of Parkview Community Mission, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Virginia, the Virginia Legal Aid Society, and Randolph College.

Mr. Schewel is the father of three children: David, Sara, and Matthew, and of two stepdaughters, Kali and Adrienne. He has eight grandchildren: Lia, Ari, Ana Maria, Ben, Frank, Jackson,

Abigail and Bennett. In his spare time Mr. Schewel enjoys exercise, reading, and duplicate bridge.

Our presenter, Marc Schewel, provided this abstract of his presentation entitled: *The Three Trillion Dollar Trough*

The title of Mr. Schewel's paper, "The Three Trillion Dollar Trough," approximates the \$3.65 trillion spent by the U.S. in 2018 on health care, a number which is now closer to \$4 trillion and which equates to \$11,000 per person or at least twice the amounts reported by all other high-income countries.

Despite this inordinate spending, Americans experience worse health outcomes than their international peers. They have a lower life expectancy, more suicides, a fifteen percent higher prevalence of chronic illness, twice the incidence of obesity, fifty percent more hospitalizations for diabetes and hypertension, and the highest rate of amenable or premature deaths from conditions which are considered preventable.

Mr. Schewel reviewed the various sectors of the health care industry feeding at the trough.

Strategies implemented by hospitals to enhance their revenue have resulted in room rates three to ten times higher than those in comparable countries. Hospitals employ coding specialists who train doctors and nurses to amplify the severity and complexity of diagnoses in order to obtain higher insurance reimbursements. They charge patients and insurers extra simply for the use of their facilities and equipment. They credential themselves as trauma centers so as to become eligible for substantial fees even when emergency victims are not admitted. Non-profit hospitals save billions every year in tax exemptions which far exceed their expenditures on charity care and community benefit.

Specialty physicians earn twice the salaries of those in countries like Germany. Overall, twenty-seven percent fall in the upper one percent of all wage earners, which is higher than the percent of attorneys and corporate executives in that category. Professional medical groups spent hundreds of millions every year for two decades lobbying Congress to defer Medicare reimbursement caps until they were permanently lifted in 2015.

Pharmaceutical companies have systematically manipulated patent law and FDA policies to enhance their products' values and boost their profits. In 2009 Proctor and Gamble prevented a generic of the colitis drug mesalamine from coming to the market by patenting two "new improved" versions. In 2010 Purdue Pharma extended the life of its patent on its billion-dollar pain medicine Oxycontin by introducing a shatter-resistant substitute whose purported safety enabled it to prohibit the manufacture and sale of a generic crushable pill. The manufacture of generic formulations of insulin and the popular contraceptive pill Loestrin 24 was stymied by lengthy law suits and bribes disguised as partnership payments.

Further price escalation comes from pharmacy benefit managers, intermediaries who purchase drugs from manufacturers, sell them to pharmacies, and invoice employers' health plans as prescriptions are filled at five to twenty times their cost.

Medical devices also carry a huge markup. A handful of manufacturers monopolizes the market, and realizes gross profit margins as high as seventy-five percent. Stretching between them and the implant recipient is a chain of hands that includes a broker, a distributor, a salesman, and the hospital, each of whom pockets his share.

The final beast feeding at the health care trough is the insurance industry. "The use of insurance to fund nominal and routine as well as large and expected expenses is a major cause of health care's huge cost," says David Goldhill. Insurance promotes moral hazard – the tendency for people to make less careful decisions when risk is minimized – by insulating the consumer from the high cost of his care. Yet he, like everyone, is paying hidden consequences for his safety net: lower wages, higher retail prices, high premiums to cover co-workers and to offset Medicare discounts to providers.

Mr. Schewel presented three possible solutions for the health care cost problem.

Capitation – whereby providers receive fixed lump-sum payments to manage population health – he rejected as impractical, as it requires significant attitudinal and behavioral changes from hospitals, physicians, and patients.

Regulation through the legislative process he also rejected, citing the failure of the negotiations surrounding the Affordable Care in 2010 to yield any meaningful participation from the device, hospital, insurance, or pharmaceutical industries, who were expected to gain twenty million new customers.

A device tax, collected for four years, eventually succumbed to intense lobbying from the manufacturers. Similar efforts suppressed measures designed to reduce hospital reimbursements: a provision to cut Medicaid's Disproportionate Share payments; the formation of an Independent Payment Advisory Board to implement cost-cutting policies; and an attempt to tie Medicare payment updates to a productivity measurement.

As for the insurance industry, a premium tax had to be repealed when it was discovered that the insurers weren't paying it; their customers were. While open market insurance was initially successful, primarily due to government subsidies for low income members, by 2020 the new coverage requirements – no lifetime or preexisting conditions limitations and the inclusion of emergency, maternity, mental health, and preventive services – had doubled both costs and deductibles, and driven away many customers. Also doubling was the cost of the plan to the federal government, which rose from \$21 billion to \$45 billion annually.

The pharmaceutical industry was able to whittle a \$13 billion a year demand from Congress down to \$8, thanks to the work of Billy Tauzin, CEO of their manufacturer's association, and a \$70 million contribution to two of their political action committees. Also falling by the wayside were other potential savings: prescription drug importation; negotiated drug prices; cuts in Medicaid payments; and the moratorium on biologic patents.

Mr. Schewel endorsed universal health insurance – either the German or Canadian plan – as the best solution to the health care cost problem. He said the U.S. is halfway there, considering that the entire population's health insurance is either paid by the government through Medicare, Medicaid, and the Veterans' Administration or subsidized directly through credits or the tax deductibility of employer funded plans. He claimed universal care offers more choice, produces better outcomes, and costs much less than the current system.

Mr. Schewel is not sanguine about the prospects for universal health insurance in this country. He said domination of the industry by corporate power, Congress's lack of courage and political will, and indifference and complacency on the part of both employers and employees effectively forecloses any hope for meaningful change.

Mr. Schewel concluded his talk by providing his own prescription for avoiding the health care system altogether.

After a question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by President Frantz at 9:18.

Respectfully submitted,
G. Kenneth West, Ph.D.
Secretary

**Minutes of the 1,469th meeting of the SPHEX Club
January 6, 2022**

President David Frantz called the 1469th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, January 7th. This was a virtual meeting (Zoom).

Active members present were: Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Delzingaro, Doyle, Edwards, Foster, Frantz, Gillette, Hendricks, Langhorne, Light, Lucas, Morrison-Shetlar, Payne, Roberts, Schewel, Sigler, Stinnett, Tiller, West, Wilson, Wodicka, Wright.

Emeritus Member Present: Dr. Ken Garren

Unable to Attend Were:

Bateman, Bradford, Hansen, Manian, Marion, McDonald, Salmon

Sphex's special guest for the evening: John Hughes IV

President Frantz introduced Dr. Reid Wodicka our speaker for the evening:

Dr. Reid Wodicka was appointed Deputy City Manager for the City of Lynchburg on June 13, 2018. Prior to his service in the City, Dr. Wodicka served as Deputy County Administrator for nearby Bedford County and Town Manager for the Towns of Woodstock and Elkton in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia.

A graduate of E. C. Glass High School, Dr. Wodicka was born and raised in the City of Lynchburg. He later graduated from James Madison University in Harrisonburg with a BS in Public Policy and Administration. He continued at JMU to earn a Master of Public Administration degree while serving as the Town Manager in Elkton. After several years of working in local government, he earned a PhD in Public Policy with a concentration in Urban and Regional Development from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. He is currently pursuing the Executive Master of Science in Cities at the London School of Economics.

Dr. Wodicka serves as a member of a number of local community boards and organizations. He is also a member of the Virginia Local Government Management Association and the Government Finance Officers Association.

Our presenter, Dr. Reid Wodicka, provided this abstract of his presentation entitled: "Wait, what happened?"

Dr. Wodicka began his talk, entitled "Wait, what happened", with a request for the Club to remember the number 68 throughout the discussion. This statistic represents the percentage of children in Virginia who have been released from juvenile detention or locked corrections facilities and are reconvicted within two years of their release, the first 50 percent of which recidivate within the first year. The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of the challenges facing the juvenile justice system throughout the United States, and with particular

focus on Virginia, finishing with a celebration of some preliminary accomplishments in Lynchburg's juvenile services in order to better serve children and the community as a whole.

Over the last 120 years, there have been three phases of the development of the juvenile justice system. First, the system was very individual-specific, with focus on addressing the unique needs of each child. While that worked in some cases, the considerable discretion of judges and prosecutors led to miscarriages of justice in the form of harsh punishments for minor crimes. Beginning in the late 1960s, the system became more focused on requisite due process reform to ensure uniformity in decision-making. By the 1990s, similar to national conversations surrounding criminal justice, which encouraged harsher punishments, the juvenile justice system became far more punitive and far less focused on rehabilitation of children who had committed crimes.

At the same time, there has been a movement to develop a stronger understanding of the *reason* that some children engage in criminal acts, particularly violent criminal acts. Dr. Wodicka discussed the impact that brain development has on decision-making in adolescence and how those realities should moderate how we choose to address criminal behaviors. But why some children engage in these behaviors and others do not is really the more interesting question. While there are many sociological explanations that discuss criminal acts, Dr. Wodicka focused on the impacts that significant psychological traumas in childhood have on the structure of the brain and how those traumas impact the child's later behaviors. There is a clear connection between those children who have extensive psychological trauma in childhood and those who, untreated, go on to commit serious criminal acts as teenager.

Unfortunately, the juvenile justice system throughout the United States is poorly equipped to address significant childhood trauma and to recognize the children that need significant mental health care. In fact, the de-institutionalization of human services may have even made it more difficult to adequately address the serious mental health challenges that many of our children are experiencing. Sadly, most children involved in the juvenile justice system throughout the United States have experienced dramatic traumatic experiences in their homes or in their communities.

Virginia is no different and a recent Virginia Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) report outlined some of the significant challenges that are facing Virginia's juvenile justice system. In total there are approximately 3,000 children involved in the juvenile justice system at any one time – 20% of which are housed in locked detention or correctional facilities. The vast majority of these children are between the ages of 14 and 17, which is when the brain is in its most vulnerable state. Unfortunately, the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice, through the JLARC study, found that in the majority of locked juvenile facilities in Virginia, no evidence-based practices designed to reduce recidivism were employed, nor had they evaluated the impact of any program that they did employ. Instead, most facilities are staffed by undertrained employees who have little to no training in dealing with children who have experienced significant trauma. So, we are taking children who have experienced significant trauma and warehousing them in an inherently traumatic place with people who are not trained to address those problems. Clearly, the system has not focused on rehabilitation.

We are proud that in Lynchburg, after it came to light that there were very significant challenges in our local system, we have been working to transform how Lynchburg manages

juvenile detention. This was done by providing evidence-based interventions both to children and to staff to make the time we have with the children in care be the most productive possible, with assistance from throughout city government and the community. Most importantly, we are changing our question from: “What’s wrong with you?” to “What happened to you?”, and starting our intervention from there. While it is too early to determine the impacts of our work, we are seeing some very good early results.

The children in our care are not beyond rehabilitation, and if we are focused on addressing the true explanation for their behavior, we will make a significant improvement to their lives, as well as to the overall health and safety of our community.

After a question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by President Frantz.

Respectfully submitted,

G. Kenneth West, Ph.D.
Secretary

**Minutes of the 1,470th meeting of the SPHEX Club
January 20, 2022**

President David Frantz called the 1,470th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, January 20th. This was a virtual meeting (Zoom).

Active members present were: Bradford, Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Doyle, Edwards, Elliott, Foster, Frantz, Gillette, Jablonski, Light, Lucas, Manian, Marion, McDonald, Morrison-Shetlar, Payne, Roberts, Salmon, Schewel, Sigler, Stinnett, Tiller, West, Wilson, Wodicka, Wright.

Emeritus Member Present: Dr. Ken Garren

Unable to Attend Were: Bateman, Delzingaro, Hansen, Hendricks, Jablonski.

Sphex's special guest for the evening: Maria Roberts

New Member, Dr. Michael Elliott was in attendance: Michael Elliot is Senior Vice President and Chief Transformation Officer at Centra Health.

The minutes for Sphex's January 6th meeting were approved without modification.

President Frantz reminded the membership of the value of the Sphex tradition of contacting the presenter if one is unable to attend a presentation.

President Frantz also reported sending Sphex's "Resolution of Appreciation and Respect for Dr. James Martin Elson (1932-2021)" to his daughter Elizabeth Elson who replied with deep appreciation.

Marc Schewel presented the following Treasurer's Report:

Ever since my Sphex presentation on the Health Care industry back in November, strange things have been happening to me.

After nine hours in a car with my son, his wife, and their three children and spending Thanksgiving weekend with nine other family members at a crowded resort in Bedford Springs, Pennsylvania, I came home with a serious head cold.

Just in case you're wondering, I did test myself for Covid – jamming a swab $\frac{3}{4}$ " up each nostril and rotating five times for fifteen seconds – with a negative result.

The cold lingers off and on for three weeks, during which I have a regularly scheduled annual check-up with my internist. With a cough and congestion, I manage to get past the gatekeeper at the entrance to his office, and am ushered back to an examination room. During my interview with a nurse, I am asked if I want to get a flu shot. "Sure," I say, "but I don't know if I should have it with this cold."

“Let me check with the doctor,” she says. Five minutes later she rushes back with a panic-stricken look on her face, and exclaims, “You’re not allowed to be in here,” and shoos me out like a pesky fly.

The doctor calls me while I’m sitting in my car, and tells me that, in order for him to examine me, I need to take a Covid test. “Fine,” I say, until he informs me I won’t get the result for two hours. “I don’t have Covid, and I can’t wait two hours,” I say. “I’ll come back when this cold is gone.”

My cold abates. I meet with the doctor, receive a clean bill of health, attend a party on December 23rd, and celebrate the day after Christmas with a few friends. But on the evening of December 27th, I start feeling sick again.

The next morning I subject myself to another test, and this time when I look at the test card after the requisite fifteen minute wait, I see two parallel pink lines staring back at me. I didn’t have Covid before, but I have it now.

I’m happy to report that my symptoms were no worse than a bad head cold.

Now, what does this have to do with the treasurer’s report?

During my quarantine I receive a letter from the Bank of the James advising me that the Sphex Club account has been closed due to lack of activity. This is very strange. Why hasn’t the bank noticed this inactivity for the past two years? Is it possible that the bank found out I was ill, and perhaps jumped to the conclusion that, well, I’m dead?

I need to find someone trustworthy who can attest to my identity and vitality. I look over the Sphex roster, and see it’s replete with a host of suspicious doctors, lawyers, and professors. I finally light on one member whose commanding presence and resonant tone of voice can never be questioned: Dennis Roberts. Dennis is kind enough to accompany me to the bank, vouch for me, and help me get our account reopened – where we discover the balance to be the same as it was two years ago: \$1293.56.

President Frantz introduced The Rev. Dennis Roberts our speaker for the evening:

Dennis Roberts is a native of Rural Retreat, Virginia. He graduated in 1983 from Washington & Lee University with a B.S. in Business Administration and Accounting. He then earned a Master of Divinity degree from the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. He served congregations in Frankfurt, Germany, and Harrisonburg, Virginia, before coming to Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Lynchburg in January 1991. In Lynchburg, he has served on the board and as president of Interfaith Outreach Association. He currently is a member of the United Way Campaign Cabinet. He is also on the boards of the Lynchburg Chapter, Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities and the Lynchburg Community Action Group (LynCAG).

Dennis and his wife, Maria, are the parents of two daughters.

(Secretary’s Note: During the Covid pandemic that in March will stretch over two years of Sphex presentations, The Rev. Dennis Roberts provided links that allowed all active members, emeritus members and guests to listen, watch and interact virtually with each Sphex presenter. In addition, Dennis Roberts tirelessly and patiently coached each member that had never presented virtually and needed help understanding how to best proceed. Speaking for the entire membership of Sphex, we so greatly appreciate the outstanding work that The Rev. Dennis Roberts has done for the Sphex Club, its presenters and membership. Dr. Ken West, Secretary)

Our presenter, The Reverend Dennis Roberts, provided this abstract of his presentation entitled: “Witch Hunt”.

The term “witch hunt” has been used frequently in recent years to dismiss the ever-growing list of accusations, outrages, scandals, and unfolding saga of potential criminal offenses associated with the Trump administration. The phrase piqued a curiosity about the *real* thing: the witch craze and deadly witch hunts of the early modern European era, roughly from 1450 to 1750, with a focus on the Germanic regions of western Europe.

The Brocken mountain in north-central Germany figures prominently in “Witches’ Night” legends as the location for the annual April 30-May 1 fly-in to commune with the Devil in a bacchanalian orgy. The witches’ revelry is referenced by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe in *Faust*, Part I.

Historian Brian Levack explains that early modern Europeans used the word “witchcraft” to describe the practice of maleficent magic and/or the alleged relationship that existed between witches and the Devil. The combination of black magic and diabolism made witches not simply felons but heretics and apostates who could be executed for their crimes. There is no scholarly consensus on why the great European witch-hunt took place, but it is “attributed, in whole or in large part, to the Reformation, the Counter-Reformation, the Inquisition, the use of judicial torture, the wars of religion, the religious zeal of the clergy, the rise of the modern state, the development of capitalism, a series of agricultural crises, the widespread use of narcotics, changes in medical thought, social and cultural conflict, an attempt to wipe out paganism, the need of ruling elites to distract the masses, opposition to birth control, the spread of syphilis, and the hatred of women.”

The paper then explored the religious dimension and hatred of women in more detail. While there may not be a causal relationship between religious reforms taking place at the time, it is certainly true that forces unleashed by the Reformation and Counter-Reformation did serve as a catalyst for witch hunting in both Roman Catholic and Protestant areas. Statistically, witchcraft prosecutions were more likely to occur in areas where there was more religious conflict.

Historian Anne Barstow details how patriarchy and misogyny helped fuel the witch hunt movement, writing that of the approximately 100,000 people executed under the guise of “witch hunts” from 1450 to 1750, most (80-90%) were women. She continues, “...women were accused primarily by men, tried by male juries, burned to death by male executioners—while being prayed over by male confessors.” The stories of Walpurga Hausmannin and Elisabeth Strupp, executed in 1587 and 1599 respectively, are examples of a recurring theme: the victim is almost always female, old, poor, illiterate, and widowed, often falling prey to the Devil because of sexual desire and economic need. She is a lower-class female judged by the male oligarchy of her town. Her execution will be a brutal spectacle, often with sexual violence.

Even though the oppression of women had a long history before the early modern European period, the witch hunt era appears to be the first time that women were criminalized as a group. Their vulnerability to mass persecution was proven, their alleged propensity for evil dramatized. The lengths to which men in power would go in order to control women became more violent, more public, and more organized. The public execution of witches was a powerful way to keep women in their place.

Intimidation is certainly a factor in all centuries, in all places. Such intimidation – the scapegoating of women for the ills of society, the “ethnic cleansing” of independent women, the desire of some men to control women’s bodies and reproductive health – continues to influence our culture today. Violence against women and girls is one of the more prevalent human rights violations in the world, knowing no social, economic, or national boundaries. Women who challenge the patriarchal order are often assailed, including in our own country and community.

Today, one has to wonder if the repetitive use of the term “witch hunt” is *more* than a throw-away line. What if it is an intentional dog whistle to further demonize women and subconsciously unleash misogynistic forces, just as racism and xenophobia have been subtly validated with a wink and a nod in recent years? Human rights in general, and women’s rights in particular, are under attack – whether by populist forces desperate to gain power, religious forces enmeshed in unholy alliances with the powers that be, or authoritarian governments eager to maintain and extend their power.

After a question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by President Frantz at 8:45.

Respectfully submitted,
G. Kenneth West, Ph.D.
Secretary

**A Resolution of Appreciation and Respect
for
Dr. James Martin Elson (1932-2021)**

Whereas Dr. James Martin Elson was a respected teacher of music and administrator in higher education before coming to Lynchburg:

Whereas he was a retired Colonel of the United States Army and was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal:

Whereas since Dr. Elson came to Lynchburg as Executive Director of the Academy of Music Theater, he has been an enthusiastic and productive participant in the cultural life of the community:

Whereas he served as Executive Vice President of the Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation from 1988 until 2000:

Whereas James Elson authored an informative and entertaining history of the first two-hundred years of Lynchburg:

Whereas our colleague Jim Elson was a devoted member of the Sphex Club from 1997 until his death:

Whereas he served as Secretary of the Club for several years and strengthened it by reminding and encouraging members regarding the responsibilities of membership:

Whereas Jim Elson's notable presentations, wit and love of history are and will continue to be missed by the Sphex Club, now therefore be it

Resolved that the members of the Sphex Club express their heartfelt appreciation for the outstanding membership of Dr. James Martin Elson, their deep sorrow at his death, and their support, condolences and best wishes for his family.



**Minutes of the 1,471st meeting of the SPHEX Club
February 3, 2022**

President David Frantz called the 1,471st meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 3rd. This was a virtual meeting (Zoom).

Active members present were: Bradford, Cook, Cyphert, Delaney, Doyle, Edwards, Foster, Frantz, Hendricks, Light, Lucas, Manian, Marion, Payne, Roberts, Salmon, Sigler, Stinnett, Tiller, West, Wilson, Wright.

Unable to Attend Were: Bateman, Dawson, Delzingaro, Elliott, Gillette, Hansen, Jablonski, McDonald, Morrison-Shetlar, Schewel, and Wodicka.

Sphex's special guests for the evening: Chris Webb, Francie Webb

The minutes for January 20th were approved without modification

Resolution Honoring The Rev. Dennis Roberts:

President Frantz presented the following resolution honoring The Rev. Dennis Roberts for his service during the pandemic. The resolution was passed unanimously:

WHEREAS: During the Covid pandemic that in March will stretch over two years of Sphex presentations, The Rev. Dennis Roberts provided links that allowed all active members, emeritus members and guests to listen, watch and interact virtually with each Sphex presenter,

WHEREAS: Dennis Roberts tirelessly and patiently coached each member who had never presented virtually and needed help understanding how to best proceed,

And WHEREAS: The Rev. Dennis Roberts enabled the Club to cast secret ballots virtually for the induction of new members,

BE IT RESOLVED, The membership of Sphex, express their appreciation and thanks for the outstanding work that The Rev. Dennis Roberts has done for the Sphex Club, its presenters and membership.

President Frantz introduced Katie Webb Cyphert our speaker for the evening:

Katie Webb Cyphert was born in Fort Sill, Oklahoma to two native Virginians, and moved to Lynchburg when she was two. Katie attended school in Lynchburg from kindergarten to her graduation from E.C. Glass in 1998. In 2002 she received her Bachelors of Science in Psychology-Special Education from Lynchburg College (now the University of Lynchburg).

After 6 years as a Special Education teacher at E.C. Glass, Katie ventured into financial services for 5 years. She held licenses in Life & Health, Property & Casualty, Variable Products (Series 6/63), and Long Term Care Insurance. Katie returned to the classroom in 2013 to teach Earth Science at Linkhorne Middle School.

Katie is currently a building rep for the Lynchburg Education Association and a Board Member of the Shawn Moss Wellness and Growth Foundation. Katie's past activities include

serving on the boards for Young Professionals of Central Virginia and Friends of Rivermont, serving as Chair of the Lynchburg Democratic Committee, and as a Daisy Troop Girl Scout Leader. She spends her summers working at Camp Alleghany for Girls in West Virginia.

Katie and her husband Mark have two daughters: Rosalie is 12 and in 6th grade at Dunbar Middle. Brea is 15 and in 10th grade at E.C. Glass. On the weekends, Katie tests her patience and prays to the gods of driving while teaching Brea to drive a stick shift. Tonight Katie will present her third paper for SPHEX: "Breaking Up Is Hard To Do".

**Our presenter, Katie Cyphert, provided this abstract of her presentation entitled:
"Breaking up is Hard to Do"**

Not available at this time.

Here is the link to Katie's presentation:

https://youtu.be/c3_5TFFLuDA

After a question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by President Frantz at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
G. Kenneth West, Ph.D.
Secretary

Resolution Honoring The Rev. Dennis Roberts
February 3rd, 2022

President Frantz presented the following resolution honoring The Rev. Dennis Roberts for his service during the pandemic. The resolution was passed unanimously:

WHEREAS: During the Covid pandemic that in March will stretch over two years of Sphex presentations, The Rev. Dennis Roberts provided links that allowed all active members, emeritus members and guests to listen, watch and interact virtually with each Sphex presenter,

WHEREAS: Dennis Roberts tirelessly and patiently coached each member who had never presented virtually and needed help understanding how to best proceed,

And WHEREAS: The Rev. Dennis Roberts enabled the Club to cast secret ballots virtually for the induction of new members,

BE IT RESOLVED, The membership of Sphex, express their appreciation and thanks for the outstanding work that The Rev. Dennis Roberts has done for the Sphex Club, its presenters and membership.

**Minutes of the 1,472nd meeting of the SPHEX Club
February 17, 2022**

President David Frantz called the 1,472nd meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 17th. This was a virtual meeting (Zoom).

Active members present were: Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Doyle, Elliott, Foster, Frantz, Gillette, Hansen, Hendricks, Jablonski, Light, Lucas, Manian, Marion, McDonald, Morrison-Shetlar, Payne, Roberts, Schewel, Sigler, Stinnett, Tiller, West, Wilson, Wright

Emeritus Members Present: Dr. Ken Garren

Unable to Attend Were: Bateman, Bradford, Delzingaro, Edwards, Salmon, Wodicka

Sphex's special guests for the evening: Edie Light, Paige Light, the Reverends Diane and Todd Vie, Megan Lucas, and Sumner Jenkins.

The minutes were approved without modification.

New Officers Announced for 2022-2023

Dr. Michael Gillette on behalf of the Nominations Committee announced the new officers for the next Sphex year:

President	Katie Cyphert
Vice President	Joe Stinnett
Treasurer	Marc Schewel
Secretary	Dr. Jim Wright
Assistant Secretary	Dr. Ken West

Membership Committee

Mike Bradford, Chair
Julie Doyle
Travis McDonald

Nominations Committee

Dr. Michael Gillette, Chair
Dr. Reid Wodicka
Dr. Crystal Edwards

Ad Hoc Library Committee

Ted Delaney, Chair
Dr. Jim Wright

Dr. Tom Tiller
Nancy Marion

Program Committee

Dr. David Frantz, Chair

Nominations for New Members

Please send your nominations for new members to any member of the Membership Committee. Also, please send with your nomination a brief biography of your nominee(s):

Mike Bradford, Chair (mvbradford@gmail.com)
Julie Doyle (jdoyle0463@gmail.com)
Travis McDonald (travis@poplarforest.org)

President Frantz introduced Cham Light our speaker for the evening:

Cham Light served for over 30 years, from 1985 to 2016, as an Assistant General Counsel and Claims Director with state, regional and national responsibilities for Nationwide Insurance Company. He is also in his 16th year as an Adjunct Professor of Law at Liberty University Law School teaching courses in Land Use and Zoning Regulations, Insurance Law and also Real Estate Transactions and Development Law.

Cham has been very active in community service organizations over the years including serving as a Founding Director and Executive Committee member of the Free Clinic of Central VA for nine years, for fifteen years on the Board of the Library of VA including two terms as President, five years as President of the Old City Cemetery, two years as President of the Lynchburg Historical Foundation, a term as Chair of the Arbitration Committee of the National Association of Mutual Insurance Carriers and is presently President of the Board of Trustees of Jones Memorial Library.

Cham has been married to his wife Edie for 38 years and they have two children: Tray, who is an Episcopal seminary student at Sewanee University and Paige, who is a marketing representative for Tableaux Software.

Our presenter, Cham Light, provided the following abstract of his presentation entitled: "The City of Secrets"

Cham Light spoke from the lectern in the sanctuary of St. Paul's Episcopal Church located at 605 Clay St. in Lynchburg. He invited SPHEX members who were present to sample wines and cheeses from the area of the city in Italy about which his presentation was based before the meeting at 7:00 p.m. and also after his presentation in the narthex of St. Paul's. At the end of his presentation Cham said he had done this partly to get members of the SPHEX back in the habit of meeting in person.

Cham's guests were his wife, Edie, Megan Lucas, CEO of the Regional Business Alliance and wife of SPHEX member Tory Lucas, the Reverends Diane and Todd Vie, co-priests of St.

Paul's, Sumner Jenkins, organist and choirmaster of St. Paul's, who had prepared the photos and video segments of Cham's presentation and who operated the video and sound system that evening, and Cham and Edie's daughter Paige Light, who viewed the presentation via Zoom. SPHEX members who attended in person were Jim Wright, Tory Lucas, John Cook and Billy Hansen.

Cham started his presentation by stating this was his fourth paper since being invited into membership in January, 2009. His previous papers dealt with the acquisition and use of political power, the Virginia Brigade in the War of 1812 which was led by his ancestor General Joel Leftwich, and a review of the Electoral College which elects U.S. Presidents.

Cham said this paper, while it may seem like a travelogue, had a more serious purpose, which was to identify characteristics of a city that had different factions but was still unified, and what lessons Lynchburg residents might learn from this city to better our own community.

The title of Cham's paper, "The City of Secrets," was taken from a book written by Professor Jane Tylus entitled *Siena City of Secrets*. He mentioned that Tylus had numerous YouTube segments that would be of interest to those wanting to learn more than would be provided in his presentation.

Cham stated that the city in question was Siena, Italy, in the heart of Tuscany, which was built on three hills but did not have a dependable source of water since it was not built on a river. It depended on wells until an aqueduct was constructed in the 1910s. He also noted that there was a series of eight walls surrounding the city, the first of which was built in the 11th century and the last finished in 1460. Most of the walls are still standing and make navigation in the city confusing and difficult.

Cham had Sumner show two panoramic photos of Siena and two of the campo or city center of Siena. Siena has struggled for centuries, especially against Florence, to preserve its identity and heritage and does not want the city to be overrun with tourists like Venice and Florence.

Cham gave a brief history of the country of Italy, pointing out that the country was not unified until 1861 and that before that it had been a collection of city states that had been unstable politically and constantly at war since the disintegration of the Western Roman Empire in 476 AD.

Siena is about 143 miles north of Rome and 45 miles south of Florence. It grew from a Roman trading post in 30 AD and prospered based on wool, wheat, salt, some mining, and money lending, and because a stopover for pilgrims on the Via Francigena, the 1,181 mile pilgrimage route from Canterbury, England to Rome, Italy.

Cham pointed-out that all great cities have great buildings, great institutions and great historical figures. He then identified the Cathedral of Siena, the Hospital of Santa Maria della Scala and the Monte dei Paschi Bank as key buildings or institutions in the city. Photos of all these were shown. The hospital, dating to the 12th century, was the oldest and one of the largest in Europe. The bank, established in 1472, is the oldest bank in the world. The hospital was dedicated to caring for pilgrims, the poor and abandoned babies and the bank was founded to provide loans for pilgrims and the poor so they could avoid private money lenders.

Cham identified St. Catherine of Siena as the most famous citizen of Siena. She was born in Siena in 1347, started to have religious visions at an early age, was a lay member of the

Dominican Order, developed stigmata, became quite influential, helped persuade the Pope to leave Avignon, France and return to Rome and died in Rome from constant fasting in 1380, age 33 (the same age as Jesus Christ when he was crucified). She has subsequently been declared by the Pope as co-patron saint of both Italy and Europe and was the second woman to be proclaimed a Doctor of the Roman Catholic Church. Photos of her torso, which is in a glass coffin at the altar of the Basilica di Santa Maria sopra Minerva in Rome, and her head, which is in a glass reliquary at her home church, San Domenico in Siena, were shown.

Cham then explained how Siena is divided into 17 Contrada, or neighborhoods, each with its own shield, clubhouse, chapel and museum. At birth children are given a scarf with the shield of the Contrada in which they are born and they cherish it for life. Cham and Edie had scarves they had purchased at the Aquila (Eagle) Contrada dinner the night before with scarves from the Contrada being distinguishable by Sienese from those bought at a souvenir shop.

Cham then provided details about the Palio, or banner horse race, which is dedicated to the Virgin Mary and which is held every year on July 2 and August 16. He included video clips of Contrada members marching and singing in the streets and a Rick Steves clip of various scenes from a Palio.

Cham and Edie have been to Siena four times: for several hours as day trippers in 2002 and 2007 and to attend the Palio for five nights in August 2016, and with his adult children for six nights in August 2019. He stated he is more perplexed now about Siena than he was after his first visit.

Cham pointed out that Siena has very little crime, typically no murders and very little violence, even during the Palio, and then asked a series of questions about Lynchburg and how aspects of our city compare to Siena:

- How about comparable buildings? Perhaps Monument Terrace or the Old City Courthouse.
- Comparable institutions? Perhaps Centra Health or BWXT.
- A comparable person that could be unifying and inspiring? Leland Melvin was Cham's personal choice.
- A song? Maybe Lynchburg needs to commission one.
- What about a shared activity like the Palio? Is that the Ten Miler?

Cham pointed-out one advantage Lynchburg has that Siena does not is the James River. We need to continue the positive momentum.

Cham closed with asking what lessons can be learned from Siena. He has raised some questions and asked his listeners if they had other questions or any answers.

There were some questions and answers after his presentation. Julius Sigler said he was surprised Cham did not include reference to the fresco of the Allegory of Good Government and the Effects of Bad Government. Cham explained that the fresco is in City Hall, which borders the Campo and is distinguished by the large tower seen in the photos. He simply did not have enough time to cover all aspects of Siena. There were also comments and questions by George Dawson and Katie Cyphert.

After a question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by President Frantz at 8:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

G. Kenneth West, Ph.D.
Secretary

**Minutes of the 1,473rd meeting of the SPHEX Club
March 3, 2022**

President David Frantz called the 1,473rd meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 3rd. This was a virtual meeting (Zoom).

Active members present were: Bradford, Cook, Cyphert, Delaney, Doyle, Edwards, Frantz, Hansen, Hendricks, Jablonski, Light, Manian, Marion, McDonald, Morrison-Shetlar, Payne, Roberts, Salmon, Schewel, Stinnett, Tiller, West, Wilson, Wodicka, Wright

Emeritus Member Present: Dr. Ken Garren

Unable to Attend Were: Bateman, Dawson, Delzingaro, Elliott, Foster, Gillette, Lucas, Sigler

Sphex's special guests for the evening: Peter Doyle, Mckayla Warwick

The minutes were approved without modification.

President Frantz congratulated the Nomination Committee (Dr. Michael Gillette, Chair, Dr. Reid Wodicka, and Dr. Crystal Edwards) for their work in the selection of officers for the 2022-2023 Sphex year:

President	Katie Cyphert
Vice President	Joe Stinnett
Treasurer	Marc Schewel
Secretary	Dr. Jim Wright
Assistant Secretary	Dr. Ken West

The Membership Committee continues to accept nominations for new members:

Please submit your nominations and the required background information by Sunday night, March 13th to any member of the committee.

Mike Bradford, Chair -- mvbradford@gmail.com

Julie Doyle -- jdoyle0463@gmail.com

Travis McDonald -- travis@poplarforest.org

Treasurer's Report – Marc Schewel

In order to avoid being “cancelled” as I was after my reelection as Treasurer at the last meeting, I have decided to make tonight's report mercifully brief. Recently the Club has been the beneficiary of an unexpected windfall. My fellow members will recall that I was unable to attend our meeting four weeks ago as I was preparing to leave early the following morning for a trip out of the country. That trip was to the Patagonia region of Chile.

However, I am embarrassed to admit that there was another unpleasant reason for my absence: the Sphex Treasury had been stripped of its funds. Yes, my friends, on the eve of my departure I found myself short of cash, and so took the liberty of borrowing the bank balance of \$1293.56 to tide me over, fully intending to repay it upon my return. Of course, immediately upon arriving in Santiago I converted the money to Chilean pesos. Then I discovered that I had prepaid almost all of my travel expenses and could use a credit card for any incidentals. I did spend ten dollars on a travel guide. Two days after I got home I went straight to the Bank of the James, and deposited what I had left in the Sphex Club account. So, I am pleased to report that the Treasury now stands at 1,034,848 pesos. This puts us well ahead of the curve when the current inflation spiral reaches 800%.

President Frantz introduced Julie Doyle our speaker for the evening:

Our speaker was born in Los Angeles and raised in Portland, Oregon. She is one of five sisters. Ms. Doyle received her Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering at the University of Notre Dame and a Master's in Business Administration from George Washington University. Her first job after college was as a Sales Engineer for Westinghouse Electric Corporation. Afterwards, Ms. Doyle was an Education Account Executive at Honeywell, Inc. In 2005 Ms. Doyle became the President and Executive Director of The Education & Research Foundation. She retired from this position in 2021.

Ms. Doyle has contributed generously to the Central Virginia Community. Presently she is a member of the Centra Health Board of Directors, the University of Lynchburg Board of Trustees, the Bank of the James Board of Directors and The Lynchburg Education Foundation Board of Directors. Formerly she was Chairperson of the Lynchburg City School Board and the president of the Kids' Haven Board of Directors.

Julie moved to Lynchburg in 1993 and is married to Peter Doyle who is a native of Lynchburg. The two met at Notre Dame where Julie lettered in volleyball. Julie and Peter have three children—all Notre Dame graduates. Kevin lives in Chicago. He and his wife Caitlin have two children, Grace and Callahan. Sarah, their second child, lives in Seattle. And, their youngest child, Maggie, lives in Philadelphia. Incidentally, Julie became the first woman to be President of Notre Dame's prestigious Monogram Club.

Our presenter, Julie Doyle, provided this abstract of her presentation entitled: *This Road Less Traveled Moves Like Water*

The practice of Restorative Justice – found in court systems, schools, communities and the workplace – has been said to move like water, since it represents flexibility and fluidity, and can flow around obstacles in powerful ways.

Julie's talk was inspired by the restorative justice work being done in Philadelphia by Lynchburg native and University of Pennsylvania graduate, Mckayla Warwick. Mckayla and two of her UPenn classmates received a \$250,000 President's Engagement Prize in 2020, and have been working in west Philadelphia to train and empower BIPOC youth (black, indigenous, people of color) on restorative justice practices which can have a meaningful impact on

incarceration rates and improve harmony within communities. (Mckayla attended the talk as Julie's invited guest.)

Although the meaning of "restorative justice" can vary widely depending on the setting, a common thread is that these practices will emphasize the acknowledgement of a harm and its impact on people, relationships and community, and will focus on bringing about a resolution that is not only centered around punishment.

Restorative justice is sometimes referred to as a "victim-centered approach", addressing weaknesses in the traditional court processes, which result in those impacted *most* by a crime, often having the *least* to say about the outcome of the criminal proceeding.

In a successful restorative justice process, the offender will recognize the effects of the harm and, wherever possible, repair the harm in a manner that is satisfactory to the victim.

With origins tied to Native American and other indigenous communities, restorative justice practices have been around for many years. However, it was not until the 1970's that these practices began to surface in some U.S. courts.

Cook County, Illinois – located in the greater Chicago area – has a restorative justice champion in their Chief Judge, the Honorable Timothy C. Evans. Chief Judge Evans has established three (3) stand-alone Restorative Justice Community Courts (RJCC) in Cook County. These courts focus on providing alternative adjudication pathways for non-violent, first time "emerging adult" offenders, ages 18-26 years old, who are willing to accept responsibility for the harm they have caused. The RJCC restorative justice process includes Peace Circles facilitated by trained professionals and attended by the victim, the offender and representatives from the community, and a Repair of Harm Agreement (RHA) co-authored by all parties. Once the terms of the RHA have been met by the offender, the case is dismissed and the offender's record is cleared.

The Commonwealth of Virginia has not integrated restorative justice practices into its court systems as proactively as has been seen in other states. But recent efforts by the legislature – including the addition of language in Section 16.1 of the Code of Virginia and in the Virginia Juvenile Community Crime Control Act (VJCCCA) - give reason to believe that support is growing for the use of restorative justice practices in Virginia, especially for juvenile court cases.

Following Reid Wodicka's January 2022 SPHEX paper on the challenges facing the juvenile justice system, several SPHEX members expressed an interest in finding ways to engage with and support juveniles in the justice system. With some winds of change on the horizon, there may be opportunities for all to play a part in enabling restorative justice efforts to flow into our community.

Special Guest and Participant: Mckayla Warwick

Mckayla Warwick is a Lynchburg native and graduate of EC Glass high school, currently residing in Philadelphia. Mckayla earned a full-ride QuestBridge scholarship to the University of Pennsylvania, where she graduated Summa Cum Laude in 2020 with a major in Sociology, and minors in Urban Education and Africana Studies. Upon graduation, Mckayla and two of her classmates – Hyungtae Kim and Kwaku Owusu – were awarded a \$250,000 President's Engagement Prize for a project they named "Collective Climb". They have been working with West Philly youth – first under the umbrella of the President's Engagement Prize and now as an

independent non-profit. Collective Climb was incorporated as a 501(c)3 organization in 2021 so the impactful work—of using restorative justice practices to engage and empower youth to build community and repair harm—could continue.

If you would like to learn more about Collective Climb, you can visit their website:

www.collectiveclimb.org

or email McKayla Warwick at mckayla@collectiveclimb.org.

The following video provides a brief overview of the Collective Climb project:

<https://youtu.be/KM7jcqhi860>

After a question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by President Frantz at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
G. Kenneth West, Ph.D.
Secretary

**Minutes of the 1,474th meeting of the SPHEX Club
March 17, 2022**

President David Frantz called the 1,474th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 17th. This was a virtual meeting (Zoom).

Active members present were: Bradford, Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Doyle, Edwards, Elliott, Frantz, Gillette, Hansen, Hendricks, McDonald, Payne, Roberts, Salmon, Schewel, Sigler, Stinnett, Tiller, West, Wilson, Wright.

Emeritus Member Present: Dr. Ken Garren

Unable to Attend Were: Bateman, Delzingaro, Foster, Jablonski, Light, Lucas, Manian, Marion, Morrison-Shetlar, Wodicka.

Sphex's special guests for the evening: Sandra Wilson (wife of Dr. Jeff Wilson) and daughters Elizabeth Betz and Melissa Watts.

The minutes for March 3rd, 2022 passed without modification.

Proposed Amendment to Sphex Constitution: President Frantz

The following amendment was proposed by President Frantz and will be voted on during the March 31st meeting.

ARTICLE IV. Officers

7. An Executive Committee shall be comprised of the President, Vice President, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer and past President. They shall serve as a consultative body for any officers of the club at the officer's request.

The Membership Committee Presented Eight Candidates for Sphex Membership

(Mike Bradford – Chair, Julie Doyle, Travis McDonald)

Active Sphex members will vote on March 31 to select which candidates will be offered membership.

Sphex Survey Results: Dr. Jim Wright

A poll sent to members on February 28 garnered 22 responses. Members were given a choice between continuing virtual meetings in September or resuming in-person meetings. Ninety percent favored in-person meetings. When asked if they would attend Zoom meetings, 100% replied in the affirmative; the same applied to in-person meetings. Members were also asked if they would attend a cocktail event preceding a talk in September. Ninety-five percent indicated that they would. The survey also asked members for meeting place suggestions. Eight responded with five suggestions.

New Meeting Space for the Sphex 2022-2023 year:

Following the opening meeting on September 8 that will include a social hour, SpheX meetings will be held at the University of Lynchburg in room 232 in Schewel Hall.

The Ad Hoc SpheX Archives Committee made the following report:

(Ted Delaney – Chair, Dr. Jim Wright, Dr. Tom Tiller, Nancy Marion)

The committee is working to create a permanent, digital archive of the Club's meeting minutes, member papers, and miscellaneous documents. We have had difficulty securing a long-term arrangement with Jones Memorial Library to host the archives, but we now have a short-term solution to give members immediate access. Very soon we will email the membership a direct link to a Dropbox folder that contains 6.0 GB of materials digitized last year by Jim Wright and Nancy Marion. The documents are in PDF format, organized chronologically or alphabetically in folders, and searchable. With the link we will provide instructions for searching. We encourage members to browse and search the archives before the fall, when we will have more information on a more permanent hosting solution for our digital records.

Treasurer's Report: Marc Schewel

With the announcement that the Club may consider a social event to inaugurate its Fall 2022 season, I decided to investigate just how far our current bank balance of \$1293.56 would go before we might have to assess our membership for dues, which have been deferred the past two years. Estimating an attendance of sixty persons (thirty members plus spouses) and assuming the Club could find a venue rent-free, after shopping food prices, I calculated that there were sufficient funds in the treasury to allow us to offer the following menu for each person: $\frac{1}{4}$ glass of wine, one hot dog and bun, one pickle slice, one small cup of coleslaw, three apple slices, and $\frac{1}{2}$ chocolate chip cookie. I recommend that the Club adopt this menu rather than assessing dues since, considering the current price of gas, members would have to make the difficult choice between driving several miles to our event and paying their dues.

President Frantz introduced Dr. Jeff Wilson our speaker for the evening:

Dr. Wilson was born in Charleston, West Virginia December 18, 1946, but lived in Connecticut, Kentucky, Florida, and Pennsylvania while growing up. He is Duke inbred receiving a BS in Zoology (1968) and his M.D. in 1972. He continued post-graduate medical training at Duke including internship, internal medicine residency, and rheumatology fellowship from 1972 till 1979. This was interrupted by two years of active duty Navy service (1974-1976).

He and his wife Sandra have been married since June 20, 1969. They have two children, Elizabeth and Melissa and three teenage grandchildren. The longest they have lived in any one place has been Lynchburg where he practiced rheumatology from July 7, 1979 until December 15, 2014. He saw rheumatology patients two afternoons a month in the Free Clinic and has prepared a Rheumatology Primer for the Free Clinic.

He served as President of the Lynchburg Academy of Medicine, 6th District Councilor to the Medical Society of Virginia, and was the tenth recipient of the William Barney Award in 2007.

He has published two books: *“Hello, Friend” Dr. George B. Craddock Stories* (Warwick House Publishing 1989) and *“Let Me Tell You Something, Dr. Wilson”* (Warwick House Publishing 2016). A third book is at the printer’s—*“A Doctor in the House? Good luck!”* He has authored articles in medical journals and chapters on vitamin D and Environmental Triggers for *The Sjogren’s Book, 5th Edition*. He was the first person to discover benign familial elevation of alkaline phosphatase described in the article “Inherited Elevation of Alkaline Phosphatase in the Absence of Disease,” *New England Journal of Medicine*, November 1, 1979, 983-984.

He and Sandra reside in Lynchburg. Dr. Wilson can be contacted at (434) 444-1729 or by email at wilson1821@comcast.net.

Our presenter, Dr. Jeff Wilson, provided this abstract of his presentation entitled “TEETHBRUSH LESSONS”.

Recalling a program more than 20 years ago we are reminded of the importance of teachers. While a minority of us may know prominent CEOs of industry, almost all of us can remember a teacher who made a difference in our lives.

Personal experiences included an assumed poor educational background coming from West Virginia to Florida. In reality it provided a setting for exceptional teacher introduction to foreign languages and testing of a Teacher-mother (1950’s).

The pandemic has provided abundant discord at all levels. In a refusal to dwell on today’s miseries, the talk covers some of the “W.Va.” jokes with a reminder of mentoring—received and given.

Next we discuss three individuals with W.Va. educational backgrounds. Katherine Johnson, one of the “Hidden Figures” real life main characters, is an example of a nuclear family that valued education. She experienced an extensive, impressive faculty of teachers that made a difference (1930’s).

Homer Hickham had one teacher, Freida Riley, who was invaluable in encouraging Homer and the Rocket Boys of Coalwood, W.Va. to look beyond a future in the coal mines to college education and Homer’s career in NASA and success as an author (1960’s).

Anne Spencer had no formal education in W.Va., but attributes her literary roots to Mrs. Dixie, the black barber’s wife who read aloud to her while living in Bramwell, W.Va. Formal education was at Virginia Seminary in Lynchburg (1893-99).

Vivian Pinn was a product of segregated schools in Lynchburg (1960’s) who remembered Willie Clark as a teacher who made a difference.

The talk concludes with the hope that each member in attendance had a happy recollection of wonderful teachers, and the concern that the changed relationships due to the pandemic will not eclipse the development of such student-teacher bonds in the future.

After a question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by President Frantz at 8:35pm.

Respectfully submitted,
G. Kenneth West, Ph.D.
Secretary

**Minutes of the 1,475th meeting of the SPHEX Club
March 31st, 2022**

President David Frantz called the 1,475th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 31st. This was a virtual meeting (Zoom).

Active members present were: Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Doyle, Edwards, Foster, Frantz, Hansen, Hendricks, Light, Manian, McDonald, Roberts, Salmon, Tiller, West, Wilson, Wodicka

Unable to Attend Were: Bateman, Bradford, Cook, Delzingaro, Gillette, Jablonski, Lucas, Marion, Morrison-Shetlar, Payne, Schewel, Sigler, Stinnett, Wright

The minutes for March 17th, 2022 were approved without modification.

New Meeting Space for the Sphex 2022-2023 year: President Frantz

Following the opening meeting on September 8th, which will include a social hour, Sphex meetings will be held at the University of Lynchburg in room 232 in Schewel Hall. More information about the location of the social hour on September 8th will be sent out at a later date.

1) Election of New Members –

The membership committee (Mike Bradford – Chair, Julie Doyle, Travis McDonald) received eight excellent nominations for the six open membership spots in Sphex. The Rev. Dennis Roberts provided the membership with virtual, secret balloting. With the help of Ted Delaney, Dennis received and counted votes to determine the six candidates to be invited to join Sphex. Beside the candidates' names below are the Sphex members who nominated them and will formally invite them into membership. Potential members have until May 15th to accept membership. However, if any accept but need to delay their membership for a brief time in the 2022-2023 year, that can be negotiated.

Dr. Bill Blackman (Dr Dave Frantz)

Wynter Benda and Geoffery Kershner (Travis McDonald)

Dr. Nicole Sanders (Dr. Sabita Manian)

Dr. Stephen Smith (Dr. Julius Sigler)

Walker Sydnor (George Dawson)

2) Vote on an Amendment to the Sphex Constitution

The following amendment to the constitution proposed by President Frantz was accepted unanimously.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO SPHEX CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE V. Committees

4. An Executive Committee shall be comprised of the President, Vice President, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer and the immediate past President. They shall serve as a consultative body for any officer of the club at the officer's request.

3) Vote on a member's request for emeritus status

Dr. Jeff Wilson, who presented the last presentation of the 2021-2022 Sphex year, requested emeritus status beginning in the 2022-2023 year. This request was unanimously passed along with the expression of tremendous appreciation by all Sphex members for Dr. Wilson's many exceptional contributions to Sphex.

4) Formal election of Sphex officers for 2022-2023

The following slate of officers was unanimously elected.

President	Katie Cyphert
Vice President	Joe Stinnett
Treasurer	Marc Schewel
Secretary	Dr. Jim Wright
Assistant Secretary	Dr. Ken West

The meeting was adjourned by the new president of Sphex, President Katie Cyphert, at 6:24.

Secretarial Privilege: Dr. Ken West

What a pleasure it has been to serve as Sphex's secretary for the past five years. We enjoyed exceptional leadership from five excellent presidents during these years. Particularly I would like to thank President Cham Light and President Dave Frantz for their leadership during the devastating Covid pandemics that forced us to no longer meet together in person. Another above and beyond performance during the pandemics was given by The Rev. Dennis Roberts who worked throughout the two years to allow us to attend meetings virtually. In addition, Dennis taped each presentation for the membership. I have been surrounded by outstanding leaders during these five year, and I am greatly appreciative for their sterling contributions to The Sphex Club. We have been so fortunate.

Respectfully submitted,

G. Kenneth West, Ph.D.
Secretary

(A recording of the presentation is available courtesy of The Rev. Dennis Roberts. Please click on the link or copy and paste it into your browser to access the presentation. The links can be found below the minutes.)

Minutes of the 1,463rd meeting of the SPHEX Club

September 9th, 2021

President David Frantz called the 1,463rd meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 9th. This was a virtual meeting (Zoom).

President and Vice President switch leadership years:

It was announced by David Frantz that he and Katie Cyphert would switch years as SPHEX President. Because of the Covid pandemic's unpredictable but already disruptive influence on Katie Cyphert's teaching and leadership roles with the Lynchburg City Schools, it became necessary for Dr. David Frantz to assume the role of president of The SpheX Club in 2021-2022. Katie Cyphert will be vice president this year and president of The SpheX Club in 2022-2023.

Active members present were: Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Delzingaro, Doyle, Edwards, Foster, Frantz, Gillette, Hendricks, Manian, Marion, McDonald, Payne, Roberts, Schewel, Sigler, Stinnett, Tiller, West, Wilson, Wodicka, Wright.

Unable to Attend Were: Langhorne, Light, Lucas

SpheX's special guest for the evening: Cyndi Lee, spouse of President Bateman.

Change in SPHEX Bylaws (to change 5 d. below)

President Frantz recommended, with the unanimous agreement of SPHEX's officers, that a change be made to the SPHEX Bylaws concerning the reading of the minutes.

Below (highlighted) is the former wording of 5 d.:

5. The order of business of regular meetings shall be as follows: a. Call to order; b. Introduction of new members, if any; c. Introduction of guests, if any; d. **Reading of the minutes of the last meeting by the Secretary**; e. Reports of committees; f. Old business; g. New business; h. Reports of regrets to the speaker from members unable to be present; i. Introduction of the speaker by the president to include a brief background identification and announcement of the speaker's topic; j. Reading of the paper or equivalent (ordinarily limited to forty-five minutes); k. Discussion of the paper; l. Adjournment.

This change to 5 d. was approved by a majority vote:

Amend item d., replacing it with text as follows: "Reading of the minutes of the last meeting by the Secretary. He/she may abbreviate or omit the reading provided a digital copy of the minutes has been submitted for approval to the membership prior to the meeting."

Treasurer's Report and Membership Dues Discussion – Marc Schewel

The pandemic has seen many changes to the normal order of things, including unprecedented largesse by the federal government, permitted suspension of certain contractual obligations such as rent and student debt, and of course the radical move of the Sphex Club from in-person to virtual meetings.

As President Biden's executive order to extend the moratorium on landlord evictions even though rents may have not been paid for over a year has come under judicial scrutiny, it occurred to me as your treasurer that the Sphex Club also may

be facing a constitutional crisis. After all, the Club has not collected any dues for over two years, while all members have enjoyed – from the comfort of their homes, no less – the privileges granted by membership, that is, being educated, enlightened, and entertained by scholarly papers carefully crafted and professionally presented by their peers.

I began to suspect and fear that the Club might find me culpable of failing to collect the dues as required by the Constitution and in fact seek redress. What form might this take? Might I be required to make up the lost revenue personally? Even worse, might I suffer the embarrassment of possible impeachment, a word that seems to be thrown about these days with reckless abandon? On the other hand, maybe impeachment wouldn't be a bad idea, since it would relieve me of the obligation of concocting these ridiculous reports every month or so.

I asked the noted jurist, the Honorable John Cook, if he could render an opinion, to which he responded, "Marc, I wouldn't touch that with a ten-foot pole." I went to our esteemed secretary, Ken West, to see if he could help, but all I got from him was: "I'm just a retired professor and newspaper columnist. This is way out of my league."

So, I come before the Club this evening to plead leniency and forgiveness for my dereliction of duty. I am not sure what is the proper procedure for a constitutional amendment, but am hopeful that the members in their ultimate wisdom will, with sympathy, approve the motion I humbly bring before them this evening: "That Sphex Club dues shall be understood as waived for the sessions 2020-2021 and 2021-2022."

Results of the Survey Monkey -- President David Frantz

Dr. Frantz reported that toward the end of July the membership voted on whether to meet live or on Zoom. The vote was split almost evenly between the two

options. But within a week, the pandemic worsened with the advent of the new Delta Covid variant. Several additional members reconsidered and expressed a preference to have Zoom meetings only. To maximally protect all members, the decision was made to begin the 2021-2022 SPHEX year on Zoom.

A second question on the survey asked members whether they would prefer to meet at 7:30 p.m. or 8:00 p.m. Almost unanimously the membership chose 7:30.

Update from the Ad Hoc SpheX Archives Committee – Ted Delaney, Chair

(Committee Members include Nancy Marion, Tom Tiller, and Jim Wright.)

The club's digital archives were delivered to Jones Memorial Library in April, but library staff have not been able to post the files to their website yet. Several questions still need to be resolved by the club, including whether future presentations should be submitted in digital and/or analog format, and whether the public will have access to the digital archives once they are available online. The committee will continue to explore these issues and make recommendations to the full membership later in the fall or winter.

Nomination of New Members – Judge John Cook, Chair

(Nomination Committee members: Christina Delzingaro and Cham Light)

Following a lengthy delay in the election of new members due to the Covid 19 virus, Judge John Cook led a discussion about the election of members that will take place in the next meeting on September 23rd. There are 9 nominations for the 7 slots that are open for membership. The biographies of these 9 candidates have been sent to the voting membership of the SPHEX Club.

On September 23rd a Certification Ballot will be held. Each nominee must receive 75% of the vote on the Certification Ballot in order to be placed on the ballot that

will determine membership. Members can vote to certify all nine or fewer. On the final ballot the 7 nominees who receive the most votes will be offered membership into SPHEX.

President Frantz introduced our speaker for the evening: Dr. Brad Bateman

Brad Bateman became the tenth president of Randolph College in 2013. He will retire at the end of the 2021-22 academic year.

Before becoming an academic administrator, Bateman held the Gertrude B. Austin Chair of Economics at Grinnell College, where he taught for twenty years. He also served as Provost and Executive Vice President at Denison University. He is a scholar of the work of the British economist John Maynard Keynes and has also written extensively on the religious roots of American economic thought.

He is married to Cyndi Lee, an internationally recognized teacher of yoga and meditation who is also an ordained Buddhist chaplain.

Dr. Bateman provided this abstract of his presentation entitled: “Thy Kingdom Come?”

From its earliest days, the American college was a Protestant enterprise. Harvard and Columbia, Yale and Princeton, were all founded to educate Protestant ministers and the men who would sit in the pews of their churches. A funny thing happened, however, as colleges and universities started to secularize themselves: the role of religion in shaping America’s history started to disappear from our narratives about ourselves. In the attempt to secularize the university, the story of the way that things had been done in the past was largely ignored and forgotten.

But the system was built by Protestants, for Protestants. But our ignorance of our past hides much from us besides the history of overt discrimination. It is impossible to understand much about American culture without understanding its Protestant underpinning.

One unlikely example of the Protestant influence in American culture is the formation of economics as an academic discipline in the United States. The American Economic Association was founded in 1885 by young evangelical Protestants who wanted to shape the emerging discipline of economics into a tool for making the economy more fair and equitable.

Prior to the 1880s, almost all colleges had a required senior year course taught by the president of the college; this course was meant as a capstone that prepared the seniors to understand their roles they were to assume in American society. The texts used in these courses were not analytically sophisticated, but they helped to spread a gospel of free trade and free markets.

Some of the difference between the older Protestant economists and the young evangelicals who founded the A.E.A. was that they were describing different economies. The older ministers had known the mercantile economy of the early nineteenth century that consisted largely of farmers and small town merchants. The economy that the young evangelicals described was very different from the rural idyll of the older ministers. The emerging factory production in the large cities was not only drawing America's young men and women off the farm and into urban areas, it was also drawing central and southern Europeans to work in America. Working conditions in the factories were squalid and, despite the opportunities available in America's cities, urban poverty was rampant.

Richard T. Ely, the man who is most responsible for organizing the young evangelical economists, and who we think of today as the founder of the A.E.A., saw the new industrial economy quite clearly. Ely's purpose in organizing the

A.E.A. was in large part to provide an institutional home for the young Christian economists who saw the world as he did and, thus, to define the emerging discipline.

The ultimate failure of the A.E.A. to protect these young men, however, and the vulnerability of the young evangelicals was a reflection of the failure of the new “Social Gospel” message to resonate with the people in the pews at the end of the nineteenth century. Protestants were generally unmoved. The great Social Gospel theologian Walter Rauschenbusch called this era a “dark time” for progressive Christianity.

The great church historian Martin Marty has described this underlying tension in the Protestant world as “two-party Protestantism”. The “private party” saw the world as largely corrupt and was primarily concerned with saving individual souls. The “public party” saw society itself as sinful, so turned their attention to redeeming it through social action. Seen through this lens, the older Protestant ministers appealed to the private party, whereas the Social Gospellers were a manifestation of the public party.

In the first decade of the twentieth century, however, the public party suddenly swung into prominence. For Protestants, the desire to address the new industrial reality was most obvious in the Social Creed of the Churches, a document approved first by the Methodists in 1907, and approved in 1908 by virtually every other mainline Protestant denomination. The Creed called for an end to child labor, a ten hour work day, no work on Sundays, and compensation for the families of the victims of industrial accidents. These were exactly the kinds of “government interventions” that the young evangelical economists had been calling for in the 1880s and 1890s.

Although they had lived through a “dark time” in the 1890s, they would become a dominant force in American economics in the first two decades of the twentieth

century. Clark, Ely, Adams, and Commons would eventually become well known giants of the discipline and influenced important moments in the evolution of American economic policy. They liked wealth well enough, but they felt that America produced enough of it to take care of children and laborers.

Below is the Zoom link for Dr. Bateman's presentation. The link is provided by The Rev. Dennis Roberts.

<https://youtu.be/11-EHItWv3U>

Our presenter Dr. Brad Bateman furnished this link to an essay in the Atlantic Magazine connected to his SpheX presentation.

This is a revision of an essay that I published in the online version of The Atlantic magazine a few years ago. The finally edited version is here (the link to the essay online):

<https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2016/02/evangelical-american-economics/460455/>

After a question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by

President Frantz at 8:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
G. Kenneth West, Ph.D.
Secretary

A recording of the presentation is available. Please click on the link or copy and paste it into your browser to access the presentation. A special thanks goes to The Rev. Dennis Roberts for making these recordings available.

Minutes of the 1,464th meeting of the SPHEX Club September 23, 2021

President David Frantz called the 1,464th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 23rd. This was a virtual meeting (Zoom).

Active members present were: Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Delzingaro, Doyle, Frantz, Gillette, Hendricks, Manian, Marion, Roberts, Schewel, Sigler, Tiller, West, Wilson, Wright.

Unable to Attend Were: Bateman, Payne, Stinnett, Edwards, Foster, Langhorne, Light, Lucas, McDonald, Wodicka.

Treasurer's Report – Marc Schewel

At our last meeting, Dr. Bateman astutely observed that the tolerable amount of time for a presentation delivered by Zoom is twenty minutes. That being the case, after a hasty calculation on my handy mobile phone using a ratio of one to three, I have determined that I need to reduce the length of my treasurer's reports from six minutes to two minutes.

I know many of you will be disappointed to hear that, but rest assured that this contraction will only last until November 18th, when I am scheduled to deliver a Sphex Paper. As it now stands, that paper will probably take eighty minutes, so I am humbly requesting that the Club allow me to carry over the sixteen minutes saved by the next four meetings' truncated Treasurer's Reports and apply them to my November 18th presentation.

If anyone needs any help with this math, you can contact me or Julius Sigler after the meeting.

By the way, the Club's bank account now stands at \$1293.56. Nothing's changed in two years other than the fact that in 2019 the Club could have bought a reclining sofa and a recliner for that amount from Schewel's Home, but today it can only get the sofa.

Nomination of New Members – Judge John Cook, Chair

(Nomination Committee members: Christina Delzingaro and Cham Light)

Judge John Cook led members in completing both a Certification Ballot and a Membership Ballot. Seven people will be invited to join Sphex.

(A special thanks to The Rev. Dennis Roberts for making the arrangements needed for the membership to vote anonymously during the Zoom meeting.)

President Frantz introduced Christina Delzingaro our speaker for the evening

Christina Delzingaro is the Chief Executive Officer of the Free Clinic of Central Virginia and of the Community Access Network. In this shared leadership collaboration, Christina works to increase access to healthcare for uninsured and under-insured community members.

She has been CEO of the Free Clinic of Central Virginia since 2014 and CEO of Community Access Network since its founding in 2015. Christina's previous positions include Director of Programs for the AIDS/HIV Services Group, the Director of Mission Services for the Goodwill of Central and Eastern Virginia, Executive Director of The Arc of the Piedmont for over 12 years and Director of the Richmond County Department of Social Services.

Christina received her BA from Randolph-Macon Woman's College and her MBA from Averett University. She has been a member of the Blue Ridge Institute of Southern Human Services Executives for over 30 years and currently serves as President-elect. Her service also includes the Board of Directors of the Virginia Association of Free and Charitable Clinics where she also serves as President-elect, the Board of the Greater Lynchburg Community Foundation, the Board of Roads to Recovery, a founding Board member of Pierce Street Gateway, as well as serving on the Lynchburg Department of Social Services Advisory Board. Christina lives in the Garland Hill neighborhood in Lynchburg with her husband Larry Lacina.

Our presenter, Christina Delzingaro, provided this abstract of her presentation entitled "Yet Another Thing I Never Learned in School"

Shortly after the Civil War, during the Reconstruction Era, blacks made significant economic and political advances. White physical violence against blacks in the form of massacres, as well as legal and policy violence against blacks that began during Jim Crow and continue into this century, destroyed these advances and blacks' ability to amass generational wealth.

Reconstruction was intended to provide a means for readmitting Southern states into the Union and to define how whites and blacks could live together in a non-slave society after the Civil War. Sherman's Special Orders Number 15 provided land to newly freed slaves. Granting freedmen land confiscated from ex-Confederates was an attempt at reparations and provided hope that newly freed blacks would join the landowning class. When President Johnson overturned the Special Orders, and blacks were driven from the land granted by the orders, it became clear that public policy would also create significant obstacles to blacks achieving economic equality.

There were over 175 racially motivated massacres in the United States between 1863 and 1951. There were over 65 massacres in 1919 alone. They took place not just in the South, but in over 22 states, including Nebraska, Maryland, Michigan, New York, and Pennsylvania. These massacres left thousands of blacks murdered, tens of thousands of black citizens displaced and resulted in incalculable damage to black property.

This presentation summarized the impact of hundreds of race riots and described the specific effects of 13 of these massacres on the lives, rights and property of black Americans. The review demonstrated that while the immediate cause of these massacres was often vigilante justice, the real motivation was typically white anger and frustration with competing for jobs, housing and political power with blacks. The presentation also outlined the public policies and practices that blocked the growth of wealth and political power for blacks, including Jim Crow laws, restrictive covenants, redlining, crime control, and community development.

The economic impact of white racial violence in the form of massacres, along with the effect of Jim Crow laws and other public policy, has been widespread and long-lasting. In the United States in 2019, the typical white family had a net worth of almost eight times the net worth of a typical black family. The destruction of black towns, homes, and businesses over nearly 100 years hampered black American's ability to amass financial assets – particularly housing – and to pass them down to their children and grandchildren to help build wealth. While race massacres are no longer mechanisms of racial suppression, the goals of the massacres – furthering white supremacy; winning the capitalist zero-sum competition for jobs, housing and other resources; and suppressing voting rights – have continued on in politics and public policy. As a result, the ability of former slaves to create intergenerational wealth and political power has been systematically destroyed.

After a question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by President Frantz.

Respectfully submitted,
G. Kenneth West, Ph.D.
Secretary

**Minutes of the 1,465th meeting of the SPHEX Club
October 7th, 2021**

President David Frantz called the 1,465th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 7th. This was a virtual meeting (Zoom).

Active members present were: Bradford, Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Delzingaro, Edwards, Foster, Frantz, Gillette, Hansen, Hendricks, Light, Manian, Marion, Payne, Roberts, Salmon, Schewel, Sigler, Stinnett, Tiller, West, Wilson,

Unable to Attend Were: Bateman, Doyle, Langhorne, Lucas, McDonald, Wodicka, Wright

Emeritus Member Present: Dr. Ken Garren

Sphex's special guests for the evening: Jacquie Glanz and Mary Hapala

Welcome to New Members:

Mike Bradford was introduced by Cham Light:

Mike Bradford was born and raised in Lynchburg, graduating from E.C. Glass and then obtaining a degree in Economics from Duke and an MBA from UNC-Chapel Hill. Returning to Lynchburg he embarked on a 34 year career in commercial banking with Central Fidelity and all of its successors by merger through Wells Fargo. Looking to make an impact in a different field, he enjoyed spending the last six years of his career as VP of Advancement at CVCC. Mike has served on many community and civic boards during his career and currently is a long term director for Centra Health. Mike and his wife Pam (also a Lynchburg native and banker) have three grown children living and working across the country.

Dr. Nina Salmon was introduced by Dr. Ken West:

Nina Salmon is a graduate of Randolph-Macon Woman's College. After college she married a wonderful teacher and coach, Jerry Salmon, and they moved into the house across the street from Patty and me on Huron Avenue. Nina earned her masters from the University of Lynchburg and her Ph.D. from Virginia Tech. She has taught at the University of Lynchburg since 1997. Nina teaches English and is the current director of Senior Symposium. Always on the move and growing, Nina studied at Sewanee Seminary and received ordination as an Episcopal priest. She currently serves as the part-time Associate for Youth and Families at St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Jerry and Nina have three adult sons, and they are now raising an "entitled" standard poodle named Grace.

Treasurer's Report – Marc Schewel

Those of you following the contentious negotiations in Congress regarding a proposed \$3.5 trillion reconciliation bill may be familiar with a provision that would allow the IRS to monitor bank accounts over \$600. Since the Sphex account currently stands at \$1293.56, guess what? I received a visit from an IRS agent, Mr. Hugh B. Ware. Here's how the conversation went.

Hugh: This Sphex account looks very suspicious to me.

Marc: Why? As you can see, Hugh, there's been no activity for two years.

Hugh: That's what's suspicious. Besides, the name of this organization is very disturbing.

Marc: And why is that? It's just an acronym: Science, Philosophy, History, Education, the X factor.

Hugh: Are you denying any association with your Mexican branch, also named Sphex, a secret drug smuggling operation with its own cultish acronym: Syndicate for the Preservation of Heroin Exporting? Its *patron* is the notorious David Francisco, known to torture rivals and enemies by ripping their hearts out. Even worse, in order to intimidate any others who might challenge his rule of terror, every violent death is dutifully recorded for public distribution by his loyal *asesor*, Carlos Ouest.

Mr. Schewel, what we have here is a serious case of Sphex trafficking. Someone from Lynchburg is shipping boxes of old Sphex Club papers to Guadalajara and someone from Guadalajara is shipping those boxes back filled with packages of pure heroin. What do you have to say to that?

Marc: What the heck have you been smoking?

Hugh: In fact, I am summoning you to appear in federal court before the Honorable Judge John Cook to testify in this matter.

President Frantz introduced Nancy Marion, our speaker for the evening:

Nancy Marion has been collecting old photos of Lynchburg since about 1999. Her digital collection contains more than 30,000 images of the area gathered from library and newspaper archives, city and agency collections, and private sources. She has posted many of these photos and maps on her website, LynchburgHistory.com, where they are available to view and download. She also writes a weekly column for the *News & Advance* called "Mystery Picture of the Week."

A native of Amherst County and graduate of Sweet Briar College, Nancy is an experienced graphic designer, having been a partner at The Design Group since 1977.

In 2003 she founded Blackwell Press to publish non-fiction books and the history magazine, *Lynch's Ferry*. In 2006 she compiled and published Gibson Hobbs' book, *The Canal on the James*, and in 2018 she revised and published a new version of *Hill City Trolleys* by Harold Cox. She has also worked closely with regional authors, designing and publishing books about places such as the Old City Cemetery, the Anne Spencer Garden, Virginia Episcopal School, Wintergreen, Hogtown, Elon, and Nelson County. She has published art books featuring local luminaries including Queena Stovall, Georgia Morgan, Brookie Abbot, Edward Beyer, Sarah Raessler, and Stanhope Johnson. She is an avid photographer as well, and has a remote pilot's license for aerial drone photography.

Nancy Marion, provided this abstract of her presentation entitled: "Telling Time."

Having been introduced to the concept of "histograms" by a neighbor, and then meeting Jacquie Glanz, the granddaughter of John Sparks, author of one of them, Nancy Marion became intrigued by these methods of charting history.

Basing her talk on the book, *Cartographies of Time* by Daniel Rosenberg and Anthony Grafton, and freely admitting no affinity for learning history or memorizing dates, Marion attempts to give a short overview of the history of time charts.

She begins with the Roman Christian scholar Eusebius, who developed a matrix to organize chronologies in the fourth century. The Eusebian model of charting history with empires or religions in parallel columns across the top and dates down the side became the standard for 1400 years.

Some genealogical trees, such as Hartmann Schedel's 15th century Nuremberg Chronicle, were created out of whole cloth to make patriarchs and rulers seem more legitimate by inventing ancestry reaching back to Noah. Later in the Chronicle, Schedel illustrated current events that had been published in newsletters, such as a naked witch riding a horse with the devil. (She commented that the tendency of modern media to spread false information is not a new concept.) The end of the Chronicle included events foretold in the Book of Revelation. Schedel gave readers a few blank pages between their own time and the Apocalypse to fill in with what he thought would be the short remaining history of the world.

Schedel was not alone in creating backstories for his patrons. Dominican theologian and con-man, Anniius of Viterbo, published a set of "ancient" texts tracing the lineage of the Borgia Pope Alexander VI and the Catholic kings of Spain to Isis and Osiris.

Legitimate chronologers sometimes faced more problems than fake ones. When Jean Rou published his first set of historical and genealogical tables of ancient history in the 1670s, he met great success. But when he published volume two on modern history, including the Reformation, it was so controversial that it was banned, and Rou had to flee to the Netherlands.

During the 1600s fine engraving emerged, along with inventive sizes and shapes, including pocket-sized 'cheat sheets,' circular charts, and 54-foot long chronologies that rolled into custom wooden cases.

In the 1700s Thomas Jeffreys published "A Chart of Universal History" that broke out of the Eusebian matrix by focusing on the larger temporal boundaries of events and empires. Joseph Priestley soon after published his own version but switched the axes so that time ran along the top and countries or empires on the vertical axis.

Cartographers got in on the act as well when Edward Quinn demonstrated the growth of historical knowledge with a series of maps of the world beginning with "The Deluge" (BC 2348, he says) showing only the Garden of Eden. Successive maps show the clouds gradually clearing away to reveal the known world at key moments in history (founding of Rome, the first Crusade, the empire of Kublai Kahn, discovery of America, etc.).

In America, chronologies became weapons in the struggle of Christians to convert the souls of Native Americans. A Catholic priest created a “visual catechism,” a pictogram relating stories in the Bible, including the Protestant Reformation. The wife of a Presbyterian missionary created her own “Protestant Ladder” to compete with the “Catholic Ladder,” showing in her version the martyrdom of Protestants, and the Pope as Antichrist falling into the flames of perdition.

In the 19th century, millennialists produced time charts predicting that the Apocalypse would occur in 1843. When that didn’t happen, they recalculated and produced new charts.

Mnemonic systems such as Mark Twain’s visual association drawings to remember English kings (hens for Henry, whale for William, etc.) were discussed.

The twentieth century works of John Sparks were shown, including his published (world history, religions, history of the universe) and unpublished (history of the arts) histograms.

Other creative methods of telling time included Olaf Stapledon’s timeline devised for his science-fiction book, *Last and First Men*; a giant sequoia tree section showing events since the birth of Mohammed in 570; and Buckminster Fuller’s chart showing the relative shrinking of the planet based on the speed of travel of the day, were displayed.

And lastly, she showed a couple of “timelines” she had created: a box of Lynchburg history containing accordion-fold versions of six panoramic views of Lynchburg at approximately 50-year intervals, and a “poodle-skirt” genealogical chart that she printed and folded into an accordion-fold book.

After a question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by President Frantz at 8:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
G. Kenneth West, Ph.D.
Secretary

Minutes of the 1,466th meeting of the SPHEX Club October 21st

President David Frantz called the 1,466th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 21st. This was a virtual meeting (Zoom).

Active members present were: Bradford, Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Doyle, Edwards, Frantz, Gillette, Light, Marion, Payne, Roberts, Schewel, Sigler, Stinnett, Tiller, West, Wilson, Wodicka, Wright.

Emeritus Members Present: Dr. Ken Garren

Unable to Attend Were: Bateman, Delzingaro, Foster, Hendricks, Langhorne, Lucas, Manian, McDonald.

SpheX's special guests for the evening: Brian Edwards (Dr. Edwards' husband), Jean Munford (Dr. Edwards' mother), Denise Spinner (Assistant to Superintendent Edwards), Leonard Payne

A summary of the October 7th minutes was read by the secretary, Dr. Ken West

The minutes for October 7th, 2021 were passed without amendment.

Treasurer's Report – Marc Schewel delivered Part II of his treasurer's report. See Part I in the October 7th Minutes.

Part II

Well, that really shook me up. As I might be facing a possible fine or jail time, the first question that came to mind is what to wear.

I decided to get some advice from some folks whose opinion I really respect.

First, I went to retired banker Mike Bradford. He said, "Marc, wear your best suit, so you will appear prosperous, important, and confident that you haven't done anything wrong."

Then I went to the esteemed attorney Cham Light. He said, "Marc, wear your oldest, most ragged tee shirt and dungarees. Maybe the judge will be sympathetic if you look destitute."

Now I was really confused. I decided to consult the distinguished former professor of Counseling and Human Development at the University of Lynchburg, Dr. Ken West. I explained my dilemma.

He said, "Marc, this situation reminds me of the young virgin who came to me a few years ago on the eve of her wedding. She had asked her mother what she should wear that night. Her mother said, 'Wear a long flannel nightgown.' Then she had gone to her sister, who told her to wear a short, sheer negligee. Finally, she came to me with the same question."

"And what did you tell her?" I asked. "'My dear,'" said Dr. West, "'It doesn't matter what you wear . . . [See the minutes for the punchline, Marc advised] You're going to get screwed.'"

President Frantz introduced our speaker for the evening: Dr. Crystal Edwards

Dr. Crystal M. Edwards began her career as a high school science teacher in 1987 and has been a teacher leader, math and science supervisor, cheerleading coach, curriculum, director, assistant band director, school administrator, assistant superintendent, and superintendent. She currently serves as the Lynchburg City Schools' Superintendent and teaches a leadership course for the Doctor of Healthcare Administration program offered at Virginia University of Lynchburg. She earned a B.S. in Secondary Education (Penn State), an M.S. in Chemistry (Rutgers), and an Ed.D in Educational Leadership, Management and Policy (Seton Hall).

One of the tenets of Dr. Edwards' leadership is giving back and developing the next generation of educational leaders. She serves as a mentor for aspiring administrators and new superintendents. More recently, Dr. Edwards has spent considerable time focusing on equity and inclusivity. In 2016, Dr. Edwards was invited to Sliema, Malta as the keynote speaker on educational equity for the Unlocking Learning Potential Summit. As a part of the 2019 VSBA Fall Conference, Dr. Edwards presented a workshop for superintendents and school board members entitled *Confronting the "Unspeakables," Let's Talk About That*, a look at inequities in schools. She also serves on the boards of the YMCA of Central Virginia and the Lynchburg chapter of the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities. In 2019, Dr. Edwards was appointed by Governor Northam to the Virginia Commission on African American History Education.

Dr. Edwards is happily married to Brian Edwards, owner and CEO of Serenity Property Management LLC. They have five children, Robyn (VCU grad - kindergarten teacher), Trey (William Paterson University grad - marketing), Miracle (self-starter – business management), Malcolm (soon to be a University of Lynchburg business graduate), and Laila (senior in high school). They have one adorable 3-year-old granddaughter who is the real boss of the family. When Dr. Edwards is not working, teaching, or attending school and community events, she enjoys doing outdoor activities such as hiking, bike riding, running half marathons, and simply relaxing in the pontoon on the lake.

Dr. Edwards provided this abstract of her presentation entitled: "The Power of Three Little Letters"

The Power of Three Little Letters was an exploration of an over 50-year journey that Dr. Edwards has had with the letters C, R and T. The journey began incredibly early with a simplistic view of the act of tracing the letters C, R, and T as a toddler. A deeper look at this mundane experience of tracing letters revealed analogous examples of inequities that exist today based on race, gender, and economic status. While the subtle differences between uppercase and lowercase Cc, Rr, and Tt may be acknowledged by some, and overlooked by others, these differences seldom result in discourse that necessitates change. Similarly, several of the struggles for equality and equity over the past century have faced a similar fate.

The journey continued with a stop during the middle and high school years where Dr. Edwards was introduced to the scientific version of CRT, the cathode ray tube. With the help of a few amazing science teachers and a curiosity about the structure of the atom, Dr. Edwards

studied physicist J.J. Thompson's Plum Pudding Model and his early experiments with the cathode ray tube (CRT) that led to the discovery of the electron. She became fascinated with the use of CRTs in computer screens, TVs, radar screens, and oscilloscopes. Hooked on STEM, Dr. Edwards pursued a career in teaching science and mentoring young women and people of color.

Determined to make a difference and encourage more minority students to pursue STEM careers, Dr. Edwards continued her journey and honed her practice by incorporating the rich CRT pedagogies in the form of Gloria Ladson-Billings' Culturally Relevant Teaching, Geneva Gay's Culturally Responsive Teaching, and Gholdy Muhammad's Historically Responsive Literacy. These educational CRTs dominated much of her professional career. Each of these frameworks, have at their core a purposeful and intentional focus on and incorporation of culture as a necessary foundation for student success. Acknowledging the legitimacy of the cultural heritages of different ethnic groups and their contributions to society is essential as a means of fostering student identity, skill, and intellectual development. Further, each of these frameworks teaches students to understand power, privilege, social justice, and oppression with the goal to have the agency to build a better world for all.

After spending over 30 years in education using CRT pedagogies to develop criticality skills in children, Dr. Edwards was introduced to yet another CRT, critical race theory. Unlike the previous CRT experiences which brought enlightenment and hope, this new CRT was shrouded in a cloud of divisiveness and despair. Critical race theory which evolved in the 1970s on university campuses to help law students think critically about the impact of racism on the legal system, soon became a political weapon aimed directly at public school systems. At a time when schools had thriving diversity, equity and inclusion programs that were built on the tenets of culturally relevant and responsive teaching (CRT), extremists accused school officials of delegitimizing whiteness, attempting to rewrite history, and teaching white students that they are inherently racist. Across the country, school board meetings erupted with citizens demanding answers to the CRT question. CRT even carved a space for debate during the 2021 gubernatorial election in Virginia.

As much as critical race theory dominated headlines, the next stop on the journey revealed that there was something more powerful demanding the media spotlight, the COVID-19 virus. With the virus came a new CRT in schools, the COVID Response Team. These new CRTs were essential to the operation of a school and without them schools would struggle to stay open. Teachers, administrators, nurses, support staff, and HR professionals were drafted to become members of the CRT. Apart from the school nurses, few educators and support staff were trained in addressing the spread of this infectious disease; yet they were expected to implement timely and effective mitigation strategies, conduct contact tracing, manage quarantines, and administer vaccines and booster shots. And while the CRTs devoted time, talent and energy to these new duties, communities questioned schools as to the "extra" efforts they would put in place to mitigate learning loss.

Despite the challenges and struggles we faced with the most recent CRT experiences, the last stop on this journey provided us with our "why we do this work," and that is simply because kids deserve it.

After a question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by President Frantz at 8:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
G. Kenneth West, Ph.D.
Secretary

**Minutes of the 1,467th meeting of the SPHEX Club
November 4, 2021**

President David Frantz called the 1,467th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, November 4th. This was a virtual meeting (Zoom).

Active members present were: Bradford, Cyphert, Dawson, Doyle, Edwards, Frantz, Hansen, Light, Lucas, Marion, McDonald, Morison-Shetlar, Payne, Roberts, Salmon, Sigler, Stinnett, Tiller, West, Wodicka, Wright.

Emeritus Member Present: Dr. Ken Garren

Unable to Attend Were: Bateman, Cook, Delaney, Delzingaro, Foster, Gillette, Hendricks, Langhorne, Manian, Schewel, Wilson.

Sphex's special guests for the evening: Al and Bettye Chambers, Dr. Allison Jablonski

New member Billy Hansen was introduced by Kim Payne.

Billy Hansen has an undergraduate degree in Economics from the University of Virginia and a Master of Business Administration from the University of Lynchburg. Billy is the principal of Hansen Realty Advisors, a real estate company in Lynchburg that provides commercial and residential brokerage, appraisal, and consulting services. Billy has earned the MAI designation from the Appraisal Institute. He also holds a Certified General Appraiser License and a Real Estate Broker License from the State of Virginia. Billy has also taught Real Estate Appraisal and Personal Finance as an adjunct professor at Longwood University. Billy has written a regular commercial real estate column for Lynchburg Business Magazine for several years. He is active in the community and has served on many boards including the Board of Equalization for the City of Lynchburg, Jones Memorial Library, Downtown Lynchburg Association, Virginia Commonwealth Chapter of the Appraisal Institute, and Lynchburg Morning Rotary Club. Billy also hosts The Lynchburg Neighborhood Podcast, a public oral history project that seeks to help neighbors feel more connected to one another and to their community.

New member and President of the University of Lynchburg, Dr. Alison Morrison-Shetlar, was introduced by the University's past President, Dr. Ken Garren. The following presents several highlights provided by Sabita Manian.

On August 1, 2020, Alison Morrison-Shetlar became the 11th President at the University of Lynchburg. As the university moves towards development of a new strategic plan, three areas of distinction have emerged: Leadership Development, Innovation and Collaboration, and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. These areas are already in the DNA of the University and will be expanded and inclusive of our greater Lynchburg community. Morrison-Shetlar is also proposing the development of a comprehensive campaign that will focus on increasing the number of student scholarships, seeking across campus programmatic support, and funding for renovating the Hobbs-Sigler Natural Science Building and Athletics facilities.

Dr. Morrison-Shetlar came to the University of Lynchburg from Western Carolina University where she was Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. While leading Western Carolina's academic program through a time of expansion, she also served in other capacities including 18 months as Interim Chancellor and nine months as Interim Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Engagement.

Dr. Morrison-Shetlar also has held leadership roles as Dean of Elon College of Arts and Sciences at Elon University, Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Studies at the University of Central Florida, and Director of Faculty Development at Georgia Southern University.

Dr. Morrison-Shetlar brings a wealth of international experience to the presidential post. A native of Scotland, Morrison-Shetlar earned a bachelor's degree in Biology and Chemistry, and a Doctorate in Biomedical Science from Dundee College of Technology (now Abertay University).

She was the founding chair of the Molecular Biology unit at the Max Planck Institute in Dortmund, Germany, and a teacher-scholar at Bochum University in Bochum, Germany, and at the Kennedy Institute of Rheumatology in London.

The Minutes for the October 21st, 2021 meeting were approved without modification.

President Frantz introduced Travis McDonald, our speaker for the evening:

Travis McDonald is a native of Galveston, Texas, an island on the third coast. He received a degree in American history from the University of Texas in Austin and received his Master's degree in architectural history from the University of Virginia's School of Architecture, which has just awarded him their Distinguished Alumni Award for 2021. Travis was hired in 1989 to start the restoration of Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest where he still serves as the Director of Architectural Restoration. He formerly worked for the Chief Historical Architect of the National Park Service where he was awarded a Special Achievement Award. He began directing museum quality restorations at Colonial Williamsburg. Awards for his work at Poplar Forest include The Architecture Medal for Virginia Service, by the Virginia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, and a Virginia Senate Commendation for Preserving the Heritage of Virginia. He serves on several advisory boards including the Historic Preservation Committee that oversees Thomas Jefferson's buildings at the University of Virginia. Travis recently wrote an architectural history of Poplar Forest that will be published by the University of Virginia Press in 2022. He is working on a second book that will document the 30-year restoration of Poplar Forest. Travis is married to Denise McDonald who is the Executive Director of the Old City Cemetery and the proud father of two married daughters, one of whom is expecting the first grandchild around Christmas time.

Our presenter, Travis McDonald, provided this abstract of his presentation entitled "Oh Rats!"

In 1991 while investigating the evolutionary architectural changes to Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest retreat Travis McDonald found the first of many rats' nests in the hollow walls and floors. Since the house had burned in 1845 and was rebuilt in 1846, this material, which spanned 1847 to the 1970s, was from the Hutter and Watts families occupancy. While initially examining the

material (wood, paper, fabric, fruit, nuts, metal) for material culture clues of what the humans had done in and around the house (food, letters, newspapers, furniture, clothes, music, games, crops), questions arose regarding the collectors- the rats. Research on rats and their behavior and their nests led to nothing but laboratory rats and outdoor rats that lived in burrows. Information regarding rats living inside buildings and how they constructed their nests could not be found. Why did they take certain things? How did these things get arranged in the nests? Were different parts of a nest used for different purposes? What was the use of other materials that seemingly had no practical function? The questions pushed the boundaries of ethology (study of animal behavior) and whether rats had a culture as well as a society. Rats' nests have been useful for certain architectural restorations where they have provided clues for restored features or furnishings. While rats are venerated in some ancient and modern cultures, they have more often been made into cute mice stories in children's books, movies, and on television. In literature they have been infamously portrayed as themselves. Rats have been responsible for many human deaths and food losses. They arrived in America with the first settlers and are one of the most wide-spread and recognizable animals on earth. Farmers and home owners have over the centuries tried various methods to trap and exterminate them, including modern gadgets that are listed in current 2021 Christmas catalogs. The research and academic paper the author wrote in 2005 (*Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*) are still the only known published works on this subject.

After a question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by President Frantz at 8:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
G. Kenneth West, Ph.D.
Secretary

**Minutes of the 1,468th meeting of the SPHEX Club
November 18, 2021**

President David Frantz called the 1,468th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, November 18th. This was a virtual meeting (Zoom).

Active members present were: Bradford, Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Delzingaro, Edwards, Foster, Frantz, Hansen, Hendricks, Manian, Marion, McDonald, Morrison-Shetlar, Payne, Roberts, Salmon, Schewel, Sigler, Tiller, West, Wilson, Wright.

Emeritus Members Present: Dr. Ken Garren

Unable to Attend Were: Bateman, Doyle, Gillette, Langhorne, Light, Lucas, Stinnett, Wodicka

SpheX's special guests for the evening: Jacquie Glanz

The Minutes for November 4th were approved without modification.

Membership Decisions: Dr. Allison Jablonski and Michael Elliot will decide on membership in January.

Next Year's Officers will be selected early in 2022.

Treasurer's Report: Mr. Schewel declined to give a report in order to afford the speaker more time.

President Frantz introduced Marc Schewel our speaker for the evening:

Marc Schewel is a native of Lynchburg, Va. He graduated from E.C. Glass High School in 1965 and from Washington and Lee University in 1969. Except for a brief teaching tenure at Appomattox High School, Mr. Schewel has worked all of his adult life at Schewel Furniture Company, where he is currently President. Schewel Furniture Company is a retail furniture chain with 50 stores in Virginia, North Carolina, and West Virginia. Mr. Schewel, his brother, and his son are the fourth and fifth generations to own and operate this family business which will celebrate its 125th Anniversary in 2022.

Mr. Schewel is involved in numerous community service activities. He is the past Chair of the United Way of Central Virginia, past Chair of New Vistas School, past Chair of the YMCA, past Chair of the National Conference for Community and Justice, past Chair of the Salvation Army Advisory Board, past Chair of the Family Alliance, and past President of the National Home Furnishings Association. He currently serves on the Boards of Parkview Community Mission, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Virginia, the Virginia Legal Aid Society, and Randolph College.

Mr. Schewel is the father of three children: David, Sara, and Matthew, and of two stepdaughters, Kali and Adrienne. He has eight grandchildren: Lia, Ari, Ana Maria, Ben, Frank, Jackson,

Abigail and Bennett. In his spare time Mr. Schewel enjoys exercise, reading, and duplicate bridge.

Our presenter, Marc Schewel, provided this abstract of his presentation entitled: *The Three Trillion Dollar Trough*

The title of Mr. Schewel's paper, "The Three Trillion Dollar Trough," approximates the \$3.65 trillion spent by the U.S. in 2018 on health care, a number which is now closer to \$4 trillion and which equates to \$11,000 per person or at least twice the amounts reported by all other high-income countries.

Despite this inordinate spending, Americans experience worse health outcomes than their international peers. They have a lower life expectancy, more suicides, a fifteen percent higher prevalence of chronic illness, twice the incidence of obesity, fifty percent more hospitalizations for diabetes and hypertension, and the highest rate of amenable or premature deaths from conditions which are considered preventable.

Mr. Schewel reviewed the various sectors of the health care industry feeding at the trough.

Strategies implemented by hospitals to enhance their revenue have resulted in room rates three to ten times higher than those in comparable countries. Hospitals employ coding specialists who train doctors and nurses to amplify the severity and complexity of diagnoses in order to obtain higher insurance reimbursements. They charge patients and insurers extra simply for the use of their facilities and equipment. They credential themselves as trauma centers so as to become eligible for substantial fees even when emergency victims are not admitted. Non-profit hospitals save billions every year in tax exemptions which far exceed their expenditures on charity care and community benefit.

Specialty physicians earn twice the salaries of those in countries like Germany. Overall, twenty-seven percent fall in the upper one percent of all wage earners, which is higher than the percent of attorneys and corporate executives in that category. Professional medical groups spent hundreds of millions every year for two decades lobbying Congress to defer Medicare reimbursement caps until they were permanently lifted in 2015.

Pharmaceutical companies have systematically manipulated patent law and FDA policies to enhance their products' values and boost their profits. In 2009 Proctor and Gamble prevented a generic of the colitis drug mesalamine from coming to the market by patenting two "new improved" versions. In 2010 Purdue Pharma extended the life of its patent on its billion-dollar pain medicine Oxycontin by introducing a shatter-resistant substitute whose purported safety enabled it to prohibit the manufacture and sale of a generic crushable pill. The manufacture of generic formulations of insulin and the popular contraceptive pill Loestrin 24 was stymied by lengthy law suits and bribes disguised as partnership payments.

Further price escalation comes from pharmacy benefit managers, intermediaries who purchase drugs from manufacturers, sell them to pharmacies, and invoice employers' health plans as prescriptions are filled at five to twenty times their cost.

Medical devices also carry a huge markup. A handful of manufacturers monopolizes the market, and realizes gross profit margins as high as seventy-five percent. Stretching between them and the implant recipient is a chain of hands that includes a broker, a distributor, a salesman, and the hospital, each of whom pockets his share.

The final beast feeding at the health care trough is the insurance industry. "The use of insurance to fund nominal and routine as well as large and expected expenses is a major cause of health care's huge cost," says David Goldhill. Insurance promotes moral hazard – the tendency for people to make less careful decisions when risk is minimized – by insulating the consumer from the high cost of his care. Yet he, like everyone, is paying hidden consequences for his safety net: lower wages, higher retail prices, high premiums to cover co-workers and to offset Medicare discounts to providers.

Mr. Schewel presented three possible solutions for the health care cost problem.

Capitation – whereby providers receive fixed lump-sum payments to manage population health – he rejected as impractical, as it requires significant attitudinal and behavioral changes from hospitals, physicians, and patients.

Regulation through the legislative process he also rejected, citing the failure of the negotiations surrounding the Affordable Care in 2010 to yield any meaningful participation from the device, hospital, insurance, or pharmaceutical industries, who were expected to gain twenty million new customers.

A device tax, collected for four years, eventually succumbed to intense lobbying from the manufacturers. Similar efforts suppressed measures designed to reduce hospital reimbursements: a provision to cut Medicaid's Disproportionate Share payments; the formation of an Independent Payment Advisory Board to implement cost-cutting policies; and an attempt to tie Medicare payment updates to a productivity measurement.

As for the insurance industry, a premium tax had to be repealed when it was discovered that the insurers weren't paying it; their customers were. While open market insurance was initially successful, primarily due to government subsidies for low income members, by 2020 the new coverage requirements – no lifetime or preexisting conditions limitations and the inclusion of emergency, maternity, mental health, and preventive services – had doubled both costs and deductibles, and driven away many customers. Also doubling was the cost of the plan to the federal government, which rose from \$21 billion to \$45 billion annually.

The pharmaceutical industry was able to whittle a \$13 billion a year demand from Congress down to \$8, thanks to the work of Billy Tauzin, CEO of their manufacturer's association, and a \$70 million contribution to two of their political action committees. Also falling by the wayside were other potential savings: prescription drug importation; negotiated drug prices; cuts in Medicaid payments; and the moratorium on biologic patents.

Mr. Schewel endorsed universal health insurance – either the German or Canadian plan – as the best solution to the health care cost problem. He said the U.S. is halfway there, considering that the entire population's health insurance is either paid by the government through Medicare, Medicaid, and the Veterans' Administration or subsidized directly through credits or the tax deductibility of employer funded plans. He claimed universal care offers more choice, produces better outcomes, and costs much less than the current system.

Mr. Schewel is not sanguine about the prospects for universal health insurance in this country. He said domination of the industry by corporate power, Congress's lack of courage and political will, and indifference and complacency on the part of both employers and employees effectively forecloses any hope for meaningful change.

Mr. Schewel concluded his talk by providing his own prescription for avoiding the health care system altogether.

After a question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by President Frantz at 9:18.

Respectfully submitted,
G. Kenneth West, Ph.D.
Secretary

**Minutes of the 1,469th meeting of the SPHEX Club
January 6, 2022**

President David Frantz called the 1469th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, January 7th. This was a virtual meeting (Zoom).

Active members present were: Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Delzingaro, Doyle, Edwards, Foster, Frantz, Gillette, Hendricks, Langhorne, Light, Lucas, Morrison-Shetlar, Payne, Roberts, Schewel, Sigler, Stinnett, Tiller, West, Wilson, Wodicka, Wright.

Emeritus Member Present: Dr. Ken Garren

Unable to Attend Were:

Bateman, Bradford, Hansen, Manian, Marion, McDonald, Salmon

Sphex's special guest for the evening: John Hughes IV

President Frantz introduced Dr. Reid Wodicka our speaker for the evening:

Dr. Reid Wodicka was appointed Deputy City Manager for the City of Lynchburg on June 13, 2018. Prior to his service in the City, Dr. Wodicka served as Deputy County Administrator for nearby Bedford County and Town Manager for the Towns of Woodstock and Elkton in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia.

A graduate of E. C. Glass High School, Dr. Wodicka was born and raised in the City of Lynchburg. He later graduated from James Madison University in Harrisonburg with a BS in Public Policy and Administration. He continued at JMU to earn a Master of Public Administration degree while serving as the Town Manager in Elkton. After several years of working in local government, he earned a PhD in Public Policy with a concentration in Urban and Regional Development from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. He is currently pursuing the Executive Master of Science in Cities at the London School of Economics.

Dr. Wodicka serves as a member of a number of local community boards and organizations. He is also a member of the Virginia Local Government Management Association and the Government Finance Officers Association.

Our presenter, Dr. Reid Wodicka, provided this abstract of his presentation entitled: "Wait, what happened?"

Dr. Wodicka began his talk, entitled "Wait, what happened", with a request for the Club to remember the number 68 throughout the discussion. This statistic represents the percentage of children in Virginia who have been released from juvenile detention or locked corrections facilities and are reconvicted within two years of their release, the first 50 percent of which recidivate within the first year. The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of the challenges facing the juvenile justice system throughout the United States, and with particular

focus on Virginia, finishing with a celebration of some preliminary accomplishments in Lynchburg's juvenile services in order to better serve children and the community as a whole.

Over the last 120 years, there have been three phases of the development of the juvenile justice system. First, the system was very individual-specific, with focus on addressing the unique needs of each child. While that worked in some cases, the considerable discretion of judges and prosecutors led to miscarriages of justice in the form of harsh punishments for minor crimes. Beginning in the late 1960s, the system became more focused on requisite due process reform to ensure uniformity in decision-making. By the 1990s, similar to national conversations surrounding criminal justice, which encouraged harsher punishments, the juvenile justice system became far more punitive and far less focused on rehabilitation of children who had committed crimes.

At the same time, there has been a movement to develop a stronger understanding of the *reason* that some children engage in criminal acts, particularly violent criminal acts. Dr. Wodicka discussed the impact that brain development has on decision-making in adolescence and how those realities should moderate how we choose to address criminal behaviors. But why some children engage in these behaviors and others do not is really the more interesting question. While there are many sociological explanations that discuss criminal acts, Dr. Wodicka focused on the impacts that significant psychological traumas in childhood have on the structure of the brain and how those traumas impact the child's later behaviors. There is a clear connection between those children who have extensive psychological trauma in childhood and those who, untreated, go on to commit serious criminal acts as teenager.

Unfortunately, the juvenile justice system throughout the United States is poorly equipped to address significant childhood trauma and to recognize the children that need significant mental health care. In fact, the de-institutionalization of human services may have even made it more difficult to adequately address the serious mental health challenges that many of our children are experiencing. Sadly, most children involved in the juvenile justice system throughout the United States have experienced dramatic traumatic experiences in their homes or in their communities.

Virginia is no different and a recent Virginia Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) report outlined some of the significant challenges that are facing Virginia's juvenile justice system. In total there are approximately 3,000 children involved in the juvenile justice system at any one time – 20% of which are housed in locked detention or correctional facilities. The vast majority of these children are between the ages of 14 and 17, which is when the brain is in its most vulnerable state. Unfortunately, the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice, through the JLARC study, found that in the majority of locked juvenile facilities in Virginia, no evidence-based practices designed to reduce recidivism were employed, nor had they evaluated the impact of any program that they did employ. Instead, most facilities are staffed by undertrained employees who have little to no training in dealing with children who have experienced significant trauma. So, we are taking children who have experienced significant trauma and warehousing them in an inherently traumatic place with people who are not trained to address those problems. Clearly, the system has not focused on rehabilitation.

We are proud that in Lynchburg, after it came to light that there were very significant challenges in our local system, we have been working to transform how Lynchburg manages

juvenile detention. This was done by providing evidence-based interventions both to children and to staff to make the time we have with the children in care be the most productive possible, with assistance from throughout city government and the community. Most importantly, we are changing our question from: “What’s wrong with you?” to “What happened to you?”, and starting our intervention from there. While it is too early to determine the impacts of our work, we are seeing some very good early results.

The children in our care are not beyond rehabilitation, and if we are focused on addressing the true explanation for their behavior, we will make a significant improvement to their lives, as well as to the overall health and safety of our community.

After a question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by President Frantz.

Respectfully submitted,

G. Kenneth West, Ph.D.
Secretary

**Minutes of the 1,470th meeting of the SPHEX Club
January 20, 2022**

President David Frantz called the 1,470th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, January 20th. This was a virtual meeting (Zoom).

Active members present were: Bradford, Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Doyle, Edwards, Elliott, Foster, Frantz, Gillette, Jablonski, Light, Lucas, Manian, Marion, McDonald, Morrison-Shetlar, Payne, Roberts, Salmon, Schewel, Sigler, Stinnett, Tiller, West, Wilson, Wodicka, Wright.

Emeritus Member Present: Dr. Ken Garren

Unable to Attend Were: Bateman, Delzingaro, Hansen, Hendricks, Jablonski.

Sphex's special guest for the evening: Maria Roberts

New Member, Dr. Michael Elliott was in attendance: Michael Elliot is Senior Vice President and Chief Transformation Officer at Centra Health.

The minutes for Sphex's January 6th meeting were approved without modification.

President Frantz reminded the membership of the value of the Sphex tradition of contacting the presenter if one is unable to attend a presentation.

President Frantz also reported sending Sphex's "Resolution of Appreciation and Respect for Dr. James Martin Elson (1932-2021)" to his daughter Elizabeth Elson who replied with deep appreciation.

Marc Schewel presented the following Treasurer's Report:

Ever since my Sphex presentation on the Health Care industry back in November, strange things have been happening to me.

After nine hours in a car with my son, his wife, and their three children and spending Thanksgiving weekend with nine other family members at a crowded resort in Bedford Springs, Pennsylvania, I came home with a serious head cold.

Just in case you're wondering, I did test myself for Covid – jamming a swab $\frac{3}{4}$ " up each nostril and rotating five times for fifteen seconds – with a negative result.

The cold lingers off and on for three weeks, during which I have a regularly scheduled annual check-up with my internist. With a cough and congestion, I manage to get past the gatekeeper at the entrance to his office, and am ushered back to an examination room. During my interview with a nurse, I am asked if I want to get a flu shot. "Sure," I say, "but I don't know if I should have it with this cold."

“Let me check with the doctor,” she says. Five minutes later she rushes back with a panic-stricken look on her face, and exclaims, “You’re not allowed to be in here,” and shoos me out like a pesky fly.

The doctor calls me while I’m sitting in my car, and tells me that, in order for him to examine me, I need to take a Covid test. “Fine,” I say, until he informs me I won’t get the result for two hours. “I don’t have Covid, and I can’t wait two hours,” I say. “I’ll come back when this cold is gone.”

My cold abates. I meet with the doctor, receive a clean bill of health, attend a party on December 23rd, and celebrate the day after Christmas with a few friends. But on the evening of December 27th, I start feeling sick again.

The next morning I subject myself to another test, and this time when I look at the test card after the requisite fifteen minute wait, I see two parallel pink lines staring back at me. I didn’t have Covid before, but I have it now.

I’m happy to report that my symptoms were no worse than a bad head cold.

Now, what does this have to do with the treasurer’s report?

During my quarantine I receive a letter from the Bank of the James advising me that the Sphex Club account has been closed due to lack of activity. This is very strange. Why hasn’t the bank noticed this inactivity for the past two years? Is it possible that the bank found out I was ill, and perhaps jumped to the conclusion that, well, I’m dead?

I need to find someone trustworthy who can attest to my identity and vitality. I look over the Sphex roster, and see it’s replete with a host of suspicious doctors, lawyers, and professors. I finally light on one member whose commanding presence and resonant tone of voice can never be questioned: Dennis Roberts. Dennis is kind enough to accompany me to the bank, vouch for me, and help me get our account reopened – where we discover the balance to be the same as it was two years ago: \$1293.56.

President Frantz introduced The Rev. Dennis Roberts our speaker for the evening:

Dennis Roberts is a native of Rural Retreat, Virginia. He graduated in 1983 from Washington & Lee University with a B.S. in Business Administration and Accounting. He then earned a Master of Divinity degree from the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. He served congregations in Frankfurt, Germany, and Harrisonburg, Virginia, before coming to Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Lynchburg in January 1991. In Lynchburg, he has served on the board and as president of Interfaith Outreach Association. He currently is a member of the United Way Campaign Cabinet. He is also on the boards of the Lynchburg Chapter, Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities and the Lynchburg Community Action Group (LynCAG).

Dennis and his wife, Maria, are the parents of two daughters.

(Secretary’s Note: During the Covid pandemic that in March will stretch over two years of Sphex presentations, The Rev. Dennis Roberts provided links that allowed all active members, emeritus members and guests to listen, watch and interact virtually with each Sphex presenter. In addition, Dennis Roberts tirelessly and patiently coached each member that had never presented virtually and needed help understanding how to best proceed. Speaking for the entire membership of Sphex, we so greatly appreciate the outstanding work that The Rev. Dennis Roberts has done for the Sphex Club, its presenters and membership. Dr. Ken West, Secretary)

Our presenter, The Reverend Dennis Roberts, provided this abstract of his presentation entitled: “Witch Hunt”.

The term “witch hunt” has been used frequently in recent years to dismiss the ever-growing list of accusations, outrages, scandals, and unfolding saga of potential criminal offenses associated with the Trump administration. The phrase piqued a curiosity about the *real* thing: the witch craze and deadly witch hunts of the early modern European era, roughly from 1450 to 1750, with a focus on the Germanic regions of western Europe.

The Brocken mountain in north-central Germany figures prominently in “Witches’ Night” legends as the location for the annual April 30-May 1 fly-in to commune with the Devil in a bacchanalian orgy. The witches’ revelry is referenced by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe in *Faust*, Part I.

Historian Brian Levack explains that early modern Europeans used the word “witchcraft” to describe the practice of maleficent magic and/or the alleged relationship that existed between witches and the Devil. The combination of black magic and diabolism made witches not simply felons but heretics and apostates who could be executed for their crimes. There is no scholarly consensus on why the great European witch-hunt took place, but it is “attributed, in whole or in large part, to the Reformation, the Counter-Reformation, the Inquisition, the use of judicial torture, the wars of religion, the religious zeal of the clergy, the rise of the modern state, the development of capitalism, a series of agricultural crises, the widespread use of narcotics, changes in medical thought, social and cultural conflict, an attempt to wipe out paganism, the need of ruling elites to distract the masses, opposition to birth control, the spread of syphilis, and the hatred of women.”

The paper then explored the religious dimension and hatred of women in more detail. While there may not be a causal relationship between religious reforms taking place at the time, it is certainly true that forces unleashed by the Reformation and Counter-Reformation did serve as a catalyst for witch hunting in both Roman Catholic and Protestant areas. Statistically, witchcraft prosecutions were more likely to occur in areas where there was more religious conflict.

Historian Anne Barstow details how patriarchy and misogyny helped fuel the witch hunt movement, writing that of the approximately 100,000 people executed under the guise of “witch hunts” from 1450 to 1750, most (80-90%) were women. She continues, “...women were accused primarily by men, tried by male juries, burned to death by male executioners—while being prayed over by male confessors.” The stories of Walpurga Hausmannin and Elisabeth Strupp, executed in 1587 and 1599 respectively, are examples of a recurring theme: the victim is almost always female, old, poor, illiterate, and widowed, often falling prey to the Devil because of sexual desire and economic need. She is a lower-class female judged by the male oligarchy of her town. Her execution will be a brutal spectacle, often with sexual violence.

Even though the oppression of women had a long history before the early modern European period, the witch hunt era appears to be the first time that women were criminalized as a group. Their vulnerability to mass persecution was proven, their alleged propensity for evil dramatized. The lengths to which men in power would go in order to control women became more violent, more public, and more organized. The public execution of witches was a powerful way to keep women in their place.

Intimidation is certainly a factor in all centuries, in all places. Such intimidation – the scapegoating of women for the ills of society, the “ethnic cleansing” of independent women, the desire of some men to control women’s bodies and reproductive health – continues to influence our culture today. Violence against women and girls is one of the more prevalent human rights violations in the world, knowing no social, economic, or national boundaries. Women who challenge the patriarchal order are often assailed, including in our own country and community.

Today, one has to wonder if the repetitive use of the term “witch hunt” is *more* than a throw-away line. What if it is an intentional dog whistle to further demonize women and subconsciously unleash misogynistic forces, just as racism and xenophobia have been subtly validated with a wink and a nod in recent years? Human rights in general, and women’s rights in particular, are under attack – whether by populist forces desperate to gain power, religious forces enmeshed in unholy alliances with the powers that be, or authoritarian governments eager to maintain and extend their power.

After a question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by President Frantz at 8:45.

Respectfully submitted,
G. Kenneth West, Ph.D.
Secretary

**A Resolution of Appreciation and Respect
for
Dr. James Martin Elson (1932-2021)**

Whereas Dr. James Martin Elson was a respected teacher of music and administrator in higher education before coming to Lynchburg:

Whereas he was a retired Colonel of the United States Army and was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal:

Whereas since Dr. Elson came to Lynchburg as Executive Director of the Academy of Music Theater, he has been an enthusiastic and productive participant in the cultural life of the community:

Whereas he served as Executive Vice President of the Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation from 1988 until 2000:

Whereas James Elson authored an informative and entertaining history of the first two-hundred years of Lynchburg:

Whereas our colleague Jim Elson was a devoted member of the Sphex Club from 1997 until his death:

Whereas he served as Secretary of the Club for several years and strengthened it by reminding and encouraging members regarding the responsibilities of membership:

Whereas Jim Elson's notable presentations, wit and love of history are and will continue to be missed by the Sphex Club, now therefore be it

Resolved that the members of the Sphex Club express their heartfelt appreciation for the outstanding membership of Dr. James Martin Elson, their deep sorrow at his death, and their support, condolences and best wishes for his family.



**Minutes of the 1,471st meeting of the SPHEX Club
February 3, 2022**

President David Frantz called the 1,471st meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 3rd. This was a virtual meeting (Zoom).

Active members present were: Bradford, Cook, Cyphert, Delaney, Doyle, Edwards, Foster, Frantz, Hendricks, Light, Lucas, Manian, Marion, Payne, Roberts, Salmon, Sigler, Stinnett, Tiller, West, Wilson, Wright.

Unable to Attend Were: Bateman, Dawson, Delzingaro, Elliott, Gillette, Hansen, Jablonski, McDonald, Morrison-Shetlar, Schewel, and Wodicka.

Sphex's special guests for the evening: Chris Webb, Francie Webb

The minutes for January 20th were approved without modification

Resolution Honoring The Rev. Dennis Roberts:

President Frantz presented the following resolution honoring The Rev. Dennis Roberts for his service during the pandemic. The resolution was passed unanimously:

WHEREAS: During the Covid pandemic that in March will stretch over two years of Sphex presentations, The Rev. Dennis Roberts provided links that allowed all active members, emeritus members and guests to listen, watch and interact virtually with each Sphex presenter,

WHEREAS: Dennis Roberts tirelessly and patiently coached each member who had never presented virtually and needed help understanding how to best proceed,

And WHEREAS: The Rev. Dennis Roberts enabled the Club to cast secret ballots virtually for the induction of new members,

BE IT RESOLVED, The membership of Sphex, express their appreciation and thanks for the outstanding work that The Rev. Dennis Roberts has done for the Sphex Club, its presenters and membership.

President Frantz introduced Katie Webb Cyphert our speaker for the evening:

Katie Webb Cyphert was born in Fort Sill, Oklahoma to two native Virginians, and moved to Lynchburg when she was two. Katie attended school in Lynchburg from kindergarten to her graduation from E.C. Glass in 1998. In 2002 she received her Bachelors of Science in Psychology-Special Education from Lynchburg College (now the University of Lynchburg).

After 6 years as a Special Education teacher at E.C. Glass, Katie ventured into financial services for 5 years. She held licenses in Life & Health, Property & Casualty, Variable Products (Series 6/63), and Long Term Care Insurance. Katie returned to the classroom in 2013 to teach Earth Science at Linkhorne Middle School.

Katie is currently a building rep for the Lynchburg Education Association and a Board Member of the Shawn Moss Wellness and Growth Foundation. Katie's past activities include

serving on the boards for Young Professionals of Central Virginia and Friends of Rivermont, serving as Chair of the Lynchburg Democratic Committee, and as a Daisy Troop Girl Scout Leader. She spends her summers working at Camp Alleghany for Girls in West Virginia.

Katie and her husband Mark have two daughters: Rosalie is 12 and in 6th grade at Dunbar Middle. Brea is 15 and in 10th grade at E.C. Glass. On the weekends, Katie tests her patience and prays to the gods of driving while teaching Brea to drive a stick shift. Tonight Katie will present her third paper for SPHEX: "Breaking Up Is Hard To Do".

**Our presenter, Katie Cyphert, provided this abstract of her presentation entitled:
"Breaking up is Hard to Do"**

Not available at this time.

Here is the link to Katie's presentation:

https://youtu.be/c3_5TFFLuDA

After a question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by President Frantz at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
G. Kenneth West, Ph.D.
Secretary

Resolution Honoring The Rev. Dennis Roberts
February 3rd, 2022

President Frantz presented the following resolution honoring The Rev. Dennis Roberts for his service during the pandemic. The resolution was passed unanimously:

WHEREAS: During the Covid pandemic that in March will stretch over two years of Sphex presentations, The Rev. Dennis Roberts provided links that allowed all active members, emeritus members and guests to listen, watch and interact virtually with each Sphex presenter,

WHEREAS: Dennis Roberts tirelessly and patiently coached each member who had never presented virtually and needed help understanding how to best proceed,

And WHEREAS: The Rev. Dennis Roberts enabled the Club to cast secret ballots virtually for the induction of new members,

BE IT RESOLVED, The membership of Sphex, express their appreciation and thanks for the outstanding work that The Rev. Dennis Roberts has done for the Sphex Club, its presenters and membership.

**Minutes of the 1,472nd meeting of the SPHEX Club
February 17, 2022**

President David Frantz called the 1,472nd meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 17th. This was a virtual meeting (Zoom).

Active members present were: Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Doyle, Elliott, Foster, Frantz, Gillette, Hansen, Hendricks, Jablonski, Light, Lucas, Manian, Marion, McDonald, Morrison-Shetlar, Payne, Roberts, Schewel, Sigler, Stinnett, Tiller, West, Wilson, Wright

Emeritus Members Present: Dr. Ken Garren

Unable to Attend Were: Bateman, Bradford, Delzingaro, Edwards, Salmon, Wodicka

Sphex's special guests for the evening: Edie Light, Paige Light, the Reverends Diane and Todd Vie, Megan Lucas, and Sumner Jenkins.

The minutes were approved without modification.

New Officers Announced for 2022-2023

Dr. Michael Gillette on behalf of the Nominations Committee announced the new officers for the next Sphex year:

President	Katie Cyphert
Vice President	Joe Stinnett
Treasurer	Marc Schewel
Secretary	Dr. Jim Wright
Assistant Secretary	Dr. Ken West

Membership Committee

Mike Bradford, Chair
Julie Doyle
Travis McDonald

Nominations Committee

Dr. Michael Gillette, Chair
Dr. Reid Wodicka
Dr. Crystal Edwards

Ad Hoc Library Committee

Ted Delaney, Chair
Dr. Jim Wright

Dr. Tom Tiller
Nancy Marion

Program Committee

Dr. David Frantz, Chair

Nominations for New Members

Please send your nominations for new members to any member of the Membership Committee. Also, please send with your nomination a brief biography of your nominee(s):

Mike Bradford, Chair (mvbradford@gmail.com)
Julie Doyle (jdoyle0463@gmail.com)
Travis McDonald (travis@poplarforest.org)

President Frantz introduced Cham Light our speaker for the evening:

Cham Light served for over 30 years, from 1985 to 2016, as an Assistant General Counsel and Claims Director with state, regional and national responsibilities for Nationwide Insurance Company. He is also in his 16th year as an Adjunct Professor of Law at Liberty University Law School teaching courses in Land Use and Zoning Regulations, Insurance Law and also Real Estate Transactions and Development Law.

Cham has been very active in community service organizations over the years including serving as a Founding Director and Executive Committee member of the Free Clinic of Central VA for nine years, for fifteen years on the Board of the Library of VA including two terms as President, five years as President of the Old City Cemetery, two years as President of the Lynchburg Historical Foundation, a term as Chair of the Arbitration Committee of the National Association of Mutual Insurance Carriers and is presently President of the Board of Trustees of Jones Memorial Library.

Cham has been married to his wife Edie for 38 years and they have two children: Tray, who is an Episcopal seminary student at Sewanee University and Paige, who is a marketing representative for Tableaux Software.

Our presenter, Cham Light, provided the following abstract of his presentation entitled: "The City of Secrets"

Cham Light spoke from the lectern in the sanctuary of St. Paul's Episcopal Church located at 605 Clay St. in Lynchburg. He invited SPHEX members who were present to sample wines and cheeses from the area of the city in Italy about which his presentation was based before the meeting at 7:00 p.m. and also after his presentation in the narthex of St. Paul's. At the end of his presentation Cham said he had done this partly to get members of the SPHEX back in the habit of meeting in person.

Cham's guests were his wife, Edie, Megan Lucas, CEO of the Regional Business Alliance and wife of SPHEX member Tory Lucas, the Reverends Diane and Todd Vie, co-priests of St.

Paul's, Sumner Jenkins, organist and choirmaster of St. Paul's, who had prepared the photos and video segments of Cham's presentation and who operated the video and sound system that evening, and Cham and Edie's daughter Paige Light, who viewed the presentation via Zoom. SPHEX members who attended in person were Jim Wright, Tory Lucas, John Cook and Billy Hansen.

Cham started his presentation by stating this was his fourth paper since being invited into membership in January, 2009. His previous papers dealt with the acquisition and use of political power, the Virginia Brigade in the War of 1812 which was led by his ancestor General Joel Leftwich, and a review of the Electoral College which elects U.S. Presidents.

Cham said this paper, while it may seem like a travelogue, had a more serious purpose, which was to identify characteristics of a city that had different factions but was still unified, and what lessons Lynchburg residents might learn from this city to better our own community.

The title of Cham's paper, "The City of Secrets," was taken from a book written by Professor Jane Tylus entitled *Siena City of Secrets*. He mentioned that Tylus had numerous YouTube segments that would be of interest to those wanting to learn more than would be provided in his presentation.

Cham stated that the city in question was Siena, Italy, in the heart of Tuscany, which was built on three hills but did not have a dependable source of water since it was not built on a river. It depended on wells until an aqueduct was constructed in the 1910s. He also noted that there was a series of eight walls surrounding the city, the first of which was built in the 11th century and the last finished in 1460. Most of the walls are still standing and make navigation in the city confusing and difficult.

Cham had Sumner show two panoramic photos of Siena and two of the campo or city center of Siena. Siena has struggled for centuries, especially against Florence, to preserve its identity and heritage and does not want the city to be overrun with tourists like Venice and Florence.

Cham gave a brief history of the country of Italy, pointing out that the country was not unified until 1861 and that before that it had been a collection of city states that had been unstable politically and constantly at war since the disintegration of the Western Roman Empire in 476 AD.

Siena is about 143 miles north of Rome and 45 miles south of Florence. It grew from a Roman trading post in 30 AD and prospered based on wool, wheat, salt, some mining, and money lending, and because a stopover for pilgrims on the Via Francigena, the 1,181 mile pilgrimage route from Canterbury, England to Rome, Italy.

Cham pointed-out that all great cities have great buildings, great institutions and great historical figures. He then identified the Cathedral of Siena, the Hospital of Santa Maria della Scala and the Monte dei Paschi Bank as key buildings or institutions in the city. Photos of all these were shown. The hospital, dating to the 12th century, was the oldest and one of the largest in Europe. The bank, established in 1472, is the oldest bank in the world. The hospital was dedicated to caring for pilgrims, the poor and abandoned babies and the bank was founded to provide loans for pilgrims and the poor so they could avoid private money lenders.

Cham identified St. Catherine of Siena as the most famous citizen of Siena. She was born in Siena in 1347, started to have religious visions at an early age, was a lay member of the

Dominican Order, developed stigmata, became quite influential, helped persuade the Pope to leave Avignon, France and return to Rome and died in Rome from constant fasting in 1380, age 33 (the same age as Jesus Christ when he was crucified). She has subsequently been declared by the Pope as co-patron saint of both Italy and Europe and was the second woman to be proclaimed a Doctor of the Roman Catholic Church. Photos of her torso, which is in a glass coffin at the altar of the Basilica di Santa Maria sopra Minerva in Rome, and her head, which is in a glass reliquary at her home church, San Domenico in Siena, were shown.

Cham then explained how Siena is divided into 17 Contrada, or neighborhoods, each with its own shield, clubhouse, chapel and museum. At birth children are given a scarf with the shield of the Contrada in which they are born and they cherish it for life. Cham and Edie had scarves they had purchased at the Aquila (Eagle) Contrada dinner the night before with scarves from the Contrada being distinguishable by Sienese from those bought at a souvenir shop.

Cham then provided details about the Palio, or banner horse race, which is dedicated to the Virgin Mary and which is held every year on July 2 and August 16. He included video clips of Contrada members marching and singing in the streets and a Rick Steves clip of various scenes from a Palio.

Cham and Edie have been to Siena four times: for several hours as day trippers in 2002 and 2007 and to attend the Palio for five nights in August 2016, and with his adult children for six nights in August 2019. He stated he is more perplexed now about Siena than he was after his first visit.

Cham pointed out that Siena has very little crime, typically no murders and very little violence, even during the Palio, and then asked a series of questions about Lynchburg and how aspects of our city compare to Siena:

- How about comparable buildings? Perhaps Monument Terrace or the Old City Courthouse.
- Comparable institutions? Perhaps Centra Health or BWXT.
- A comparable person that could be unifying and inspiring? Leland Melvin was Cham's personal choice.
- A song? Maybe Lynchburg needs to commission one.
- What about a shared activity like the Palio? Is that the Ten Miler?

Cham pointed-out one advantage Lynchburg has that Siena does not is the James River. We need to continue the positive momentum.

Cham closed with asking what lessons can be learned from Siena. He has raised some questions and asked his listeners if they had other questions or any answers.

There were some questions and answers after his presentation. Julius Sigler said he was surprised Cham did not include reference to the fresco of the Allegory of Good Government and the Effects of Bad Government. Cham explained that the fresco is in City Hall, which borders the Campo and is distinguished by the large tower seen in the photos. He simply did not have enough time to cover all aspects of Siena. There were also comments and questions by George Dawson and Katie Cyphert.

After a question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by President Frantz at 8:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

G. Kenneth West, Ph.D.
Secretary

**Minutes of the 1,473rd meeting of the SPHEX Club
March 3, 2022**

President David Frantz called the 1,473rd meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 3rd. This was a virtual meeting (Zoom).

Active members present were: Bradford, Cook, Cyphert, Delaney, Doyle, Edwards, Frantz, Hansen, Hendricks, Jablonski, Light, Manian, Marion, McDonald, Morrison-Shetlar, Payne, Roberts, Salmon, Schewel, Stinnett, Tiller, West, Wilson, Wodicka, Wright

Emeritus Member Present: Dr. Ken Garren

Unable to Attend Were: Bateman, Dawson, Delzingaro, Elliott, Foster, Gillette, Lucas, Sigler

Sphex's special guests for the evening: Peter Doyle, Mckayla Warwick

The minutes were approved without modification.

President Frantz congratulated the Nomination Committee (Dr. Michael Gillette, Chair, Dr. Reid Wodicka, and Dr. Crystal Edwards) for their work in the selection of officers for the 2022-2023 Sphex year:

President	Katie Cyphert
Vice President	Joe Stinnett
Treasurer	Marc Schewel
Secretary	Dr. Jim Wright
Assistant Secretary	Dr. Ken West

The Membership Committee continues to accept nominations for new members:

Please submit your nominations and the required background information by Sunday night, March 13th to any member of the committee.

Mike Bradford, Chair -- mvbradford@gmail.com

Julie Doyle -- jdoyle0463@gmail.com

Travis McDonald -- travis@poplarforest.org

Treasurer's Report – Marc Schewel

In order to avoid being “cancelled” as I was after my reelection as Treasurer at the last meeting, I have decided to make tonight's report mercifully brief. Recently the Club has been the beneficiary of an unexpected windfall. My fellow members will recall that I was unable to attend our meeting four weeks ago as I was preparing to leave early the following morning for a trip out of the country. That trip was to the Patagonia region of Chile.

However, I am embarrassed to admit that there was another unpleasant reason for my absence: the Sphex Treasury had been stripped of its funds. Yes, my friends, on the eve of my departure I found myself short of cash, and so took the liberty of borrowing the bank balance of \$1293.56 to tide me over, fully intending to repay it upon my return. Of course, immediately upon arriving in Santiago I converted the money to Chilean pesos. Then I discovered that I had prepaid almost all of my travel expenses and could use a credit card for any incidentals. I did spend ten dollars on a travel guide. Two days after I got home I went straight to the Bank of the James, and deposited what I had left in the Sphex Club account. So, I am pleased to report that the Treasury now stands at 1,034,848 pesos. This puts us well ahead of the curve when the current inflation spiral reaches 800%.

President Frantz introduced Julie Doyle our speaker for the evening:

Our speaker was born in Los Angeles and raised in Portland, Oregon. She is one of five sisters. Ms. Doyle received her Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering at the University of Notre Dame and a Master's in Business Administration from George Washington University. Her first job after college was as a Sales Engineer for Westinghouse Electric Corporation. Afterwards, Ms. Doyle was an Education Account Executive at Honeywell, Inc. In 2005 Ms. Doyle became the President and Executive Director of The Education & Research Foundation. She retired from this position in 2021.

Ms. Doyle has contributed generously to the Central Virginia Community. Presently she is a member of the Centra Health Board of Directors, the University of Lynchburg Board of Trustees, the Bank of the James Board of Directors and The Lynchburg Education Foundation Board of Directors. Formerly she was Chairperson of the Lynchburg City School Board and the president of the Kids' Haven Board of Directors.

Julie moved to Lynchburg in 1993 and is married to Peter Doyle who is a native of Lynchburg. The two met at Notre Dame where Julie lettered in volleyball. Julie and Peter have three children—all Notre Dame graduates. Kevin lives in Chicago. He and his wife Caitlin have two children, Grace and Callahan. Sarah, their second child, lives in Seattle. And, their youngest child, Maggie, lives in Philadelphia. Incidentally, Julie became the first woman to be President of Notre Dame's prestigious Monogram Club.

Our presenter, Julie Doyle, provided this abstract of her presentation entitled: *This Road Less Traveled Moves Like Water*

The practice of Restorative Justice – found in court systems, schools, communities and the workplace – has been said to move like water, since it represents flexibility and fluidity, and can flow around obstacles in powerful ways.

Julie's talk was inspired by the restorative justice work being done in Philadelphia by Lynchburg native and University of Pennsylvania graduate, Mckayla Warwick. Mckayla and two of her UPenn classmates received a \$250,000 President's Engagement Prize in 2020, and have been working in west Philadelphia to train and empower BIPOC youth (black, indigenous, people of color) on restorative justice practices which can have a meaningful impact on

incarceration rates and improve harmony within communities. (Mckayla attended the talk as Julie's invited guest.)

Although the meaning of "restorative justice" can vary widely depending on the setting, a common thread is that these practices will emphasize the acknowledgement of a harm and its impact on people, relationships and community, and will focus on bringing about a resolution that is not only centered around punishment.

Restorative justice is sometimes referred to as a "victim-centered approach", addressing weaknesses in the traditional court processes, which result in those impacted *most* by a crime, often having the *least* to say about the outcome of the criminal proceeding.

In a successful restorative justice process, the offender will recognize the effects of the harm and, wherever possible, repair the harm in a manner that is satisfactory to the victim.

With origins tied to Native American and other indigenous communities, restorative justice practices have been around for many years. However, it was not until the 1970's that these practices began to surface in some U.S. courts.

Cook County, Illinois – located in the greater Chicago area – has a restorative justice champion in their Chief Judge, the Honorable Timothy C. Evans. Chief Judge Evans has established three (3) stand-alone Restorative Justice Community Courts (RJCC) in Cook County. These courts focus on providing alternative adjudication pathways for non-violent, first time "emerging adult" offenders, ages 18-26 years old, who are willing to accept responsibility for the harm they have caused. The RJCC restorative justice process includes Peace Circles facilitated by trained professionals and attended by the victim, the offender and representatives from the community, and a Repair of Harm Agreement (RHA) co-authored by all parties. Once the terms of the RHA have been met by the offender, the case is dismissed and the offender's record is cleared.

The Commonwealth of Virginia has not integrated restorative justice practices into its court systems as proactively as has been seen in other states. But recent efforts by the legislature – including the addition of language in Section 16.1 of the Code of Virginia and in the Virginia Juvenile Community Crime Control Act (VJCCCA) - give reason to believe that support is growing for the use of restorative justice practices in Virginia, especially for juvenile court cases.

Following Reid Wodicka's January 2022 SPHEX paper on the challenges facing the juvenile justice system, several SPHEX members expressed an interest in finding ways to engage with and support juveniles in the justice system. With some winds of change on the horizon, there may be opportunities for all to play a part in enabling restorative justice efforts to flow into our community.

Special Guest and Participant: Mckayla Warwick

Mckayla Warwick is a Lynchburg native and graduate of EC Glass high school, currently residing in Philadelphia. Mckayla earned a full-ride QuestBridge scholarship to the University of Pennsylvania, where she graduated Summa Cum Laude in 2020 with a major in Sociology, and minors in Urban Education and Africana Studies. Upon graduation, Mckayla and two of her classmates – Hyungtae Kim and Kwaku Owusu – were awarded a \$250,000 President's Engagement Prize for a project they named "Collective Climb". They have been working with West Philly youth – first under the umbrella of the President's Engagement Prize and now as an

independent non-profit. Collective Climb was incorporated as a 501(c)3 organization in 2021 so the impactful work—of using restorative justice practices to engage and empower youth to build community and repair harm—could continue.

If you would like to learn more about Collective Climb, you can visit their website:

www.collectiveclimb.org

or email McKayla Warwick at mckayla@collectiveclimb.org.

The following video provides a brief overview of the Collective Climb project:

<https://youtu.be/KM7jcqhi860>

After a question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by President Frantz at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
G. Kenneth West, Ph.D.
Secretary

**Minutes of the 1,474th meeting of the SPHEX Club
March 17, 2022**

President David Frantz called the 1,474th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 17th. This was a virtual meeting (Zoom).

Active members present were: Bradford, Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Doyle, Edwards, Elliott, Frantz, Gillette, Hansen, Hendricks, McDonald, Payne, Roberts, Salmon, Schewel, Sigler, Stinnett, Tiller, West, Wilson, Wright.

Emeritus Member Present: Dr. Ken Garren

Unable to Attend Were: Bateman, Delzingaro, Foster, Jablonski, Light, Lucas, Manian, Marion, Morrison-Shetlar, Wodicka.

Sphex's special guests for the evening: Sandra Wilson (wife of Dr. Jeff Wilson) and daughters Elizabeth Betz and Melissa Watts.

The minutes for March 3rd, 2022 passed without modification.

Proposed Amendment to Sphex Constitution: President Frantz

The following amendment was proposed by President Frantz and will be voted on during the March 31st meeting.

ARTICLE IV. Officers

7. An Executive Committee shall be comprised of the President, Vice President, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer and past President. They shall serve as a consultative body for any officers of the club at the officer's request.

The Membership Committee Presented Eight Candidates for Sphex Membership

(Mike Bradford – Chair, Julie Doyle, Travis McDonald)

Active Sphex members will vote on March 31 to select which candidates will be offered membership.

Sphex Survey Results: Dr. Jim Wright

A poll sent to members on February 28 garnered 22 responses. Members were given a choice between continuing virtual meetings in September or resuming in-person meetings. Ninety percent favored in-person meetings. When asked if they would attend Zoom meetings, 100% replied in the affirmative; the same applied to in-person meetings. Members were also asked if they would attend a cocktail event preceding a talk in September. Ninety-five percent indicated that they would. The survey also asked members for meeting place suggestions. Eight responded with five suggestions.

New Meeting Space for the Sphex 2022-2023 year:

Following the opening meeting on September 8 that will include a social hour, SpheX meetings will be held at the University of Lynchburg in room 232 in Schewel Hall.

The Ad Hoc SpheX Archives Committee made the following report:

(Ted Delaney – Chair, Dr. Jim Wright, Dr. Tom Tiller, Nancy Marion)

The committee is working to create a permanent, digital archive of the Club's meeting minutes, member papers, and miscellaneous documents. We have had difficulty securing a long-term arrangement with Jones Memorial Library to host the archives, but we now have a short-term solution to give members immediate access. Very soon we will email the membership a direct link to a Dropbox folder that contains 6.0 GB of materials digitized last year by Jim Wright and Nancy Marion. The documents are in PDF format, organized chronologically or alphabetically in folders, and searchable. With the link we will provide instructions for searching. We encourage members to browse and search the archives before the fall, when we will have more information on a more permanent hosting solution for our digital records.

Treasurer's Report: Marc Schewel

With the announcement that the Club may consider a social event to inaugurate its Fall 2022 season, I decided to investigate just how far our current bank balance of \$1293.56 would go before we might have to assess our membership for dues, which have been deferred the past two years. Estimating an attendance of sixty persons (thirty members plus spouses) and assuming the Club could find a venue rent-free, after shopping food prices, I calculated that there were sufficient funds in the treasury to allow us to offer the following menu for each person: $\frac{1}{4}$ glass of wine, one hot dog and bun, one pickle slice, one small cup of coleslaw, three apple slices, and $\frac{1}{2}$ chocolate chip cookie. I recommend that the Club adopt this menu rather than assessing dues since, considering the current price of gas, members would have to make the difficult choice between driving several miles to our event and paying their dues.

President Frantz introduced Dr. Jeff Wilson our speaker for the evening:

Dr. Wilson was born in Charleston, West Virginia December 18, 1946, but lived in Connecticut, Kentucky, Florida, and Pennsylvania while growing up. He is Duke inbred receiving a BS in Zoology (1968) and his M.D. in 1972. He continued post-graduate medical training at Duke including internship, internal medicine residency, and rheumatology fellowship from 1972 till 1979. This was interrupted by two years of active duty Navy service (1974-1976).

He and his wife Sandra have been married since June 20, 1969. They have two children, Elizabeth and Melissa and three teenage grandchildren. The longest they have lived in any one place has been Lynchburg where he practiced rheumatology from July 7, 1979 until December 15, 2014. He saw rheumatology patients two afternoons a month in the Free Clinic and has prepared a Rheumatology Primer for the Free Clinic.

He served as President of the Lynchburg Academy of Medicine, 6th District Councilor to the Medical Society of Virginia, and was the tenth recipient of the William Barney Award in 2007.

He has published two books: *“Hello, Friend” Dr. George B. Craddock Stories* (Warwick House Publishing 1989) and *“Let Me Tell You Something, Dr. Wilson”* (Warwick House Publishing 2016). A third book is at the printer’s—*“A Doctor in the House? Good luck!”* He has authored articles in medical journals and chapters on vitamin D and Environmental Triggers for *The Sjogren’s Book, 5th Edition*. He was the first person to discover benign familial elevation of alkaline phosphatase described in the article “Inherited Elevation of Alkaline Phosphatase in the Absence of Disease,” *New England Journal of Medicine*, November 1, 1979, 983-984.

He and Sandra reside in Lynchburg. Dr. Wilson can be contacted at (434) 444-1729 or by email at wilson1821@comcast.net.

Our presenter, Dr. Jeff Wilson, provided this abstract of his presentation entitled “TEETHBRUSH LESSONS”.

Recalling a program more than 20 years ago we are reminded of the importance of teachers. While a minority of us may know prominent CEOs of industry, almost all of us can remember a teacher who made a difference in our lives.

Personal experiences included an assumed poor educational background coming from West Virginia to Florida. In reality it provided a setting for exceptional teacher introduction to foreign languages and testing of a Teacher-mother (1950’s).

The pandemic has provided abundant discord at all levels. In a refusal to dwell on today’s miseries, the talk covers some of the “W.Va.” jokes with a reminder of mentoring—received and given.

Next we discuss three individuals with W.Va. educational backgrounds. Katherine Johnson, one of the “Hidden Figures” real life main characters, is an example of a nuclear family that valued education. She experienced an extensive, impressive faculty of teachers that made a difference (1930’s).

Homer Hickham had one teacher, Freida Riley, who was invaluable in encouraging Homer and the Rocket Boys of Coalwood, W.Va. to look beyond a future in the coal mines to college education and Homer’s career in NASA and success as an author (1960’s).

Anne Spencer had no formal education in W.Va., but attributes her literary roots to Mrs. Dixie, the black barber’s wife who read aloud to her while living in Bramwell, W.Va. Formal education was at Virginia Seminary in Lynchburg (1893-99).

Vivian Pinn was a product of segregated schools in Lynchburg (1960’s) who remembered Willie Clark as a teacher who made a difference.

The talk concludes with the hope that each member in attendance had a happy recollection of wonderful teachers, and the concern that the changed relationships due to the pandemic will not eclipse the development of such student-teacher bonds in the future.

After a question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by President Frantz at 8:35pm.

Respectfully submitted,
G. Kenneth West, Ph.D.
Secretary

**Minutes of the 1,475th meeting of the SPHEX Club
March 31st, 2022**

President David Frantz called the 1,475th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 31st. This was a virtual meeting (Zoom).

Active members present were: Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Doyle, Edwards, Foster, Frantz, Hansen, Hendricks, Light, Manian, McDonald, Roberts, Salmon, Tiller, West, Wilson, Wodicka

Unable to Attend Were: Bateman, Bradford, Cook, Delzingaro, Gillette, Jablonski, Lucas, Marion, Morrison-Shetlar, Payne, Schewel, Sigler, Stinnett, Wright

The minutes for March 17th, 2022 were approved without modification.

New Meeting Space for the Sphex 2022-2023 year: President Frantz

Following the opening meeting on September 8th, which will include a social hour, Sphex meetings will be held at the University of Lynchburg in room 232 in Schewel Hall. More information about the location of the social hour on September 8th will be sent out at a later date.

1) Election of New Members –

The membership committee (Mike Bradford – Chair, Julie Doyle, Travis McDonald) received eight excellent nominations for the six open membership spots in Sphex. The Rev. Dennis Roberts provided the membership with virtual, secret balloting. With the help of Ted Delaney, Dennis received and counted votes to determine the six candidates to be invited to join Sphex. Beside the candidates' names below are the Sphex members who nominated them and will formally invite them into membership. Potential members have until May 15th to accept membership. However, if any accept but need to delay their membership for a brief time in the 2022-2023 year, that can be negotiated.

Dr. Bill Blackman (Dr Dave Frantz)

Wynter Benda and Geoffery Kershner (Travis McDonald)

Dr. Nicole Sanders (Dr. Sabita Manian)

Dr. Stephen Smith (Dr. Julius Sigler)

Walker Sydnor (George Dawson)

2) Vote on an Amendment to the Sphex Constitution

The following amendment to the constitution proposed by President Frantz was accepted unanimously.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO SPHEX CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE V. Committees

4. An Executive Committee shall be comprised of the President, Vice President, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer and the immediate past President. They shall serve as a consultative body for any officer of the club at the officer's request.

3) Vote on a member's request for emeritus status

Dr. Jeff Wilson, who presented the last presentation of the 2021-2022 Sphex year, requested emeritus status beginning in the 2022-2023 year. This request was unanimously passed along with the expression of tremendous appreciation by all Sphex members for Dr. Wilson's many exceptional contributions to Sphex.

4) Formal election of Sphex officers for 2022-2023

The following slate of officers was unanimously elected.

President	Katie Cyphert
Vice President	Joe Stinnett
Treasurer	Marc Schewel
Secretary	Dr. Jim Wright
Assistant Secretary	Dr. Ken West

The meeting was adjourned by the new president of Sphex, President Katie Cyphert, at 6:24.

Secretarial Privilege: Dr. Ken West

What a pleasure it has been to serve as Sphex's secretary for the past five years. We enjoyed exceptional leadership from five excellent presidents during these years. Particularly I would like to thank President Cham Light and President Dave Frantz for their leadership during the devastating Covid pandemics that forced us to no longer meet together in person. Another above and beyond performance during the pandemics was given by The Rev. Dennis Roberts who worked throughout the two years to allow us to attend meetings virtually. In addition, Dennis taped each presentation for the membership. I have been surrounded by outstanding leaders during these five year, and I am greatly appreciative for their sterling contributions to The Sphex Club. We have been so fortunate.

Respectfully submitted,

G. Kenneth West, Ph.D.
Secretary

Minutes of the 1,476th meeting of the SPHEX Club

September 8, 2022

After a two-year hiatus of on-line meetings necessitated by the Covid-19 pandemic, the club resumed in-person meetings. In celebration of that fact, and to provide an opportunity to meet the ten new members inducted during the hiatus, members enjoyed a social hour, arranged by outgoing president Dr. David Frantz, in the Flint Lobby of Elliot and Rosel Schewel Hall on the campus of the University of Lynchburg.

President Katie Cyphert called the 1,476th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on September 8, 2022. We met for the first time in Room 232 of Schewel Hall.

Active members present were: Benda, Blackman, Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Doyle, Elliott, Foster, Frantz, Light, Lucas, Manian, Marion, Morrison-Shetlar, Roberts, Salmon, Sanders, Schewel, Sigler, Smith, Stinnett, Sydnor, Tiller, West, Wodicka, and Wright.

Emeritus Members Present: none

Unable to Attend Were: Bradford, Delzingaro, Edwards, Gillette, Hansen, Hendricks, Jablonski, McDonald, and Morrison-Shetlar.

Sphex's special guests for the evening: Amy Carrier, Rosemary Dawson, Paul Fitzgerald, Kenneth White and George Zippel

President Cyphert began the meeting by introducing the new members who were present for their first in-person meeting. They included, from the class of September 2021, Nina Salmon, and from the Class of March 2022 Bill Blackman, Wynter Benda, Nicole Sanders, Stephen Smith and Walker Sydnor.

Minutes of the March 31, 2022 meeting: Dr. Wright announced that copies of Dr. Jim Elson's history of the club are available to new members and could be picked up after the meeting. He reminded members that Dr. Elson has also donated 25 copies of his book, *Lynchburg, Virginia: The First Two Hundred Years*, to the club and they are available to members who do not already have a copy. Finally, Dr. Wright informed members that Dr. Jeffrey Wilson, who recently transferred to emeritus status, has published a book entitle *A Doctor in the House? Good Luck!*

The book is available at Givens Book Store and Ace Hardware, where they can be found next to the lawn mowers. Dr. Wright assured members that the book is considerably more entertaining than the lawn mowers and can be had at a substantially lower price. The minutes of the March 31, 2022 business meeting were read by the secretary and approved without alteration.

There were no committee reports.

Treasurer's Report: Mr. Schewel submitted the following report:

This is our first in-person meeting since March 2020. Think of all that's happened since then: the pandemic surges, the pandemic wanes, the pandemic surges; schools close; businesses close; everybody Zooms; everybody gets Covid; the federal government disburses trillions of dollars, three times; the stock market collapses, the stock market soars, the stock market collapses; furniture sales soar, furniture sales collapse; the nation is shocked by the police killing of George Floyd; protests roil major cities; Biden defeats Trump; the Democrats claim the Senate, by one tie-breaking vote; disbelievers storm the U.S. Capitol; mass shootings kill hundreds, including twenty-one by a crazed gunman in Uvalde, Texas; supply chain management becomes a household word; shortages abound, from video games to automobiles to truck drivers to affordable homes; prices rise faster in one year than in the previous five; the Federal Reserve raises interest rates for the first time since 2018; Russia invades Ukraine, provoking economic sanctions and spiking oil and gasoline prices; the Supreme Court removes abortion rights from federal protection; Lynchburg gets a new city manager; and Schewel Furniture Company relocates its corporate office the Galleria.

But amidst all this change and turmoil, one thing has remained stable and rock solid: the Sphex Club Treasury. On March 19th, 2020, the Sphex Club Treasury stood at \$1293.56. And I'm pleased to report that today, almost thirty months later, its bank balance is still \$1293.56.

Wait a minute. That's not right. Last month I had to right a check to pay for tonight's gathering: \$616.05. So, alas, we no longer have \$1293.56 in the bank; we now have only \$677.51.

That's one irony. But there's another one, as Dave Frantz can attest to. Dave wrote a personal check for the U of L invoice, and sent me a copy so I could reimburse him. Writing that check was the only transaction your Treasurer had to make in two years. Well, it turns out I overpaid Dave by \$61.46, and would never have known if he hadn't sent a refund.

I asked if this was grounds for impeachment. He said he would leave that decision to the club members.

Regrets to the speaker from members unable to attend were received from Ms. Delzingaro, Mr. Billy Hansen, Dr. Morrison-Shetlar, and Mr. Michael Gillette.

President Cyphert introduced Mr. George Dawson, our speaker for the evening. George Dawson, and his wife Rosemary, have lived in Lynchburg since 1980. They moved here, with their 16-month-old son Nick, in 1980, when George was offered the position of Executive Director at Virginia Baptist Hospital. Thirty-four at the time, he was the third person to head VBH since it opened in 1924. When Centra Health was formed in 1987, George was appointed as President. He led Centra as President and CEO from 1987 until his retirement in January of 2012. Today George and Rosemary still live in Lynchburg. George is an active artist in oil and watercolor, an active volunteer, and fund raiser, having headed several capital campaigns including the \$18 million campaign to restore the Academy Theater and the \$5 million campaign for the new Humane Society building. He has been a SPHEX member for several decades and has presented papers on topics ranging from Robert Frost to Sockeye salmon.

Mr. Dawson's talk was entitled "A Per Se Violation." He provided the following summary:

A "Per Se Violation" presented the speaker's view of the forces, events, and people that caused Centra Health to be created by the merger of Lynchburg General Hospital and Virginia Baptist Hospital on January 1, 1987. Dawson introduced it as a biased version of a cautionary tale – researched from the Board minutes of LGH, VBH, and Centra– but told from the perspective of one of the participants.

The paper began with a brief review of two opposing legal and public policy theories. One of these is the 1890 Sherman Antitrust Act which (along with the 1914 Clayton Act and Federal Trade Commission Act) is cited by the Federal Trade Commission as the "comprehensive charter of economic liberty aimed at preserving free and unfettered competition as the rule of trade." The other is the theory of health planning that emerged in the 1960's and 1970's through a series of federal and state laws. It is described by its advocates as a "movement," planning aimed to make widely available coordinated health facilities and services, especially hospitals, and to foster their orderly and efficient development, that is, to meet need without duplication."

Drawing on the recorded minutes of the Boards of Lynchburg General and Virginia Baptist Hospital from the from the 1970's and 80's; and from his own personal recollections, Dawson describes the issues, personalities and influences that both pushed the hospitals apart and tied them together over the nearly two decades preceding the merger. Especially pivotal was the role of physician leaders, the joint medical staff, and key Hospital trustees. He also touched on relationships with the Baptist general Association of Virginia.

He concluded by noting the significant responsibility of Board member at Centra today In this time of consolidation and change in the healthcare. Among these: how does a non-profit Board deal with the question of asset value, ownership, and control. How is mission defined? How are “community interests” defined and represented by decision makers. What happens when those interests’ conflict or compete – internally and externally?

Following the presentation, Mr. Dawson entertained insightful comments and questions from from Mssrs. Light, Lucas, and Sydnor, and from Dr. Frantz. Guest Kenneth White, former attorney for Virginia Baptist Hospital and former board chair for Centra Health, also offered comments.

President Cyphert adjourned the meeting at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Wright
Secretary

Minutes of the 1,477th meeting of the SPHEX Club

September 22, 2022

President Katie Cyphert called the 1,477th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on September 22, 2022.

Sphex's special guests for the evening: Dr. Brad Bullock spouse of Dr. Sabita Manian and Seonaid Elliott from the United Kingdom and guest of Dr. Alison Morrison-Shetlar

Active members present were: Blackman, Bradford, Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Doyle, Gillette, Hansen, Jablonski, Lucas, Manian, Marion, McDonald, Morrison-Shetlar, Roberts, Salmon, Sanders, Schewel, Sigler, Smith, Tiller, West, Wodicka and Payne.

Unable to Attend: Benda, Delzingaro, Edwards, Foster, Frantz, Hendricks, Kershner, Light, Sydnor, Stinnett, Wright

The minutes of the September 8th meeting were approved without modification.

There were no committee reports at this time.

Treasurer's Report: Marc Schewel

At our last meeting, Mr. Dawson chronicled the momentous merger between the Lynchburg General and the Virginia Baptist Hospitals, an event that ultimately had to gain approval from the FTC before it could be consummated. His paper prompted me to do some research on another negotiation that ended differently but also had a huge impact on the history of Lynchburg; this was a prospective merger between two towering institutions of higher learning, whose joint membership included some of the most erudite, learned, and cultured individuals in the region.

I'm speaking of course of our own Sphex Club and its counterpart, the Thirteen Club.

Now we all are familiar with the history of the Sphex Club, founded in 1910 by eleven men from the business community and the Randolph-Macon Woman's College faculty in an effort to unify town and gown. The origins of the Thirteen Club are more obscure, but one member informed me that he believes that its earliest meeting was held in 1895 in emulation of clubs formed in New York City in 1882 and at the University of Virginia in 1889, whose mission was to demonstrate the absurdity of popular superstitions, like fear of the number thirteen.

So, we have two local clubs, whose purpose is the pursuit of learning and whose methods for achieving this are essentially the same: hold regular gatherings where members by invitation give lectures on subjects of their choice. Why should these two groups remain separate? Why should they have to find two places to meet? Why shouldn't members of both clubs be able to benefit from hearing from a broader cohort of peers? Why shouldn't these talks, which require hours of preparation, be heard by a wider audience? Why should a prospective member have to decide which club to affiliate with?

Why should these two clubs remain in competition with each other? The efficiencies and improvement in service to the community were undeniable. But as merger discussions commenced, a number of contentious issues emerged. Could the inherent jealousies, conflicts of interest, and territorial prerogatives be overcome? The future of Lynchburg's intellectual sustainability seemed to hang on the outcome.

A committee of four men who were members of both clubs – Norman Moon, Julius Sigler, Travis MacDonald, and Jim Wright – was formed in hopes they could persuade stubborn obstructionists on both sides to moderate their stance. Then a member of the Sphex Club, who shall remain anonymous, presented a talk entitled "The Unlucky Thirteen." As you can imagine, it was not very complimentary of our prospective partner. He disclosed that the Thirteen Club has no official records, keeps no minutes, has no officers, has no qualifications for membership, holds no elections for new members, and, perish the thought, allows members to assign descriptive titles to its papers. If all this weren't enough to convince his audience of the undesirability of a merger, two other characteristics hammered the final nails in the coffin.

First, the membership of the Thirteen Club consists of seventeen white males. Should the FTC find out about this discriminatory practice, there was little likelihood of its ever approving this merger.

Second, the Thirteen Club has no bank account. Why would the Spheeris Club share its \$677.51 with an organization so negligent? And if there's no bank account, there's no Treasurer's Report. And I know my colleagues would never stand for that.

And thus this proposed merger was relegated to a mere footnote in the history of our city.

President Cyphert introduced Dr. Sabita Manian our speaker for the evening:

Dr. Sabita Manian was born in Calcutta, India and immediately after her undergraduate degree, attended Tulane University (New Orleans) where she received a Master's and a PhD in Political Science. She moved to Lynchburg in 2000, after receiving tenure and a sabbatical from Stephen's College in Columbia, Missouri. She came to Lynchburg to spend that time with her love, and now spouse, Dr. Brad Bullock (who is her special guest).

She currently wears two hats at the University of Lynchburg: she is Associate Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences (responsible for the School of Social Sciences), *and* Professor of International Relations and Security Studies. She has been at UL since the Fall of 2001. She is the recipient of the SCHEV Outstanding Faculty Award, which is the Commonwealth of Virginia's recognition for a faculty who excels in teaching, research, and community service. She is also the recipient of the University's Shirley Rosser Award for Excellence in Teaching; the Thomas Allen Award for Excellence in Advising; and is a recent inductee of the Phi Kappa Phi international honors society for scholars and professionals.

Dr. Manian is co-author of *Sex Trafficking: A Global Perspective* (2010) and has authored dozens of journal articles, book chapters, academic papers and delivered public lectures on identity and diaspora politics, human security, foreign policies, and gender politics relating to the Americas, Asia, and Europe. She has presented academic papers nationally and internationally in Argentina, Barbados, Belize, Belgium, China, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, France, Grenada, Guadeloupe, India, Italy, Morocco and the UK.

She speaks Bengali, Hindi, Tamil, German, and of course English. She loves reading spy fiction, the classics, and diaspora literature, is passionate about politics, and adores travelling.

Our presenter, Dr. Sabita Manian, provided this abstract of her presentation entitled: “Within and Without the Veil”

“WITHIN AND WITHOUT THE VEIL”

SPHEX Talk – Delivered on September 22, 2022, at the University of Lynchburg.

The words “within and without the veil” are drawn from W.E.B. DuBois’ preface or “Forethought” as he labels it, in his monumental work, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 1903, where he states: “*I have sketched in swift outline the two worlds within and without the Veil, raising it that you may view faintly its deeper recesses, — the meaning of its religion, the passion of its human sorrow, and the struggle of its greater souls.*” I chose the title from Du Bois’ quote because:

1) In accordance with SPHEX norms that underscore how the topic is to be kept a secret, the quote aptly veils my subject matter; 2) Du Bois’ work, *The Souls of Black Folk*, masterfully outlines “the problems of the Twentieth Century” as the “problem of the color line” including the “global color line” whereby Du Bois berates democracy’s false promises for real equality (rather than a theoretical one) – my talk is a riff from that Du Boisian notion but quite different as you will see; and 3) Du Bois was not only a foremost sociologist, but as CUNY scholar, Zachariah Mampilly, writes in the September/October 2022 issue of *Foreign Affairs* (in an article, titled, “The Du Bois Doctrine: Race and the American Century”), Du Bois’ contribution to international relations goes mostly unnoticed. He had five essays published between the interwar years in *Foreign Affairs* – the nation’s leading periodical - that is widely read by scholars and policymakers. As a sociologist who engaged with the field of international relations, Du Bois’ “*writings on international politics, [where] Du Bois argued that the domestic could never be divorced from the global, and that Washington’s quest for a liberal order could never be reconciled with a Jim Crow system at home,*” - these words resonate with my own ethos as a public scholar and a diehard humanist.

So, what am I going to talk about, you wonder? It's not about Du Bois, it is about the recent reemergence of the Far Right on both sides of the Atlantic – Europe and North America that pose a diabolic challenge to democracies. As I lift the “veil” and seek the two worlds “within and without the veil” I will focus on: *a) the re-emergence of Far-Right Neo-Nationalism in states, on both sides of the Atlantic (cite a few examples); and connect it with (b) war in Ukraine.* My emphasis will be on the international and global forces that have catalyzed the current century's violence and vehemence of hate. Questions I explore:

Why and how does the international dynamic of power politics and liberal values intertwine and affect the rise of domestic far-right groups in the liberal democracies of the Atlantic?

How does symmetrical and asymmetrical warfare launched by international actors (powers) affect democratic values and the world order?

I will start with an image I captured of news items in *The Guardian* under the category, The Far Right. As you can see from the image [on screen] there is the article titled “*Italy Election: Who will Win, and Why Does it Matter?*” followed by “*How KiwiFarms, the Worst place on the web, was Shut Down;*” another titled, “*Deep Roots in Racist Organizations: Sweden's PM Magdalena Andersson on the Far-Right Threat in the Election,*” and “*Oath Keepers Membership Rolls Feature Police, Military, and Elected Officials.*” The news captions are from September 10, 2022. My talk follows the subsequent 10-12 days since the abovementioned news. I argue that these four news captions reveal not only the rise of the Far-Right per se in a number of Atlantic states, including the reinstatement of Viktor Orban in Hungary in April 2022, but is more particularly a consequence of the machinations of Russia's Vladimir Putin.

Let us start with Italy, touch upon Sweden, the KiwiFarms, and the US to see how and why democracy and liberal values are being challenged by power politics, and asymmetrical and symmetrical warfare.

1. Globally, mainstream media has been filled with dire warnings of Italy's Giorgia Meloni who leads the Brother of Italy (Fratelli d'Italia) party - she is anti-globalist and anti-LGBTQ+ but has not taken aim at NATO or the EU. As part of a trio of right-wing parties, including Salvini's Lega Lombardia and Berlusconi's Forza Italia, who brought down the previous government of Draghi, Italy is poised to elect a nationalistic leader whose party has roots in Mussolini's fascist party and has three of his grandchildren as current

members. The upcoming elections are forecast to bring this populist to power.

2. In Sweden, according to *Euronews*: the hate politics and discourse around immigration and the “Great Replacement” inspired by Mr. Trump (including a ‘make Sweden great again’ campaign) has led the Far-Right Swedish Democrats to become the second largest party in parliament as a coalition member. Some of their members have spread anti-Semitic conspiracy theories and hailed Neo-Nazi movements. The mainstream Christian Democrats, their coalition partner, has basically turned a blind eye to such travesties.
3. KiwiFarms is a hate forum and online platform that is notorious for stalking progressives especially gay and trans people. After one such egregious instance, Cloud Flare, the online host finally shut down KiwiFarm. It is on such platforms that the Alt-Right has been mobilized and brought their discourse and conspiracy theories to the mainstream, and consequently deflating our democracies. QAnon conspiracy theories, more recently, that began online, has moved to terra firma -
e.g. Mr. Trump’s recent Ohio campaign and the image he posted on his platform, Truth Social, of himself with a Q pin on his lapel and a caption that read “The Storm is Coming” - with the rhetorical device of the ‘storm’ that harks back to the Nazis (Stormtroopers) and Neo-Nazis like the Atomwaffen group.
4. And then there is the unavoidable topic of Putin and his invasion of Ukraine - testing everything the free world stands for and in violation of international law. In a Russian Presidential Press Service address yesterday (September 21, 2022), he called for a mobilization of 300,000 additional Russian troops to fight the war in Ukraine, and declared that he would not hesitate to use nuclear weapons to protect Russian territory. This nuclear threat comes a day after Putin called for occupied Ukrainian land to be annexed with Russia after calling a referendum in those territories [*eastern Luhansk and Donetsk and southern Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions*], knowing that the referendum would certainly favor Moscow. Putin thus not only announced a “partial mobilization” but declared that he would use ““all available means” to deter future attacks against Russia — a reference to Russia’s nuclear arsenal in a chilling new round of brinkmanship.” He then added, “It’s not a

bluff.” This dynamic falls traditionally under symmetrical power manifestation.

Putin’s machinations in destabilizing liberal democracies of the Atlantic have been substantiated by intelligence services as well as scholars and policymakers - this constitutes asymmetrical warfare.

His illiberal activities are an extension of his vainglorious attempt at recreating not just the former Soviet empire, but rejuvenating the Cold War power politics.

Think-tanks warn us about the perils facing liberal democracies - e.g. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace: “American democracy is at a dangerous inflection point” - a sentiment reflected by the EU and other groups in Europe.

Thus, as du Bois alerted us in the first half of the twentieth century, the domestic and the international are indeed intertwined as Russia’s actions of power politics reveal.

After a question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by President Cyphert at 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Ken West

Assistant Secretary

Minutes of the 1,478th meeting of the SPHEX Club

October 6, 2022

President Katie Cyphert called the 1,478th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on October 6th, 2022.

Active members present were: Blackman, Cook, Cyphert, Doyle, Edwards, Frantz, Kershner, Gillette, Hansen, Manian, Marion, Morrison-Shetlar, Payne, Roberts, Sanders, Smith, Stinnett, Sydnor, West, Wodicka

Unable to Attend: Benda, Bradford, Dawson, Delaney, Delzingaro, Foster, Hendricks, Jablonski, Light, Lucas, McDonald, Salmon, Schewel, Sigler, Tiller, Wright.

Sphex's special guests for the evening: The Honorable John Cook's wife, Elizabeth, and two of his daughters Jean and Mary were Sphex's special guests.

The Sphex Club voted unanimously to give Hermina Hendricks emeritus status in Sphex.

There were no committee reports at this time.

Article about a Sphex Presentation – March 28, 1958

Julie Doyle brought an article from Lynchburg's newspaper (The News) that focused on a presentation made to the Sphex Club by Jerry A. Burke, Jr. in 1958. Burke was the Executive Vice President of Experiment, Inc. in Richmond. The headline was: "Speaker Sees Russians Beating U.S. To Moon." Although this prediction did not turn out to be accurate, it is possible that presentations like Burke's influenced the United States to speed up the race to the moon. (On the back of the article was a picture of Julie's mother-in-law, Patricia Ann Kinney, who was engaged to T. O. Doyle in March of 1958).

President Cyphert introduced The Honorable John T. Cook our speaker for the evening:

John Cook received his B.A. and J.D. degrees from the University of Virginia. He was elected to be a Circuit Court Judge for the Twenty-Fourth Judicial Circuit in 2008. He is also an adjunct faculty member at the University of Virginia Law School. Prior to 2008, he was a member of the law firm of Caskie & Frost for twenty-five years.

As a lawyer, he served as the representative of the Twenty-Fourth Circuit on the State Bar Council. He also served on the State Bar Committee of Lawyer Discipline. He is a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers and past chair of the Virginia Chapter of the American Board of Trial Advocates. He currently serves on the committee for the preeminent National Trial Competition for law schools and judges at the finals in Texas.

He is past president of the Lynchburg Morning Rotary Club and a Paul Harris Fellow. He has served on the board of Kids' Haven, Lynchburg Symphony Orchestra, Lynchburg Historical Society, Lynchburg Youth Services, Boonsboro Country Club and James River Day School.

He is a member of Peakland Baptist Church and has served as moderator and chairman of the Congregational Council. John is married to Elizabeth Wills Cook and they have three daughters and one grandson.

Our presenter, The Honorable John Cook, provided this abstract of his presentation entitled: "Repairing Her Faults."

I have used my SPHEX papers to go on journeys about topics I want to learn. After hearing Kim Payne's paper of 2020 that discussed the changes in municipal government from Virginia's different constitutions, I started researching the history of Virginia's constitutions. I have two quotes before I discuss the Virginia constitutions.

One is from Professor A. E. Dick Howard of UVA law school:

No document of American constitutionalism, save the Federal constitution itself, draws so deeply on the great themes of American constitutional and legal developments as does the Virginia Constitution. Its origins were

contemporaneous with the events leading to independence; some of the greatest minds of the founders' generation made contributions to it, and its development over the ensuing two centuries have been shaped by the conflicts and movements central to the history of the American nation.

A second quote is from Alexis de Tocqueville, the Frenchman who knew Democracy:

...the greatness of America lies not in being more enlightened than. . .other Nations, but in her ability to repair her faults.

The title of this paper comes from this quote—Repairing Her Faults. Part of the story of the Virginia constitution is Virginia addressing and repairing her faults.

This paper tells the story of two of Virginia's six constitutions. The first story begins in May 1776. The Continental Congress, meeting in Philadelphia, passed a resolution asking each colony to form a new government. A reluctant fifty-year old traveled to Williamsburg to serve as a delegate. He would draft the Virginia Declaration of Rights which would be the model for the United States Bill of Rights and other state's constitutions. The man was George Mason. Pictures were shown of his home, Gunston Hall, and his statue at George Mason University. Also, pictures were shown of his bust at the state Capital as well as Patrick Henry debating the Declaration of rights in a painting.

The second story, starts in 1968. It was a year of great turmoil in Virginia. Governor Mills Godwin appointed a Commission to Revise the 1902 constitution which was discriminatory. The 1902 constitution included a poll tax and literacy test that disenfranchised African Americans. It also provided for segregated schools. This resulted in the Byrd Organization controlling Virginia politics for most of the century.

The commission included a group of distinguished men. Professor A. E. Dick Howard of UVA law school was named executive director. They drafted a 542-page report that recommended a new constitution.

It was passed by two General Assemblies and went to a vote in November 1970. Professor Howard led the campaign. There was stiff opposition. It passed by a vote of 71.8%. It had an anti-discrimination clause that repudiated the 1902 constitution. It also included education in the declaration of rights. It significantly expanded Virginia's ability to borrow money to build roads and schools. The

constitution was streamlined and made easier to read. Virginia was able to repair its faults in this 1971 constitution.

After a question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by President Cyphert at 8:45.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Ken West

Assistant Secretary

Minutes of the 1,479th meeting of the SPHEX Club

October 20, 2022

President Katie Cyphert called the 1,479th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:35 p.m. on October 20, 2022. We met in Room 232, Schewel Hall, on the University of Lynchburg campus.

Active members present were: Benda, Bradford, Cook, Cyphert, Delaney, Delzingaro, Edwards, Gillette, Hansen, Jablonski, Kershner, Light, Lucas, Manian, Marion, Roberts, Sanders, Schewel, Sigler, Smith, Stinnett, Sydnor, Tiller, West, Wodicka, and Wright.

Emeritus Members Present: Wilson

Unable to Attend Were: Blackman, Dawson, Doyle, Foster, Frantz, McDonald, Morrison-Shetlar, and Salmon

There were no committee reports.

Mr. Schewel entertained members with the treasurer's report. Some parts of it may have been true:

With nothing noteworthy in the news to expand upon, your treasurer turned to the sports world for this week's report.

Although some might find most riveting the abrupt exit from the playoffs of two of the best teams in baseball – the Los Angeles Dodgers and the Atlanta Braves – or the altercation between two stars on the world champion Golden State Warriors, my attention was drawn toward the activities of my favorite football team, the New England Patriots. Even as coach Bill Belichick was facing a difficult decision as to which quarterback to start – Mac Jones or rookie Bailey Zappe – I was preparing to wager on two off-the-field matters of extreme interest.

Having just returned from the Furniture Market, I was short of cash, and thus took the liberty of borrowing \$600 from the Club Treasury. The first \$300 bet I made was whether eighty-one-year-old Robert Kraft, owner of the Patriots, would marry his forty-seven-year-old girl friend, Dana Blumberg. Well, I was as surprised as the 250 guests at Kraft's "Kickoff and Touchdown" party in lower Manhattan were when an unannounced wedding ceremony was performed.

When the new Ms. Kraft, an ophthalmologist, was asked whether the couple had been blinded by love, she said, “Certainly not. My husband was clearly seeing stars, while I was looking at a long and happy life.”

Losing that bet, I decided to double down, and wagered another \$300 that, in spite of their widely reported estrangement, surely supermodel Gisele Bundchen would accompany her husband and former Patriot quarterback, Tom Brady, to the big event. Alas, it was not to be, and another \$300 disappeared.

As to whether Mr. Brady had been blinded by love, Ms. Kraft observed that he had indeed been blinded, and by love, but it was by the love of the spotlight, the love of playing one more season, and the love of possibly collecting one more Super Bowl ring.

I get my Schewel paycheck tomorrow, and will duly replace the \$600 I borrowed (and lost), bringing the Club balance back to \$677.51.

SpheX’s special guests for the evening: Dr. Patty West, Ms. Sandra Wilson

President Cyphert introduced Dr. Ken West, our speaker for the evening:

Dr. Ken West was born in Lynchburg and raised in Raleigh, N.C. There he played on two North Carolina State High School Championship tennis teams, being captain of the second championship team. He was also captain of the Wake Forest University tennis team and selected to be Mr. Tennis for two years by the North Carolina Tennis Association. Since coming to Lynchburg, Ken has run in 25 Virginia 10 milers and ten marathons.

At the University of Lynchburg Ken was the 4th faculty member in school history to receive the national teaching award, The T.A. Abbott Award for Excellence in Teaching. Also Ken received the Shirley Rosser Award for Teaching Excellence, The James A. Huston Award for Excellence in Scholarship, and the Elsie Bock Citizenship Award. He was chosen to be the graduation speaker for Lynchburg College in 1996. In addition, he received the Lynchburg Peace Prize and was selected as the Educator of the Year by Phi Delta Honor Society.

Dr. West has written six books. Two have been translated into Czech and Indonesian. He wrote a weekly column for The News and Advance for 28 years. In case you are wondering, Ken retired after writing his 1,482nd column for the newspaper.

But his greatest pride is in his family. Ken has been married to the marvelous Dr. Patty West for 48 years. They have three children and four sometimes perfect grandchildren.

Dr. West provided this abstract of his presentation entitled *Your Earliest Memories: A theory you will NEVER forget:*

On this evening we examined our own Early Recollections and how they constantly influence the way we see life and respond to challenges. First, we looked at the life of Dr. Alfred Adler (1870-1937) the founder of Individual Psychology and the study of Early Recollections (ERs). Then we discussed the two rules that a memory must pass to be considered a true ER. It must be a one-time event that happens before the age of seven. Most people have only 4–6 ERs.

Afterwards, Dr. West shared his most influential ER. All in attendance then wrote their most significant ER on a form that also asked three questions about their chosen ER. We then looked at how experts have interpreted the ERs of a wide variety of people from the highly successful to the frequently imprisoned. Research also showed the themes in ERs that appear to have a high likelihood of leading people to choose certain professions and ways of life.

Dr. West explained that delinquents, the imprisoned and students who have chronic behavior problems generally have very negative ERs that predict a lifetime of trouble. Change is possible but quite challenging to bring about. High achievers, such as Sphinx Club members, might also have ER directions that need to be altered or added to at some time in their lives. Dr. West explained how the ER he shared that evening helped him in many ways until he graduated from college. At that time he struggled until a psychology professor taught his class how to interpret their ERs. At that point, Dr. West knew that the beliefs and directions carried in his ER that influenced his behavior and feelings needed to change. And, miraculously they did.

The following quote from Alfred Adler reflects his view of the influence of ERs: “There are no ‘chance memories.’ Out of the incalculable number of impressions which meet an individual, he chooses to remember only those which he feels, however darkly, to have a bearing on his situation. Thus, his memories represent his ‘Story of my Life’; a story he repeats to himself to warn him or comfort him, to keep him concentrated on his goal, to prepare him, by means of past experiences, to meet the future with an already tested style of action.”

Dr. West closed with the suggestion that we all help our children and grandchildren create helpful ERs even during the most difficult times.

A question and answer period followed the talk, during which insightful questions and comments were made by Messrs. Stinnett, Gillett, and Kershner. The meeting was adjourned by President Cyphert at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
James W. Wright, Secretary

Minutes of the 1,480th meeting of the SPHEX Club

November 3, 2022

President Katie Cyphert called the 1,480th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:34 p.m.

Active members present were: Bradford, Cook, Cyphert, Delaney, Delzingaro, Edwards, Gillette, Hansen, Jablonski, Marion, McDonald, Roberts, Salmon, Schewel, Sigler, Stinnett, Sydnor, Tiller, West, Wodicka, Wright.

Regrets to the speaker were received from Doyle, Kershner, Light, Lucas, Manian, Morrison-Shetler, Smith and Sanders

Sphex's special guests for the evening were the speaker's son, Craig Tiller, and his grandson, Jacob Tiller.

Minutes of the October 20 meeting were approved without correction or addition.

Treasurer's Report: Mr. Schewel gave the following report:

At our last meeting I duly followed Professor West's instructions, and recorded an early recollection. I'm glad he didn't call on me to share it, because it's hardly worth recounting, although it did teach me a lesson which I have for the most part adhered to for seventy years.

For two weeks I've been trying to summon an early recollection which this Club might find more interesting and relevant.

My father was somewhat of a practical joker. One day when I was around eight, he presented my sister and me twin piggy banks. He said he had given each bank a name corresponding to its owner, written each name on a slip of paper, and dropped both slips into the banks. If we saved enough money, he would open the banks, give us the money, and reveal the names.

My sister Donna was two years younger than I, and we were very different in temperament. I was quiet and studious. It was easy for me to save money. I wasn't very good at sports, so I wasn't interested in that kind of equipment. I liked books, but they were readily available at the Jones Memorial Library. It wasn't long before my bank was filled to the brim. I would shake it, but the coins were packed in so tightly, they hardly jangled.

Donna was loud, easily annoyed, and a spendthrift. She could never get her hair fixed in the morning and would throw fits, which resulted in shouting matches between her and my father. She couldn't save a nickel. If she had any money, she traded it for trinkets, little toys, candy, or whatever other kids had. She would shake her bank, and a lone coin or two would rattle around.

Well, the day came when I told Donna I was ready to take my bank to our father so he could open it, give me the money, and show me the name. Donna got really angry. She smashed her bank on the floor; it split open and a couple of coins fell out.

Then she tried to grab my bank. We started hitting each other, and even though I was older and bigger, she fought with a vengeance. I remember feeling proud at saving so much money but incensed at my sister for being so jealous. Eventually, she got hold of my bank and hurled it against the wall. It broke open also, and all the money fell out.

I'm not sure what meaning lies in this recollection. Maybe it's an indicator that in future years, I would be responsible for an organization's funds. Also, I would always remember that my sister had a temper, although she would learn to control it.

More portentous, however, are a couple of salient facts. First, when I added up the value of my coins, the total came to \$677.51, which coincidentally is the amount in the Club's treasury today. And when the two slips of paper were revealed, my jokester father had labeled my sister's bank "Bad Hairy," for obvious reasons, and, because I wore glasses even at that young age, he had named mine "Specs."

President Cyphert introduced Dr. Tom Tiller, our speaker for the evening:

She pointed out that Dr. Tiller has benefited personally and professionally from education and because he is a strong supporter of the public school system, served for three terms on the Lynchburg City Schools board of directors in the 1970s, during a time when city-wide integration was accomplished and when the city incorporated a sudden, large increase in students due to annexation of land in Campbell and Bedford Counties. He chaired several Board committees, including the much-time-eating finance committee. He served on an ad hoc committee in the 1980s which recommended a career ladder program aimed at retaining, rewarding and extending the influence and expertise of master teachers. He also served on the drug-free schools advisory committee and for many years served on the board of the LCS Education Foundation. Other service of a civic nature has included three terms on the city Planning Commission (one year as chair), a Chamber of Commerce committee that studied strategies for attracting new businesses, and he was a group facilitator for the Lynchburg Dialogue on Race and Racism. He is known to SpheX members for his long career at Lynchburg

College. He also served in the US Army for two years and the Virginia National Guard for two years. He has been married to his college sweetheart, Mary Frances Carwile, for sixty-five years and has two terrific sons, Thomas and Craig, and marvelous grandchildren.

Dr. Tiller provided this abstract of his presentation entitled “Walk on Air”:

The paper opened with a brief description of the speaker’s growing interest in poetry, followed by selected definitions and descriptions of poetry and its place in our lives. For example: “Poetry is the art of rhythmical composition, written or spoken, for exciting pleasure by beautiful, imaginative or elevated thoughts;” “At crucial moments of heightened feeling, we often turn to the memorable and vivid language of poetry;” and “Let us remember ... that in the end we go to poetry for one reason, so that we might more fully inhabit our lives and the world in which we live them, and that if we more fully inhabit these things we might be less apt to destroy both.” That was followed by a discussion of the ways poetry is read. Several poets were alluded to.

In recognition of the importance of the current effort of Ukrainians to repulse Russia’s invasion and illegal occupation of their land, Ukraine’s national poet, Taras Shevchenko (1814- 1861), was noted with lines from his still-pertinent inspiring resistance poetry of 170 years ago.

Particular attention was paid to the Irish poet, teacher, translator and playwright, Seamus Heaney – the 1995 recipient of the Nobel Prize in Literature. His Nobel citation was for “works of lyrical beauty and ethical depth, which exalt everyday miracles and the living past.” Several of Heaney’s poems were cited with selected lines from each.

Extended consideration was given inspirational poetic lines created by Heaney for insertion into “The Cure at Troy . . .,” his translation of Sophocles’ play, “Philoctetes.” Those lines included the famous, “History says, *Don’t hope On this side of the grave*, But then, once in a lifetime The longed-for tidal wave Of justice can rise up, And hope and history rhyme. So hope for a great sea-change On the far side of revenge. Believe that a further shore is reachable from here. Believe in miracles And cures and healing wells.”

Heaney’s final writing, *noli temerus* (be not afraid), done from a hospital as a text message to his wife, was noted, as was the epitaph on Heaney’s gravestone - *Walk On Air Against Your Better Judgement* - from his poem “The Gravel Walks.” In closing, the speaker emphasized the message of facing reality with the forgiveness, hope and courage depicted in several of Seamus Heaney’s works, and invited questions, thoughts and sharing of poems.

A discussion followed with questions and remarks from McDonald, Stinnett, Payne, and Sigler.

The meeting was adjourned by president Cyphert at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James W. Wright
Secretary

Minutes of the 1,481st meeting of the SPHEX Club

November 17, 2022

President Katie Cyphert called the 1,481st meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on November 17, 2022.

Active members present were: Blackman, Bradford, Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Delzingaro, Elliott, Frantz, Hansen, Jablonski, Kershner, Light, Manian, Marion, McDonald, Morrison-Shetlar, Roberts, Salmon, Sanders, Schewel, Sigler, Smith, Stinnett, Sydnor, Tiller, West, Wilson, Wright.

Emeritus Members Present:

Unable to Attend Were: Benda, Doyle, Edwards, Foster, Gillette, Lucas, Payne, Wodicka

Sphex's special guests for the evening: Dr. Wright's wife Marty and son Beau were present.

Nancy Marion is the new Assistant Secretary

Among many other contributions, Nancy writes a weekly column for the *News & Advance* called the "Mystery Picture of the Week" and is the publisher of the history magazine, *Lynch's Ferry*.

Treasurer's Report

I submit my report without any qualm,
Inspired by our speaker, a Tiller named Tom.
The subject of his oratory
Was his burgeoning love of poetry,
And he delivered his talk with his usual aplomb.

I'm an avid reader of history and fiction,
But poetry to me is an abominable affliction.

I'd never heard of Taras Shevchenko,
Not only a poet but a resister to Moscow,
Whose cries for Ukraine ring with glorious conviction.

If Tom likens poetry to walking on air,
When Schewel sees rhymes, he thinks beware
Of Shelley, Frost, Graves, and Shannon,
Berry, Kilmer, Hughes, and Bob Dylan.
Deciphering their verse is an exercise in despair.

There's no way, friend Tom, to make poetry fun.
Even the great Seamus Heaney is one I must shun.
Instead of the wit of Ogden Nash,
I'll continue to read nothing but trash,
And report to the Club a bank balance of \$677.51.

Report from Ad Hoc Library Committee

Dr. Jim Wright reported that the committee is making outstanding progress, and they have been in conversation with the new Executive Director, Deb Smith. The 524 SpheX presentations available will eventually be accessible on the Internet. More progress reports will be available soon.

President Cyphert introduced Dr. Jim Wright our speaker for the evening:

Jim Wright is a Lynchburg native, a graduate of E.C. Glass High School and the University of Virginia. An English major, he required remedial science training, which he obtained at William & Mary before returning to UVA for medical school. He did his postgraduate medical training, including a fellowship in endocrinology and serving as chief resident in internal medicine, at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston. He practiced medicine in Austin, Texas, and Lynchburg, and left a solo practice in 1992 to join the medical department at First Colony Life. He retired from Genworth Financial last year. He is a past president

of the Lynchburg Academy of Medicine and currently president of the board of the Free Clinic and also serves on the boards of the Greater Lynchburg Community Foundation and the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities. He and Marty have thus far enjoyed 41 years together and have four adult children and three grandchildren.

Our presenter, Dr. Jim Wright, provided this abstract of his presentation entitled:

Dr. Wright began by telling the story of Vaughan Smith, a high school graduate who lives in Washington, D.C. and was featured in a Washington Post article in April 2022. Mostly self taught, Smith speaks over forty languages. Early reports of other individuals with remarkable abilities were described. Dr. John Langdon Down described a series of cases in 1887 and coined the term “idiot savants” to describe such individuals, a term that has been retired in favor of savant syndrome. While no universally accepted definition of the syndrome exists (it is not included in the current edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association), a definition proposed by Dr. Darold Treffert is widely accepted: “a condition in which persons with various developmental disabilities, including Autistic Disorder, have astonishing areas of brilliance, ability or talent—‘islands of genius’—that stand in jarring, marked contrast to overall handicap.” Brief video clips of three persons with savant syndrome—George Finn, Steven Wiltshire, and Kody Lee—were shown.

Wright listed the salient characteristics of savant syndrome. It occurs in persons with significant mental disability and may be developmental or acquired due to brain trauma, is associated with autism in fifty percent of cases, and always includes a prodigious, though specialized memory. He reviewed the definition of autism and the history of that disorder.

Wright reviewed Treffert’s categorization of savant skills by their complexity: splinter skills, which involve memorization within a narrowly focused area of interest; talented savants who express musical, artistic or other special abilities, and prodigious savants, whose special skills would be spectacular or impossible even

for a non-impaired person. Savant skills are also categorized by the type of skill. The most common include calendrical, mathematical (including hypercalculia, the ability to perform mind-boggling calculations rapidly, and numerosity, the ability to accurately estimate numbers of objects without counting), mnemonist (prodigious memory feats), artistic, and musical. Examples were provided. Linguistic savants are much rarer. Vaughan Smith's history suggests the possibility of autism, though the Washington Post article did not report that diagnosis.

Several theories to explain savant syndrome were discussed. The most useful explain its relationship to autism and male sex. Chief among them is the left brain damage/right brain compensation model, based on what is known about brain hemisphere specialization and the observation that most people with developmental or acquire savant syndrome have suffered some damage to the parietal or temporal lobes of the left hemisphere. This could result in the assumption of the impaired functions by the right hemisphere, with its distinctly different cognitive abilities, either by rewiring or by removal of left hemisphere inhibitory control of the right with the consequent emergence of right hemisphere abilities. Empiric evidence and experimental studies that support this theory, including the emergence of savant skills in some persons with fronto-temporal dementia, and the results of experiments using transcranial magnetic stimulation, were discussed. A companion hypothesis is based on the known slower maturation of the left hemisphere, both *in utero* and *post partum*, and the potential for aberrantly high testosterone levels during a critical phase of fetal development to further slow left hemisphere development, resulting in the emergence of right hemisphere dominance.

Wright briefly reviewed the atypical memory characteristic of savants, that appears to involve the abnormal prolongation of sensory or short term memory, possibly due to an impaired ability to "forget" what are normally very transient memories. He then briefly mentioned theories based on cognitive styles ("weak central coherence") and hypersystemisation (an unusual, intense focus on developing law-based pattern recognition). Genetic theories based on an observed chromosomal abnormality and a hypothesis based on inherited knowledge were mentioned.

The speaker concluded by observing that while much has been learned about the functioning of human brain, much remains a mystery. The rare islands of genius that we encounter offer us tantalizing clues to capabilities locked away within each of us, and provide avenues for future research that promise not only insights and treatments for autism and other cognitive disorders, but might also reveal opportunities to expand human cognitive potential.

After a question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by President Cyphert at 9:15 (or so—the new assistant secretary wrote it down and promptly lost it).

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Marion
Assistant Secretary

Minutes of the 1,482nd meeting of the SPHEX Club

January 12, 2023

President Katie Cyphert called the 1,482nd meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:35 p.m. on January 12, 2023.

Active members present were: Bradford, Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Doyle, Frantz, Gillette, Hansen, Jablonski, Lucas, Marion, McDonald, Morrison-Shetlar, Roberts, Salmon, Sanders, Schewel, Sigler, Smith, Stinnett, Sydnor, Tiller, West.

Emeritus Members Present:

Unable to Attend Were:

Benda, Blackman, Delzingaro, Edwards, Foster, Kershner, Light, Manian, Payne, Wodicka, Wright

Treasurer's Report:

The bottom line is: \$677.51.

For the full, unexpurgated, extraordinary report, see the video linked here:  [Schewels](#)

It will be available for only a couple of weeks.

President Cyphert introduced Ted Delaney our speaker for the evening:

Ted Delaney is the Director of the Lynchburg Museum System and Chief Public History Officer for the City of Lynchburg. The Museum System is responsible for operating the Lynchburg Museum at the Old Court House and Point of Honor in Daniel's Hill. Delaney is a graduate of E.C. Glass High School and the University of Virginia, and is the former Executive Director of Lynchburg's Old City Cemetery. Tonight's presentation is dedicated to his predecessor and former SpheX member, the late Tom Ledford.

Our presenter, Ted Delaney, provided this abstract of his presentation entitled:

THE SPIRIT OF '76

The last time the city of Lynchburg annexed land from surrounding counties to enlarge its borders was almost half a century ago. The Hill City's 1976 annexation was one of the most important and consequential turning points in local history, and it continues to impact on our city and region today.

In early 1972 the City of Lynchburg initiated the formal process to annex 50 square miles from its three surrounding counties. Motivated by an acute lack of available land for new development, an aging and stagnant population, and "spectacular" growth outside city limits without zoning or planning, Lynchburg did what was customary and even expected of cities in Virginia for centuries.

After two years of legal proceedings, delays, and a five-week trial, a special court approved Lynchburg's annexation, but only granted the City 25 square miles from Bedford and Campbell Counties. At midnight on December 31, 1975, the city instantly doubled in land area, and almost 14,000 county residents became citizens of Lynchburg overnight. As a direct result of the annexation, Lynchburg had to build a new, multi-million-dollar high school and create a new, four-ward system to elect city council members. The city struggled for years with turmoil in local politics—and deep resentment from both annexed residents and neighboring counties.

The 1976 annexation was the most ambitious expansion of the city undertaken in its history. It came at a tremendous cost: four years of legal battles, over \$20 million (\$110 million in today's dollars) spent by the City, and profound damage to regional relationships. Unfortunately the Commonwealth's unique system of independent cities makes annexation in Virginia more divisive and adversarial than almost anywhere else in the nation. This, combined with an ongoing moratorium on annexation by the General Assembly, means that Lynchburg may never grow in geographic size again. Given this reality, how will the city thrive and prosper in the 21st century? How can Central Virginia as a region be competitive and prosperous if its central urban anchor is locked in size and struggles economically?

After a question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by President Cyphert at

8:53

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Marion

Assistant Secretary

Minutes of the 1,483rd meeting of the SPHEX Club

January 26, 2023

President Katie Cyphert called the 1,483rd meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on January 26, 2023.

Active members present were: Blackman, Bradford, Cook, Cyphert, Delaney, Doyle, Frantz, Gillette, Hansen, Jablonski, Light, Lucas, Marion, McDonald, Payne, Roberts, Salmon, Sanders, Schewel, Sigler, Stinnett, Tiller, West, Wodicka.

Unable to Attend Were:

Benda, Dawson, Delzingaro, Edwards, Foster, Kershner, Manian, Morrison-Shetlar, Smith, Sydnor, Wright.

Guest:

Joe Stinnett introduced his wife, Ellen, as his guest for the evening.

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved as submitted.

Treasurer's Report:

During another entertaining report, complete with balance sheets and mysteriously peppered with Schewel's ads, we found out that the bottom line is still \$677.51.

President Cyphert introduced Joe Stinnett our speaker for the evening:

Joe Stinnett is a writer and retired newspaper editor who lives with his wife Ellen in Lynchburg.

He's currently finishing up a book on the hundreds of forgotten Lynchburg people who emigrated willingly to West Africa, or were coerced into moving there by the American Colonization Society in the 19th century. The book began as his second SPHEX speech and with much encouragement and advice from SPHEX members Tom Tiller and Ken West, is on track to be published by the UVA Press in 2024.

Joe is also associated with the non-profit news operation for western Virginia, Cardinal News, where he is a member of the journalism advisory committee. He also wrote several stories in 2022 for Cardinal News, including pieces on Sam Kelso, a Black Lynchburg resident now regarded as a founder of public education in the state; the history of the Virginia batteaux, and The 1619 Project.

Joe, a graduate of Amherst County High School and the University of Virginia, began working as a journalist for the Lynchburg paper in 1974. He was also a reporter and editor for the Amherst

and Nelson weekly papers in the 1970s, then returned to The News & Advance in 1980, working as reporter, city editor, and finally managing editor. The paper won multiple awards as the state's best mid-size daily under his guidance and he also had oversight of multiple other Virginia and North Carolina newsrooms and briefly the WSLC-TV news operation in Roanoke. He left the Lynchburg paper to become editor of The Roanoke Times and retired from daily journalism in 2014.

Joe's wife, Ellen, is a Lynchburg native — a graduate of E.C. Glass and Virginia Tech — and a retired public school teacher who taught math at Sandusky Middle School. Their two grown sons are both Heritage High School graduates. His older son, Drew, went to VCU and is now a senior network administrator at Duke University, specializing in network security. Joe's younger son, Patrick, owns Camp Quiet, a digital studio in Richmond that builds websites for clients including Sonos Radio, the ACLU, and IBM. Joe and Ellen also have three grandchildren.

Our presenter, Joe Stinnett, provided this abstract of his presentation entitled:

“What Demi-god Hath come so near creation?”

19th century developments in Lynchburg

Joe Stinnett's fifth Sphex speech was about Peter Gibbs and the practice of daguerreotype photography in 1850s Lynchburg. Essentially, daguerreotypes were the first photographs. Gibbs had a busy studio and his subjects ranged from Mary Brice, an enslaved woman who worked at Point of Honor, to Samuel Garland Jr., a lawyer, slave master, and future Confederate general. Stinnett also speculated that Gibbs may have taken the earliest known photograph of Lynchburg itself, an 1853 view of the riverfront.

The final decade before the Civil War was the height of the daguerreotype's reign before it was replaced by newer technologies. Louis Daguerre, a French painter, set designer and theatrical producer, was among multiple amateurs who spent years in the 1820s and 1830s working on the chemistry and optics of preserving detailed shadows cast by sunlight and focused through a lens. Other early attempts involved paper, but Daguerre worked with a piece of copper roughly the size and thickness of a playing card, coated with a silver solution, then polished and buffed to a brilliant shine. His 1839 patent for the process, which the French government purchased and made available to the world, was in use in Central Virginia by 1840.

These small images quickly became treasured keepsakes. They were unique objects because there was no negative involved. They couldn't be reproduced endlessly like a film or digital photograph. The process was so revolutionary that the French government bought the patent from Daguerre in 1839 with an award of 10,000 francs, and shared the method with the world. Still, photography was more like chemistry than art with multiple chemicals involved, including fumes of mercury and bromide which could be fatal if inhaled.

The speech included a slide presentation of other Gibbs images and also touched briefly on Lynchburg itself in the 1850s as well as local photography marketing, prices and Gibbs' competition in town. The title of his speech came from another Lynchburg studio's advertisement which included the Shakespeare near-quotation from *The Merchant of Venice*, referring to a small painted portrait.

The Gibbs daguerretotype of Ms. Brice is the only known image of an enslaved Lynchburg person from this era. A few years later, Gibbs moved back to Richmond and became an industrial pattern maker as daguerreotypes were replaced by ambrotypes and tintypes, and paper prints mounted on cardboard.

After a question and answer period, including examples of tintypes, an ambrotype, and paper prints, the meeting was adjourned by President Cyphert at 8:48

The next meeting will be held February 9th at the University of Lynchburg. The speaker will be Julius Sigler with a talk entitled, "It's About Time!"

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Marion
Assistant Secretary

Minutes of the 1,484th meeting of the SPHEX Club

February 9, 2023

President Katie Cyphert called the 1,484th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m.

Active members present were: Blackman, Bradford, Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Edwards, Frantz, Hansen, Light, Marion, Morrison-Shetlar, Payne, Roberts, Salmon, Schewel, Sigler, Smith, Sydnor, Tiller, West, Wodicka, Wright.

Regrets to the speaker were received from Delzingaro, Gillette, Jablonski, Kershner, Lucas, Manian, and Sanders

Sphex's special guests for the evening were the speaker's wife, Jan Sigler, who announced that this was the first Sphex talk she has attended.

Minutes of the January 26 meeting were approved without correction or addition.

Treasurer's Report: Mr. Schewel gave the following report:

Like many other organizations, the Sphex Club benefited greatly from the pandemic.

It wasn't eligible for the Paycheck Protection Program, since it didn't have any employees, although I would submit that maintaining the high standards of the biweekly Treasurer's Report has become a part-time full-time job. Fortunately, my duties at Schewel Furniture Company are not so onerous as to prevent me fulfilling my Sphex Treasurer obligations.

But I digress.

The ubiquitous coronavirus compelled the Club not only to resort to remote Zoom meetings but also to suspend its annual social in 2020 and 2021. The result of these measures was an accumulation of \$1293.56 in the Treasury over three years, which was reduced to \$677.51 by an expenditure of \$616.05 to cover the cost of a very limited assortment of light hors d'oeuvres at this season's inaugural in-person meeting in September 2022.

As your Treasurer, I began to feel very uncomfortable retaining these funds in an essentially dormant account for this lengthy period of time. After all, this money is merely the remaining total of dues assessed against the members in previous years, and since it is excess unused cash,

it seems wrong to hold on to it when it could be refunded to the dues payers, who could deploy it to fulfill their needs and desires and perhaps to benefit the local economy.

Some member might even decide to use their proceeds to buy new furniture – granted not much furniture, but I know that even the purchase of a decorative pillow or two at Schewels Home will be greatly appreciated by the proprietors.

But I digress.

Fearful that such a momentous decision might exceed my authority, I broached the subject with our esteemed president, Katie Cyphert, who, sympathetic to my dilemma, suggested that we convene a committee of all current officers.

If you've been keeping up with the antics of our newly-installed City Council members, you will understand that reaching a consensus among folks with seemingly similar political views is not as simple as you might assume.

Ms. Cyphert agreed that the money should be returned to the members, and insisted that it be done immediately. Dr. James Wright, Secretary, also wanted to make a refund but preferred that it be done in stages so that some money would be available should any emergency arise. Joe Stinnett, Vice-President, said the amounts involved were so minimal that they might be better used *in toto* to make a major purchase. He offered to scour all antique stores and estate sales in the area for old photographs of Sphex members. Assistant Secretary Nancy Marion perked up when she heard Joe's proposal, but wanted to use half the money to mount an exhibit of the photographs in the Schewel Hall lobby.

As for me, well, contributing to the décor of Schewel Hall sounded good, although I thought a better choice would be a plush lounge chair embroidered with a red and black hornet from Schewels Home.

I doubt you would be surprised if I told you that such a wide divergence of opinions could not be resolved in just one meeting. We moved to adjourn, think about the options, and reconvene a week later.

It only took another hour of discussion, but I'm happy to report that our committee reached what I consider to be a fair and wise solution.

I'm even happier to inform you that, as his or her share of the Sphex Club Treasury, each member is entitled to gift card from Schewels Home in the amount of \$22.56. And you won't even have to wait to receive them in the mail, because I have them right here to distribute tonight. These cards may have a face value of \$50, but we've programmed them to an actual value of \$22.56.

Your gift card expires in ninety days from the issue date. It is not redeemable for cash. It cannot be applied to an account balance or previous sale. You must bring the gift card to the store and surrender it upon use. Schewels or SpheX is not responsible for lost or stolen gift cards.

President Cyphert introduced Dr. Julius Sigler, our speaker for the evening:

Julius Sigler graduated from Lynchburg College with a B.S. in physics in 1962. Following graduate study leading to the doctorate in physics from the University of Virginia, he joined the Lynchburg College physics faculty in August, 1967. He taught physics, astronomy and mathematics for the next four decades, retiring as Vice President and Dean of the Faculty in 2015.

His community activities have mostly centered on young people, as Chair of the Lynchburg Aquatics League, in various roles with the Boy Scouts of America, and as a volunteer in many aspects of the Lynchburg City Schools, including service as the founding Chair of the Lynchburg Strings Boosters, as part of the group who helped to create the Central Virginia Governor's School for Math Science and Technology, service on various parent advisory groups and on the School Board. He served five terms as an elected Director of the Robert E. Lee Soil and Water Conservation District.

He and his wife Jan, who was his college suite mate, will celebrate their 58th wedding anniversary in June. They have three grown sons, all of whom graduated from Heritage High School. Jonathan graduated from Lynchburg College and currently lives and works in Greenwood Village, Colo. Jaime holds degrees from the University of Virginia and Georgia Tech and works as an environmental manager at BWXT. Jeff graduated from the University of Virginia and Yale and teaches at the Watkinson School in Hartford, Conn.

Following her introduction, Dr. West reminded members that Dr. Sigler's stature at the University of Lynchburg is reflected in the fact that the Hobbs Science Building was renamed Hobbs-Sigler Hall in his honor in 2016.

Dr. Sigler provided this abstract of his presentation entitled "It's About Time!":

This paper describes the speaker's beginning to question the many differences between commonly held beliefs about American core values and American reality. He began by discussing the first line of the Declaration of Independence and its implicit religious origins, especially the belief that America is not only blessed by God in a special way, but that God is on our side.

The paper then briefly outlined three narratives that are commonly held by Americans and why one should regard each with at least a bit of skepticism. The first is the American belief that we are fundamentally different from other nations—that we are somehow superior, and that this superiority requires us to bear special responsibilities.

The second narrative says that we as a nation behave better than other nations—that we respect human rights, are a nation of laws, that we are peace loving and that we above all celebrate and enjoy liberty.

A third narrative argues that our nation has been successful because of the brilliance of its founders and the US Constitution, the importance of individual liberty and the creativity and hard work of the American people.

While the paper makes no attempt to resolve these issues, it concludes with a very brief discussion of the "American Way of Life."

A discussion followed with questions and remarks from Sydnor, Payne, Roberts, Light, Cook, Frantz, Tiller and Wodicka.

The meeting was adjourned by president Cyphert at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
James W. Wright
Secretary

Minutes of the 1,485th meeting of the SPHEX Club

February 23, 2023

President Katie Cyphert called the 1,485th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:35 p.m. Due to a failure to schedule our usual room for the spring semester, we met in Room 231 of Schewel Hall on the University of Lynchburg campus. The business portion of the meeting was held in this room but then, due to difficulties with the audiovisual equipment, we decamped to our usual room (#232), which was not being used, for Mr. Payne's presentation.

Active members present were: Blackman, Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Delzingaro, Doyle, Edwards, Hansen, Light, Lucas, Manian, Marion, McDonald, Payne, Roberts, Sanders, Salmon, Schewel, Sigler, Smith, Stinnett, Sydnor, Tiller, West, Wodicka, Wright.

Regrets to the speaker were received from Bradford, Frantz, Jablonski, and Morrison-Shetlar.

Sphex's special guests for the evening was the speaker's wife, Leslie Payne.

Minutes of the February 9 meeting were approved without correction or addition.

Treasurer's Report: Mr. Schewel gave the following report:

After Dr. Sigler's insightful and provocative analysis at our last meeting of America's core beliefs – which he identified, in simple terms, as exceptionalism, humanitarianism, and constitutional integrity – and our subsequent discussion on the current state of the great American experiment, or empire, if you will, maybe it's about time for me to get serious about the numbers.

The Sphex Club has in its account at Bank of the James \$677.51, or \$22.56 per member. It has no debt, no liabilities, no outstanding invoices.

The current United States federal debt is \$31.568 trillion, or \$94,000 per citizen. Assuming Centra Health reports \$1 billion in annual revenues, it would take 31,000 years for it to report an equivalent amount.

The current annual United States gross domestic product is \$26.225 trillion. The ratio of the federal debt to gross domestic product is 120%. In the year 2000, that ratio was 59%.

The United States Treasury's current annual tax revenue, including personal income taxes, payroll taxes, corporate income taxes, and tariffs is \$4.610 trillion. The current United States government annual spending is \$6.015 trillion. The current annual federal deficit is \$1.405 trillion. That much will be added to United States federal debt in 2023.

The Congressional Budget Office projects annual deficits to average \$2 trillion over the next ten years.

The four highest components of the federal government's current annual spending are Medicare and Medicaid benefits at \$1.530 trillion, Social Security benefits at \$1.259 trillion, defense at \$0.778 trillion, and interest at \$0.533 trillion. The last item is expected to increase 35% by year end due to rapidly rising rates.

If you're worried about your Social Security payments, despite outlays exceeding income by \$88 billion over the past two years, the Trust Fund's current balance is \$2.830 trillion, and actuarially is projected to remain solvent until 2035. Of course, there's no money in the Fund, only special Treasury bonds, as all Social Security surpluses over the past forty years have been transferred to the government's operating accounts to reduce its annual deficits.

The United States government's total unfunded liabilities – which consist of Social Security, Medicare, and pensions among other obligations – currently amount to \$181 trillion. Fortunately, these are offset by an approximate equivalent amount in national assets, provided the government can get full value for things like its stockpile of nuclear weapons, its fleet of nuclear submarines, its air force of bombers, jet fighters, and guided missiles, and its real estate in Washington, DC.

The United States will mark its 250th anniversary in 2026, and its one hundredth year as a world power. Rome as republic and empire reigned for one thousand years. The Greeks dominated the Eastern Mediterranean for eight hundred years. Egypt as a civilization was preeminent in the ancient world for twenty-seven centuries. Even the most sanguine among us would find it difficult to imagine our own American Empire equaling or surpassing any of those in longevity.

If the numbers I presented don't convince you, moving from the sublime to the ridiculous, here's more evidence.

In December 2022, with input from a coalition which included the American Home Furnishings Alliance, the Home Furnishings Association, Parents Against Tip-overs, the Consumer Federation of America, and Kids in Danger, Congress passed the Stop Tip-overs of Unsafe Risky Dressers on Youth, or STURDY Act. This Act established a reasonable, workable, and broadly accepted testing standard to mitigate furniture tip-overs.

A month before the Act was signed into law the Consumer Products and Safety Commission published its own rule regarding tip-overs. This rule requires manufacturers to calculate each unit's "tip-over moment" individually, creating not one testing standard but many.

Further, the rule will most likely necessitate the addition of up to one hundred pounds of counterweight to clothing storage pieces. This will make the furniture nearly impossible to engineer and completely unmanageable from a sales, delivery, and installation standpoint. The safety of warehouse and delivery teams will be threatened. Customers will have difficulty moving furniture after it's delivered. The significant increase in the cost of manufacturing will make the retail prices of these items almost prohibitive. Many consumers will turn to second-hand models or defer replacing their older units, thereby undermining the CPSC safety goals.

The agency has set a May 24 implementation date of its rule, which is highly impractical considering the lead time necessary to redesign the products affected and to develop testing equipment.

Sadly, I fear that all too often poorly-conceived measures like this one are defining the American Way.

Meeting Room Discussion

Following Mr. Schewel's informative report, a brief discussion was held regarding the pros and cons of the two meeting rooms we have used in Schewel Hall. Room 231, where this meeting began, was lauded for its comfortable seats and large central table, reminiscent of our long-time meeting place, the board room of Pacific Life. Members were not enthusiastic about the audiovisual equipment: large video monitors on the side walls, which would prove awkward for the speaker and do not permit the use of a laser pointer. An additional difficulty this evening was that only one of the monitors could be made to connect to the speaker's computer. Room 232 is specifically designed for presentations, with gallery seating and a large projection screen (which allows use of a laser pointer) at the front of the room. Members favored this arrangement for presentations but lamented the uncomfortable seating. Some speculated that the uncomfortable seating was intended to keep college students awake during boring lectures. We then moved down the hall to room 232.

President Cyphert introduced Mr. Kimball Payne, our speaker for the evening:

Kim Payne has been married to his wife Leslie for 48 years. They have five children and eleven grandchildren. A twelfth is anticipated this Fall.

Kim spent his early years in Lynchburg, grew up in Lexington, attended Duke University and then the University of Virginia. He served in the U.S. Navy, both on active duty and in the reserves, retiring as a Commander. His local government service started in Spotsylvania County, Virginia, where he spent seventeen years as Assistant County Administrator and then County Administrator. Kim returned to Lynchburg in 2001 and served as its City Manager until his retirement in 2016. He now spends his time serving on several non-profit boards, teaching, coaching, consulting, gardening, practicing yoga, playing softball in season, and learning to fly-fish; all of which can be interrupted to spend time with his grandchildren.

This is Kim's twentieth year in SPHEX and his eighth presentation. Its title is, "Now, What?"

Mr. Payne provided this abstract of his presentation entitled "What, Now?":

For his eighth SPHEX presentation, Kim provided an update of his sixth presentation, given in 2018. That presentation, "Should They Stay, or Should They Go?" was shortly after the "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville that was sparked, in part, by the City's action to remove equestrian statues of Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson that stood in prominent downtown

locations. In Lynchburg, the Jubal Early monument at the intersection of Memorial and Fort Avenues was destroyed by an automobile in 2002 and the replica that replaced it was damaged in 2012 by another auto strike. After the latter incident the monument was moved about twenty feet to another location. In both cases, the monument was restored “without fanfare.” Recalling the two incidents, Kim asked, as he did in 2018, if the monument was damaged or destroyed again, what would the public reaction be?

In 2018, a provision in the Code of Virginia, adopted in 1904, that authorized the erection of monuments to war veterans on public property also included a prohibition against their removal or alteration. In Virginia, localities that wanted to address community concerns about publicly sanctioned Confederate monuments or memorials lacked the legal authority to act. The statute was amended in 2020 after Democrats claimed control of both houses of the General Assembly and the Governor’s mansion. The revised statute allows local governing bodies to remove, relocate, contextualize, or cover monuments or memorials after meeting certain procedural requirements. It also allows for an advisory referendum. This provoked Kim’s new question, and the title of his presentation, “Now, What?”

The presentation provided updated polling results on public attitudes regarding Confederate memorials, reviewed the history of their erection nationally and in Virginia, relying on information compiled by the Southern Poverty Law Center, and focused on Confederate monuments and memorials in Lynchburg. It then reported on what had happened since the July 1, 2020 effective date of the amended State Code.

Over 100 Confederate monuments or memorials have been removed or renamed in the Commonwealth. This includes the removal of twenty-nine monuments and the renaming of schools, other public buildings, and roads. There have also been nine advisory referenda, all with results resoundingly in favor of keeping Confederate monuments on courthouse greens. There have been no successful conceptualizations of monuments because the State has not yet approved the regulations that will govern that action. Experiences in the Town of Farmville, Mathews County, Tazewell County, and the City of Roanoke were used as illustrations.

Kim concluded his presentation by speculating on how Lynchburg might go about addressing its Confederate memorials. Although he tended toward the conceptualization option, he encouraged full, open, honest, and respectful community engagement should the citizens desire to take on this issue. He echoed the goal of an interracial group of Virginia preservation experts who developed guidance on monument removal for the Department of Historic Resources that “decisions to remove, contextualize, or take other steps to reveal the histories of monuments designed and installed during the Jim Crow and the mid-century Civil Rights Era in twentieth-century Virginia could be an important step in community truth, reconciliation, and healing.”

A discussion followed with questions and remarks from Tiller, Gillette, Light, Cyphert, Delzingaro, Wodicka, Lucas, Stinnett, Dawson, Edwards, McDonald, and Salmon.

The meeting was adjourned by president Cyphert at 9:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
James W. Wright
Secretary

Minutes of the 1,486th SPHEX Club
March 9, 2023

President Katie Cyphert called the 1,486th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on March 9, 2023.

Active members present were: Blackman, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Delzingaro, Doyle, Frantz, Gillette, Jablonski, Kershner, Light, Lucas, Manian, Marion, McDonald, Morrison-Shetlar, Payne, Roberts, Sanders, Schewel, Sigler, Smith, Stinnett, Sydnor, Tiller, West.

Unable to Attend Were:

Benda, Bradford, Cook, Edwards, Salmon, Wodicka, Wright

Guests for the evening were: the speaker's wife, Jodi Gillette; his parents; and Dr. Scott Hyman, retired professor of physics at Sweet Briar College.

Business: President Cyphert announced that Joan Foster had requested to become an emerita member. A motion was made and seconded and was approved by the members.

Because it is now too late to plan an annual meeting for the spring, we will probably schedule it for fall.

Our next speaker, Tory Lucas will postpone his talk (the last of the year) to the snow date on April 6 because of commitments he has at Liberty University. His talk will be entitled "Avoidance."

Treasurer's Report:

The bottom line is still: \$677.51. Mr. Schewel provided this report:

Mr. Payne's revisiting of the monuments controversy at our last meeting prompted me to consider that it might be appropriate to examine the archives of our own SpheX Club to ascertain whether they might contain similar allusions to a past and a cause now regarded as tainted and best consigned to oblivion.

After all, those familiar with our Club's history will recall it was founded during the same period that those anachronistic bronze images blanketed the southern landscape.

Sure enough, I unearthed a number of papers which are likely to inflame the sensibilities of our membership. You only have to hear the titles to intuit their meaning:

- (1) Jefferson Davis: The Man and The Hour
- (2) Robert E. Lee: A Life of Service – Soldier, General, Educator
- (3) Wade Hampton: Redeemer of the South

(4) Stonewall Jackson and Jubal Early: Defenders of the Valley

(5) Jeb Stuart: He Rode for Freedom

(6) Honoring the Confederacy: the Grand Memorials of the South

If those titles aren't dispiriting enough, I found in the minutes a proposal back in 1910 to change the meaning of the acronym SpheX from Science, Philosophy, History, Education, and the X Factor to Southerners Preserving a Heritage of Exceptionalism. Fortunately, it failed by a vote of nine to six.

I wanted to add that one member made a motion that never received a second to change the name of the Club to the Ku SpheX Klan, but Jim Wright said I should keep that to myself, so I will.

After reading these papers, which took three days – some were quite long – and absorbing their content, I felt I had no choice but to bring them to the attention of the Club's Executive Committee. After all, should these papers be made public, it might impair the Club's reputation of being a diverse, open-minded, progressive, and intellectually honest organization. It might be incumbent upon us to expunge these vestiges of outdated thinking from our archival record.

But that was a decision too momentous for me to make on my own.

Naturally, there were different opinions about how to deal with this disturbing revelation. Katie Cyphert, our president, wanted to hold a referendum to gauge the sentiment of the members, both current and past. Her colleagues raised concerns that the referendum would only fuel the controversy and, regardless of the result, would be nonbinding.

Joe Stinnett, vice-president, didn't have an opinion, but said that if the papers were removed, he would try to collect old photographs of the presenters so they would not be forgotten.

Nancy Marion, assistant secretary, said that the papers should be placed in a case in the Lynchburg Museum and that some elementary school children should be invited to splash paint all over them.

Jim Wright, secretary, said we should consult Kim Payne, who after all was somewhat of an expert on Confederate memorabilia. I countered by saying that I doubted that would help since I had heard Mr. Payne deliver two talks to Club on this subject and had read his article in Lynch's Ferry Authority and I still didn't know whether he thought the monuments should stay or whether they should go.

I said a better idea would be to sell these papers on the internet, even if only for a pittance, and add the proceeds to our bank account, which stands at a measly \$677.51.

After further deliberation, it was decided that the issue should be referred to an impartial body, one with a record of acting wisely and judiciously in the past, one that would take the time to hear both sides of the case, one that would weigh all its facts and implications and discuss them openly and calmly, one whose members have the utmost respect for each other and each other's opinions and are known for their collegiality and courteous behavior, and one which actually might be considered to have jurisdiction in the matter: our own Lynchburg City Council.

We won't know until our next meeting what their decision will be. But if Mr. Payne can get two papers out of the Confederate monuments, I'm entitled to get two Treasurer's Reports out of the Club's Confederate archive.

President Cyphert introduced Dr. Michael Gillette, our speaker for the evening:

Soon after completing his Ph.D. in philosophy at Brown University, Michael Gillette and his wife Jodi came to Lynchburg in 1990 where Michael had accepted both a teaching position in the Philosophy Department at Randolph-Macon Woman's College and a clinical appointment through the University of Virginia to develop an ethics curriculum for Lynchburg Family Practice Residency. While building his consulting business, Dr. Gillette rose to the rank of Associate Professor of Philosophy and was granted tenure, which he quickly relinquished in 1997 to pursue a full-time career in the field of clinical ethics. Michael has served on a number of non-profit boards and was President of the Fine Arts Center when he engineered the merger with the Academy Theater and became the first president of the newly formed Academy of Fine Arts. He currently sits on the boards of both Rush Homes and Miriam's House, serving as project committee chairperson for the former and Vice President for the latter. He has been involved in local politics, serving three terms on Lynchburg City Council, including two terms as the City's Mayor. Michael and Jodi have two daughters, Rachel and Rebecca, and one granddaughter, Teva, with another grandchild on the way. Michael has been a member of the SPHEX Club for 21 years, junior in membership only to Tom Tiller and Julius Sigler, and will be presenting his ninth SPHEX paper this evening entitled "TOS 1-21."

Our presenter provided this abstract of his presentation:

In his ninth paper to the SPHEX Club, Dr. Gillette began with a brief description of a new-found hobby that he developed during the COVID-19 pandemic- watchmaking. While working on watches, began to consider questions regarding the ability of timepieces actually to measure time and entertained quizzical musings on common science fiction depictions of time travel. In this SPHEX paper, Dr. Gillette launched a careful examination of the nature of time itself and the possibility of time travel as depicted in popular culture. After reviewing a number of logical and physical difficulties with the concept of time travel, Dr. Gillette presented basic aspects of Einstein's Theory of Special Relativity including the reality of time-dilation. Finally, after considering the interplay of distinct frames of reference, Dr. Gillette concluded by arguing that time travel, as routinely presented in science fiction, is not possible.

Note: In his talk, Gillette made several references to *Star Trek* episodes involving time travel. One episode in particular called "Tomorrow is Yesterday" was cited. It was the 21st episode of the first season of the original series: The Original Series 1-21.

After a lengthy question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned by President Cyphert at approximately 9:05 (again, the assistant secretary dropped the ball on this).

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Marion
Assistant Secretary

The March 23, 2023 meeting
was postponed to the designated snow day,
April 6, at the speaker's request.

Minutes of the 1,487th SPHEX Club
April 6, 2023

President Katie Cyphert called the 1,487th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:32 p.m. on April 6, 2023. We met in Room 232 of Schewel Hall on the University of Lynchburg campus.

Active members present were: Blackman, Bradford, Cook, Cyphert, Delaney, Delzingaro, Doyle, Edwards, Hansen, Light, Lucas, Marion, McDonald, Schewel, Sigler, Smith, Stinnett, Tiller, and Wright.

Regrets were extended to the speaker by:

Frantz, Gillette, Jablonski, Kershner, Manian, Morrison-Shetlar, Payne, Roberts, Salmon, Sanders, Sydnor, West and Wodicka.

Guests for the evening were: the speaker's wife, Megan, and two of his students, Josh Davis and Aaron Campbell.

Business: President Cyphert announced that long-time member, Arelia Langhorne, has requested transfer from inactive to emeritus status. A motion to grant emeritus status was made and seconded and was approved by the members. The secretary will notify Ms. Langhorne.

Committees: Ad Hoc Archives Committee

President Cyphert recognized Mr. Delaney, who reported on the ad hoc committee for the SpheX archives. The committee is working with Deborah Smith, head librarian at the Jones Memorial Library. The library is in the early stages of migrating portions of its collection to an online format. The SpheX archives will serve as a pilot for this process. The library will use a third party hosted web service and has chosen Omeka, a well-known, open-source platform launched in 2008 by George Mason University. Today Omeka is operated by the nonprofit Corporation for Digital Scholarship. The process of putting our archives online will require some effort because archival information and a set of key words will have to be entered for each document. A small number of talks and about half of the SpheX minutes and all iterations of our constitution and bylaws have already been put online. Members will soon be sent access instructions and are encouraged to explore those documents to have an understanding of how the site can be used. Mr. Delaney hopes the club can formally vote on this project when it reconvenes in September.

Treasurer's Report:

After last month's presentation by Michael Gillette, I've been taking the time to think about time.

First, I was disappointed to learn that it's impossible to travel back in time. While I've only made two mistakes in my lifetime, I'd certainly welcome the opportunity to correct them. And while I wouldn't want to kill my grandfather, I can't in complete honesty say that about some other family members.

Coincidentally, some strange things have been happening with time since that meeting. On March 12th, we turned our clocks ahead leaped one hour into the future. Now, Dr. Gillette would say that's merely a mechanical adjustment not measuring anything. But try telling that to millions of time travelers who couldn't get to sleep Sunday night, who overslept on Monday, who almost had accidents on the way to work because they woke up tired and were driving in the dark, and who got sick on Tuesday, not to mention those who struggled to get their kids to school on time – whatever time that was.

Normally, we have two weeks between meetings, but this time we had four. Did that mess up anybody's clock? It did mine. I had two extra weeks to prepare my report, so I procrastinated, lost track of time, and had to come up with something at the last minute. Time dilated, and then all of a sudden it collapsed.

This week, after fifty years of getting longer, baseball games are getting shorter. A batter has eight seconds to step into the box and get ready for the pitch. A pitcher has fifteen seconds to deliver a pitch with the bases empty, twenty seconds with runners on base. Games are shrinking from three-and-a-half hours to two-and-a-half hours. Pity the poor fan who will hardly enough time to drink three beers and eat two hot dogs.

As your treasurer, it's my duty to deliver some bad news regarding the time value of money. At \$677.51, our bank balance is too small to qualify for a market interest rate. Yet inflation is running at five percent a year. So as time inexorably moves ahead, the nominal amount of money we have in the bank will remain constant at \$677.51, yet it's value will decrease so that in five years it will be worth in present dollars only \$530.85. Maybe with the state of banks today, we might be better taking the cash and stuffing it under a mattress, preferably a new one from Schewels Home. (I think I've used that joke before, but hopefully it's been such along time that you've all forgotten.)

Now, to conclude my last Treasurer's Report for the Sphex Club 2023 winter season, regardless of what Dr. Gillette says, climb with me aboard the U.S.S. Enterprise for a brief journey back in time. (Mr. Schewel then played a short video with clips of the following twentieth century hits, taking his audience, many of whom were in their youth and some of whom were not yet born when the videos were recorded, on a form of time travel.)

(1) The Byrds: Turn, Turn, Turn

(2) Cher: If I Could Turn Back Time

(3) The Rolling Stones: Time Is On My Side

(4) Chicago: Does Anybody Really Know What Time It is

President Cyphert introduced Tory Lucas, our speaker for the evening:

Professor Tory L. Lucas has served on the faculty of Liberty University School of Law since 2011. During his legal career, Tory has been a trial lawyer in private practice, served as a judge advocate in the U.S. Air Force, earned an LL.M. degree in a fellowship that focused on disability law, clerked for two federal appellate judges on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, published seventeen articles, and taught law at Creighton University School of Law, Stetson University College of Law, the University of Nebraska College of Law, and Liberty Law. Tory was the first person in his family to attend college, and a generous scholarship afforded him that opportunity. Tory now serves on the Board of Trustees of that college and has endowed a scholarship to allow similarly situated students to pursue their dreams. Tory is married to Megan A. Lucas, who serves as the CEO and Chief Economic Development Officer of the Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance. This is Tory's third Spdex presentation, which is entitled "Avoidance."

Returning to the theme of his first Spdex talk, Professor Lucas focused on the Seven Deadly Sins and their implications for legal ethics and the legal profession, this time with an emphasis on Sloth. He cited a study in which a diverse and random sample ranked sloth as less offensive than pride, but more offensive than lust, gluttony, envy, greed and wrath. He briefly reviewed the evolution of the idea of moral virtue from the Aristotelean "Golden Mean" and the evolution of the list of "Deadly Sins," all of which have at their base the elevation of the Self over others. He cited the thinking of Evagrius, a fourth century monk who equated sloth with the avoidance of important work and specified the antidote: disciplined perseverance. Evagrius and his disciple, Cassian, taught that sloth produces "a restless and anxious" spirit lacking in self satisfaction. St. Thomas Aquinas later taught that avoidance generates "an oppressive sorrow" and leads to more avoidance and thus to greater despair. Professor Lucas then applied these ancient truths to the practice of law, stating that the ethical duties of attorneys include competence, diligence, communication, loyalty and zealousness and the absence of these traits is neglect of clients, failure to meet deadlines (24–41% of legal malpractice claims are deadline-related), and ultimately denial of access to justice for clients. He pointed out that sloth (avoidance) may masquerade as busyness. As formulated by Evagrius, Lucas's antidote for avoidance is "disciplined and diligent perseverance," and placing the focus on service of the client rather than the needs of self. He emphasized that equal justice under law is a fundamental concept of law and a bedrock ideal of society, and can be realized only when those who practice law are zealous in their commitment to that principle. He quoted from President Obama's commencement address at Arizona State University in 2009. Obama warned graduates that they can "too often let the external, the material things, serve as indicators that we're doing well, even though

something inside us tells us that we're not doing our best; that we're avoiding that which is hard, but also necessary; that we're shrinking from, rather than rising to, the challenges of the age... none of us...can afford to be complacent."

Following the talk, members engaged in a discussion of the talk. Mr. Stinnett noted that corporations can be as guilty of sloth (and other sins, particularly greed) as well as individuals. Mr. Schewel countered that it is dangerous to attribute greed to corporations, since they must operate in a business environment dictated by the exigencies of the economy and competition, and must answer to their stockholders. Mr. Light observed that one of the qualities sought in leaders is a sense of urgency, a quality opposite to that of sloths and its manifestation, avoidance. Ms. Delzingaro noted that we are often seduced by the "busy-ness trap"—the avoidance of some necessary but unpalatable task by keeping busy in other ways. Cyphert emphasized the need to achieve balance—that it is important to be aware of how busy one wants to be. Dr. Blackman observed that sloth might be compounded by other "deadly sins," especially greed and pride, and that they can be addicting. Judge Cook noted that the law ~~is~~ rife with deadlines, and that lawyers with disciplinary issues usually have other issues that cause them to miss deadlines, including but not limited to alcohol or drug abuse, serious family problems, and others. Missing deadlines is a sign that these issues are not being addressed.

The meeting was adjourned by President Cyphert at 9:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
James W. Wright
Secretary

Minutes of the 1,488th SPHEX Club September 7, 2023

President Katie Cyphert called the 1,488th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on September 7, 2023. We met in Room 232 of Schewel Hall on the University of Lynchburg campus.

Active members present were: Bradford, Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Delzingaro, Doyle, Edwards, Frantz, Hansen, Jablonski, Marion, McDonald, Payne, Roberts, Sanders, Sigler, Smith, Stinnett, Sydnor, Tiller, Wodicka and Wright.

Business: President Cyphert opened the meeting and recognized Julie Doyle, who was recently appointed chair of the membership committee. (The presumptive president to be, Mr. Stinnett, appointed committee chairs and suggested potential committee members two weeks before this meeting.) Ms. Doyle put forth a slate of officers for the 2023–2024 SpheX year: Joe Stinnett, president; Nancy Marion, vice president; James Wright, secretary; Nancy Marion, assistant secretary; and Marc Schewel, treasurer. These candidates were elected by voice vote, without dissension. A sense of relief pervaded the room as other members realized they were off the hook for another year. Ms. Cyphert then turned the meeting over to President Stinnett.

Mr. Stinnett then noted **regrets** expressed by members who were unable to attend. They included Gillette, Lucas, Kershner, Morrison-Shetlar, Salmon, and West.

Guest for the evening: the speaker's wife, Judy Frantz.

Mr. Stinnett announced the chairpersons of the other committees: Nominating—Ms. Delzingaro and Dr. Frantz—Program. Ms. Delzingaro reported that there are three positions to be filled and said that her committee would propose candidates for membership within the next several meetings.

Treasurer's Report:

Mr. Schewel was traveling. In his absence, Mr. Stinnett reported that the club's treasury continues to hold \$677.51.

President Stinnett introduced Dr. David Frantz, our speaker for the evening:

Dr. Frantz grew up in Silver Spring, MD and attended the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee. He is a member of Phi Beta Kappa.

He went to Tufts University in Boston for his medical degree, then began his first residency at the University of Vermont in Internal Medicine. Dr. Frantz moved to Portland, Maine, to train in

General Surgery for four years at the Maine Medical Center. He completed his final residency with three years at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, training in Cardiothoracic Surgery.

Dr. Frantz began private practice in St. Louis where he remained for four years. In 1989, however, he came to Lynchburg to establish the Cardiac Surgery Program for Centra Health, performing the first open heart procedures for our community. The surgical program began at Virginia Baptist Hospital and then moved in 1995 to Lynchburg General Hospital. Dr. Frantz continued to serve as the Director of Cardiac Surgery until his retirement from surgery in 2015 and then began working regularly for Centra's Center for Wound Care and Hyperbaric Medicine until his final retirement in 2021.

Dr. Frantz is a past president of the Lynchburg Academy of Medicine and serves on the boards of the Centra Specialty Hospital and Westminster Canterbury.

Dr. Frantz provided the following summary of his talk on the American Chestnut entitled “Almost Gone But Not Forgotten”:

Castanea dentata, the American Chestnut, is still widespread in the Appalachian forests despite a devastating fungal blight first noted in 1904. It exists almost entirely of small plants that are not able to reach maturity due to recurrent infection by *Cryphonectria parasitica*. It is therefore termed “functionally extinct”.

The American Chestnut was a “foundational species” of the Eastern United States with a range that extended from the lowlands of the South, up the Ohio Valley, the Appalachians and coastal regions as far as Maine. They were frequently 7 feet in diameter and over 100 feet tall. Where concentrated, they comprised 1 in 4 trees in the forest and could be 80% of the canopy.

An abundant, dependable “nut mast” every year made it indispensable to early indigenous tribes as well as the hunters and trappers and subsequent subsistence farmers. Where there were chestnuts there was abundant game as well as food for families and livestock. With improved transportation, it became a popular seasonal staple for Eastern cities and therefore a cash crop for the farmers. The wood was prized for its beauty and rot resistance.

In 1904 a fungal blight was first noted and spread from New York City rapidly through the entire range of the chestnut. The importation of Japanese seedlings were felt to be responsible for the introduction of the fungus. By the 1940's the large trees were virtually gone. The animal and human communities that had relied on the chestnut were diminished, resulting in wildlife extinctions and outmigration of people from the Appalachians.

Small trees arising from old roots can frequently be seen in the chestnut's former range, including our Blue Ridge Mountains. A survey along Virginia's Appalachian Trail revealed 22 small trees per mile.

Because the related Chinese chestnut has a some resistance to the blight, breeding programs to create hybrids with the American chestnut began early with unsatisfactory results. The American Chestnut Foundation, founded in 1983 has promoted an extensive modern breeding program with significant success and the best hybrid available. However, genetic engineering has provided a transgenic tree, the Darling 58 from the research of Dr. William Powell at SUNY. It exhibits even higher resistance to the blight via the insertion of a gene from wheat. It still awaits approval from the FDA, USDA and EPA and faces opposition from anti-GMO organizations.

There is now significant popular support for the transgenic tree and continued breeding programs. Release of a blight resistant tree with real American traits would slowly transform our forests, re-establish wildlife and create new lumber materials and a food crop. However it will face an environment significantly changed over the last 120 years.

Dr. Frantz's talk concluded with a report of his visit to the American Chestnut Foundation research farm at Meadowview, Virginia, near Abingdon. There he was able to interview three staff members (Dr. Vasiliy Lakota, Ciera Wilbur, and Lauren Kerwein) and learn about the research process.

Dr. Frantz's talk elicited great interest from the members. After an extended question and answer period, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m. Ms. Judy Frantz announced to members that noted tree expert and author, Doug Tallamy, will speak at E.C. Glass High School at 7:00 p.m. on September 28. The title of his talk will be "Nature's Best Hope."

Respectfully submitted,
James W. Wright
Secretary

**Minutes of the 1,489th SPHEX Club
September 21, 2023**

President Joe Stinnett called the 1,489th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:32 p.m. on September 21, 2023. We met in Room 232 of Schewel Hall on the University of Lynchburg campus.

Active members present were: Cook, Cyphert, Delaney, Edwards, Frantz, Gillette, Hansen, Jablonski, Kershner, Marion, McDonald, Morrison-Shetlar, Roberts, Schewel, Sigler, Smith, Stinnett, Tiller, West, Wodicka and Wright.

Business: President Stinnett called for additions or corrections to the minutes of the September 7 meeting. There were none and the minutes were approved by voice vote. Mr. Delaney then reported on the activity of the Sphex Archives ad hoc committee. He asked whether any members had used the internet link sent out in the spring to examine the Sphex papers and minutes that have thus far been posted. Several members responded that they had. Jim Wright said that the process of posting the papers online was not as simple as making a searchable folder available to members. Because we are using the Jones Memorial site, library standards must be met, and that means that for each of the approximately 520 Sphex papers, key words must be extracted and a form filled out. Dr. Frantz suggested that some Sphex members might be willing to volunteer to move this process forward. Dr. Wright will meet with Ms. Deborah Smith, Director of the Library, to outline the process and ascertain how volunteers can best be employed, and will report at the next meeting.

Mr. Stinnett then raised the matter of dues, noting that dues were not collected last year. He proposed that dues be collected during October for the year 2023 and again in the spring for 2024. Dr. Frantz, as chairman of the Program committee, pointed out that funds were needed to help defray the cost of the annual meeting and to provide an honorarium for the speaker. There was a brief discussion regarding the amount before Dr. Wodicka moved that members pay \$35 in dues in the coming weeks and that dues be collected again in the spring. This motion was duly seconded and approved unanimously.

Mr. Stinnett then recognized Treasurer Marc Schewel, who provided the following report:

After waiting all summer, I know how disappointed the Club members were at the last meeting when I failed to show up for the Treasurer's Report. I was traveling out of the country – in Greece actually.

A funny thing happened on the way to the Forum. No, wait, that's the wrong country.

A funny thing happened on the way to the Agora. I noticed a medallion on the lapel of our guide's jacket. When I asked about it, he removed it and proudly showed it to me. Believe it or not, the inscription read: Sigma, Phi, Eta, Xi – pronounced in Greek (as in English), SpheX.

It turns out our guide Kostas was a member of a club in Athens similar to our own. He graciously invited me to attend the meeting which, coincidentally, was being held that night at the National Library. As their club had been founded in 400 BC, it was their 29,176th meeting. By the way, like us, the Club is in the process of digitally archiving all 29,176 talks, a task which is expected to take fifty years.

Not only was the title of the talk obscure, the entire meeting was all Greek to me. There was one moment early on where some bespectacled member made some brief comments which elicited an outburst of laughter, which, I presumed was the Treasurer delivering his biweekly report.

I was fortunate enough to obtain a written copy of the speaker's talk, which I forwarded to my nephew, Bert Schewel, who has a Ph.D. in classics. He was kind enough to read the talk and provide me with a synopsis, which I thought useful to share with you.

The title of the talk was "The Beautiful American," and the subject was why the Greeks love American tourists.

We love Americans, said the speaker, because they come to our country with unlimited credit cards and wallets stuffed with euros; because they will pay three hundred euros to taxi drivers for private all-day excursions; because they will devote hours to wandering in ninety-degree heat with hundreds of fellow travelers among ruins twenty-five centuries old; because they will swallow a twenty-percent premium to dine at a rooftop restaurant offering spectacular views of a lit-up Acropolis; because they will pay fifteen euros per person to rent chaises and umbrellas at tiny beaches without rocks; because they will troll the streets day after day shopping for sundresses and linen shirts that all look alike but vary in price from 69 to 339 euros; because they will hand over 35 euros per day to rent ATV's and risk their lives dodging cars, motorcycles, and other ATV's driven by other Americans while navigating streets built for one-way traffic; because they will join the other seventy-year-olds in their group in trying and usually failing to master Greek line and circle dances; because they will pay one hundred euros per person for a four-hour sunset cruise aboard a twenty-foot rib boat cresting five-foot waves at twenty-five knots; because they will consume copious amounts of cheap wine at every meal; and because they will observe the quaint American custom of tipping generously.

But heck, after spending two weeks with these delightful people, we love the Greeks, who went out of their way to make us feel at home and to share their wonderful food, their unique culture, and a past which is marked by both triumph and tragedy.

And if I did borrow \$677.51 from the Club Treasury to help pay for all these activities, I repaid it in euros, which, when exchanged for dollars, will be worth ten percent more.

Mr. Stinnett then noted **regrets** expressed by members who were unable to attend. They included Bradford, Doyle, Light, Lucas, Salmon, and Sydnor.

No guests attended this meeting.

President Stinnett introduced Allison Jablonski: Allison B. Jablonski is Provost and VP of Academic Affairs at the University of Lynchburg. She serves as the chief academic officer and tenured professor of Biology and Biomedical Science. She is a 1986 graduate of the College of William and Mary with a B.S. in Biology, and holds a doctorate in Human Genetics (1995) from Virginia Commonwealth University/Medical College of Virginia.

As a professor, Dr. Jablonski teaches introductory cell biology, genetics, forensic science, molecular biology, and cancer biology. She often works with students on one-on-one research projects. Her research includes the examination of cell signaling pathways in various models, including breast cancer, prostate cancer, and ‘rabbit fever’ infections caused by *Francisella tularensis*.

Dr. Jablonski currently serves several community groups in Lynchburg, including Miriam’s House and St. Paul’s Episcopal Church. Her passion includes mission outreach to underserved men, women and families. Her greatest joy is spending time with her family: her husband, Brian, and her three daughters, Lucy, Amy, and Lily. She has lived in Lynchburg for more than 25 years, and still considers it to be too far from the beach.

Dr. Jablonski introduced her topic by relating the story of the first use of DNA testing in policing to identify the perpetrator of two sexual assaults and murders in England in 1986, and to exonerate the leading suspect. She then reviewed the structure of DNA, the process of extraction, amplification and analysis of samples, and the types of DNA analysis, including VNTR (variable number of tandem repeats), STR (short tandem repeats), mitochondrial DNA and Y chromosome analysis. She discussed the limitations of DNA testing, including privacy considerations, contamination, chain-of-custody issues, as well as obvious limitations such as cost, identical twins, and the fact that presence at the crime scene does not equal guilt. She listed good sources of DNA in criminal work, which include, aside from the obvious, hair and toothbrush and relatives. She discussed the use of commercial DNA databases, such as those created by ancestry.com, familytreedna.com, and 23andme.com. She described how the degree of relatedness between individuals in the same family can be used to construct probabilities and referenced the Shared cM Project. The gedmatch.com open-source database contains over 1.8 million DNA profiles. While this database might not identify a specific perpetrator, It might place the perpetrator within a family and close to relatives in the database. She then reviewed the case of the Golden State Killer, the first person identified using this database. Finally, Dr.

Jablonski addressed the question of whether individuals such as Sphex members should have their DNA analyzed. Considerations include who should have their DNA analyzed and who will have access to that information.

A wide-ranging discussion followed the talk, with comments or questions offered by West, Frantz, Gillette, Cyphert, Marion, and Wright. By a show of hands it was determined that about one-third of those present had submitted a DNA sample to one or more commercial vendors for analysis.

Mr. Stinnett reminded members that the next meeting will be on October 5, when Marc Schewel will speak. The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
James W. Wright
Secretary

Minutes of the 1,490th SPHEX Club October 5, 2023

President Joe Stinnett called the 1,490th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:35 p.m. on October 5, 2023. We met in Room 232 of Schewel Hall on the University of Lynchburg campus.

Active members present were: Blackman, Bradford, Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Delzingaro, Edwards, Frantz, Hansen, Kershner, Marion, Morrison-Shetlar, Payne, Roberts, Sanders, Schewel, Smith, Stinnett, Sydnor, Tiller, West, Wodicka and Wright.

Business:

- President Stinnett called for additions or corrections to the minutes of the September 21 meeting. There were none and the minutes were approved by voice vote.
- **Committee Reports:**
 - *Membership:* Ms. Delzingaro reported that the committee would have a slate of proposed new members to present at the next meeting.
 - *Ad hoc Committee on Club Archives:* Mr. Delaney had no report, but Dr. Wright endorsed Dr. Frantz's suggestion, made at the last meeting, that a committee of volunteers be organized to do the work necessary to put our archives of approximately 520 papers online. To that end, Dr. Wright has an October 10 appointment with Deborah Smith, chief librarian at the Jones Memorial Library, to learn the process so that he can teach it to others. It will be possible to do the work from home at whatever pace is comfortable.
- Dues were collected from those members who remembered to bring them. Some have already mailed dues to the treasurers. Those in arrears will be dunned.

Mr. Stinnett then recognized Treasurer Marc Schewel, who provided the following report:

Mr. President, I regret to inform you that I do NOT have a Treasurer's report.

Mindful that our speaker this evening – like every speaker when his or turn comes up – has spent many hours researching and preparing his paper and is entitled to the full attention of the membership in attendance, far be from me to take up any of his valuable time, to distract in any way from the seriousness of the occasion, or to try to upstage or disrespect him by delivering some pseudo-humorous report that has only a tenuous connection to the financial state of the Club.

What speaker, anxious to take the podium and get to his task, would want to suffer through a ludicrous video about a purported SpheX savant or a series of nostalgic music videos designed to take the audience back in time or the bogus revelation that some ancient SpheX papers might face

expunging due to their shameful glorification of former Confederate heroes or a tedious discussion as to the possible distribution of dormant funds in the Club's treasury to the membership in the form of Schewel gift cards?

Not I, and I don't think any of you would either.

Therefore, I will get right to the point. Due to a sudden influx of dues, the Club Treasury has blown past its perennial balance of \$677.51, and now stands at \$957.51, a proverbial embarrassment of riches which is destined to become even more inflated once our negligent members bring their delinquent accounts up to date.

Mr. Stinnett then noted regrets to the speaker expressed by members who were unable to attend. They included Lucas, Light, Salmon, Gillette, McDonald, Doyle, and Jablonski.

Mr. Schewel introduced his guests: his son, Matthew Schewel; Barbara Verser; Lorenzo Megginson; Valerie Chambers; Delores Hicks; Millicent Nash; Valeria Megginson, and Yvette Harris.

President Stinnett introduced our speaker: Marc Schewel is a native of Lynchburg. He graduated from E.C. Glass High School in 1965 and from Washington and Lee University in 1969. Except for a brief teaching tenure at Appomattox High School, Mr. Schewel has worked all his adult life at Schewel Furniture Company, where he is currently President. Schewel Furniture Company is a retail furniture chain with fifty stores in Virginia, North Carolina, and West Virginia. Mr. Schewel, his brother, his son, and his niece are the fourth and fifth generations to own and operate this family business which celebrated its one hundred and twenty-fifth Anniversary in 2022. Mr. Schewel is involved in numerous community service activities. He is currently Chair of the Lynchburg Jewish Community Council and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Virginia. He is past Chair of the United Way of Central Virginia, past Chair of New Vistas School, past Chair of the YMCA, past Chair of the National Conference for Community and Justice, past Chair of the Salvation Army Advisory Board, past Chair of the Family Alliance, past Chair of the Greater Lynchburg Habitat for Humanity, and past President of the National Home Furnishings Association. He currently serves on the Boards of Parkview Community Mission, the Virginia Legal Aid Society, Randolph College, and the Lynchburg Housing and Redevelopment Authority. Mr. Schewel is a recipient of the John Willis Award of Merit, the NCCJ Humanitarian Award, the Mayor's Award of Excellence, the Lynchburg Chamber of Commerce George Taylor Stewart Award, the Lynchburg Bar Association Liberty Bell Award, and the Paul Harris Fellow Award. He is the father of three children, David, Sara, and Matthew, and of two stepdaughters, Kali and Adrienne. He has ten grandchildren: Lia, Ari, Ana, Mia, Ben, Frank, Jackson, Bennett, Davis, and Abigail. In his spare time Mr. Schewel enjoys exercise, reading, and duplicate bridge.

Mr. Schewel provided the following summary of his talk, titled “The Peddler and the Pedagogue”:

The subject of my talk was the partnership between Julius Rosenwald and Booker T. Washington, which resulted in the construction of 5,357 school buildings to serve black children across the South between 1913 and 1931.

I began by noting the coincidence of the turning points in the lives of his two protagonists: the late summer of 1895. On August 13th, the thirty-three-year-old Rosenwald, a clothing retailer and manufacturer, consummated his purchase of twenty-five percent of the fledgling mail-order house Sears, Roebuck. The conjoining of his organizational skills to the marketing brilliance of its founder, Richard Sears, produced geometric sales and profit increases that made him a multi-millionaire by 1910. Under the mentorship of his rabbi Emil Hirsch and industrialist William Henry Baldwin, he embarked on a secondary career of philanthropy, supporting many causes but devoting particular attention to the plight of African-Americans.

That same summer, on September 18th, Booker T. Washington delivered the most famous speech of his career at the Atlanta Cotton States Exposition. In it he emphasized black achievements since the end of slavery and predicted greater progress if racial animosity could be mitigated, if blacks and whites could see local black labor as beneficial to both employer and worker, and if social equality as a goal could be deferred to a later time. Not surprisingly, while the speech confirmed his growing prominence as the leader and spokesperson for his race, it exposed him to the criticism that would bedevil him throughout his career: that he was not aggressive enough in denouncing racial prejudice and oppression.

I briefly reviewed the highlights of that career: Washington’s appointment as headmaster of the newly-birthing Tuskegee Institute in 1881 at the age of twenty-five in place of “a well-qualified white man”; the spectacular growth of Tuskegee through his leadership and fundraising such that by 1895 it boasted the largest enrollment of its peer southern institutions; his prolific authorship, which included voluminous newspaper articles and magazine articles and three books, the most famous of which, *Up From Slavery*, his autobiography, has never been out of print; his White House dinner with President Theodore Roosevelt, which earned him more censure than approval as representing inappropriate social mingling of the races; his furtive efforts on behalf of black rights, which included his personal funding of numerous court cases; his feuds with black activists W.E.B. Dubois and William Trotter, who relentlessly impugned him for “his policy of non-resistance” and were instrumental in organizing the NAACP as a vehicle to co-opt his leadership role and sully his reputation; and finally his ongoing crusade for black education, whose abysmal state he valiantly struggled to publicize north and south while pleading for help.

Washington and Rosenwald met for the first time on May 18, 1911 at the Blackstone Hotel in Chicago at a luncheon preceding a YMCA anniversary celebration. Shortly thereafter,

Washington invited Rosenwald to join his Tuskegee Institute Board of Trustees. The two became close friends and confidantes of each other, which led to Washington's suggestion to Rosenwald that he contribute partial funding for the construction of six schoolhouses in the Tuskegee area. Following their completion in 1913, the two men formalized a plan whereby Rosenwald committed to paying up to thirty-three percent of the cost of a hundred more buildings, the balance to be raised by county residents and school boards.

By the time of Washington's death in November 1915, the program had expanded into three states, with seventy-eight schools completed, many conforming to the recommended design and curriculum published that year in the Tuskegee manual *The Negro School and its Relation to the Community*. Confident in the leadership of Tuskegee extension director Clinton Calloway, Rosenwald committed to two hundred more schools in 1916 and three hundred more in 1917 and to the addition of nine more states as eligible for assistance.

Reports of poor construction and improper accounting procedures prompted Rosenwald in 1920 to transfer management of the school building program from Tuskegee to the Julius Rosenwald Fund, a foundation he had established in 1917. Its offices were relocated to Nashville, TN. More elaborate designs were specified. Grant amounts were increased. Support was made available for teachers' homes, vocational buildings, classroom additions, and book purchases. From 1920 to 1927, an average of four-hundred-sixty-seven schools per year were built.

Edwin Embree, whom Rosenwald appointed president of the Fund in 1928, took it in a new direction. While authorizing new grants for bus service and permanent brick or concrete construction for rural schools, he redefined the program as universally "southern," and shifted its focus to large schools in urban settings. During the next four years, however, he became convinced that the program had run its course and that the time had come for white southerners to do for themselves what the Fund had been doing for them. Six months after Julius Rosenwald's death on January 6, 1932, state superintendents of education were notified that that year's appropriation would be their last.

Rosenwald and his Fund had contributed \$4.3 million toward the construction of 5,357 school buildings, and had served over 600,000 students. They had "instigated an investment in black education that would not have taken place or would have been much smaller." They had deployed grants and black self-help to obtain public funding (i.e., tax revenues) which ultimately amounted to 63.7 percent of the school's cost. They had "stimulated unity, pride, and autonomous development in black communities." They had required immense sacrifices from black school patrons, who donated their land, labor, and meager earnings and materials to make up funding shortfalls. They had changed the cultural and pictorial landscape of the South by replacing "the shabbiest and shoddiest of cabins, churches, and halls" endemic in black education with new buildings of exemplary quality and appearance.

I concluded my talk by identifying several Rosenwald schools which have been restored, renovated, and repurposed to serve as heritage, technology, community, and administration centers, among them Scrabble School in Sperryville, Va., Shiloh School in Notasulga, Ala., Hopewell School in Round Rock, Tex., and our own Campbell County Training School in Rustburg, Va. Among my guests to the meeting were alumni and children of alumni of the sixteen Rosenwald schools built in Campbell County.

One of them, Millicent Nash, chairs the School Complex Restoration Committee and authored the wallpaper narrative which decorates a commemorative room. "The school was a source of pride for the community," she wrote. "It was a center for education but also a home for growth, friendship and love." She is devoting her retirement years to bringing the School Complex back to life because it meant so much to many Campbell County residents. She says preserving history is important also for the youth in the county; it enables them not just to learn about their past but to be proud of it.

I closed by acknowledging local philanthropist Bill Jamerson, who solicited me to contribute to the restoration project and to visit the site.

An extended question and answer period followed, during which most of Mr. Schewel's guests associated with the Rustburg Rosenwald School restoration project spoke. The secretary was not able to identify some speakers for this summary. Dr. Frantz began the session by asking if the rapid construction of schools in the 1920s had generated a shortage of teachers. Mr. Schewel pointed out that institutions like Tuskegee throughout the South were graduating teachers. Ms. Nash added that the Jeanes Foundation (also known as the Jeanes Fund) provided funding to support the training of African American teachers. Mr. Stinnett asked for clarification of the sources of funding for construction of the Rosenwald schools. Mr. Schewel responded that local jurisdictions were willing to build schools, especially when 35% of the funding came from other sources, including the Rosenwald Foundation. Ms. Marion asked if materials or land were donated. Mr. Schewel responded that such donations were common, and that labor was also donated. Ms. Marion then addressed our visitors to ask if any of them had attended one of Campbell County's Rosenwald Schools. Most had, some attending the school at Rustburg, known as the Campbell County Training School and moving from that to the all-Black Campbell County High School. Mr. Lorenzo Megginson said that he attended the Megginson School, named in honor of his great-grandfather. He has served as on-site supervisor for the restoration work. Ms. Nash added that most of them had contributed considerable "sweat equity" in restoring the building and one guest assured us that Mr. Megginson worked the women as hard as the men. Dr. Morrison-Shetlar spoke of her visit to the school and a partnership between the University of Lynchburg and the school wherein university students and faculty can participate in the research and documentation of the school. One of the guests emphasized that their plans include a new business incubator, vocational training facilities that can be used by local

businesses, and possibly a child care facility. Ms. Nash emphasized that participants have great pride in their past and what they have accomplished thus far. She invited Sphex members to visit the site.

Mr. Stinnett reminded members that the next meeting will be on October 19, when Billy Hansen will present his first Sphex talk. The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
James W. Wright
Secretary

Minutes of the 1,491st SPHEX Club Meeting October 19, 2023

President Joe Stinnett called the 1,491st meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:32 p.m. on October 19, 2023. We met in Room 232 of Schewel Hall on the University of Lynchburg campus.

Active members present were: Bradford, Cook, Cyphert, Delaney, Delzingaro, Doyle, Frantz, Hansen, Jablonski, Light, Marion, Morrison-Shetlar, Payne, Sanders, Salmon, Schewel, Sigler, Stinnett, Sydnor, Tiller, West, and Wright.

Business:

- President Stinnett called for additions or corrections to the minutes of the October 5 meeting. There were none and the minutes were approved by voice vote.

Committee Reports:

- *Membership:* Ms. Delzingaro reported for the committee, which also includes Crystal Edwards, Dennis Roberts and Geoff Kershner. The club has two vacancies to fill, one of which was created by Dr. Sabita Manian's move to inactive status. The committee presented eight candidates. Those names and brief biographies will be sent to members by email prior to the next meeting. A qualifying vote and election of new members will be held at the November 2 meeting.
- *Program:* Dr. Franz announced that the date for the annual dinner meeting has been set for Thursday, April 18, 2024. The program committee is investigating possible venues at Sweet Briar College and the University of Lynchburg. The committee is also seeking suggestions for a speaker for that event.
- *Ad hoc Committee on Club Archives:* Dr. Wright reported that he met with the chief Jones Memorial Library librarian, Deb Smith. Ms. Smith proposed that she would create a spreadsheet for all of the data fields required by omeka.com for each of the Sphex papers in the archives. It will be our responsibility to select key words for each paper and list them in the spreadsheet. Once the spreadsheet has been completed, it will be possible to transfer that information to omeka. Ms. Smith also recommended creating a single minutes document of all typed minutes from 1920 to the present. Since the individual minutes documents have been scanned and made searchable through the OCR process, this single minutes document will be searchable. Five Sphex members volunteered to help with the key word process: Frantz, Doyle, Marion, Sanders and Stinnett.

Mr. Stinnett then recognized Treasurer Marc Schewel, who provided the following report:

Club members who attend on a regular basis and who are attentive to the Treasurer's Reports will recognize that often he will draw on the previous speaker's presentation as source material for the report and attempt to cast it a humorous light or craft some fanciful tale related to the subject.

So, as soon as they were distributed by our esteemed secretary, Dr. Wright, I went straight to the minutes to refresh myself on the talk given two weeks ago to see if it contained anything useful – useful to me, that is.

Well, those of you who were here and heard it will acknowledge that there was nothing funny about it. Quite the contrary. In fact, after rereading it, I must confess that it was nothing short of a tour de force – a masterful, erudite, lucid, engrossing, mesmerizing, impassioned, and informative work of scholarship on a subject of interest both global and local and with relevance today. And of course, it was delivered with panache, eloquence, empathy, and authority – and highlighted with some illuminating slides and comments from the speaker's guests. In fact, one member was so enthralled, he informed the Treasurer, that he decided to pay his dues.

Which brings the Club's bank account to \$1482.21. There are still a few members who have not yet paid and whom I will not embarrass by disclosing their names. Instead, I will defer to my colleague, Mr. Hansen, perhaps to inspire them with his forthcoming lecture.

Mr. Stinnett then noted regrets to the speaker expressed by members who were unable to attend. They included Edwards, Kershner, Smith and Wodicka.

Mr. Hansen introduced his guest, his wife, Catherine.

President Stinnett introduced our speaker: Billy Hansen is a commercial real estate appraiser, broker, and investor living in Lynchburg, Virginia. Billy is married to his college sweetheart, Kathryn. The couple has two children, Claire and William. Billy attended Jefferson Forest High School, graduated from the University of Virginia with a degree in Economics, and received an MBA from the University of Lynchburg. Billy has also taught Real Estate Appraisal and Personal Finance as an adjunct professor at both Longwood University and Randolph College. Billy serves locally on a number of boards including the Jones Memorial Library, the Downtown Lynchburg Association, the Lynchburg Affordable Housing Collaborative, and the Lynchburg Board of Equalization. Billy's favorite hobby is capturing human stories by recording oral histories, writing profiles of interesting local people, and producing the Lynchburg Neighborhood podcast.

Mr. Hansen provided the following summary of his talk, which was titled "The First Rule":

"The First Rule" is an elaborate and absurd experiment measuring just how much time and creative energy that a curious yet misguided young man can waste in the obsessive pursuit of solving a vague mystery that no one has ever heard of and only originated from a couple of throwaway sentences in the middle of an interview conducted nearly seven years ago. The answer turns out to be quite a lot, but you can't always pick and choose what captures your imagination. For me, it was a tall tale about a secret society that reportedly ran Lynchburg back in the day.

The premise itself is more than likely to be false, wildly exaggerated, just a joke that I mistakenly took seriously, or simply a mischaracterization of a real entity or group with no aims of power and control over local matters. However, the larger idea of a small group of well-connected people running this city is Lynchburg's oldest and most persistent myth. The '03, Old Money, Liberty, the Good Old Boy network, and all the other "Powers that Be" throughout history have often been rumored to control and dictate what happens (and doesn't happen) in our community. With that lens in hand, I set out to find this specific group with an openness to finding other groups, networks, and stories.

The questions I set out to answer: Did this group exist? Who was in it? What time period did they operate in? What did they do? If they controlled Lynchburg, how did they do it? What specific things did they weigh in on? Did they have regular meetings? Did they keep minutes or other records? Did they have any rituals? Are there any symbols of their group hidden in public? Do they still exist? If not, why did it end? Could a group like that even still exist today? Why did they formalize it and give it a name when informal networks already work so well and provide so much more plausible deniability than an organized group?

With no one talking and little to go on, one potential route to solving this mystery was trying to find out who actually held power in that era and seeing what connections they had with one another. Who were the consensus power brokers "back in the day"? I have estimated back in the day to primarily mean the 50s, 60s, 70s, and 80s. Extensive reading and research combined with a series of interviews with numerous knowledgeable and influential people from that era resulted in three main findings: 1. A solid short list of perceived power brokers in Lynchburg during that period 2. A ridiculous amount of gossip, rumors, and hearsay about questionable behavior throughout our history. 3. A growing list of alternative secret societies, clubs, gatherings, and groups. It turns out that Lynchburg has a rich tradition of people (usually men) gathering regularly in private and exclusive spaces, often for decades. As interesting as all these other findings were, none of it was the group that I was actually seeking.

The elusiveness of any information at all on the secret society that I was looking for forced me to sharpen and expand my research tools. It drove me to the morgue at the News & Advance, to Alumni Hall at UVA to search for 7s, to prominent institutions to search their board records, to the clerk's office at the circuit court to search through deeds, court cases, and estate filings, and to the stacks at the Jones to look through family, business, and organizational records. However, every clue or detail I could find in print ultimately drove me back to the people that lived it to

have more and more conversations as that's the only place where I could really learn and confirm the information that I wanted to know. Just when I thought I was getting close and had finally developed an understanding of power and influence in our community back in the day, a phone call on the eve of my talk changed everything that I thought I knew about this group, which led to a deeply unsatisfying conclusion for both the speaker and the audience. As our Secretary Jim Wright so aptly put it at the conclusion of our meeting, "The journey truly was better than the destination."

The nature of Mr. Hansen's talk prompted considerable discussion. Dr. Tiller noted that Mr. Hansen's inquiries about secret societies in Lynchburg might generate more talk about and conspiracy theories about secret societies. Mr. Hansen responded that he did, in fact, observe that phenomenon. Dr. Sanders asked for clarification about the 1967 letter from community leaders to the community, disavowing the racist stance of the local newspapers. Mr. Stinnett, who joined the staff of the newspapers a few years later, provided an explanation. He then noted that the leadership in Lynchburg in the 1960s and earlier consisted primarily of white males, and even in the present much of the leadership is provided by a relatively small group of people, and he asked the speaker whether that might change in the next two decades. Mr. Hansen responded that he thought there would always be fairly small groups of leaders but the composition of those groups would be more diverse. Ms. Delzingaro opined that Mr. Hansen was "off track," and that Lynchburg was not run by seven men, but by seven women. Mr. Sydnor pointed to a modern example of a small group of men and women coming together to address a need and make something happen: those who succeeded in restoring the Academy of Music theater. Mr. Light pointed out that the men cited by Mr. Hansen as being key to making movers in their day were heads of large, locally-owned businesses with the financial wherewithal to support major projects. He pointed out that the business environment has changed. Several members expressed agreement. Mr. Hansen said that he had heard from multiple sources that there was a small group that coordinated fund-raising campaigns, so that multiple large campaigns were not conducted simultaneously. Mr. Schewel observed that Mr. Hansen did not mention the effect of politics on the workings of the groups that came together to achieve major goals. He opined that politics play a much larger role in trying to get something major accomplished. Mr. Light recalled hearing about an effort by George Stewart (CEO of First Colony Life and a former member of SpheX) to move "everything downtown" or City Hall out to Miller Park. He asked Mr. Payne whether he was aware of that effort and Mr. Payne responded that he was not. Mr. Light asked if anyone present had heard about that effort and received no replies, though Mr. Payne responded that every city manager knows who to go to in the community to get things done. Mr. Light cited the example of Senator Harry Byrd who, when asked how he controlled everything, responded that it wasn't a matter of exerting control so much as it was surrounding yourself with people who think the same way—things got done because those in the group had the same mind set. Mr. Hansen concluded by observing that his investigations have been a fun

way to learn about Lynchburg history. Dr. Salmon applauded his approach to using primary sources and invited Mr. Hansen to speak to her class at the University of Lynchburg.

Mr. Stinnett reminded members that the next meeting will be on November 2, when Dr. Nina Salmon will present her first Sphex talk. The meeting was adjourned at 9:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
James W. Wright
Secretary

Minutes of the 1,492nd SPHEX Club Meeting November 2, 2023

President Joe Stinnett called the 1,492nd meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:32 p.m. on November 2, 2023. We met in Room 217 of Schewel Hall on the University of Lynchburg campus.

Active members present were: Blackman, Bradford, Cook, Delzingaro, Doyle, Edwards, Hansen, Jablonski, Light, Marion, McDonald, Payne, Roberts, Sanders, Salmon, Schewel, Sigler, Smith, Stinnett, Tiller, West, Wodicka and Wright.

Business:

- President Stinnett called for additions or corrections to the minutes of the October 19 meeting. There were none and the minutes were approved by voice vote.

• Committee Reports:

- *Membership:* President Stinnett conducted the voting for new members. Biographies of the eight candidates identified by the committee were distributed by email to active members on October 19 following the meeting on that date and were re-sent to active members by the secretary on October 30. As prescribed by the bylaws, two votes were held. Certifying ballots were distributed to those in attendance. The secretary cast proxy votes for Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Frantz, Kershner and Sydnor. Three of the eight candidates were eliminated by the certifying vote. Members then cast votes for two of the five remaining candidates. Elected to membership were Mr. John Capps and Ms. Sue Ott Rowland. The membership committee will notify those individuals. Mr. Cham Light then made a motion, based on a proposal put forth by President Stinnett, that should any membership vacancies occur during the 2023-24 year, those candidates who had the third and fourth largest number of votes be advanced to membership. The motion was adopted by unanimous voice vote. President Stinnett expressed the appreciation of the club to the members of the membership committee: Ms. Delzingaro, Dr. Edwards and Rev. Roberts.
- *Program:* No report.
- *Ad hoc Committee on Club Archives:* Dr. Wright announced that Dr. Ken West has volunteered to extract key words from SpheX papers in the archives, joining the five member who had previously volunteered. He reminded members that it is not too late to join the fun.

Mr. Stinnett then recognized Treasurer Marc Schewel, who provided the following report:

Well, as fate would have it, the Friday after our last meeting I had a sudden craving for a cheesy western and stopped by the Texas Inn. Now, I'm more a country club kind of guy, having been

born into a prominent family and heir to a retail furniture empire. In fact, my father and cousin were recognized decades ago as two of the most influential persons in the city by the local newspaper.

Nevertheless, there I was seated at the counter with Mr. Hansen's talk on my mind, and so I decided to ask the T-Room's matriarch, Miss Betty, if she had ever heard of a secret group of men (or women) who might presume to be important in city affairs.

"Like a Fight Club?" he asked. "You know, a fight breaks out here just about every other Saturday night."

"I think you've got that Club mixed up with our City Council. And it meets on Tuesday night," I said.

When I probed a little further, she finally admitted, "Look, sonny, I hear a lot of conversations in this dive, and know way too much about things I don't need to know and don't want to know."

"Like what?" I said.

"Like the Sessa Seven," she said. "The Sessa Seven? What's that?"

"Seven guys who come in here once a month, order cheesy westerns, and, if my eavesdropping is correct, are the recognized authority on which restaurant in the area has the best hamburgers."

Well, that got my curiosity up, and being the compulsive person I am and one who loves mysteries – at least reading them, usually one a week – I decided to try and find out if such a club actually existed, and to do it in time for our meeting tonight, as I knew all our Sphex members would be equally as curious.

Obviously, there was only one way to accomplish this, and that was to visit at least one restaurant a day for the thirteen days available, talk to the proprietors, and of course sample their burgers.

And so, here they are, starting with the T-Room's famous smashburger and egg topped with cheese, its legendary relish, and a sprinkle of diced onions, followed by: My Dog Duke's Diner's brisket-short rib blend cheeseburger; Iron and Ale's shiner burger with bacon jam and gruyere; Benjamin's local pure bred wagyu pan-seared cheeseburger; Bootlegger's house-made pimento cheese and fried jalapeño pepper southern belle burger; RA Bistro's blended angus beef, chopped sirloin, andouille sausage, and bacon house burger; Shaker's smokey mountain burger with bacon, cheddar cheese, and house-made barbecue sauce; Bentley's custom blended chuck, brisket, and short-rib burger . . .

Well, you get the idea. I won't bore you with the rest. But I would be remiss if I didn't mention the Oakwood Country Club angus beef, bacon, and brie cheeseburger, which, if you go there on the right Saturday night, you can enjoy at half-price.

As you can imagine, this hamburger spree made me sick to my stomach, added an inch to my waistline, and put a sizable dent in the Sphex Club's \$1657.51 bank account. And while I wasn't able to determine if the Sessa Seven was anything more than a fanciful rumor, I did figure out what the name really referred to: Seven Asses (plus one).

Mr. Stinnett then noted regrets to the speaker expressed by members who were unable to attend. They Dawson, Delaney, Frantz, Cyphert, Kershner, Morrison-Shetlar, Sydnor and Lucas.

Dr. Salmon introduced her guest, her husband, Jerry.

President Stinnett introduced our speaker: Nina Salmon is an associate professor of English at the University of Lynchburg, where she has taught since 1997. An Episcopal priest since 2019, she serves at St. Paul's in downtown Lynchburg as Associate Rector for Youth and Families. Salmon graduated from Randolph-Macon Woman's College and completed her graduate work at Lynchburg College, Virginia Tech, and Sewanee.

A commitment to racial equality and awareness of the injustice of systemic oppression grew out of her upbringing, a foundation in the Episcopal church, and an education at West Charlotte High School, a national model during the era of school desegregation.

Students in Salmon's Freshman English classes participated in Service Learning and research projects on Lynchburg's Harlem Renaissance poet, Anne Spencer. She currently teaches a class that invites student exploration of heroes of the Harlem Renaissance and residents of Lynchburg's Pierce Street.

Nina and Jerry, a retired history teacher and coach, have three sons, one daughter-in-law, and a very spoiled standard poodle named Grace.

Dr. Salmon's talk was titled "Sinister, or just out in left field?" She addressed the issue of handedness, in part to highlight the marginalization of minorities by the dominant culture. She began by pointing out the negative connotations of the words used to reference left handedness in multiple languages. She briefly reviewed what is known about the causes of left handedness, concluding that data linking left handedness to various pathologies are conflicting and inconclusive. She reviewed data on the prevalence of left handedness in the general population (10%), by sex, by culture and over time. She mentioned well-known historical figures as well as current celebrities, musicians and athletes who are left handed. She discussed common tools that favor right handed people and emphasized the cultural biases that favor right handedness. She pointed to other biologic dimorphisms, such as sexual orientation, and minority physical traits, such as skin color and short stature, that convey disadvantages in modern culture. At the end of her talk Dr. Salmon asked for a show of hands to determine the prevalence of left handedness in

the Sphex membership. Of those attending, 37% were left handed and more than 50% had at least one first-degree relative who is left-handed. She concluded that while left handedness might impose some inconvenience and a slight survival disadvantage, it might also convey a slight edge in the areas of creativity and intelligence.

A question and answer period followed during which many members shared thoughts and experiences related to handedness. Comments pertained to efforts in prior generations to force young children who favored the left hand to switch. Mr. Stinnett expressed gratitude that his mother did not force him. Questions were also raised about mixed handedness. Dr. Salmon said that her paternal grandmother had been forced to switch hands and as a result did most tasks with the right hand but wrote with the left hand. She noted that in the movie, "The King's Speech," King George VI stuttered because he had been forced to switch hands at an early age. A question was asked about a correlation between dominant hand and dominant eye. Dr. Salmon said that it was her understanding that there is no correlation between eye, hand and foot dominance. She said that research has also shown that left handers have less REM sleep and more vivid dreams. Rev. Roberts cited a Wikipedia article that said about 1% of the population is naturally ambidextrous (mixed handed). Mr. Hansen related that when he was young a family friend gave him a book about how special it was to be left handed. Another member noted that the word right (as opposed to left) in multiple languages is also used to mean correct, or proper, or a power or privilege. There was some discussion of the right-handed tools that Dr. Salmon had used to illustrate her talk.

Mr. Stinnett reminded members that the next meeting will be on November 16, when Mr. Mike Bradford will present his first Sphex talk. The meeting was adjourned at 8:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
James W. Wright
Secretary

**Minutes of the 1,493rd SPHEX Club Meeting
November 16, 2023**

President Joe Stinnett called the 1,493rd meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:32 p.m. on November 16, 2023. We met in Room 217 of Schewel Hall on the University of Lynchburg campus.

Active members present were: Blackman, Bradford, Cook, Cyphert, Delaney, Doyle, Edwards, Frantz, Hansen, Marion, McDonald, Morrison-Shetlar, Payne, Roberts, Sanders, Salmon, Schewel, Sigler, Smith, Stinnett, Tiller, West, and Wright.

Business:

- President Stinnett called for additions or corrections to the minutes of the October 19 meeting. There were none and the minutes were approved by voice vote.

- **Committee Reports:**

- *Membership:* Rev. Roberts reported in the absence of Chairwoman Delzingaro. Ms. Sue Ott Rowland has accepted the invitation to membership. Mr. John Capps declined, citing the distance of his home from Lynchburg, but voiced a strong desire to be reconsidered after his retirement. After speaking with Mr. Capps, the committee, following a procedure approved by members at the last meeting, extended an invitation to Mr. Derek Brown. Mr. Brown declined. The committee will invite the next highest vote getter and report at the January 11 meeting.
- *Program:* Dr. Frantz reported that the annual dinner meeting will be on April 18 at Sweet Briar College. The speaker will be Dwayne Yancey, a reported and editor of Cardinal News, a nonprofit, nonpartisan news service serving Southwest and Southside Virginia.
- *Ad hoc Committee on Club Archives:* Dr. Wright reported that key words have been identified for 18% of the papers in the Sphex archives. He attributed this rapid progress to the efforts of Dr. Ken West.

Mr. Stinnett then recognized Treasurer Marc Schewel, who provided the following report:

I was really struggling with this one. Then I said to myself, “Marc, you’re left-handed. Just use the right side of your brain and come up with something creative.”

After all, a Sphex club meeting would not be complete if the treasurer’s report was left out.

So, it was Election Day. I was as yet uncertain whether I was going to vote left or right.

Fortunately, I had left my alarm clock which sits on the left side of my bed set for 6:00 AM, which left me plenty of time to work out, have breakfast, and vote.

I rolled over to the left, jumped out of bed, and dashed to the bathroom. There was just enough sharpness left on my razor for me to shave without any troublesome cuts being left on my face –

also because I used my dexterous left hand. Turning on the shower, I was pleased to find that my predecessor had left me some hot water. But more importantly she had left enough coffee in the pot to energize me.

I made sure that my garbage was left at the roadside, then planted myself in the left front seat of my car, which of course was parked on the left side of the garage, and backed out of my driveway. I stopped by the mailbox, and sure enough the mailman had left a couple bills there.

I turned right, then left into the parking lot at First Christian Church, and then into the only space left close to the entrance. I was signed in, handed a ballot, and directed toward a private booth which another voter had just left.

I didn't want this report to turn political, since it wouldn't take a sharp-minded lefty to figure out which side of the aisle most of the folks in this room favor – and by a lot higher margin than the 37% of you who are lefties. Nevertheless, here I am, left with no choice but to admit that both parties have left me behind. But I did vote. As for whether it was for the sinister or adroit candidates, that, my friends, is best left for you to cogitate.

Have I left anything out? Only the amount left in our Treasury – which is \$1447.51 after deducting \$210 to cover our speaker's expenses for our upcoming social.

And I'm also pleased to report that there are no members left on our delinquency report.

Mr. Schewel received a round of applause.

Mr. Stinnett then noted regrets to the speaker expressed by members who were unable to attend. They included Dawson, Delzingaro, Kershner, Light, Lucas and Wodicka.

Mr. Bradford introduced his guest, his wife Pam.

President Stinnett introduced our speaker: Mike Bradford is a Lynchburg native and an E. C. Glass High School graduate. He earned his BA degree in Economics from Duke University and an MBA from UNC Kenan-Flagler Business School. He declined job offers from banks in Dallas, Atlanta and Charlotte, and came to Lynchburg to work at Central Fidelity Bank, a choice he never regretted. For 34 years he worked as a commercial banker assisting business owners grow their companies and manage their financial needs. He ultimately managed the bank's commercial banking teams throughout the western half of Virginia as an Executive Vice President of Central Fidelity. The bank subsequently went through three mergers with Wachovia, First Union and Wells Fargo and in 2012 he decided enough was enough and went to work for his good friend John Capps as VP of Advancement at CVCC and enjoyed 6 wonderful years there before retiring in 2018. He has been on many non-profit boards over the decades. He has served on Centra's board since 2008, and as chair of its Finance Committee since 2014. He is a life-long member of St. John's Episcopal Church and has served twice on the Vestry, once as

Treasurer and once as Senior Warden. He is very happily married to Pam Bradford and has two sons, Rob and Sam, and one daughter, Kate, ages 29 to 39 all of whom are wonderful adults, but none of whom live in Lynchburg. His first grandson Ben was born earlier this year and he and Pam are driving to Baltimore every chance they get.

Mr. Bradford's talk was titled "Lynchburg Connections Key to Success and Legacy of a Gilded Age Tycoon."

Mr. Bradford told the story of the single generation rise of the Duke family from tobacco farmers to near-total control of the tobacco industry, and the several Lynchburg connections that helped them achieve success. At the end of the Civil War, Washington Duke had lost two wives and one of his five children. He resumed farming and soon began curing and marketing his own brand of smoking and chewing tobacco with the aid of two young sons, Buck and Ben. By the mid-1870s, he had moved to Durham, built a house and moved his production facilities. Buck went to business school. The company grew and in 1881 entered the cigarette market. All cigarettes were hand-rolled but with increasing demand, the need for mechanization was obvious.

James A. Bonsack, born near Big Lick (now Roanoke) in 1859, had become proficient in operating and repairing his father's woolen mill. When Allen & Ginter, a Richmond tobacco firm, offered a prize of \$75,000 for a practical rolling machine, Bonsack began a three-year effort to invent a machine. That machine was destroyed in a fire in a rail yard in Lynchburg. Bonsack built an improved machine that was patented in 1882. A company was established. Among early investors was Philip A. Krise, Lynchburg businessman. The company headquarters and manufacturing were established in Lynchburg. At some point the Bonsack Machine Company became the United Cigarette Machine Company, which operated in Lynchburg from 1906 to 1956.

Duke bought the Bonsack machine in 1884 and moved William T. O'Brien, a mechanic with Glamorgan Foundry, to Durham to work on the machine and improve it. O'Brien was offered open-ended compensation based on the volume of cigarettes produced. Mr. Bradford elaborated on the histories of Mr. Krise and Mr. O'Brien. Bonsack leased its machines. Duke negotiated a contract with Bonsack that gave it access to the machines at a price 25% below that charged to all other cigarette manufacturers. Business surged and in 1890 Buck Duke created the American Tobacco Company by absorbing most of its competitors. By 1906 the ATC controlled 80% of the domestic tobacco industry. In 1911, ATC was found guilty of violations of the 1890 Sherman Antitrust Act and was split into four competitors. Thereafter, Buck Duke turned his focus to power generation and philanthropy.

Mr. Bradford then briefly reviewed the roles of Washington and Ben Duke to relocate a Methodist school, Trinity College, from rural North Carolina to Durham, make it co-educational, and eventually rename it Duke University. He also briefly reviewed the evolution of the Southern Power Company to the highly successful Duke Power.

Finally, Mr. Bradford spoke about the connection of William R. Perkins to the Duke businesses and philanthropy. A native of Nelson County, Perkins moved to Lynchburg with his family at age 15. He attended the Lynchburg public schools, then W&L and practiced law in Lynchburg and Newport News until 1906. He was then hired by the ATC in NYC, where he was active in anti-trust litigation, was the personal attorney of Buck and Ben Duke, a trustee of Trinity College and did the legal work to establish the Duke Endowment. After the death of James B. Duke in 1925 he successfully defended the estate from tax suits brought by multiple states and the federal government. He served for many years as a trustee of Duke University and a board member and vice chairman of the Duke Endowment. Perkins addressed the Sphex Club in October 1929. He moved back to Lynchburg part-time in 1936. His son William Jr. moved back to Lynchburg in 1940 and built a residence on Rivermont Avenue, still owned by his daughter, Sara, though her primary residence is in England.

A question and answer period followed. Dr. Edwards asked about the Doris Duke Foundation. Doris was the daughter of J. B. Duke and was raised on her father's farm in New Jersey. Her philanthropic efforts and her house, Shangri-la, in Honolulu were mentioned. Ms. Marion noted that William R. Perkins once worked for Judge Diggs, who at one time lived in the house she later occupied on Madison Street. Dr. Frantz asked if Duke University was named for Washington Duke (it was). Mr. Bradford showed a slide that listed the beneficiaries of the Duke Endowment. Mr. Stinnett asked about the origin of Duke Energy. The history of that company, in which J. B. Duke's early involvement featured prominently, was discussed. Mr. Bradford's talk and the Q&A session both earned enthusiastic applause.

Mr. Stinnett reminded members that the next meeting will be on January 11 when Dr. Steve Smith will present his first Sphex talk. The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
James W. Wright
Secretary

**Minutes of the 1,494th SPHEX Club Meeting
January 11, 2024**

President Joe Stinnett called the 1,494th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:32 p.m. on January 11, 2024. We met in Room 217 of Schewel Hall on the University of Lynchburg campus.

Active members present were: Blackman, Bradford, Cook, Cyphert, Delaney, Delzingaro, Gillette, Hansen, Kershner, Marion, McDonald, Roberts, Schewel, Sigler, Smith, Stinnett, Tiller, and West.

Business:

- President Stinnett called for additions or corrections to the minutes of the November 16 meeting. There were none and the minutes were approved by voice vote.
- **Committee Reports:**
 - *Membership:* Chairwoman Delzingaro reported that she has not yet been able to reach the next prospective member on the list.
 - *Program:* Dr. Frantz sent a report as follows: Our annual dinner and speaker are still planned for April 18 at Sweet Briar College. Dwayne Yancey will deliver the presentation. We ran into problems with the estimated cost, however, as food prices have nearly doubled since we last planned this event in 2020. We therefore investigated other venues, including Lynchburg College and Shoemakers. Ultimately, we were able to adjust the menu and negotiate with Sweet Briar to keep the cost down. Unfortunately for our robust drinkers we will have to forgo an open bar and go to cash or credit card drinks. We were able to preserve a plated dinner with choices of fish, chicken and vegetarian entrees. The cost per person will be about \$45 and we are hoping we will get the usual enthusiastic attendance by all our members and spouses. Guests are also very welcome to attend, so feel free to invite those you think might enjoy our company, or failing that, would be interested in our speaker.

Mr. Stinnett then recognized Treasurer Marc Schewel, who provided the following report:

I'm sure everyone enjoyed his or her Sphex holiday hiatus, attending parties, celebrating with friends and family, partaking of all kinds of treats and beverages. Probably no one in this room was even thinking of the Sphex Club, not even my friend Dr. Jim Wright, who if he's not preparing the minutes is immersed in his Sphex archival project, sifting through reams of past presentations in search of key words.

Which leads me to disclose that this project has also been on my mind for some time and that, taking advantage of our Sphex vacation, I decided to act on my concerns. Because during all of Dr. Wright's lengthy updates on the status of his project, no mention has been made of what has come to be regarded as the most anticipated segment of each meeting: the bimonthly Treasurer's Report. Fearful that Dr. Wright had made the presumptuous decision to exclude these reports from his digital archives, while all of you were partying relentlessly, I took it upon myself to circumvent the gatekeepers of Jones Memorial Library, rescue my past Treasurer's Reports from obscurity, scan them, and, yes, identify and record key words from each report and save them to a file, so that these reports will be immediately accessible to those searching for related topics.

As you can imagine, this task consumed many hours, and just about ruined my holidays.

But since I devoted so much time to it, I felt compelled to share with the Club some of the results, even though the words will mean absolutely nothing to most of you, since the reports themselves, even if you were around to hear them, have long been forgotten.

So, here they are: Science, Philosophy, History, Education, and the X Factor; Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence; Bank of the James; Chilean pesos; Eurodollars, The Thirteen Club; Savant; Lynchburg City Council; Confederate States of America; If I Could Turn Back Time; Texas Inn; Dues; Schewels Home (repeated five times); \$1293.56 (repeated twenty-two times); \$677.51 (repeated eighteen times); and, today's balance, \$1797.51.

Mr. Stinnett then noted regrets to the speaker expressed by members who were unable to attend. They included Salmon, Wright, Morrison-Shetlar, Edwards, Doyle, Payne, Franz, Sanders, Jablonski, Rowland.

Mr. Smith introduced his guests, his wife, Meg, and son Harrison, as well as Tom Tiller's son, Craig, and grandson, Jacob.

President Stinnett introduced our speaker: Dr. Steve Steve is a career educator with over 30 years of experience in Lynchburg's public schools. He has served as a middle school and high school teacher, an elementary principal, and a central office administrator. He is currently a high school math teacher and the director of the Central Virginia Governor's School for Science and Technology, often abbreviated to CVGS. As CVGS director, Steve leads the CVGS Foundation, a non-profit that supports the program and its students. Steve is a past board member of Camp Kum-Ba-Yah, a day camp in Lynchburg where Steve was fortunate to work for many summers under the mentorship of Bev Cosby.

Steve is delighted to be married to Meg Smith, a truly gifted teacher the Virginia State Board of Education selected as Virginia's state teacher of the year for 2012. Meg and Steve have two children and four grandchildren, all of whom bring them great joy. While he has only been a resident of Lynchburg since enrolling at Lynchburg College in 1985, Steve is proud to note that his eldest grandchild represents the fifth generation of his wife's family to attend the Lynchburg City Schools.

Mr. Smith's talk was titled "How did we get here and when will they join us?" He provided the following summary.

Recent developments in Artificial Intelligence, or AI, are in turn promising and concerning. While we are not at the level of Artificial General Intelligence, or AGI, that scientists are referring to when they talk of the risk of extinction of the human race, developments in the field are progressing rapidly. AGI, while not scientifically defined, is understood to be when an autonomous computer model can do any task as well as a typical human. While AI is currently able to do many things "more intelligently" than humans, such as complex mathematical computations, there are many more tasks that AI simply can't do...yet.

AI has been around for over 50 years, and it is embedded in much of our daily lives. Its development has been marked by numerous significant events, most recently in 2022, with the release of ChatGPT by OpenAI. Since then, AI has been in the news daily, as have people expressing concerns about the risks of AI development. ChatGPT4 is a Natural Language Processing (NLP) Large Language Model (LLM) Generative Pretrained Transformer (GPT). Current AI models like ChatGPT4 not only pass the Turing Test proposed by Alan Turing in 1950, a test in which a machine communicates in natural language so effectively that it can't be distinguished from a human, they exceed human performance on numerous tasks.

The question of how did we get to this point with AI is best answered with an overview of the AI development timeline and major areas. In summary, AI started in 1950 with classical classification systems. In the 1980s the focus was on expert systems, narrow and labor intensive database decision tree type programs. Machine learning started in the 1990s, but symbolic rules based systems of logic were vastly preferred over neural networks until AlexNet's development and success in 2012. There were three primary barriers to the development of systems like ChatGPT4: limited computer resources, limited training data, and required advances in programming algorithms. These barriers were overcome by the development of Graphics Processing Units (GPUs), the Internet and its vast amount of data, and several programming breakthroughs. Current AI models and training datasets are exponentially larger than previous ones, and the scaling of these models has resulted in amazing improvements in their performance.

NLP LLM GPTs are trained on vast datasets, larger than all the information on the Internet. They break language into tokens, numbers that represent words, punctuation, or parts of words like prefixes or suffixes. They can do this in any language to which they are exposed. They examine the relationships between and among tokens in context from left to right and right to left and at many levels and in ways humans can't. Their training is unsupervised—they simply mask a word in context, predict it, unmask the word to check the answer, and then adjust their program to accommodate for any errors. Some models train this way millions of times a second, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for months on end. Then, when exposed to a prompt, they take all they have seen and predict the next token, consider that with the prompt, predict the next, and continue in that way. This is why fine-tuning the model and engineering the prompt are essential to increasing accuracy and decreasing hallucinations, which are confident statements that are false. There are a great many concerns about the development of AI, and categories of the risks are summarized in a paper entitled “An Overview of Catastrophic AI Risks” written by members of the Center for Artificial Intelligence Safety. Misuse of AI by bad actors is an obvious concern, but misalignment of the goals and methods of an autonomous AI system and humans is even more concerning for many AI scientists, as more advanced models have emergent capabilities that are surprising. The statement on the website of the non-profit Center for AI Safety, *“Mitigating the risk of extinction from AI should be a global priority alongside other societal-scale risks such as pandemics and nuclear war”* has signatories include 3 Turing Award Laureates and over 600 other leading AI researchers and notable public figures, including members of leadership teams of Microsoft, Google DeepMind, OpenAI, and the Alan Turing Institute. At the same time, many of these same leading AI researchers are optimistic about how AI could benefit all of humanity in countless ways in the coming decades.

A question and answer period followed.

Mr. Stinnett reminded members that the next meeting will be on January 25 when Nancy Marion will present her third Sphex talk. The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy B. Marion
Assistant Secretary

**Minutes of the 1,495th SPHEX Club Meeting
January 25, 2024**

President Joe Stinnett called the 1,495th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:45 p.m. on January 25, 2024. The meeting was delayed 15 minutes while Ms. Marion, Dr. Jablonski and Dr. Salmon wrestled the audiovisual technology into submission. We met in Room 217 of Schewel Hall on the University of Lynchburg campus.

Active members present were: Blackman, Bradford, Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Delzingaro, Doyle, Edwards, Gillette, Jablonski, Marion, McDonald, Payne, Roberts, Salmon, Sanders, Schewel, Sigler, Stinnett, Sydnor, Tiller, West, Wodicka and Wright.

Business:

- President Stinnett called for additions or corrections to the minutes of the January 11 meeting. There were none and the minutes were approved by voice vote.

- **Committee Reports:**

- Membership: Chairwoman Delzingaro reported that she has not yet spoken with Ms. Gloria Witt regarding membership..
 - Ad hoc Archives Committee: Dr. Wright announced that Mr. Delaney, due to pressing obligations elsewhere, has stepped down as chair of the committee. He thanked Mr. Delaney for serving as chair for four years—three years longer than the intended term. Dr. Wright recognized Dr. Ken West’s prodigious efforts to determine key words for papers in our archives, an effort that has likely taken over 80 hours of his time, inasmuch as each paper requires an hour or more to complete. Dr. Wright then announced that Dr. Steve Smith has been able, using artificial intelligence technology, to reduce the time per paper to less than seven minutes. Dr. Smith had agreed to train any willing volunteers at 6:30 pm prior to our next meeting. Dr. Wright observed that the difference between Dr. West’s and Dr. Smith’s approach bore a striking resemblance to John Henry’s contest with the steam engine in an earlier age.

President Stinnett reminded members that we agreed in the fall to collect 2023 dues in November and 2024 dues in the spring. The secretary was instructed to send a dues reminder to all members, setting the dues at \$35 and the due date April 1, 2024.

Mr. Stinnett then recognized Treasurer Marc Schewel, who provided the following report:

After Steve Smith’s enlightening presentation on Artificial Intelligence, I decided to try the app Chat-GPT4. I downloaded it, played around with it for a few days, and finally figured how to get what I wanted.

“Miss Barb, give me a Sphex Club treasurer’s report in the style of Dr. Seuss.

“Sighed Wood, an attorney and member of Sphex,

'I'm old and I'm tired
And it's all too complex
I'm walking away and calling it a day,
Giving up the law and the Sphex Club Treasury,
Although finding a successor won't be so easy.'

"Then Schewel, like a fool, said, 'I might look like a dummy,
But, believe it or not, I know a lot about money.
And if you give me the nod, you might even applaud.
You'll never regret it nor ever forget it,
Because I might find a way to make this job funny.'

"Some members looked worried, and one of them spoke,
'Our business is serious; our Treasury's no joke.
Our finances are precarious; we can't afford to go broke.'

"I raised my hand and did solemnly swear
To perform all my duties with the greatest of care,
To collect all the dues, head straight to the bank,
Not go on a cruise nor fill up my tank,
Though tempted I was, I must confess, under times of duress, to use my mattress,
Which comes from a store I've commended before.
In story or poem, of course it's Schewels Home.

"At every Club meeting, I took copious notes
On mergers, annexations, statues, savants,
Time travel, tobacco, and leftist deviants,
To transmute them into hilarious anecdotes
Though not a peep be heard from my listeners' throats.

"Nevertheless, I bravely persisted in giving reports that consisted
Of some timely riff on a speech or a theme
Designed to titillate both cynical and serene.
And in spite of what some might suppose I never failed to disclose
The amounts in our accounts, usually when I'm done: \$1797.51

"Or, as a famous elephant might have expostulated while he waited for an egg to be incubated:
'I meant what I said, and I said what I meant . . .

This treasurer's faithful . . . one hundred percent.'"

The speaker had no guests.

President Stinnett introduced our speaker: Nancy Marion has been collecting old photos of Lynchburg since about 1999. Her digital collection contains more than 30,000 images of the area gathered from library and newspaper archives, city and agency collections, and private sources. She has posted many of these photos and maps on her website, LynchburgHistory.com, where they are available to view and download. For eighteen years she wrote a weekly column for the *News & Advance* called "Mystery Picture of the Week." A native of Amherst County and graduate of Sweet Briar College, Nancy is an experienced graphic designer, having been a partner at The Design Group since 1977. In 2003 she founded Blackwell Press to publish non-fiction books and the history magazine, *Lynch's Ferry*. In 2006 she compiled and published Gibson Hobbs' book, *The Canal on the James*, and in 2018 she revised and published a new version of *Hill City Trolleys* by Harold Cox. She has also worked closely with regional authors, designing and publishing books about places such as the Old City Cemetery, the Anne Spencer Garden, Virginia Episcopal School, Wintergreen, Hogtown, Elon, and Nelson County. She has published art books featuring local luminaries including Queena Stovall, Georgia Morgan, Brookie Abbot, Edward Beyer, Sarah Raessler, and Stanhope Johnson. She currently has books on artists Pat Harrington and Annie Massie in the pipeline. She is an avid photographer of terrestrial and aerial drone photography.

Ms. Marion's talk was titled "Up in the Air." She provided the following summary:

Aerial photography dates back to the mid-19th century. The first known aerial photograph was taken by French photographer Nadar in 1858 from a tethered balloon. Other methods of producing aerial photos were kites, carrier pigeons, and rockets. Over the years, advancements in technology led to the use of aircraft for aerial photography.

The set of 1924 aerial photographs at the Jones Memorial Library comprises about fifty shots in and around Lynchburg. Ms. Marion gave a short history of the Underwood & Underwood business, beginning with stereo view photography and their "Travel Series" of photos, and expanding to their news photography business and finally their aerial photography business.

The Underwood & Underwood aerials were commissioned by Lynchburg Traction and Light, the company that ran the trolleys.

Underwood & Underwood was a prominent American photography and stereoscope company that operated in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. While they were not pioneers in aerial photography, they did contribute to the popularization of stereoscopic images.

Underwood & Underwood produced stereoviews, which are pairs of nearly identical images that create a three-dimensional effect when viewed through a stereoscope. While their focus was mainly on terrestrial subjects, they did produce some aerial stereoviews.

Overall, Underwood & Underwood played a significant role in shaping the visual culture of the late 19th and early 20th centuries through their stereoscopic photography, including limited contributions to the aerial genre.

After the short lesson on aerial photography and on Underwood & Underwood, Ms. Marion showed about half of the Underwood aerials of Lynchburg. She explained that was in the photo and, with some, added additional images of the same subjects from the ground.

A brief question and answer period followed.

Mr. Stinnett reminded members that the next meeting will be on February 8 when Dr. Crystal Edwards will present her second SpheX talk. The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
James W. Wright

**Minutes of the 1,496th SPHEX Club Meeting
February 8, 2024**

President Joe Stinnett called the 1,496th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:32 p.m. on February 8, 2024. We met in Room 217 of Schewel Hall on the University of Lynchburg campus.

Active members present were: Cook, Cyphert, Edwards, Frantz Gillette, Hansen, Jablonski, Light, Marion, McDonald, Payne, Roberts, Sanders, Salmon, Schewel, Smith, Stinnett, Tiller, Wodicka and Wright.

Business:

President Stinnett called for additions or corrections to the minutes of the January 25 meeting. There were none and the minutes were approved by voice vote.

There were no committee reports.

President Stinnett announced the resignation of Tory Lucas from the club and read a portion of Mr. Lucas's letter: "As you may have noticed, it has been getting harder and harder for me to attend our Sphex Club meetings. I am almost always traveling or committed to another function, and it weighs on me not being able to meet my commitment to attend all of the enlightening presentations. Because of the number of conflicts that continue to occur, I must resign from the Sphex Club. During my seven years in the club, I learned a lot. I appreciate Kim Payne's introducing me to the Sphex Club, and I am grateful for the members who made me feel welcome."

Mr. Stinnett also reminded members that 2024 dues (\$35) are now being collected and may be brought to the next meeting.

Mr. Stinnett then recognized Treasurer Marc Schewel, who provided the following report:

In keeping with the theme of Ms. Marion's presentation on January 25, the treasurer's report featured aerial photography. The treasurer showed photographs taken from drones of four Schewel's Home stores: Lynchburg, Roanoke, Danville, and Henderson, NC. Each photograph was overlaid with a Schewel's brochure promoting a recent or future sale: Black Friday, New Year's, Presidents' Day, and Leap Year.

The treasurer's last slide was an aerial photograph of the towering downtown Bank of the James building, where the Sphex Club account is safely on deposit. The balance in the account—\$1757.51—was displayed adjacent to the bank accompanied by the Sphex Club logo.

The treasurer's report was once again received with a round of applause, which might have been prompted by Ms. Marion's exclamation that this was "the shortest treasurer's report ever!"

Dr. Edwards, our speaker, introduced her guest, her husband Brian Edwards.

Regrets to the speaker were sent by Mike Bradford, Allison Morrison-Shetlar, Ted Delaney, Geoff Kershner, Walker Sydnor, Julie Dalton, Ken West, George Dawson, and Sue Ott Rowland.

President Stinnett introduced Dr. Edwards: Dr. Crystal M. Edwards is the Superintendent for Lynchburg City Schools and an adjunct professor at the Virginia University of Lynchburg. She earned a B.S. in Secondary Education (Penn State), an M.S. in Chemistry (Rutgers), and an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership, Management, and Policy (Seton Hall).

She has spent 37 years in education serving as the Superintendent in two states, Assistant Superintendent, Director and Supervisor of Math and Science, and a high school science teacher. During the summers when she wasn't teaching, Dr. Edwards worked in research labs at Rutgers University and three pharmaceutical companies, Union Carbide, Merck, and Celanese. Much of her research focused on the early onset of Alzheimer's disease.

One of the tenets of Dr. Edwards' leadership is giving back and developing the next generation of educational leaders. She served as a mentor for aspiring administrators and new superintendents and has given many talks and presentations at various conferences in Virginia, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Texas, and overseas in Malta.

She also serves on the boards of the YMCA of Central Virginia, the Virginia School Consortium for Learning, and the Lynchburg Chapter of the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities. In 2019, Governor Northam appointed Dr. Edwards to the Virginia Commission on African American History Education.

Dr. Edwards is happily married to Brian Edwards, owner and manager of several rental properties at Smith Mountain Lake and Lake Gaston in North Carolina. They have five children, Robyn who takes after her mom and is a kindergarten teacher in Fairfax County. Trey, Miracle, and Malcolm take after their dad and all work in business and marketing for a small business, Amazon and Zillow, respectively. Laila is a sophomore at Rowan University and is pursuing criminal justice.

When they are not running in one of the local 5K races, Brian and Crystal like to relax in their pontoon, listen to music and enjoy some quiet time while fishing.

Dr. Edward's talk was titled "Fierce Women." She provided the following summary, and acknowledged the assistance of ChatGPT in crafting the abstract:

During this talk, we embarked on a profound exploration of the multifaceted concept of "Fierce Women," delving into the narratives that had shaped and continue to shape our understanding of empowered femininity. Through an interdisciplinary lens, we sought to unravel the intersections of strength, representation, and legacy that defined this enduring archetype.

Our journey commenced with a reflective glance back at the cultural touchstones of our childhood superheroes. These iconic figures, with their bravery, resilience, and resourcefulness, have served as beacons of inspiration, laying the foundation for our perceptions of strength and heroism. From the pages of comic books to the box office, these characters have fueled our imaginations and set the stage for our examination of fierce women in contemporary media.

Navigating through the evolution of female representation in media, we dissected the commercial implications intertwined with top-grossing films and merchandise trends. From blockbuster successes to Halloween sales, we unraveled the complex web of influences that shape and reflect societal attitudes toward strong women. Through this analysis, we invited critical reflection on the commodification of empowerment and its implications for gender dynamics in our culture.

Yet, amidst the celebration of empowerment laid a terrain fraught with controversy and ambiguity. We traversed through the turbulent waters of contentious portrayals, examined the dichotomy between reality and fiction, and explored the ethical dimensions of representation in media. As we confronted these complexities, we challenged ourselves to discern the truths that lay beneath the surface of our cultural narratives, seeking a deeper understanding of the impact of media on our perceptions of gender roles.

Our journey extended beyond the boundaries of contemporary media as we delved into the annals of history, uncovering the captivating saga of the Kingdom of Dahomey and its formidable female warriors. From the recruitment and training of the Agojie to their valorous exploits on the battlefield, we bore witness to the resilience and indomitable spirit of these historical figures, whose legacy reverberated through the corridors of time.

Through an exploration of their conflicts with neighboring kingdoms, confrontations with colonial forces, and entanglements in the heart of the transatlantic slave trade, we gained profound insights into the complexities of their lived experiences. Their stories served as a poignant reminder of the strength and fortitude inherent in the female spirit, inspiring reverence, and admiration for their enduring legacy.

Conclusion: As we bring our narrative into the present day, reflecting on the enduring resonance of these historical figures and their contemporary manifestations, we recognize the personal responsibility we each hold in honoring their legacy. From the pulpit to the stage, the schoolhouse to the White House, and the athletic team bench to the Supreme Court judicial bench, we witness the enduring impact of fierce women who persist in defying expectations and reshaping our collective consciousness. Through their stories, we are reminded of our duty to challenge stereotypes, dismantle barriers, and advocate for gender equity in every facet of society.

A question and answer period followed, with questions or observations from Payne, Light, Wright, Gillette, Salmon, Jablonski, Tiller, Roberts, Cyphert and Smith.

Mr. Stinnett reminded members that the annual dinner meeting will be on April 18 at Sweet Briar. Our speaker will be Mr. Dwayne Yancey, Executive Editor of Cardinal News and former editorial page editor of the Roanoke Times.

Our next meeting will be on February 22 when Travis McDonald will speak on “Obsolete and Broken Art.” The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
James W. Wright

**Minutes of the 1,497th SPHEX Club Meeting
February 22, 2024**

President Joe Stinnett called the 1,497th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:38 p.m. on February 22, 2024. The meeting was delayed due to parking difficulties. We met in Room 217 of Schewel Hall on the University of Lynchburg campus.

Active members present were: Bradford, Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Delzingaro, Doyle, Edwards, Hansen, Kershner, Light, Marion, McDonald, Payne, Roberts, Sanders, Schewel, Sigler, Smith, Stinnett, Sydnor, Tiller, West and Wright.

Business:

President Stinnett called for additions or corrections to the minutes of the January 25 meeting. There were none and the minutes were approved by voice vote.

The speaker's guests, Mrs. Denise McDonald and Mr. S. Allen Chambers, were welcomed.

Committee reports:

Membership: After excusing our guests, Ms. Delzingaro reported that an invitation to join the club was extended but declined with regret. The membership therefore consists of 32 persons. Members were encouraged to submit nominations for membership to Ms. Delzingaro or any member of the committee (Crystal Edwards, Dennis Roberts, and Geoffrey Kershner).

Archives Ad Hoc Committee: Dr. Wright thanked Mr. Smith for the training session he provided for several members just prior to this meeting. His innovations and training will greatly accelerate the project of moving the Sphex papers and minutes online.

Mr. Stinnett also reminded members that 2024 dues (\$35) are now being collected and may be brought to the next meeting. Twenty-six members have paid, six have not.

Mr. Stinnett then recognized Treasurer Marc Schewel, who provided the following report:

At our last meeting we heard from Dr. Crystal Edwards about strong women in film – Wonder Woman, Black Panther, The Woman King, Barbie – and in real life: the Agojie Female Warriors of Dahomey. In the film Barbie, the living doll's feminist world is upended when Ken turns it into a patriarchy. Mattel employee and mother Gloria tries to console her by speaking to the greater, painful truth of being a woman in America.

Can we all relate to that? It's a question I won't dare try to answer. But I will say this. Not many people understand or can relate to the greater, painful truth of being a volunteer treasurer for a non-profit like the Sphex Club in society today. So, let me try to explain it to you.

It's literally impossible to be a treasurer. You're smart, you're diligent, you can add and subtract, you can balance a checkbook, yet sometimes you don't think you're good enough. You wouldn't think you have to be extraordinary to do this job but it seems more and more that people are expecting that.

The Club has to have money if it wants to have a social event, but you don't want to ask members to pay their dues because that would be crass and you don't want to offend or embarrass anyone. And how are you supposed to cope with a member not paying his dues all year and then paying double the next year? Or a member who actually pays a voluntary late charge? Or a member who makes a voluntary contribution? Don't they understand how difficult this makes it for a treasurer who's trying to keep the accounts accurately yet doesn't want the bookkeeping to get so complicated as to require professional help?

As the treasurer, you have to be both a leader and a follower. You're one of the officers of the Club and you're in charge of the money, but if the president or the program chairman says to send a check to Sweet Briar College, you're obligated to do his bidding without questioning the expenditure. Is this money being spent wisely? Have other options been considered? Don't they know that if the Club runs short of funds, you – that is me – are going to get blamed. And if you point out any irregularity, of course you're accused of complaining.

If that isn't stressful enough, how about having to give a report at every meeting? Because the proceedings are always so serious, you decide to inject a little humor, and so what happens? All of a sudden, the members are anticipating a humorous treasurer's report. Do they understand how bothersome and time-consuming it is trying to come up with some ridiculous riff on the previous presenter's paper, and how you break out in a sweat as the days tick down, and you just can't think of anything.

And then some members don't appreciate you. When you just show a few slides, they say the report is too short and didn't meet the expectations you created. Then you have the skeptics sitting in their seats fidgeting and wondering when is this absurd monologue going to end and are you ever going to get to the point, which is how much money is in the treasury today.

By the way, it's \$1757.51.

It's too hard! It's too contradictory, and nobody gives you a medal or says thank you! All they want to do is reelect you to another term and give you another opportunity to speak and probably be criticized. When and where that might be, I'm not at liberty to say, but you can probably guess, so be prepared.

Mr. Stinnett recognized the secretary, Dr. Wright, who reminded members that the late Jim Elson gave the club a number of copies of his book, *Lynchburg, Virginia: The First 200 Years*, and they are available to any member who desires one. We also have copies of Dr. Elson's history of the SpheX Club. They are normally given to new members, but Dr. Wright wanted to make sure that every current member has received one.

Regrets to the speaker were sent by Alison Morrison-Shetlar, Bill Blackman, Nina Salmon, Michael Gillette and Allison Jablonski.

President Stinnett introduced Mr. McDonald: Travis McDonald is a native of Galveston, Texas. He received a degree in American history from the University of Texas and a graduate degree in architectural history from the University of Virginia's School of Architecture. He formerly worked for the Chief Historical Architect of the National Park Service, for the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. He was hired to direct the restoration of Poplar Forest in 1989 and retired last year after its architectural completion. In 2011 he was awarded The Architecture Medal for Virginia Service, by the Virginia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects; in 2016 he received a Commendation from the Virginia Senate for Preserving the Heritage of Virginia; and in 2021 he was awarded the UVA School of Architecture's Distinguished Alumni Award. His first book on Poplar Forest was published last year and he is now working on a second Poplar Forest book. He is married to Denise McDonald who also retired last year from running the Old City Cemetery Arboretum. They have two married daughters and three infant grandchildren.

Mr. McDonald's talk was titled "Obsolete and Broken Art." He began his paper by asking his audience to name the person pictured on the \$1, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50, \$100, \$500, \$1000, \$5000, \$10,000, and \$100,000 U.S. bills, and then to name who or what was pictured on the back of each bill. He then launched into a brief history national banks, beginning with the first created by Alexander Hamilton in 1781 and increasing in number to about 2000 in 1861. Each issued its own paper money—more than 10,000 unique forms, and all tied to local or state banks. About 600 banks failed (were "broken") in the Panic of 1837. It was only with the issuance of non-secured federal Demand Notes, called "green backs," in 1861 that the modern era of U.S. paper currency began. The 1863 National Banking Act chartered all banks, all of which were secured by deposited bonds, which helped to stabilize the currency. By 1890 there were over 3300 chartered banks.

McDonald then revealed his true subject: the artistry found on notes issued by broken banks and on obsolete currency and the art of engraving that made such artistry possible. He began by relating the story of the three "education notes," \$1, \$2 and \$5 bills issued in 1896 that featured artwork by three well-known artists and today are considered the most beautiful paper currency ever issued by the U.S. These notes were withdrawn two years later for a variety of reasons, including depictions of nudity, and now command prices above \$10,000. He then showed reproductions of the education notes overprinted on modern currency, along with other examples of "overprinting" to enhance or otherwise modify modern, legal currency.

The speaker has accumulated over 200 obsolete notes over the past 30 years. His has not been a systematic collection, but an occasional purchase in antique stores or coin shops, buying most because he admired the artwork or because of the signatures the bills bore. Early notes usually bore actual signatures, along with a hand-written date and number and occasionally the signature of the person cashing the note. An early buying criterion was to collect notes from the antebellum Deep South, because they tended to feature quality engravings. He showed a number of examples and included some from New England and the Mid-west.

The speaker then explained that the pictorial vignettes used on bank notes had to be drawn or painted in the actual size they would be used on the note. These miniatures had to have the detail and shading usually associated with larger works of art. They then had to be reproduced by a skilled engraver, transforming continuous lines and gradations into dots and lines on a steel die. The skill is difficult to acquire and practice and engraving apprenticeships lasted about ten years. Mr. McDonald then discussed the methods of engraving. This work was done by private engraving companies. He showed posters produced by the companies that featured engraved portraits or vignettes the company had produced for currency, postage stamps and stock certificates. By the 1850s, larger artistic works could be reduced photographically, but the images still had to be reproduced by engraving.

McDonald discussed the American Bank Note Company which had merged, by 1857, with seven other companies, commanded 90% of the engraving business, and printed federal currency for most of the late nineteenth century.

He concluded by citing, as the reasons for his fascination with obsolete currency, that it “could show traditions of ideal and allegorical representations of nationhood and liberty; they showed concepts of ideal beauty; of powerful manhood and joys of childhood; gods and goddesses; great leaders, aboriginal ancestors; scenes of peace and prosperity; national superiority; timeless values and truths; local pride of structures, steamboats, factories, and railroads; portraiture and figure paintings; and various historical compositions of known and unique works.”

Following the delivery of the paper there was question and answer period with participation by Stinnett, Marian, Dawson and others. Mr. McDonald had passed around several examples of ante-bellum notes as well as overprint reproductions of the “education notes.” Despite the powerful temptation to liberate these articles, they were collected and returned to the speaker.

Our next meeting will be on March 7 when Dr. Alison Morrison-Shetlar will deliver her first Spheer paper, entitled “Life and My Grandmother’s Flower Garden.” The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
James W. Wright

Minutes of the 1,498th SPHEX Club Meeting

March 7, 2024

President Joe Stinnett called the 1,498th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on March 7, 2024. We met in Room 217 of Schewel Hall on the University of Lynchburg campus.

Active members present were: Blackman, Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Delzingaro, Doyle, Frantz, Hansen, Light, Marion, McDonald, Morrison-Shetlar, Payne, Roberts, Sanders, Salmon, Schewel, Sigler, Stinnett, Sydnor, Tiller, West and Wodicka.

Business:

President Stinnett called for additions or corrections to the minutes of the February 22 meeting. There were none and the minutes were approved by voice vote. The speaker's guest, Sarah Rhodes, was welcomed.

Committee reports:

Membership: After excusing our guests, Ms. Delzingaro conducted the election of new members. Two new members were elected. The committee will now extend invitations to those individuals and, if possible, announce their response at the next meeting.

Program Committee: David Frantz announced that invitations to the dinner were going out that night by email. Members must reply and select their choice of meal for each attendee. He welcomed spouses, significant others, and friends who might be interested in hearing the speaker (Dwayne Yancey of Cardinal News). Checks for \$40 per person should be mailed or given to Marc Schewel.

Mr. Stinnett then recognized Treasurer Marc Schewel, who provided the following report:

Thanks to Travis McDonald for finally giving a talk about something extremely important to the continuing operations of the Club, something relevant to my job as treasurer, something near and dear to my heart (and probably yours also): money.

All those slides of interesting but extinct and basically worthless currency got me thinking about the recent devaluation of today's currency. In only four years the dollar has lost 17% of its purchasing power. Yes, it takes one hundred dollars today to buy the same goods and services you could have bought in 2020 for \$83.

This puts our own bank account in serious jeopardy. More years like the last four could basically wipe us out, and put an end to all our activities – well, our one activity, which is our upcoming annual meeting.

Thankfully, Travis's talk gave me an idea. What better way to preserve our cash assets than for us to create our currency?

Of course, this wasn't easy. I had to get permission from the Department of the Treasury. Fortunately, I was able to obtain a letter of recommendation from President Joe Biden, who wrote that while he doesn't remember much, he does remember the founding of the Sphex Club oh so many years ago and that it was very important to assure its financial security. Accordingly, the Club is authorized to issue its own form of bitcoin called Sphex Bucks.

I'm proud to be able to show you this evening the beautiful designs that have been adopted.

Now before I show the last slide, I'd like you to recall the 1988 film, "Coming to America," in which Eddie Murphy plays the wealthy prince of Zamunda, Akeem Joffer, who comes to America to find a woman who will love him for himself and not his social status. Upon meeting Lisa, who possesses all the qualities he is looking for, he goes to work in her father's fast-food restaurant to get closer to her. But the father, Cleo, disapproves of Akeem, thinking he is poor and not good enough for his daughter – until he finds out who Akeem really is, which prompts this scene between him and Lisa.

"He's rich. He is rich. He's got his own money. And baby, when I tell you he's got his own money, I mean the boy has got his own money!"

[Images of the Sphinx Bucks are appended to these minutes.]

Regrets to the speaker were sent by Edwards, Jablonski, Kershner, Rowlands, Smith, and Wright.

President Stinnett introduced Dr. Morrison-Shetlar: On Aug. 1, 2020, Alison Morrison-Shetlar became the 11th president at the University of Lynchburg in Lynchburg, Virginia. In the last three years, under President Alison's leadership, the University has developed a strategic plan with three areas of distinction—Leadership Development, Innovation and Collaboration, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion—and a comprehensive campaign focused on endowed scholarships, programmatic support, and facilities projects. The University has been undergoing strategic reorganization to enhance the student experience and ensure that the university is both effective and efficient in its use of resources. It has also increased marketing of the University outside of Virginia to grow enrollment and engagement with the community to provide students the experiential learning opportunities they deserve. The tagline for the University is 'Undeniably life-changing' as changing lives is what we do better than any other institution.

Alison has experience working at private and public institutions in the U.S. Upon coming to the U.S. in 1993, she served Wesleyan University in Connecticut (adjunct faculty), Georgia Southern University (associate professor of biology and director of professional development), the University of Central Florida (director of faculty development, professor of biology, vice provost and dean of undergraduate studies), Elon University (dean of arts and sciences), and most recently Western Carolina University, where she served as provost for 3.5 years, vice president for development and alumni engagement (9 months) and interim chancellor (18 months).

Alison brings a wealth of international experience to the presidential post. A native of Scotland, she earned a bachelor's degree in biology and chemistry and a doctorate in biomedical science from Dundee College of Technology (now Abertay University). She was the founding chair of the molecular biology unit at the Max Planck Institute in Dortmund, Germany, and a teacher-scholar at Bochum University in Bochum, Germany, and the Kennedy Institute of Rheumatology in London.

Dr. Morrison-Shetlar's talk was titled "Life and my grandmother's flower garden." She began by recounting the history of LIFE (Learning Institute for Elders) programs, beginning with the first at the University of Central Florida in 1991, which has been expanded to include campus and community excursions called LIFE Trippin' Tours, and opportunities for engagement with students and faculty. Subsequent LIFE programs at Elon University (2012) and Western Carolina University (2014) have also been successful. She then described the LIFE program at the University of Lynchburg, now completing its second year, and the favorable responses of

participants. She explained that these programs improve memory, enhance cognitive function, reduce the risk of cognitive decline, increase neuroplasticity, and increase confidence and social engagement.

The speaker then shifted to her main topic, the art of quilting. The title of her paper was taken from the 18th century hexagonal quilt pattern known as Grandmother's Flower Garden. She reviewed the history of quilting, which is believed to have originated in ancient Egypt, and quilting bees, noting that quilting bees in this country have provided a means of socializing, telling multigenerational stories, and providing mutual support for centuries. They have served to enhance a sense of community among women who otherwise had few opportunities for social interaction. Modern quilting groups serve the same functions. The speaker illustrated a number of quilting designs.

Our next meeting will be on March 21 when Dr. Reid Wodicka will speak. The title of his paper will be "The Back Half."

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

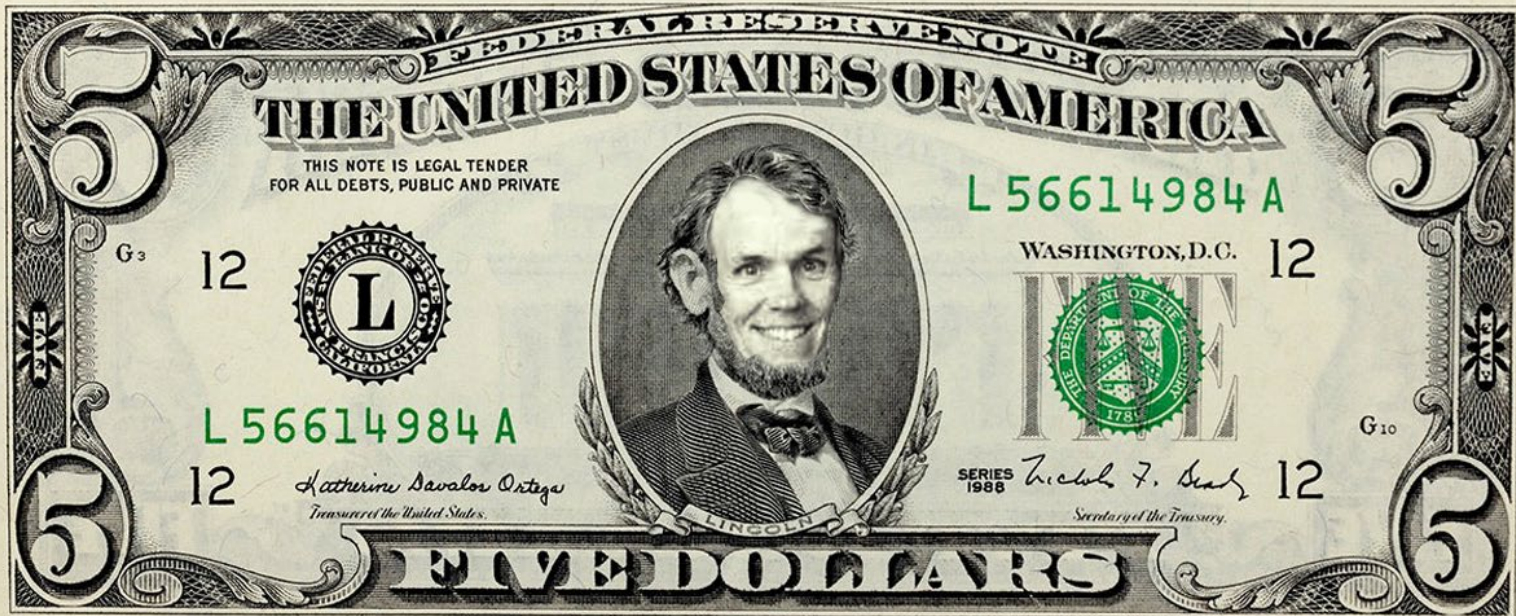
Nancy B. Marion
Assistant Secretary

SPHEX CLUB

Treasurer's Report
March 7, 2024



(Joe Stinnett)



(James Wright)



(George Dawson)



(Kimball Payne)



(Travis McDonald)



(Marc Schewel)



(Jerry Falwell, Jr.)



\$2317.61

Minutes of the 1,499th SPHEX Club Meeting March 21, 2024

President Joe Stinnett called the 1,499th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:33 p.m. on March 21, 2024. We met in Room 217 of Schewel Hall on the University of Lynchburg campus.

Active members present were: Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Delzingaro, Edwards, Frantz, Gillette, Light, Marion, Payne, Roberts, Rowlands, Sanders, Salmon, Schewel, Sigler, Smith, Stinnett, Tiller, Wodicka, and Wright.

Business:

President Stinnett welcomed to membership Dr. Sue Ott Rowlands, who was greeted with a round of applause. He then called for additions or corrections to the minutes of the February 22 meeting. The secretary announced one change suggested by Julie Doyle. The amended minutes were approved by acclamation. The speaker had no guests.

Committee reports:

Membership: Ms. Delzingaro announced that Dr. Chris Lewis has accepted the club's invitation to membership. She has not yet been able to contact the other person elected.

Nominating Committee: In Ms. Doyle's absence, President Stinnett introduced the slate of proposed officers for the 2024-2025 year. This slate was emailed to members five days prior to the meeting. Elected by acclamation were Nancy Marion, President; Steve Smith, Vice President; Secretary, Jim Wright; Assistant Secretary, Nancy Marion; and Treasurer, Marc Schewel.

Program Committee: David Frantz informed members that invitations to the annual dinner were emailed to members by Dr. Nina Salmon. Thus far 28 members have responded. A reminder: the dinner will take place at Sweet Briar College on April 18. Members are encouraged to bring guests. There is a charge of \$40/person, payable to Treasurer Marc Schewel. The online registration also allows members to select entrées from a menu. Mr. Dwayne Yancey, Executive Editor of Cardinal News, will be our speaker.

Ad Hoc Committee on the Sphex Archives: Dr. Wright reported that the project of identifying key words in the 530 papers in the archives is 70% complete. The committee would like to complete this project by May and is hopeful that the staff at the Jones Memorial Library will have the papers online but password protected by September.

Mr. Stinnett then recognized Treasurer Marc Schewel, who provided the following report:

Well, a couple of weeks ago I went on a rant describing the difficulties and stress involved in managing the Club's Treasury and the lack of appreciation for all the work and time required to do the job properly.

Even though that outburst was intended to be a joke, I'm grateful that many members have since then expressed their appreciation. One even sent me a personal note written on a beautiful floral sympathy card. I am reluctant to disclose the name of the sender at the risk of embarrassing the other twenty-nine members who obviously felt no such note was necessary.

Tonight, however, I feel like the kid who shouted "Fire" as a practical joke and cleared the classrooms but never considered what would happen if a real fire broke out. Nobody would believe him.

But believe me, this job is getting really hard.

I'm having to collect dues and banquet fees simultaneously, which is stressing out this seventy-five-year-old brain. I've got to figure out how much goes in the dues column and how much goes in the banquet column for each member.

Then, some members insist on paying in cash. When I get a check, at least I know who's paying but when several folks thrust five, ten, and twenty-dollar bills at me at one time just minutes before the meeting starts, it's a challenge to get each person's name down correctly. And sometimes I even have to make change, which complicates matters considerably.

Worse than that was a situation where I received a check from a member who was paying a banquet charge for two plus dues and banquet charges for another member. Hmmm! That's \$80 plus \$40 plus \$35, for a total of \$155. The only problem was that the check was written for \$125. So, either the payor was \$30 short, or intended to pay for only one banquet attendee and was \$10 over.

Wondering how I could deal with this stress, I was made aware of a program at University of Lynchburg: Learning Institute for Elders. When I read how it could improve memory, enhance cognitive functioning, and boost confidence, I thought it might help me to manage these treasury problems. But when I looked over the roster of speakers, I saw that most of their subjects were pretty useless: Whether Confederate Statues Should Stay or Go; Hidden Secrets of Jefferson's Poplar Forest; How John Lynch Created Lynchburg; Two Great Artists of the Late Fifteenth Century: Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci.

Having heard at our last meeting that quilting could be a great stress reliever, I briefly considered trying that, only to realize after one aborted lesson that more stress was being created than relieved. So now, in order to relax, on Sunday afternoons I retreat to my office and work on a scrapbook of all my past treasurer's reports, which now go back five years. And this Sunday I will be pasting this report, which will show a balance of \$3302.51.

Regrets to the speaker were sent by Blackman, Bradford, Doyle, Jablonski, McDonald, Morrison-Shetlar, and West.

President Stinnett introduced Dr. Reid Wodicka: Dr. Wodicka serves as the Deputy Superintendent for Operations and Strategic Planning for Lynchburg City Schools. A proud graduate of E. C. Glass High School, he attended James Madison University for undergraduate and masters

degrees, and has a PhD in Public Policy with a focus in Urban Development from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Later he earned an Executive Master of Science in Cities from the London School of Economics and is now (slowly, but intently) working on a Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Virginia. Reid has been the Town Manager of Elkton and Woodstock in Virginia, Deputy County Administrator in Bedford County, and most recently Deputy City Manager in Lynchburg.

Dr. Wodicka began by noting that he is about half-way through his career, a fact which has prompted him to consider the direction of the back half. He cited as goals a desire to strengthen the public schools and the schools' connection to their neighborhoods, to create and maintain public spaces that are environmentally sound and strengthen neighborhoods and their schools, and that are economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.

To establish context, he reviewed the history of redlining, the practice of classifying neighborhoods on the basis of loan risk, a practice codified in the National Housing Act of 1934. Minority neighborhoods were thus deprived of access to bank loans, leading to further decline of neighborhoods considered high loan risks. He showed a Federal Housing Administration map of Lynchburg and focused on the area around R.S. Payne Elementary School. He reviewed current poverty rates, home ownership rates, education rates and other demographic data and demonstrated the negative long-term consequences of redlining. From a sociologic standpoint, he demonstrated the high rate of vacant or condemned houses and the loss of churches in the area around the school. Schools in these neighborhoods are "walled off" from the neighborhoods.

Reid then stated his goal to redesign the outdoor spaces around public schools to better connect the schools to the neighborhoods they serve, and do it in an environmentally responsible way. He showed the current school zone map of the city, originally designed in the 1970s to achieve racial integration, but which has resulted in bussing inner city children far from home and from the schools in their neighborhood, and did not require that suburban children be bussed to the inner city. He then discussed urban heat islands and their relationship to redlined neighborhoods. Using city heat maps, he demonstrated the close correlation between redlined neighborhoods and higher average daytime temperatures. He has worked closely with Professor Laura Henry-Stone at the University of Lynchburg and Karen Warren at Randolph College.

After connecting redlining to a lack of institutions, a high poverty rate and heat islands, Reid gave examples in other cities of how thoughtfully designed and maintained public spaces improved the environment and the economy and increased social justice. He cited unused or ill-used public school campuses as an opportunity to improve neighborhoods, improve learning opportunities for students and combat the heat island phenomenon. He discussed the Transforming Schoolyards project of the Trust for Public Land and a similar project in Paris, France. He showed successful though modest efforts in Lynchburg, including an urban "food forest" at R.S. Payne School (planting fruit trees)

with a “literacy walk”, a restoration of the playground at Bass Elementary School, and replacement of a basketball court at Jefferson Park in the Dearington neighborhood.

He then showed photographs of the R.S. Payne campus as they are today along with dramatic architectural renderings of how the campus could be transformed into a park-like setting that would benefit the school and neighborhood and provide a refuge from the summer heat. These were followed by rough sketches by Dr. Henry-Stone of how the Dunbar and E. C. Glass campuses could be similarly transformed.

Dr. Wodicka concluded by saying that in the second half of his career, he hopes he has the opportunity to help Lynchburg City Schools invest in its spaces and in doing so reconnect schools to their neighborhoods and improve the neighborhoods in an environmentally responsible and sustainable way.

A lively Q&A session followed. Dr. Frantz noted that one of his daughters, who lives in San Francisco, works for the Trust for Public Lands. When he researched the organization he found that it was involved in the creation of the small public park with boat ramp and the James River Association’s Upper James Research and Education Center. He said that one of the goals of the organization is to put green spaces within a 15-minute walk of all Americans. Ms. Marion noted that every time she tries to walk across the R.S. Payne campus she encounters a chain link fence. She asked how open the campus would be after the proposed changes. Dr. Wodicka responded that fences are needed around schools but that fence design can make them more attractive and less forbidding than a ten-foot high chain link fence. Mr. Light asked if the current effort to redraw school districts would be done with an eye toward reconnecting schools with their neighborhoods. Dr. Wodicka responded that the process has sought input from hundreds of citizens and educators who have said that the old map is not working for us any more and that we need to keep children close to their neighborhood schools. He said that a variety of factors must be taken into consideration when redrawing the district to meet criteria set forth by the federal government. Dr. Edwards elaborated on this topic. Mr. Dawson noted that there have been a number of successful public-private projects in the city that suggest the possibility of others, such as rehabilitating The Plaza, with its vast expanse of asphalt. He pointed out that the city has levers at its disposal to make change happen. As an example, he said that many businesses and nonprofits operate on conditional use permits or zoning exceptions. Such permits could spell out requirements that the organization foster a relationship with the neighborhood in specific ways. He lamented the current adversarial relationship between City Council and the school board and asked if Dr. Wodicka saw any hope for progress. Dr. Wodicka expressed the belief that ultimately the City does the right thing.. It has been his experience that private investment usually follows public investment. He said that public school campus renewal would be a public good but noted that it is difficult to calculate the return on the investment. Rev. Roberts asked about the current status of the desegregation order. Dr. Edwards responded that the school system’s plan to better involve neighborhoods with their schools and keep

children in the neighborhood schools will obviate the need for the current desegregation plan. These plans are still being made. Dr. Frantz asked for an explanation of how the school system can address the inherent tension between engaging schools in their neighborhoods and maintaining diversity in the student body. Dr. Wodicka said that the LSC administration differentiates between neighborhood schools and “close-to-home” schools. The new districts would be long and thin, like a cross section of the city. He said that there is no perfect answer. Ms. Delzingaro notes that as we try to keep children closer to home, schools will become more homogenous. She asked whether there is political will to invest in African American neighborhoods, noting that there has been little will in the past. She said that there is much work to be done to address underfunding of Black neighborhoods. Dr. Edwards responded that LSC is trying to leverage local businesses and nonprofits and get them connected to our schools, and expressed the hope that this would increase pressure on city council. She said that city staff has been very supportive. Dr. Wright asked about the timeline for implementing the campus changes at R. S. Payne. Dr. Wodicka explained that the building itself is in need of major work and that work on the campus would have to wait until decisions are made about the renovations and that work is actually done. He noted that the General Assembly has passed a bill that would allow localities to adopt a one percent increase in the sales tax to be used for school construction. That still requires the governor’s signature and would then require adoption by the City Council. Dr. Gillette opined that local issues will not enter into the next election because it will be all about the presidential election. He said that moving local elections from May to December killed discussion of local issues. Mr. Payne ended the conversation by commending Drs. Wodicka and Edwards for their work and for setting new standards. He advised that they not go to the governing bodies and ask if the standards are okay, but rather tell them that these are the standards and make them repeal them if they will. He said in that case they would not repeal them because it is very difficult to say no to a good idea.

Our next meeting will be on April 18. This will be our annual dinner meeting as described earlier in the meeting by Dr. Frantz. For those who like round numbers, this will be the **1500th** meeting of the club.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James W. Wright
Secretary

Minutes of the SPHEX Club Annual Meeting

April 18, 2024

The annual dinner meeting—the first since 2019—was held in the Wailes Center at Sweet Briar College. This was the 1500th meeting of the club. President Joe Stinnett welcomed members and their guests, including the speaker, Dwayne Yancey and his wife Katrina. He thanked the program committee (David Frantz, Nina Salmon and Billie Hansen) for making the arrangements for the evening, and thanked the staff of the Wailes Center.

President Stinnett then briefly reviewed the history of the club and its purpose, “to promote the intellectual and social culture of its members and to encourage philanthropic, educational and civic progress in the community,” adding that the unstated purpose was to reduce tensions between the Randolph-Macon Women’s College faculty and members of Lynchburg’s business and professional community.

President Stinnett then introduced the new officers, elected at the last regular meeting.

Dinner was then served.

After dinner, President Stinnett introduced Marc Schewel, who had been asked to deliver, for the benefit of guests, a few remarks about the club. Whether Mr. Stinnett regretted yielding the podium to Mr. Schewel is likely to remain unknown. Mr. Schewel’s peregrinations included doggerel; one-liners; jokes, most of which elicited laughter; humorous references to new Liberty University president Dondi Costin, City Councilman Marty Misjuns, Police Chief Ryan Zuidema, and the new police station currently under construction; Congressman Bob Good; Lynchburg City Council and others. He announced awards for those SpheX members who delivered papers this year, each award a commentary that person’s paper: Crystal Edwards for the paper with the least obscure title (“Fierce Women”); Alison Jablonski for the paper with the most obscure title (“23 and Who?”); David Frantz for the paper with the most lyrical title (“Almost Gone But Not Forgotten”); Steve Smith for the paper on the most obscure subject (“How Did We Get Here and When Will They Join Us?”); Nancy Marion for the paper on the loftiest subject (“Up in the Air”); Travis McDonald for the most artistic subject (“Obsolete and Broken Art”); Billie Hansen for the most humorous but least enlightening paper (“The First Rule”); Nina Salmon for the paper that left the treasurer speechless (“Sinister or Out in Left Field”); and Reid Wodicka for the speaker with the most graduate degrees (“The Back Half”). Two members shared the prize for the paper that most shamelessly promoted the speaker’s institution of higher learning: Mike Bradford (“Legacy of a Gilded Age Tycoon” {[Duke]}) and Alison Morrison-Shetlar (“Life in My

Grandmother's Flower Garden"). Mr. Schewel concluded by recognizing the speaker with the most guests—himself.

Mr. Stinnett then introduced the speaker, Mr. Dwayne Yancey: "Tonight's speaker joins a long list of distinguished speakers at this annual meeting, including former governors, admirals, generals, professors, scholars, physicians, mountain climbers, journalists, and scientists.

"Years ago, the newspaper covered these annual meetings, and the first one I attended, as a reporter, was around 1980. The speaker coincidentally was Clark Mollenhoff, a prominent columnist and Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative reporter. Tonight we welcome an even more distinguished journalist, Dwayne Yancey, executive editor of Cardinal News. I say more distinguished because Mr. Mollenhoff practiced his craft during the golden age of print newspaper journalism. He had it easy. That's long gone.

"But the need for well-told, factual, objective, accessible journalism is not gone. So when he left the Roanoke Times after 39 years, seven as editorial page editor, Dwayne helped found Cardinal News, a non-profit, ad-free, contributor-supported online professional news outfit that over a couple years has become the fastest-growing news operation in Virginia, covering primarily central and southwest Virginia and state government and politics. I believe they currently have eight reporters, not counting Dwayne and several other editors.

"At the Roanoke Times, Dwayne twice won the Virginia Press Association's D. Latham Mims Award for Editorial Leadership, and was inducted into the Virginia Communications Hall of Fame. He is the author of "When Hell Froze Over," a book about Virginia politics, (sounds like a Spheeris title) and is also an internationally-produced playwright. He lives in Fincastle. I was lucky enough to work with him for a year at the Roanoke paper, and I can't wait to hear what he has to say tonight."

Mr. Yancey began by asking for a show of hands of those who have heard of Cardinal News and how many subscribe to its free daily email summary. He then addressed the main topic of his talk, the changing media landscape. He set the stage by describing in broad terms the cultural and political landscape of 1982, when the state budget under Governor Chuck Robb was \$15.7 billion. He contrasted that with the current state budget, \$168 billion. He pointed out that the current state budget actually gets less scrutiny than it did in 1982, primarily because the number of journalists covering the General Assembly has decreased from 45 to about 12, but from day-to-day only four or five. Mr. Yancey estimated that the number of journalists working at the state and local level today is one-third of the number working in 1982. Among the reasons for this decline, he pointed to the proliferation of smart phones and the desire of consumers to receive their news electronically. But newspapers have provided online versions. The key difference, he said, was that

advertising funded newspapers (85% of newspaper revenue was from advertising), and most of that advertising has gone to social media. He cited the ability of social media algorithms to target the advertiser's specific audience, a capability not available in newspaper advertising, so newspaper advertising today is about 20 percent of what it was 2006. Declining ad revenues have required that newspapers cut staff. Publication frequency has decreased. As newspapers shrink in size and content, they become increasingly difficult to sell. Mr. Yancey distinguished between local newspapers and large, national papers such as the NY Times, the Washington Post and the Wall Street Journal, which can sell digital subscriptions world-wide.

The changes have given rise to online, nonprofit news sites such as Cardinal News. Mr. Yancey stressed that the Cardinal News story is not unique. When it began in 2021 there were about 300 online news sites in the U.S. That number has doubled. He mentioned that his figure come from the national trade association, the Institute for Nonprofit News, so the actual total is greater—"a great flowering of innovation taking place around the country." He gave as an example Charlottesville, where The Daily Progress is now printed three days a week and the online nonprofit, Charlottesville Tomorrow, has more journalists.

Speaking specifically about Cardinal News, he said that it was founded in September 2021 with two reporters. Its goal was to cover the western one-third of the state. It now has eight (soon to be nine) reporters. Its business model is similar to that of NPR and other online nonprofit news organization. There is no pay wall; access to it is free. Support comes from reader donations, grants and sponsorships.

After his talk, Mr. Yancey took questions from the audience. He was asked whether the nonprofit model has changed how news is reported, since it does not rely on commercial considerations. He responded that in general, nonprofits work with fewer reporters and have to be very intentional—they do not cover sports, or crime. They cover the changing local economy—the decline of local industries, the reinvention of communities as they weather changes in the economy (he cited Danville as an example). They have a mix of topic reporters and regional reporters—a political reporter in Richmond, and topic reporters in education, business, technology and healthcare. They have regional reporters in Bristol, Martinsville, and Danville. They would like to have dedicated reporters for Roanoke and Lynchburg. He cited examples of Cardinal News's independence from its funders—its ability to publish stories about some of its funders.

Mr. Yancey was asked about the cost to his organization to fund a reporter and he responded that it costs \$125,000 a year, including salary, benefits, and the cost to the back end of the organization to support that reporter.

A guest asked whether Cardinal News had a political stance or position on the political spectrum. He responded that Cardinal News has an advisory board that includes both a former Democratic and a Republican congressman. He said that Cardinal News does not have formal editorials, though he writes a daily opinion column and they accept contributed opinion pieces.

Another guest asked what Cardinal News is doing to preserve its legacy of reporting so that it will be accessible 100 years from now. He responded that they will be online as long as there is an online, but they have not taken steps to create any other form of archive. Mr. Stinnett commented that there ought to be, perhaps through the trade association, a mechanism whereby all output is archived in a standard, uncluttered file format for preservation.

He was asked about Cardinal News's strengths and responded that the stories that draw the greatest readership are about politics and the economy; those that do less well are about the arts. He pointed out that in print journalism there was no good way to tell which stories were most read, whereas electronically he can get exact counts for each story. Interest levels to some extent determine what they choose to cover.

Mr. Stinnett asked Mr. Yancey to speak about the Cardinal 250 Project. Mr. Yancey explained that this project is tied to the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, noting that there is a national committee and there are state committees organizing events to celebrate this anniversary. Cardinal News has received a three-year grant to fund a project that will consist of a monthly story about Virginia's role in the lead-up to the Revolution, focusing on little-known stories—those not told in standard Virginia history textbooks. They have already done stories on the role of Virginia's Native Americans and Black sailors. This project has prompted the production of Cardinal's first podcasts.

There were no further questions. Mr. Stinnett again thanked Mr. Yancey for speaking and adjourned the meeting.

James W. Wright
Secretary

SPHEX Club
Minutes of the 1501st meeting
September 12, 2024

President Nancy Marion called the 1,501st meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on September 12, 2024. We met in Room 217 of Schewel Hall on the University of Lynchburg campus.

Active members present were: Blackman, Bradford, Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Delzingaro, Frantz, Hansen, Jablonski, Marion, McDonald, Morrison-Shetlar, Payne, Roberts, Salmon, Schewel, Sigler, Smith, Stinnett, Sydnor, Tiller, Wodicka and Wright.

West is on a leave of absence and Manian begins her second year on inactive status.

Guest for the evening was the speaker's wife, Maria.

Business: President Marion welcomed members to a new year of SpheX meetings. She then introduced the new chairs of standing committees and announced that each chairperson would recruit members for their respective committees.

Membership: Walker Sydnor

Nominating: Nina Salmon

Program: Billy Hansen

Ms. Marion then recognized Jim Wright, chair of the ad hoc committee on the club's archives. Wright reported that all of the SpheX papers, minutes and other documents have been digitized. We have spent two years trying to find the best way to put these archives online and last year settled on using the JML website. The library director, Deb Smith, requires that all documents comply with national archival protocols. For the JML, this means using an open-source web publishing platform called Omeka, a project of Digital Scholar. To prepare our collection for migration to the Omeka platform, we have had to enter information about every document into a spreadsheet that has columns A through P and 536 lines. The columns include one for a brief synopsis of each paper and another for keywords for that paper. This project took a year and was completed in May. We had expected the JML staff to put any finishing touches on the spreadsheet over the summer and then migrate the data to Omeka. Dr. Wright learned from Ms. Smith last month that the library is transferring from omeka.net to omeka-S. They have a consultant who is mapping our data to import into the new system. The switch to Omeka-S involves the movement of a large volume of data. It was begun on July 1 and Ms. Smith anticipates completion by the end of the year. Dr. Wright will therefore not burden members with another report until January 2025.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Marc Schewel gave the following report. Since it more than stretches credulity, the secretary includes it verbatim.

Our five-month Sphex vacation is over, and with the advent of September comes a revival of familiar activity – intense political campaigning, college and professional football season kickoffs, the Virginia Ten-Miler, and any number of galas and fundraisers for those who wish to partake – but perhaps no event is more eagerly anticipated, at least among those gathered here this evening, than the Club Treasurer's Report.

Since I had no recent member paper to use as source material, I had been struggling for some time to concoct some fable that might meet the lofty expectations my former reports have generated. I considered disclosing the secret backroom maneuverings among your officers that were necessary to persuade our dear President Joe, who didn't want to go, that it was time for him to step aside in favor of a young, vibrant female, but concluded that such an analogy was bound to insult somebody, maybe everybody, even though that had never deterred me before.

Another discussion conducted behind closed doors which was too risky to share was whether to raise our officers' salaries. After a contentious debate, it was decided that only the Treasurer was deserving of such, and he was awarded a ten percent increase.

I was still without a suitable angle until, wouldn't you know it, fate intervened.

Two weeks ago, I had the opportunity to tour Winston Churchill's underground war rooms in London. Revisionism hasn't been kind to Sir Winston. If universally acknowledged as an unparalleled orator, a brilliant writer and historian, and an inspirational wartime leader, some historians also now see him as a failed military strategist and a stubborn imperialist who refused to accept that the sun was setting on the colonial era.

Nevertheless, the War Rooms Tour is well worth the time and price. You wind through the corridors, passing among other spaces the Cabinet meeting room, Churchill's private bedroom with bath, a kitchen, a bank of telephone exchanges, a BBC broadcast room, and an extensive museum depicting the great man's life in photos and narrative. Your final stop is the large Map Room, the walls of which are dotted with pins identifying every naval, air, and land force deployed around the world. Its desks covered with papers, files, telephones, teacups, and ash trays, the room remains at it was when the lights were turned off on August 14, 1945, the day Japan surrendered.

My eyes were drawn to a small white board propped against a lamp, on which was scribbled a five-letter word and four-digit number. Amazingly, the word was Sphex. How strange. What was Sphex doing in the Churchill Map Room?

When I got home, I went straight to my library. I combed through all 4379 pages of Churchill's six-volume *Second World War Memoirs* and 3008 pages of William Manchester's and Paul Reid's three-volume biography, *The Last Lion*, but nowhere could I find a reference to Sphex. As a last resort, I called my friend Parker Lee, a former Lynchburger now living in Naples FL and a Churchill lover and scholar.

“It’s so great to hear from you, Marc, and I’m so glad you called,” said Parker. “Of course I’m familiar with the Sphex Club, and a little perturbed that I was never invited to join. But I don’t hold any grudges. As for the message on the white board in the Map Room, the meaning is somewhat obscure for security purposes but can be found on page 506 in Chief of Staff Baron Ismay’s memoirs. The acronym stands for the Ships, Planes, and Howitzers Expunged from the enemy’s supplies for the month to date. S-P-H-E-X. Get it?”

“I get it. And I presume the digits below would indicate that number?” I asked.

“Yes,” said Parker. “What was the number?”

“Well, it was 5003.” Which just happens to be the dollar amount in the Sphex Club bank account, today, September 12, 2024.

New Business: President Marion announced that Ken West will not be able to attend meetings this fall and asked the secretary to further explain. Dr. Wright explained that Dr. West received a diagnosis of obstructive sleep apnea earlier this year and is currently undergoing treatment trials to find the most effective treatment. He is reluctant to attend meetings due to excessive somnolence and has requested a leave of absence. Noting that there is no formal allowance in our by-laws for such a leave, Dr. West has proposed that the club adopt such a policy, to wit: “A leave of absence for no longer than six meetings can be requested for medical or professional reason. Approval of requests can be given by the officers of Sphex.” There was a brief discussion. Mr. Dawson recommended that this proposal be remanded to the executive committee and that the committee bring a recommendation to the full membership.

Regrets were extended to the speaker by:

Gillette, Doyle, Edwards, Kershner, Lewis, Ott Rowlands, and West

President Marion introduced Rev. Dennis Roberts, our speaker for the evening:

The Reverend Dennis S. Roberts is a native of Rural Retreat, Virginia. He is a graduate of Washington & Lee University in Lexington, Virginia, and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. He served congregations in Frankfurt, Germany, and Harrisonburg, Virginia, before coming to Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Lynchburg, in 1991.

Roberts serves as chair of the Lynchburg Chapter, Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities, as well as a member of the VCIC State Board. He is also a member of the Lynchburg Community Action Group board. He has served on the United Way of Central Virginia Campaign Cabinet, the Interfaith Bridges to Progress Task Group; as a board member and president of Interfaith Outreach Association; and, as president of The Sphex Club. He has been the recipient of the United Way of Central Virginia’s Virginia B. Whitehouse Award, the Jeffery B. Spence Award for Interfaith Understanding from the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities, and Interfaith Outreach Association's Seeds of Hope award.

Roberts and his wife, Maria, are the parents of two adult daughters – Gretchen and Sena.

Rev. Roberts provided a handout of 10 photographs and the following summary:

The events of January 6, 2021, at the U.S. Capitol – and the 2017 “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville – are widely regarded as the culmination of decades of preparation within a White evangelical subculture for what they perceive as a cultural and religious battleground in the U.S.

The term “evangelical” has evolved significantly over millennia, originating from the Greek word for “gospel” or “good news” and later gaining theological weight during the Protestant Reformation when it came to denote “gospel truth.” Modern U.S. evangelicalism traces its roots to the 1730s, with influences from Pietism and Puritanism. By the twentieth century, a distinct form of U.S. Evangelicalism emerged, emphasizing literal, inerrant biblical interpretation, conversionism, and spiritual activism. This transformation paved the way for the formation of the “Christian Right,” a movement that blends religious zeal with extremist, right-wing politics.

Religious scholar Bradley Onishi delves into the rise of the Christian Right in his book *Preparing for War*, exploring how White supremacy, segregationist theologies, and various societal changes bolstered the movement. Key Supreme Court decisions in the 1950s and 1960s, such as *Brown v. Board of Education* (racial desegregation) and *Engel v. Vitale* and *Abington v. Schemp* (banning mandatory prayer and Bible reading in public schools) acted as catalysts by challenging long-standing norms and igniting fervent responses from Evangelicals. These cases were perceived as eroding traditional religious influences in public life.

The political engagement of the Christian Right accelerated in the 1970s and 1980s when figures like Paul Weyrich leveraged a network of evangelical churches for political activism. The 1980 election of Ronald Reagan significantly validated the aggressive, often conspiratorial discourse among Evangelicals, further intertwining religious nationalism with political strategy. This movement consistently opposed abortion and same-sex marriage, before turning its attention more recently to opposing transgender rights, school curricula and textbooks, library books, non-white immigration, critical race theory, and diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

A historical revisionist dimension is evident in the Christian Right's claims that America was founded as a “Christian” nation. While early American colonies often practiced religious intolerance and even persecution, the Revolutionary era brought a radical shift toward separation of church and state, as championed by figures like Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. This principle aimed to ensure freedom of conscience and protect diverse religious practices – or no practice at all – from state imposition, contrary to the narratives promoted by Christian nationalists today.

Christian nationalism, as defined by Andrew Whitehead and Samuel Perry in *Taking America Back for God*, is a “cultural framework – a collection of myths, traditions, symbols, narratives and value systems – that idealizes and advocates a fusion of Christianity with American civic

life.” This ideology is often fed by fear, economic hardship, and societal changes. Prominent historical and modern leaders – including some in Lynchburg – have fueled this belief system, merging Evangelical Christianity with extreme nationalist sentiment.

The New Apostolic Reformation (NAR), a lesser-known subset of this movement, brings a unique eschatological fervor to Christian nationalism. It is rooted in a branch of Pentecostalism that emphasizes modern-day apostles and prophets wielding spiritual power. The NAR's vision includes the Seven Mountain Mandate – which aims to dominate the societal sectors of religion, family, government, education, business, media, and arts and entertainment to hasten Christ's second coming – and The Watchman Decree.

Efforts to implement this authoritarian, theocratic ideology are evident in strategies like Project 2025, developed by the Heritage Foundation. This comprehensive plan aims to restructure federal and state governments in line with Evangelical Christian biblical interpretation, impacting issues such as sexual and reproductive rights, LGBTQ+ equality, diverting funds from public education to private religious schools, and redefining religious freedom.

Recent years have witnessed a surge in legislative efforts to promote religion in public schools, reflecting a broader trend toward eroding the constitutional separation between religion and government. This rise of Christian nationalism has drawn comparisons to pre-Civil War America, where proponents of slavery manipulated historical narratives to uphold their system of human enslavement, a parallel echoed today by those promoting a vision of America as exclusively a Christian nation.

The stakes of this ideological battle are profound, potentially threatening democratic principles and religious pluralism in the U.S. Historical precedents suggest that collective action is essential to counter these divisive narratives. Thus, the challenge remains whether contemporary Americans can unite to uphold the inclusive, democratic values enshrined in the nation's founding principles against the rising tide of Christian nationalism.

A thoughtful discussion followed. Several members had questions regarding the Watchman Decree which Roberts discussed. These were adopted in 2022 as the basic tenets of the Christian Nationalist movement. Roberts expressed surprise that one of the tenets was a declaration that the country should be energy-independent. Delzingaro pointed out that some of the tenets are Biblically based while others are based on the US Constitution, which is not Biblical. She asked how Christian nationalists squared the conflicts between the two. Roberts pointed out that interpretation requires a suspension of logic. Other members pointed out that they interpret the Constitution through the Bible. Mr. Dawson said that he has friends, colleagues and family members whose political and religious beliefs differ from his and he feels that he has a tendency to put them all in a single group, which exacerbates the problem by increasing division, even though some might fall into the extreme groups that Roberts described. He asked how he might

discern among the groups—which fall on the normal liberal to conservative spectrum, and which hold beliefs that pose a threat to our country. In his response, Roberts cited the latter part of the book by Pamela Cooper-White on the Psychology of Christian Nationalism that he referenced in his talk. She references a traffic light approach in which there are red light conversations with true believers in which it is best not to engage, yellow light conversations in which there is a possibility of dialogue, and green light conversations in which full engagement is possible. Dawson asked how one might discern a Christian nationalist in conversation. Roberts responded that he has found it helpful when the other party says something non-factual to ask for the source of the information. This helps by intentional listening and allows you to better understand the basis of the beliefs of the other party. Walker Sydnor made the point that failure to agree on basic facts is a major hinderance to conversation—Planet A is the real planet with verifiable facts and Planet B is occupied by those who subscribe to an alternative set of “facts.” Katie Cyphert asked how these sides will be reconciled short of civil war. Roberts pointed out that Christian nationalists are separated from historical fact and theological understanding, and the movement has been nurtured for decades (including in Lynchburg). He speculated that some cataclysmic event might be required, or that the Apostolic Reformation movement might evolve into a fourth major expression of Christianity, in addition to Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox. Dr. Frantz asked whether the trend toward secularization in America society might blunt the danger represented by far-right Christian groups. Roberts responded that he thought it could opposite and opposing effects. He noted that the increasing secularization could be due, in part, to a reaction to Evangelicalism. He cited reasons to think the secularization might lead to some improvement. Dr. Morrison-Shetlar asked Roberts to speak to the role that fear plays in dividing people. Roberts responded that fear plays a large role, and is a great motivator and is used by some in the media and in politics to further their purposes. Nina Salmon asked how Christian Nationalism can be kept from conscripting Christianity. Roberts replied that it has to happen one-on-one or in small groups and how we live out our values, and be more bold in articulating our beliefs against the prevailing culture. Allison Jablonski added that educators have a responsibility to see that civics is taught. She said that the gaps in education have been identified and need to be corrected. We need as educators to talk about religion and politics in a healthy way. Roberts said that there are a number of active listening skills that can be employed in yellow and green light situations to further dialogue and understanding. Christina Delzingaro pointed out there are universally shared values such as stronger families, safe children, and a stronger country can open the door to conversation about how the other person arrived at their beliefs. Roberts agreed. Billie Hansen observed the one of the Watchman Decree tenets was that they can do everything with complete unity. This gives him hope because even on a local level they dislike each other and are from from unity on issues. Roberts agreed that there are cycles in history, an ebb and flow, and that unity of thought does not persist.

President Marion reminded members that the next meeting will be on September 26, when Julie Doyle will be the speaker. The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
James W. Wright
Secretary

SPHEX Club
Minutes of the 1502nd meeting
September 26, 2024

President Nancy Marion called the 1,502nd meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:32 p.m. on September 26, 2024. We met in Room 217 of Schewel Hall on the University of Lynchburg campus.

Active members present were: Bradford, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Doyle, Edwards, Hansen, Lewis, Marion, McDonald, Morrison-Shetlar, Payne, Rowlands, Sanders, Schewel, Sigler, Smith, Stinnett, Sydnor, Tiller, and Wright. Dr. West is on a leave of absence.

President Marion welcomed to membership Dr. Chris Lewis, a graduate of Swarthmore and the Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth and currently a cardiologist and Chief Clinical Officer at Centra Health.

The minutes of the September 12 meeting were approved as presented.

Guest for the evening was the speaker's husband, Peter Doyle.

Business: There were no committee reports.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Marc Schewel took full advantage of Rev. Roberts's paper of the last meeting, particularly to his reference to the so-called Watchman Decree, to give the following report:

You wouldn't think after 115 years and 1,501 meetings that something new would happen at the Sphex Club. But it did this week.

It's customary for members to convey their regrets to the speaker when he or she is unable to attend. Now, I have combed the minutes of the Club's 1501 meetings, and nowhere in its storied history have I found evidence of a member expressing regrets to the Treasurer for having to miss his report. But, indeed, last week I received just such a message from Dennis Roberts.

I thought it was quite appropriate, and I assume going forward that other absent members will demonstrate proper respect to the treasurer by observing this new tradition.

Of course, I don't know if Dennis was regretting his inability to attend or regretting what I might say about his paper.

He needn't have worried. I wouldn't presume to offer any critique on Christian Evangelism, the Apostles, or the Reformation.

However, his paper did get me thinking that after 115 years it's time for the Sphex Club to emerge from obscurity and assert itself more forcefully on the world stage. Look around this

room. There's a tremendous amount of knowledge, wisdom, and experience contained within these four walls, and it's broad and deep. Is there any organization better prepared than our own glorious Sphex Club to address the evil, demonic forces that seek to control our schools, cities, churches, government, and social institutions and are intent on destroying our country?

I want everyone here to raise his or her right hand and swear along with me: "As a member with faith in reason and common sense, I attest my allegiance first and foremost to the Sphex Club and its leadership. Secondly, I agree to be a watchman over our nation concerning its people and their rights to Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.

"Whereas, because we are invested with the powers of rational thinking, intellectual curiosity, and moral conviction, we can be world influencers, capable of arresting every attempted assault by our enemies, which are ignorance and arrogance, we hereby make our declarations:

"We decree that our federal, state, and local executives and legislators always speak honestly and forthrightly to the American people and never obfuscate, distort, embellish, exaggerate, or trump up the facts.

"We decree that our federal, state, and local executives and legislators renounce fatuous schemes designed to win our endorsement and approval and cease making promises they do not intend to keep.

"We decree that our federal, state, and local executives and legislators assume fiduciary responsibility for the vast sums of public money entrusted to them and appropriate it carefully and prudently, in fact, as if it were their own, making their best effort to balance incoming receipts and outgoing expenditures.

"We decree that our federal, state, and local executives and legislators enact and enforce laws and regulations for the good and welfare of the entire body politic rather than for the benefit of some special interest group or minority constituency at the risk of harming others.

"We decree that our federal, state, and local executives and legislators always conduct themselves with dignity and civility and be respectful of their colleagues, even those with opposing views.

"We decree that we can best accomplish these objectives by advocating and advancing the five twin peaks of the Sphex double acronym: Sustain Science; Promote Philosophy; Honor History; Elevate Education; and Examine the X Factor.

"We, Sphex, know the truth; therefore, we stand for truth and will never be deceived. We will take our country back."

Now, I know many of you think this is a rather ambitious decree and perhaps beyond our capability as a Speakers' Club. But I have confidence in every one of you, and I know that working together we can indeed take our country back. As your treasurer, I want to assure you that we have accumulated and conserved substantial resources and that we have enough money in the bank to start our campaign tomorrow: \$5003.09.

New Business: President Marion reviewed the wording of the proposed revision of Article III, section 9 of the SpheX constitution. The wording proposed is as follows:

Any active member who determines that attendance and participation during a year will be limited because of personal or job-related demands on the member's time may elect:

- *a leave of absence for no longer than six meetings. This notice must be provided in writing or by email to the secretary or president.*
- *inactive status for a period of one year. This notice must be given in writing or by e-mail to the secretary or the president. At the end of the year, a member may elect to take one additional year as an inactive member by giving notice in writing or by e-mail to the secretary or president. The membership, however, may fill the vacancy created by a member's request to be inactive. The member may return to active status upon notification to the secretary or president, even if this causes a temporary overage in the member limit stated in Article III (2) above.*

There was a brief discussion seeking clarification. The proposed wording was not altered and will be voted on at the next meeting.

Ms. Marion then recognized the secretary, who informed members that Mr. Wynter Benda has elected to leave the club, citing his inability to attend meetings due to the press of professional and family obligations. He expressed a desire to rejoin in the future when circumstances permit.

Regrets were extended to the speaker by: Cook, Frantz, Jablonski, Kershner, Light, Roberts, Salmon, and Wodicka.

President Marion introduced Ms. Julie Doyle, our speaker for the evening:

Our speaker is a west coast native, born in Los Angeles and raised in Portland, Oregon, along with her four sisters.

Julie moved eastward to attend the University of Notre Dame, where she earned her Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering and met her husband, Peter Doyle, a Lynchburg native.

Peter and Julie moved to the Washington DC area after college, where Julie worked first for Westinghouse Electric and then for Honeywell. During this time, in addition to welcoming two children – Kevin and Sarah – Julie earned her Master of Business Administration at George Washington University.

In 1993, the Doyles moved to Lynchburg where a few years later their daughter, Maggie joined the family. After a five year professional sabbatical, Julie became a small business owner, running a clinical research site – The Education & Research Foundation - for 15 years before selling the business and retiring in 2021.

Julie has had many opportunities to contribute to the Central Virginia community over the years. Presently she is the Chair of the University of Lynchburg Board of Trustees, and serves on the boards of the Bank of the James and the Lynchburg City Schools Education Foundation. Formerly she served on the Centra Health Board of Directors, was Chair of the Lynchburg City School Board and president of the Kids' Haven Board of Directors. Julie also had the honor of playing volleyball at Notre Dame in the early years of women's intercollegiate athletics and later served as the president of the Notre Dame Monogram Club.

Julie and Peter's three children are all graduates of EC Glass high school and Notre Dame, and are now spread across the country. Kevin and his wife, Caitlin live in Chicago with their three children, Grace, Callahan and Brady; Sarah and her husband, Nick live in Seattle and Maggie is in her fourth year of medical school in Philadelphia.

Julie has been a member of the SPHEX Club since 2008 and served a term as President of the club. This is her 6th SPHEX talk.

The title of her talk was "Guardians of the Record". Ms. Doyle provided the following summary:

This paper explored the history, significance, and evolution of court reporting, emphasizing the critical role court reporters play in preserving legal records. It traced the origins of record-keeping back to ancient civilizations, noting advancements in shorthand and stenography. The importance of maintaining accurate, verbatim records in legal proceedings was underscored, particularly in cases where the presence of a court reporter impacts the fairness of a trial, such as the *Wansley v. Commonwealth of Virginia* case.

Additionally, the presentation addressed common misconceptions about court reporting. It debunked myths, such as the belief that stenographic reporting is outdated or that court reporters are merely secretaries. It emphasized the advanced skill required to capture spoken word in real-time and highlighted how court reporters are integral to various industries beyond the courtroom, including media and communication access for the hearing impaired.

The future of court reporting was also examined, with a focus on the potential impact of new technologies like computer-generated transcription. However, human stenographers were presented as irreplaceable due to their ability to produce more accurate and reliable transcripts compared to automated systems. The presentation concluded with anecdotes from court reporters' real-world experiences, stressing the high-pressure nature of the profession and the sense of duty these professionals feel in upholding justice.

During her talk Ms. Doyle exhibited several models of stenography machines and explained their use.

Ms. Doyle experienced technical difficulties that prevented her from showing several video clips, and will be happy to provide those links to interested members. It was learned after the meeting

that university personnel were in another room working on the audiovisual technology infrastructure and inadvertently disconnected our room's computer from the LED projector.

Discussion followed delivery of the paper. Ms. Sanders asked about the ratio of men to women stenographers. Ms. Doyle responded that early in the history of court stenographers, the work was seen as a professional alternative for women outside of teaching and nursing. The majority of court reporters are still women. Mr. Schewel asked whether television closed captioning is done by automated means or by stenographers. Ms. Doyle responded that both systems are used but that it is usually obvious when an automated system is being used. Many members indicated their agreement. Ms. Marion added that the Lynchburg news (presumably WSET television news) must use an automated system because it contains many errors. Mr. McDonald asked about storage of the original paper copies generated by the court reporter. Ms. Doyle responded that both the coded paper and the transcription are stored for many years and can be accessed for appeals or other proceedings. In those cases, the original stenographer, if available is called upon to interpret the original stenographic recording. In a follow-up question, McDonald asked if the court reporter's transcription can be challenged. Ms. Doyle responded that the judge and the attorneys can check the transcript and question suspected errors, but the stenographer has the final say. Schewel asked about stenographic machines designed for other languages but Ms. Doyle was unable to address that. Mr. Stinnett asked if shorthand writing was transitioned to stenographic machines when the process underwent automation. Ms. Doyle responded that shorthand did not cross over to machine stenography.

President Marion reminded members that the next meeting will be on October 10, when Mr. Cham Light will present his paper titled "Shake, Rattle and Roll." The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
James W. Wright
Secretary

SPHEX Club
Minutes of the 1503rd meeting
October 10, 2024

President Nancy Marion called the 1,503rd meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:34 p.m. on October 10, 2024. We met in Room 217 of Schewel Hall on the University of Lynchburg campus.

Active members present were: Bradford, Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Doyle, Frantz, Jablonski, Light, Marion, McDonald, Roberts, Salmon, Schewel, Sigler, Smith, Tiller, Wodicka and Wright. Dr. West is on a leave of absence.

The minutes of the September 26 meeting were approved as presented.

Guest for the evening was the speaker's wife, Edie Light.

Business: There were no committee reports.

Treasurer's Report: President Marion recognized Marc Schewel, who gave the following report:

No one wants to hear about somebody else's medical problems, mainly because he has plenty of his or her own and those are probably worse than what he is compelled by courtesy to listen to.

So, if you want to turn down your hearing aids or bury your head under your arms or coat, I won't feel insulted.

Upon awakening on the morning of September 9th I was struck by an attack of vertigo. While the vertigo subsided in a matter of hours, I noticed I had lost hearing in my right ear. I was able to obtain an appointment with an ear, nose, and throat specialist who diagnosed me with Sudden Sensorineural Hearing Loss (SSHL) commonly known as an ear stroke and most likely caused by a virus. He prescribed a two-week declining dosage of the corticosteroid prednisone, and, lo and behold, I seem to have recovered about eighty percent of my hearing.

I will never scoff at drug users again.

This incident got me thinking about hearing loss in general but particularly about its prevalence in an aging population. Suddenly, I noticed friends wearing hearing aids, even though they are usually cleverly disguised. I spoke to one fellow who had the same attack as I but failed to receive treatment soon enough for it to be effective; however, he was a candidate for a cochlear implant which enables him to hear by converting sounds to electrical impulses and transmitting them to the auditory nerve.

My audiometry test indicated that hearing in my "good ear" had declined about ten percent just due to aging.

Even before the incident I found myself frequently turning on closed captioning to watch a movie or television show and wishing the same were an option in the theater, as I'm one of the few antiquarians who occasionally likes to go to the cinema (mainly to the cut-rate Venue).

Perhaps there are some in our audience this evening who can appreciate what I'm saying – that is, if you can hear me.

Look, I sit down here on the front row at every meeting and try to take in every word of our presenters. But let me be frank: some of our members are very soft-spoken. And all too often there are important words and phrases I miss, because I don't hear them clearly.

And really, who wants to go back and read the complete paper in the minutes? Once you get through the Treasurer's Report, you probably feel like you've suffered enough.

After listening two weeks ago to Julie Doyle's enlightening paper on Court Reporting, I think I've found a solution. What we need is real time closed captioning of our Sphex papers as they are delivered right here in this room. This is where history is being made, and we need to preserve this history through the ages for all mankind.

I've talked to Steve Smith, and he assures me that the technology is not that complicated and through an AI app he can project the captions directly onto the screen before you.

Of course, we're going to need a court reporter to transcribe the narratives as they are presented. Some speakers, who shall remain anonymous, are known for racing through their papers at a speed of 250 words per minute to conform to our fifty-five-minute time limit, so our reporter must be a true professional and not a glorified secretary.

I took the liberty of contacting Julie's friend Carol White, whom she spoke of as an advocate of just what we want: verbatim documentation. I explained to her our needs and of course said that our budget was limited. She graciously agreed to take the job at \$100 a meeting, which I thought was very reasonable considering she will have to drive back and forth from Roanoke. With our current bank balance at \$5003.09, we will be able to avail ourselves of this service for the next four years, after which we can evaluate the program and see if we want to continue it.

Despite her credentials, I wanted to make sure Carol could meet our expectations, so I made a recording of this report, sent it to her, and asked her to transcribe it. [Secretary's note: Mr. Schewel played a recording at this point. The speed of the playback was so fast as to render individual words indistinguishable.]

Her skill is truly remarkable. Her transcription of this recording will appear in our forthcoming minutes.

New Business: President Marion reviewed the proposal to change Article III, section 9 of the Sphex constitution to allow for a six-meeting leave of absence for personal or professional reasons. The wording of the proposed change was sent by email to members on September 21 and October 3 and discussed at the September 26 meeting. There was no further discussion. The motion to make this change in the constitution was approved unanimously by those present and

by two absent members who provided their proxy to the secretary. The new wording of Article III, section 9 is included here for completeness:

Any active member who determines that attendance and participation during a year will be limited because of personal or job-related demands on the member's time may elect:

- *a leave of absence for no longer than six meetings. This notice must be provided in writing or by email to the secretary or president.*
- *inactive status for a period of one year. This notice must be given in writing or by e-mail to the secretary or the president. At the end of the year, a member may elect to take one additional year as an inactive member by giving notice in writing or by e-mail to the secretary or president. The membership, however, may fill the vacancy created by a member's request to be inactive. The member may return to active status upon notification to the secretary or president, even if this causes a temporary overage in the member limit stated in Article III (2) above.*

Ms. Marion then recognized the secretary, who informed members that Mr. Wynter Benda's withdrawal from membership has resulted in a vacancy in the speaking schedule on February 6, 2025. Dr. Wright called for a volunteer to fill the vacancy. (After the meeting he received offers from Mr. Schewel and Dr. Tiller.)

Regrets were extended to the speaker by: Delaney, Edwards, Kershner, Morrison-Shetlar, Payne, Ott Rowlands, Sanders, Stinnett and Sydnor.

President Marion introduced Mr. Cham Light, our speaker for the evening:

Mr. Light served over 30 years as an Assistant General Counsel and Claims Director for Nationwide Mutual Insurance. He has also served as an Adjunct Faculty member at Liberty University Law School for 19 years. Cham has served the community in a number of ways including as an organizer of and on the Board of Directors of the Free Clinic of Central Virginia for nine years, 15 years on the Board of the State Library of Virginia with two terms as Chairman, two terms as President of the Lynchburg Historical Foundation, five years as President of the Board of the Old City Cemetery, six years on the Board of VES and seven years as President of Jones Memorial Library. Cham has been married to wife Edie for over 40 years and they are blessed with two wonderful children. Cham is also blessed to be the owner of a farm in Campbell County which has been in his family for almost 250 years.

The title of Light's talk was "Shake, Rattle, and Roll." He began his presentation with several disclaimers, including that he is not a professional historian and has relied heavily on several secondary sources, though they are published works with good references. He has done some original source research in the Court Clerk's Offices of Albemarle, Bedford, Amherst, and Campbell Counties and the City of Lynchburg. Also, many of the families he will discuss are direct ancestors of his and so he has focused on these families—the Lynches, the Clarks and the

Moormans—but there are many other families that could be referenced for the topic. Finally, Cham advised that he has been working on the topic for many years and it is still a work in progress. He will be doing an updated version of it in the 2025–2026 series of lectures at Jones Memorial Library.

Cham said that although the title suggested a funny or amusing topic, it is actually not very funny, but he hoped would be of interest. He then explained the title. The Shake referenced the Society of Friends, informally called the Quakers since they were said to shake during their meetings / religious services. The Rattle referenced the fact that the Friends were unconventional and did not approve of enslavement of other people, the use of alcohol or taking public oaths such as required to serve in the militia or government, so it could be said they rattled the existing order / power structure. The Roll referenced the fact that primarily because of the slavery issue many of the Quakers in the area left the area and moved north in the early 1800s and those that stayed in the area and continued to hold enslaved people were either disowned / thrown-out of the South River / Lynchburg Meeting and moved to other Christian sects such as White's Methodist Church on English Tavern Road off of Wards Road.

Cham then detailed how Charles Lynch Sr. moved from Albemarle County to what is now Lynchburg in 1751. From available records he appears to be the third settler in the area and though he was not a member of the Meeting (Lynch was a Roman Catholic from Ireland and there is no record that he ever joined the Meeting, though he was recorded as being present at a number of Friends events, such as weddings). His father-in-law, Christopher Clark, had been a prominent Friend in Louisa / Albemarle Counties and approximately eight of Clark's descendants, including Lynch's wife Sarah Clark Lynch, followed Lynch and settled in the area shortly after Lynch. Cham estimated that Quakers eventually comprised approximately 25 to 35% of the original settlers of Lynchburg and the area, though it is very difficult to be accurate because of the paucity of records, though the Quakers themselves kept good records. Their records have been archived in a Friends Library in Baltimore and these records have been the basis for several published books that Cham consulted for much of his information.

The presentation continued with slides that showed the Chestnut Hill state historical marker on Campbell Avenue, which references Charles Lynch Sr. and his home, Chestnut Hill, off of Concord Turnpike in the Lower Basin. The few Quaker buildings still in existence from those early days include the Christopher Johnson Cottage on Old Graves Road, John Lynch's home located at 619 First Street in Lynchburg, the restored Quaker Meeting House on Fort Avenue, the Judith Clark and Samuel Moorman home, Walnut Hill, near Lawyers, and several Quaker family-related cemeteries such as the Moorman Family Cemetery marker at the Liberty University Library on Candler's Mountain and the Mary Moore and John Clark cemetery in Lawyers.

Cham concluded his presentation with thoughts on why the Quakers role in establishing Lynchburg is largely forgotten. He theorized that was because there are no Quakers left in the

area since they either moved away or affiliated with other Christians sects and that there are very few of their original buildings still in existence.

Discussion followed delivery of the paper. Dr. Frantz asked about the locations of the Johnson cottage and the ferry house marker downtown. The cottage, referred to early in the talk, is located on Graves Mill Road, on the property now called the Bella Rose event venue. The ferry marker is very near the skate park behind Amazement Square. Ms. Marion added that the ferry house was razed in 1924. It was owned at one point by Elijah Fletcher, was bought in 1906 by Ida Watts, who tried to interest people in saving it but could not find anyone so she had it carefully disassembled and built a new house on the site, using as much of the original house as she could. This new house was razed in the 1970s. Mr. McDonald related that after he moved to Lynchburg in 1989, his father-in-law, Budd Adams, told him that his Quaker ancestors came to this area in 1750. They had moved from England to Philadelphia in the 1720s and were moving down the Valley of Virginia to North Carolina, but George Washington had “stirred up the Indians” near Winchester, forcing them to detour to this area. They stayed in the area for several years and had a daughter here before moving on to the Snow Hill Quaker meeting in NC. The family was persecuted for not taking up arms in the Revolutionary War and later in the Civil War and finally moved west to Missouri. Light responded that the Quakers were mobile. His Clark ancestors moved west to Ohio. Dr. Wright noted that John Lynch’s second house, called Rock Castle, shown during the talk, was about a mile east of the Johnson cottage, which means that it stood on what became Dr. Leroy Bowen’s Rock Castle Farm. Light pointed out that John Lynch was able to build a large house because he was prosperous. He owned a tobacco warehouse, a mill on Blackwater Creek and his toll bridge. Light finished by saying that the Lynch family continued to own property in Lynchburg until 1968, when they sold that last property that they owned, at the corner of Ninth and Main Streets. It was sold to Fidelity National Bank to erect its building, now owned by the Bank of the James.

President Marion reminded members that the next meeting will be on October 24, when Ms. Katie Cyphert will speak. The title of her talk will be “Maybe Drunk on the Punch.” The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
James W. Wright
Secretary

SPHEX Club
Minutes of the 1504th meeting
October 24, 2024

President Nancy Marion called the 1,504th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:34 p.m. on October 24, 2024. We met in Room 217 of Schewel Hall on the University of Lynchburg campus.

Active members present were: Blackman, Cook, Cyphert, Delaney, Delzingaro, Doyle, Frantz, Marion, McDonald, Payne, Roberts, Ott Rowlands, Salmon, Sanders, Sigler, Smith, Sydnor, Tiller, Wodicka and Wright. Dr. West is on a leave of absence.

The minutes of the October 10 meeting were approved with one correction made by the secretary.

Guests for the evening were the speaker's husband, Mark Cyphert, and her parents, Christopher and Patty Webb.

Business: There were no committee reports.

Treasurer's Report: President Marion recognized Judge Cook, who read Treasurer Schewel's report in his absence:

Regretfully I am unable to attend tonight's meeting but knowing full well how eagerly my SpheX colleagues are anticipating my biweekly treasurer's report and how disappointed they will be should it be omitted, I have authorized John Cook to deliver it in my absence, with the understanding that he is in no way responsible for its content.

I cannot be with you because I am at the High Point Furniture Market. For those of you who think this market is a week-long party, I assure you that is not the case, and even if it were, those days are long past for me.

From dawn to dusk my two buyers and I roam the corridors and showrooms of the International Home Furnishings Market Center and adjacent buildings searching for new sofas and beds to replace the ones which we selected last year around this time, which we just recently received, and which we have already determined are not going to sell.

Well, it's not quite that bad. Once in a while we pick something that literally jumps off the floor, or as one of our store managers put it, "takes off like a bullet."

We haven't seen anything interesting until we enter the Vaughan-Bassett showroom. Some of you may have read the book *Factory Man* published a few years ago about the owner, John Bassett.

Our friendly representative, Mike, walks up with a big smile, and says, “Rose, Dina, Marc, I’m so glad to see you. Walk over here. I want to show our new group for the market. It’s called ‘Quaker Treasures.’”

Dina, my bedroom buyer, makes a funny face, and says, “Quaker Treasures? The only things I knew that the Quakers were ever good for were motor oil and oatmeal.”

Always glib, Mike responds, “These are solid wood reproductions of furniture pieces that were found in the Quaker Meeting House and in the homes of the Lynch and Clark families from, would you believe it, Lynchburg. John Bassett came across photos of the originals posted on Instagram by a guy named Cham Light and fell in love with them. We’ve named most of the pieces after old Lynchburg families. You might recognize some of them: the Hansen High Chest, the Dawson Designer Dresser, the Bradford Bedside Table, the Roberts Retro Rocker.”

“And you can get it all for \$5003.09.” (Which just happens to be the Club Treasury’s current bank balance.)

“I have to say, Mike,” says Dina, “this is some of the plainest, most boring furniture I’ve ever seen.”

“What did you expect? These were Quakers. They sat in Meetings all day, didn’t speak, didn’t drink, and didn’t use firearms. But they did produce some large families, so apparently not every activity was forbidden.”

“Yeah,” says Dina, “I can see where you tried to fancy up the bed. It’s got a nice linen upholstered arched padded headboard, tall pencil thin carved posts, and a footboard with storage. Who’s that named after? John Lynch? Or better yet, Sarah Lynch?”

“No,” says Mike. “For this we wanted to go with a name more appropriate to the nature of the piece and more indicative of its Quaker origins. It didn’t sound quite right, so at the last minute we decided to add some alliteration. The bed is called the ‘Schewel Shake, Rattle, and Roll.’”

In unison, my buyers and I exclaimed, “Sold! We’ll take a truckload.”

New Business: There was none.

Regrets were extended to the speaker by: Bradford, Dawson, Hansen, Jablonski, Light and Morrison-Shetlar.

President Marion introduced Ms, Katie Cyphert, our speaker for the evening:

Katie Webb Cyphert was born in Fort Sill, Oklahoma to two native Virginians, and moved to Lynchburg when she was two. She attended school in Lynchburg from kindergarten to her graduation from E.C. Glass in 1998. In 2002 she received her Bachelors of Science in Psychology-Special Education from Lynchburg College (now the University of Lynchburg).

After 6 years as a Special Education Teacher at E.C. Glass, Katie ventured into financial services for 5 years. She held licenses in Life & Health, Property & Casualty, Variable Products (Series 6/63), and Long Term Care Insurance. She returned to the classroom in 2013 to teach Earth Science at Linkhorne Middle School.

Katie is currently a building rep for the Lynchburg Education Association and a Board Member of the Shawn Moss Wellness and Growth Foundation. Katie's past activities include serving on the boards for Young Professionals of Central Virginia and Friends of Rivermont, serving as Chair of the Lynchburg Democratic Committee, and as a Daisy Troop Girl Scout Leader. She spends her summers working at Camp Alleghany for Girls in West Virginia.

Katie and her husband Mark have two children: Ez is 14 and in 9th grade at E.C. Glass. Brea is 18 and a freshman at Warren Wilson College. Tonight Katie will present her fourth paper for SPHEX: "Maybe Drunk on the Punch."

Ms. Cyphert began by introducing the case of Aaron Hernandez, a successful football player who played for the University of Florida, the the New England Patriots who, in 2012, signed a 5-year, \$40 million contract. The following year Hernandez was charged with murder of another player. He was later convicted. Additional murder charges, for which he was eventually acquitted, were filed. Shortly after his incarceration, Hernandez died by suicide. At autopsy, He was found to have severe chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE). Cyphert related that in 2017 she had received a postcard notifying her that she might be eligible for damages and would be entitled to periodic screening for up to 50 years under a class action lawsuit because she participated in a sport on an NCAA-sanctioned team. She was a college cheerleader and sustained a concussion which was not recognized at the time.

Cyphert then reviewed the history of CTE, beginning with its initial description by pathologist Dr. Harrison Martin in 1928. Articles in 1937 and 1949 further elucidated the signs of the disorder, then called dementia pugilistica. she then gave the current definition of CTE: a neurodegenerative disease linked to repeated trauma to the head, including concussions and non-concussive events. She describe the common signs and symptoms, including behavioral problems, mood problems, and problems with thinking. It is progressive, leading to dementia. The pathological diagnosis includes clusters of abnormal tau protein She differentiated between it an Alzheimer dementia. It is associated with participation in a variety of contact sports. She discussed four stages, illustrated by brain cross sections and microscopic changes, and correlated with clinical presentations. Hernandez had stage III disease and was 27 years old when he died. Cyphert emphasized that the diagnosis can only be made at autopsy and there is no treatment. She also noted that concussions do not produce changes that are apparent on imaging studies.

Cyphert posed a question: How does a disorder identified almost 100 years ago only end up coming to our attention in the past 20 years? To answer this, she reviewed several famous cases. The earliest was Mike Webster, who played football for 17 seasons and three professional teams. He died in 2002 after exhibiting dementia for years. She discussed the cases of Terry Long and Chris Henry, which finally caused the NFL to address the issue of CTE in 2016. She also listed a number of currently living players who are experiencing symptoms of CTE. and briefly discussed players in other sports who have been affected, including Chris Benoit (wrestler), Henri Richard (hockey), Greg Johnson (hockey), Ryan Free (baseball), Jordan Parsons (mixed martial arts), and Billy Guyton (rugby). She said that since 2016 the NFL has awarded over \$1.2 billion to players who developed dementia or other brain diseases.

Cyphert quoted a statement by National Hockey League Commissioner Gary Bettman, made in 2023, that denied a relationship between playing the sport and CTE. She then cited studies that contradict that statement.

She then reviewed the response of high schools and colleges to the recent increase in awareness of CTE. The NCAA formed a working group in 2010 and required all participating schools to adopt a concussion management plan. It invested \$00k in 2012 in a study to examine head injuries in contact and non contact sports. The concussion settlement, for which Cyphert received a notice in 2017, was finalized in 2019. She reviewed the rules established as a result of that settlement, including the presence of qualified medical personnel at all games and a list of sports affected by the rules. At the high school level, Virginia law in 2010 required that all schools have concussion protocols that must be followed before a student can return to play. The law was amended in 2014 to include any youth sports using school property. It was amended again in 2016 to require school personnel to allow for gradual return to the classroom following a concussion. In 2019 it was further amended to require biennial review and update of concussion protocols based on the most recent information. She reviewed the 2015 return-to-learn protocol, which divides recovery and management into six phases.

Cyphert then discussed the impact of CTE on girls, beginning with the story of Australian Rules Rugby athlete Heather Anderson. She reviewed the results of several studies that examined the incidence of concussions in various sports. The lowest risk of concussion was, not surprisingly, in cross country running and in tennis; the highest risk was in wrestling and martial arts, followed by cheerleading and then football. Girls are more likely than boys to suffer concussions in some sports, including soccer, basketball volleyball, wrestling and a few others. This might be due to under-reporting by boys. Studies have shown that between 1982 and 2009, cheerleading accounted for 65% of all catastrophic injuries in high school female athletes and 70% of college-level female athletes.

Cyphert then pointed out that the mechanism for brain damage due to repeated trauma is still not fully understood. One reason is that brain autopsies are not routinely done; most of those that are done are on brains donated for study, leading to potential bias.

She also discussed CTE in veterans and reviewed a number of studies performed by the military.

Cyphert concluded by reviewing measures that can prevent CTE. These include prohibiting certain cheerleading moved on hard surfaces. Advances in head protection, including the Guardian Cap, and a surge in flag football. Use of technology such as specialized PET scans, better testing.

Discussion followed delivery of the paper. Dr. Frantz asked if the speaker was aware of the research on helmet technology being done at Virginia Tech. She responded that she was not

directly familiar with it but that some of her sources referenced it. Mr. Sydnor noted that football was played at Lynchburg College and that during his tenure on the board consideration was given to reinstating it. He noted that Roanoke College has recently decided to field a team. Sydnor posed the difficult question as to whether schools like the University of Lynchburg should sponsor Division 3 teams, especially in light of the information provided in this talk. Ms. Cyphert responded that in the absence of a football offering, students often form intercollegiate rugby teams, which offer less protective gear and may carry greater risk. She noted that some schools have women's rugby teams. Ms. Doyle said that a noted football player at Notre Dame while she was there, and with whom she served in the Monogram Club, later developed personality changes with aggressiveness and spousal abuse. His businesses began to fail and he ultimately died by suicide, leaving a note instructing that his brain be submitted for research. Ms. Cyphert noted that this is a fairly common story. Dr. Tiller noted that life itself is a contact sport and asked whether there is any data on the prevalence of CTE in the general population. Cyphert agreed that concussions are common in the general population but there is something about contact sports and repeated head trauma that predisposes athletes to this outcome. She said that autopsies are not routinely done, and brain autopsies even less often, so there is no general population data. Dr. Wodicka remarked about the Guardian Caps now being used in some instances to augment helmets. Lynchburg City Schools now require their use in practice, though the Virginia High School League does not permit their use in regulation play. He also reported that the city schools, particularly at Heritage High School, have acquired some helmets with built-in sensors that allow for monitoring of impacts. Dr. Sigler added that Tom Bowman at the University of Lynchburg has been doing research on lacrosse helmets for about eight years and has affected the design of those helmets. Dr. Bowman is working cooperatively with researchers at Virginia Tech. Dr. Steve Smith said that recent research has identified a characteristic shake of the head after impact [SHAKE: Spontaneous Headshake After a Kinematic Event] that has been associated with concussion and can be used as a diagnostic tool. He pointed out that concussions are difficult to diagnose and this sign may be a useful diagnostic criterion. He added that some research is being done at the Governor's School. Dr. Salmon asked whether changes in protocols have actually been effective in mitigating the risk of CTE. Ms. Cyphert responded that much work remains to be done. She pointed out that studies are focused on actual concussions and may not pick up the effects of repeated sub-concussive events. Mr. McDonald asked about the correlation between concussion and what it does to the brain. Ms. Cyphert responded that she did not do a thorough review of the medical issues for this paper. She pointed out that concussions cannot be documented with imaging studies, so the diagnosis is clinical—based on the response of the individual to head trauma, and the physical examination just after head trauma. There are computerized diagnostic tests, but they rely on having a baseline, pre-trauma test. Simple tests such as observation of the individual doing simple tasks such as walking can also give clues. McDonald asked what the process was that led to the post-mortem pathologic findings seen in persons with CTE. Dr. Frantz responded that those changes are the

result of the injury -> inflammation -> fibrosis pathway that leads to the accumulation of tau protein.

President Marion reminded members that the next meeting will be on November 1, when Mr. George Dawson will speak. The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
James W. Wright
Secretary

SPHEX Club
Minutes of the 1505th meeting
November 7, 2024

Vice President Steve Smith called the 1,505th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:31 p.m. on November 7, 2024. We met in Room 217 of Schewel Hall on the University of Lynchburg campus.

Active members present were: Blackman, Bradford, Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Delzingaro, Edwards, Gillette, Kershner, McDonald, Roberts, Ott Rowlands, Sigler, Smith, Stinnett, Sydnor, Tiller, Wodicka and Wright. Dr. West is on a leave of absence.

The minutes of the October 24 meeting were approved with several minor corrections identified by Steve Smith.

Guest for the evening was the speaker's wife, Rosemary Dawson.

Business:

Membership Committee: Chairman Walker Sydnor announced that he has a full committee, comprised of Doyle, Schewel, and Wodicka.

Treasurer's Report: Vice President Smith recognized Mr. Schewel, who provided the following copy of his report:

I was sorry to miss Ms. Cyphert's "Punch Drunk" presentation at the last meeting, but Secretary Wright was kind enough to send me a recording, and it struck a chord.

Aside from the brain injuries associated with the sport, I lost my interest in football many years ago for reasons which lack of time precludes my sharing this evening. My goal every season is to avoid watching any collegiate or professional game except for the Super Bowl, which I manage to tolerate because it means that the start of Spring Training is only three weeks away.

Ironically, however, one aspect of football's widespread appeal is the subject of my report.

After looking back at my recent reports and the ambitious projects I proposed, I conclude that the Club is going to need more money than its current balance of \$5003.09 if it intends to disseminate its SpheX Watchman Decree throughout the land or hire a court reporter to implement real-time closed captioning of member presentations.

I mull over several options for generating short-term appreciation before settling on one which, considering the current environment, is just too ubiquitous and enticing to resist: gambling.

First up is the World Series. What a match-up. We're looking at two teams from the country's largest television markets, two teams which have national fan bases beyond those markets, two

teams with a history of rivalry dating back to the 1950's, two teams with the best records in their respective leagues, and two teams with star-studded lineups.

Which to bet on? I'm not a fan of either one. I'm more attracted to teams from small markets who are able to succeed through astute trades and drafting rather than by shelling out huge contracts to star players.

If on paper the two teams are evenly matched, the oddsmakers heavily favor the Dodgers.

Before the first pitch in the best-of-seven series, to bet on the Dodgers you must put up \$130 to win \$100; to bet on the Yankees you put up \$100 and can win \$116. If I lay all the Club's \$5003 on the Yankees, I can take home \$10,806.48; if I lay it on the Dodgers, that number shrinks to \$8851.46.

Well, we know who won: the Dodgers. And Club members will be happy to know that's whom I bet their money on.

One of the great attractions of football as a spectator sport is the gambling opportunities it presents, not just betting on the games and scores but also on the performance of various players on fantasy teams. This season Americans will wager \$35 billion on professional football alone.

When I used to watch football many years ago, my favorite team was the Washington Redskins, now the Commanders. Led by rookie quarterback Jayden Daniels, who threw a spectacular seventy-yard Hail Mary touchdown pass to win the prior week's game, their unexpected resurgence this year is a sign that, as a betting man, I can't ignore.

The Commanders are favored over the New York Giants by four points. But even with points there are no even bets. To play the Commanders, you must put up \$200 to win \$100, provided the Commanders cover the spread; to play the Giants, you need only put up \$100, and you can win \$170 if the Giants win the game or lose by fewer than four points.

If I wager the Club's \$8851.46 on the Commanders, and they cover, I take home \$13,277; if I choose the underdog Giants and they cover, the Club's nest egg grows to \$15,047.

Well, the Commanders race off to big lead, then barely hold on to win 27-22, covering the spread. And whom did I bet on? The Commanders, of course.

I'm on a roll, so why stop now? We're days away from the presidential election.

Election bets were approved legally in the U.S. for the first time several weeks ago, and Americans wagered \$150 million on the Trump-Harris contest. In foreign countries, where betting has been legal for years, that number is in the billions.

Election betting in the U.S. was restricted to the purchase of futures contracts. Not surprisingly, the prices of those contracts fluctuated significantly in the final days of the campaign. A week before the election, a \$100 contract on the election of Donald Trump cost \$65, while a \$100 contract on the election of Kamala Harris cost \$35. If you still believed in Trump the morning of the election, you only had to pay \$57 to win \$100, while Harris's price had risen to \$43.

The Club and I are now \$8274 ahead. Since it will certainly be embarrassing to report that I have gambled away the Club's treasury, I decide to put our original stake of \$5003.09 back in the bank and wager our profit to date. But whom to bet on?

Trump is still the betting favorite, but Harris has momentum, the polls are indicating the race is a dead heat, and a Harris winning bet will pay off thirty percent more. On the other hand, after watching six hours of commentary equally divided between Fox News and MSNBC the night before the election and considering that the oddsmakers have been on the money so far, I'm inclined to go for Trump.

Then I do something that no seasoned gambler should ever do. I let my emotions trump (excuse the pun) cold hard logic. I figure that most – not all – of my colleagues in this room tonight would shudder at the thought of my risking their money on a Trump victory.

So, I go to the RobinHood web site, purchase 192 forty-three-dollar "yes" contracts on the election of Kamala Harris, and anxiously await what I hope will be payout of \$19,242.

Alas, it was not to be. I have lost all our prior winnings, putting the Club's Treasury back to where it began: \$5003.09.

New Business: There was none.

Regrets were extended to the speaker by: Hansen, Jablonski, Lewis, Marion, Morrison-Shetlar, Payne, Salmon, and Sanders

Vice President Smith introduced Mr. George Dawson, our speaker for the evening:

George Dawson and his wife Rosemary have lived in Lynchburg since 1980. They moved here, with their 16 month old son Nick, in 1980 when George was offered the position of Executive Director at Virginia Baptist Hospital. Thirty-four at the time, he was the third person to head VBH since it opened in 1924. When Centra Health was formed in 1987, George was appointed as President. He led Centra as President and CEO from 1987 until his retirement in January of 2012.

George and Rosemary have known each other since the second grade. At Great Falls Elementary, Rosemary's passion was beating the boys in any foot race or athletic contest available. She played every sport available to girls in high school, earning varsity letters in all of them. Today her weekly schedule includes competitive tennis, swims with a master's team, several three mile runs, a workout with her personal trainer, and a yoga class. George plays golf—riding in a cart.

George is an active artist in oil and watercolor, an active volunteer, and fund raiser, having headed several capital campaigns including the \$18 million Campaign to restore the Academy Theater and the \$5 million Campaign for the new Humane Society.

He has been a SPHEX member for several decades and has presented papers on topics ranging from Robert Frost to sockeye salmon.

After noting the recent rise in the popularity and recognition of women athletes in the United States, the speaker asked who might be considered “The Greatest of All Time” and then went on to suggest Babe Didrikson Zaharias as a candidate, noting that she is relatively unknown despite her status as a leading national celebrity of her time.

Babe was born Mildred Ella Didrikson on June 26, 1911 in Port Arthur, Texas to Norwegian immigrant parents. She and her 6 siblings grew up in near poverty. A naturally gifted athlete coming of age during the national depression at a time when society expected women to portray feminine roles and forgo public athletic displays, Babe was a three-time all American basketball star, an Olympic track and field star, winning two golds and a silver medal at the 1932 LA games, and an amateur and professional golfer with 82 career victories including 10 major championships. Married to professional wrestler and promoter, George Zaharias when she was 27, she lived with him until her death in 1956 from colon cancer at the age of 45. During the last 5 years of her life she also shared a deep friendship and relationship with golfer Betty Dodd – twenty years her junior.

Drawing on various published sources, Dawson noted her image and life were complex and controversial during much of her career. Themes touched on in his presentation included:

- The gender-biased views toward competitive sports for women that accelerated during the 1920’s and which still influence women’s athletics today.
- The impact rulings by male dominated bodies governing women’s sports regarding amateur status and eligibility had on Babe’s life and career and income
- Babe’s brash, arrogant relationships with teammates often resulting in alienation and portraying a fierce competitive nature that ruled her athletic endeavors
- Her use of the press for self-promotion and her immense public following and national recognition that she enjoyed for much of her life.
- A public image and persona that fueled speculation about her gender and sexuality which was inflamed by sportswriters and journalists, stories that would be libelous by today’s standards.
- Babe’s deliberate reframing of her public image to comply with the norms of the day and the requirements of the world of golf during her time.
- Babe’s open and public disclosure about her cancer diagnosis and her use of her celebrity status to promote cancer treatment and support cancer patients and research had a major impact on public attitudes about cancer.

A brief Q&A followed the presentation. However, the secretary bungled the recording technology and failed to record it. The secretary sometimes wonders when the dubious

advantages of age (perhaps reliability, perhaps wisdom) are superseded by the clear advantages of youth (less error-prone, more technical proficiency).

Vice President Smith reminded members that the next meeting will be on November 21, when Dr. Bill Blackman will present his first Sphex paper. The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
James W. Wright
Secretary

SPHEX Club
Minutes of the 1506th meeting
November 21, 2024

President Nancy Marion called the 1,506th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on November 21, 2024. We met in Room 217 of Schewel Hall on the University of Lynchburg campus.

Active members present were: Blackman, Bradford, Cook, Cyphert, Delaney, Doyle, Edwards, Frantz, Hansen, Jablonski, Lewis, Marion, McDonald, Payne, Roberts, Ott Rowlands, Schewel, Sigler, Stinnett, Sydnor, Tiller, Wodicka and Wright. Dr. West is on a leave of absence.

The minutes of the November 7 meeting were approved with several minor corrections identified by Steve Smith and Ms. Marion.

Guests for the evening: There were none. Mrs. Robin Blackman was ill and unable to attend.

Business:

Membership Committee: Chairman Walker Sydnor urged members to submit names and brief bios of prospective members.

Treasurer's Report: Ms. Marion recognized Mr. Schewel, who provided the following copy of his report:

I was surprised that Mr. Dawson didn't use a more obscure title for his fascinating paper two weeks ago on the life of Babe Didrickson Zaharias. After all, "Greatest of All Time" lends itself to the acronym G-O-A-T, GOAT, which seems to be a common term in SMS language. I first came across it about a year ago when I was still on the board of Randolph College and was privy to some text messages floating around the campus in which students were using it to describe their new president – our very own Sue Ott Rowlands. Apparently in the pantheon of college presidents (or at least of Randolph College presidents), she is the "Greatest of All Time."

But I digress.

A funny thing happened at our last meeting. Dennis Roberts asked me just how we accumulated so much money in our Treasury. Granted, \$5003.09 is not an exorbitant amount, but compared to our historical average of around \$1000, it's a lot. Like any good politician, I responded with the proverbial "That's a good question" followed by "I'll get back to you," which I'm doing this evening.

If you remember my most recent report, I certainly didn't grow the treasury by sports or political gambling, although I gave it a valiant try.

After hearing about the exploits of Babe Didrickson, you might think that some friendly five-dollar Nassau wagering on the golf course was the means I employed for increasing the treasury, especially since my wife, whom I married seven months ago, is an avid golfer and has lured me out on the links several times. (Oh, the sacrifices we make for love.)

Then I looked back at an article I wrote on my blog back in 2007 titled “The Last Nine Holes.” It recounts how, ten years prior to that, while vacationing on Bald Head Island, my fifteen-year-old son Matt and I, tired of the sun and surf, decided to take a lesson and play a round of golf. I had come prepared, having purchased one set of clubs from Play It Again Sports and borrowed another from a friend.

It was a typical August day at Bald Head Island, a sweltering 95 degrees with 100% humidity and a heat index of about 107 degrees. After sixty minutes of watching practice balls dribble harmlessly off the tee or spray in every direction but straight, our instructor said, “It’s mighty hot out there, guys. Are you sure you want to play?” Matt and I were both too stubborn to desist, so off we went.

Needless to say, considering the weather, our ineptitude, and the water hazards that dotted the course, it was not a very pleasant afternoon. We were losing balls at a record pace. Venturing close to a pond to retrieve one, I was startled when a snake slithered ashore. On another hole, as I swung mightily with a five-iron, it slipped from my perspiring hands and flew straight for the nearest swamp where it disappeared forever.

As we trudged up to the ninth green, Matt was a trooper. “Maybe the other nine holes will be easier,” he said. “They might be,” I said, “but we are out of golf balls.” Indeed, we were. We had lost all twenty-four I had in the bag, plus a borrowed five-iron, surely a record unequaled in the annals of golf.

There was no way I would ever win any money playing golf.

Now over the years many people have become wealthy by astute investing. Maybe that’s the route you might think I took to boost our account. It really doesn’t take a rocket scientist. Just buy an S&P 500 index fund and rake in the profits.

That’s too rational for me. I’m in the furniture business. I should know something about the industry like which furniture stocks to invest in and when to buy and sell.

So, about twenty years ago, when the stock of a national furniture chain known as Heilig-Meyers – a competitor of Schewels in some local markets – got down to \$10 a share, it looked darn cheap. True, they were having some problems, but surely, they could turn things around. So, I bought a chunk. Twelve months later they were bankrupt.

You would think I learned my lesson. Just this past year I watched the shares of four furniture chains – Big Lots, Conn’s Home Furnishings, Badcock’s, and American Freight – fall to new lows. I know from experience that the furniture business is cyclical. It goes down, but eventually

it goes back up. These were all good companies. I thought in time they would bounce back. I bought a chunk.

Since June, all four companies have declared bankruptcy. Almost 1500 furniture stores will have closed in 2024 by December 31.

As you can see, Dennis, I could never have made any money for the Club by playing golf or investing.

All I did was collect the dues, put the money in the bank, and pay our bills. Miraculously our bank account grew fivefold. So, the simple truth is that, when it comes to golf or investing, I'm a B-L-O-A-T, BLOAT: Biggest Loser of All Time. But, when it comes to being a good steward of the Club's funds, when it comes to serving as SpheX Club treasurer, after 1505 meetings, I am a GOAT: Greatest of All Time.

New Business: Some difficulty was encountered with the audio-visual equipment. Dr. Sanders was able to log into the computer and locate D. Blackman's slide on the SpheX Google Drive, but we were unable to connect the computer to the overhead LED projector. The problem was solved by calling in Dr. Steve Smith at home. He walked us through the steps necessary to complete the connection. Perhaps in this case Dr. Smith should be credited with attendance.

Regrets were extended to the speaker by: Gillette, Kershner and Smith.

President Marion introduced Dr. Bill Blackman, our speaker for the evening:

Bill was born and raised in Charlottesville, Virginia. He graduated from Hampden-Sydney College and the University of Virginia School of Medicine, and completed a four-year internal medicine residency training program. He and Robin then settled in Lynchburg in 1984 where he practiced internal medicine until retiring at the end of 2020. Bill volunteers at the Free Clinic of Central Virginia, and works part-time at a rural medical office.

In his spare time, he enjoys reading, hiking, photography, fly fishing, and traveling.

Bill and Robin have two sons, John and Will, and six grandchildren ranging in age from five months to nine years.

Dr. Blackman began his presentation with a brief review of basic immunology, describing the main components of the cell-mediated and humoral (antibody) systems. The latter system produces five classes of immunoglobulins. His paper focused on immunoglobulin E (IgE), which plays a prominent role in allergic reactions. He noted that before an IgE-mediated allergic response can occur, the individual must be exposed to an allergen. That exposure elicits the production of IgE specific to that allergen. Subsequent exposure to the allergen elicits a

cascading series of events culminating in the release of substances, most notably histamine, that are responsible for the allergic reaction.

Dr. Blackman then reviewed the history of cetuximab, an investigational chemotherapy agent that in 2004–2006 elicited severe allergic reactions in some patients. There was a regional distribution of these allergic responses; many of them were in Arkansas. Further investigation by Dr. Thomas Platts-Mills at U.Va. identified an IgE antibody directed at a sugar, galactose-alpha-1,3-galactose, commonly referred to as alpha-gal, that was part of the cetuximab molecule. Shortly after allergists at U.Va. made the connection between the cetuximab reactions and those of patients presenting with similar reactions hours after eating beef, pork or lamb. These reactions were also regional, and the distribution of reported cases was identical to the distribution of the cetuximab-induced reactions. Dr. Platts-Mills developed a test for IgE specific for alpha-gal, allowing confirmation that the reactions to cetuximab and mammalian meat were mediated by the same mechanism. The distribution of cases was largely in the southeastern US and was similar to the distribution of Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, suggesting a tick vector.

Further research of alpha-gal revealed that it closely resembles the group B antigen found in those with Type B blood, and that non-primate mammals, as well as some bacteria, parasites and ticks produce alpha-gal. The gene that codes for alpha gal is “switched off” in primates.

Dr. Blackman then reviewed the evidence linking tick bites to the development of alpha-gal allergy, including epidemiological evidence and a strong correlation between the number of tick bites and the probability of developing the allergy. We are exposed to the alpha-gal antigen through our diet and from microbes in our gut, but these exposures are not sufficient to induce IgE production. For that, the bite of the lone star tick, which carries the antigen in its saliva, is necessary.

Our speaker then reviewed the symptoms, emphasizing the inconsistent nature of the response. The classic response is itching, flushing, and hives, typically beginning about six hours after mammalian meat ingestion. Gastrointestinal symptoms are common, including vomiting, diarrhea and abdominal cramps.

The treatment consists of avoidance of mammalian meat and other products, including dairy, gelatin and other foods. He noted that animal by-products, such as heparin, beef or pork-derived thyroid hormone, some vaccines, and some snake antivenins, have also been known to cause an allergic response.

Dr. Blackman described the life cycle and anatomy of the Lone Star tick and the characteristics, such as the anatomy of its mouth parts, that make it an effective transmitter of the alpha-gal antigen.

Dr. Blackman concluded by reviewing the methods for minimizing the risk of tick bite, including the use of repellants such as DEET or picaridin and the insecticide permethrin, which can be applied to clothing. He reviewed proper tick removal technique as well as methods for dealing with a seed tick infestation.

A lively Q&A session followed. Mr. Sydnor asked about the evolutionary benefit of turning off the production of the alpha-gal in primates. Was it to allow primates to eat other mammals? Dr. Frantz noted that if it were not turned off, then mammalian meat would not be “forage in.” Dr. Blackman responded that he did not have an explanation for why the production of alpha-gal does not occur in primates but speculated that the protein is possibly too close to the blood type B antigen and would cause problems. Dr. Lewis asked about the variability in response to an alpha-gal challenge. Dr. Blackman responded that much of the alpha-gal we ingest is in fat tissue, which is digested and absorbed later than lean meat, which might help explain the variability in the response in allergic individuals. Ms. Marion asked about Dr. Blackman’s last slide, showing a product called “BaconUp”—tubs of bacon grease. Dr. Blackman spoke of stopping at a Buckee’s gas station, featuring over 75 gas pumps, very clean restrooms, and a wide variety of products and goods not seen elsewhere, including tubs of bacon grease. Mr. Stinnett asked whether alpha-gal syndrome is a new disease or a newly recognized disease. Dr. Blackman responded that he suspects that it has been around but unrecognized. He alluded to a report from Georgia in the 1990s that described 20 cases of meat allergy but attracted little attention. He speculated that many persons with predominantly GI symptoms due to alpha-gal were given other diagnoses. Dr. Wright asked what percentage of alpha-gal patients present solely with GI symptoms. Dr. Blackman did not have an answer. Ms. Marion asked why it suddenly seems so prevalent. Dr. Blackman noted that climate change has resulted in an increase in the period of tick activity. Also, the deer population that act as a host for the ticks had increased dramatically. Dr. Jablonski asked about the reason cituximab induced an allergic response. Dr. Blackman explained that the drug molecule included several alpha-gal moieties and that those patients who reacted were ones who had been primed by tick bites. Mr. Sydnor asked about the phenomenon that many people with the allergy become less allergic over time. Dr. Blackman said that about 40% of people with the allergy become non-allergic over a period of months or years as the IgE level falls. The key seems to be avoidance of further tick bites. Those exposed to repeated bites maintain the allergic response over time. Dr. Wright asked about the use of acupuncture to treat alpha-gal. Dr. Black said that it has been documented that acupuncture has no effect on the IgE level. He suggested that the variability in response to a challenge may help explain the apparent effectiveness of the treatment. Dr. Frantz asked why the lone star tick and not other ticks transmit the disease. Dr. Blackman responded that he did not know, but that each tick species seems to specialize in transmission of a particular disease. Ms. Cyphert asked whether tests are done for alpha-gal prior to transfusions or transplants. Dr. Blackman responded that testing is done prior to transplants. Mr. Schewel asked if every tick is a carrier. Dr. Blackman pointed out that in our judicial system, a person is presumed innocent until proven guilty, but in the medical world, such is not the case. The tick that bites you should be presumed guilty of carrying a disease.

Ms. Marion reminded members that the next meeting will be on January 9, when Judge John Cook will present a paper. The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
James W. Wright
Secretary

SPHEX Club
Minutes of the 1507th meeting
January 9, 2025

President Nancy Marion called the 1,507th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on January 9, 2025. We met in Room 217 of Schewel Hall on the University of Lynchburg campus.

Active members present were: Blackman, Bradford, Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Edwards, Frantz, Gillette, Hansen, Lewis, Light, Marion, McDonald, Payne, Roberts, Sanders, Schewel, Sigler, Smith, Stinnett, Sydnor, Tiller, West, Wodicka and Wright.

The minutes of the November 21 meeting were approved with the correction of several minor typographical errors identified by Steve Smith.

Guests for the evening: Judge Cook first recognized the return of Dr. West and noted that he was accompanied by his wife, Patty. Both were welcomed with a round of applause. Judge Cook then introduced his guests, his wife Elizabeth and daughters Jean and Mary.

Business:

Membership Committee: Chairman Walker Sydnor reported that the committee has compiled a list of prospective members but before the committee brings forth a list of nominees it wants to give club members one last chance to suggest nominees. He can be reached at walkersydnor@gmail.com.

Nominating Committee: Ms. Cyphert reported that the committee is hard at work and will present a slate of officers in March.

Program Committee: Mr. Hansen likewise reported that his committee has been busy.

Ad Hoc Committee on Club Archives: Dr. Wright reported that he has spoken with Deb Smith, Jones Memorial Library head librarian and has learned that all of the Sphex digital archives, except for most of the papers, have been uploaded and are now searchable from the library's home page. Those papers that have not been uploaded will be as soon as the club gives its authorization. Dr. Wright will send via email instructions to members on how to access the collection.

Treasurer's Report: Ms. Marion recognized Mr. Schewel, who provided the following copy of his report:

It's Spdex time again after a six-week interlude, and I'm sure everyone enjoyed a whirlwind of holiday festivities and family gatherings. But, while you are on vacation, your Treasurer never sleeps, both metaphorically and, many nights literally, with visions of Spdex dancing in his head.

Since there was no activity in the Treasury, which remains at a stable \$5003.89, having been asked to do double duty and serve on the membership committee, I spent many hours ruminating about potential new members. Since Spdex does demand a time commitment, I decided that having a certain amount of free time was perhaps the most important criterion for nomination.

A lot has happened since we last met – both nationally and locally – and four prominent individuals have become available. I took the liberty of sending each one a copy of Dr. Blackman's recent talk. Coincidentally, all these fellows have alpha gal, so now they are really excited about joining. Alpha gal, however, is the least of their worries, as you will soon hear.

To assist you in evaluating them, besides a brief bio, I asked each one to submit a topic and title for his initial paper.

My first nominee is a familiar name, Hunter Biden: hedge fund principal, investor in private equity funds including one based in China, and lobbyist for numerous firms including one owned by a Ukrainian oligarch. In June Mr. Biden was found guilty of three federal gun violations including unlawfully possessing a gun as a drug user. In September he pleaded guilty to six federal tax misdemeanors and three felonies, including failure to file and pay his taxes, tax evasion, and filing a false return. While he faced a possible forty-two years in prison, he was expected to receive a five-year sentence. On December 2 his father, President Joe Biden, pardoned him for any federal crimes he may have committed going back to January 1, 2014.

Exonerated of imprisonment and, with influence peddling no longer an option, basically unemployable, the younger Biden really doesn't have much to do. In fact, he says he's already working on his first two Spdex papers: "The Hunter and the Hunted," or "How I was Victimized by My Father's Political Opponents"; and "Excuse Me: A History of Presidential Pardons."

Just to demonstrate my impartiality, my second choice is Matt Gaetz, former Florida Republican Congressman and briefly President-Elect Donald Trump's Attorney-General Designate. Mr. Gaetz withdrew his name from consideration after it became apparent that probably not a single Senator would vote to approve his appointment.

Upon his selection, Mr. Gaetz resigned from the House of Representative, claiming that as a private citizen he was no longer under the jurisdiction of the House Ethics Committee and that the Committee should refrain from releasing the report of its long-running investigation of him. The Committee ignored his argument. The report disclosed "substantial evidence" that Gaetz "violated House rules and other standards of conduct prohibiting prostitution, statutory rape, illicit drug use, impermissible gifts, special favors or privileges, and obstruction of Congress."

Mr. Gaetz has posted his resumé on the employment site, Indeed; not yet having received any job offers, he has accepted my invitation to join the Club, at least until a better one comes along. His first paper is titled "Get Smart or Get Smeared," in which he defends his behavior – womanizing, paying for sex, partying, smoking, drinking, "more than he should have" – as youthful indiscretions and says he is now older, wiser, and more morally inclined.

My third recommendation is Pat Gelsinger. Most of you in this room have never heard of Pat Gelsinger. On December 2, he was asked by the Board of Directors of Intel Corporation to resign as CEO, a position he had held since February 15, 2021. For decades the world leader in the design and manufacture of semiconductor chips, the company hired Mr. Gelsinger after it had fallen behind competitors who specialized separately in each area (like Nvidia in design and TSMC in manufacturing).

Mr. Gelsinger invested billions in developing AI chips that lacked the computing power of the graphics-processing units made by Nvidia. He spent even more building manufacturing facilities which were unable to demonstrate sufficiently advanced capability to lure customers from other firms.

During his tenure, Intel's share price declined 60% and the company's value shrunk \$150 billion. In late October it reported a quarterly loss of \$16.6 billion, its worst ever.

Now retired, Mr. Gelsinger spends his free time splitting logs for his fireplace, playing Texas Hold 'em, and visiting Mexican restaurants to sample his favorite food. Hence, his inaugural Sphex paper will be a memoir titled: "Let the Chips Fall Where They May: Wood, Poker, Corn, and Semiconductor."

My last nominee is Lynchburg's own Jeff Helgeson. On September 2 Mr. Helgeson announced he was retiring as Ward 3 City Councilman after occupying the seat for twenty years. For much of that period he was Council's only self-identified Republican member. As such, it was somewhat of an insult when the first Republican majority in the modern era failed to elect him mayor in 2023. His relationship with his colleagues has remained fractious and culminated in their censuring him (and another councilman) for releasing a privileged email between the city attorney and Council.

About a year ago I had lunch with Jeff to see if he had any appetite for endorsing the City's financial support for a campaign to renovate the downtown YMCA. The only appetite he had was for the meal I bought him. He schooled me at least twice on his political philosophy: "Government produces nothing of economic value and the less there is, the better off are our citizens."

Jeff will make a great Sphex member because he lives in the past and espouses sentiments that were widespread in the early years of the Club. When I extended the invitation, he was elated. "Thank you so much, Marc," he said. "I've coveted membership for many years, and I'm honored by the opportunity. I already know what my first two papers will be: 'Be Careful What You Wish For,' or 'Local Democrats Never Thought They Would Be Saying "We Miss You Jeff" Until They Met My Successor, Curt Diemer'; and 'Turn Out the Lights, The Party's Over,' or 'How Republicans in Name Only Betrayed My Principles.'

"I'm even more excited about my third paper. I recently came across a book by a fellow named Thomas Friedman called *The World is Flat*. I've been saying this for years and now finally someone agrees with me. This is a subject I will be researching in the future."

And with that, Madam President, I respectfully submit not only my report but also these candidates for Sphex membership.

New Business: Dr. Wright exercised the secretary's privilege to call members' attention to Lynch's Ferry Magazine. Although most members are aware of this journal of local history, some are not. It was founded in 1988 by former Sphex member, Dr. Peter Houck, and over the years has featured articles by a number of Sphex members, including Ted Delaney, Tom Tiller, Travis McDonald, Kim Payne, Jim Elson, Peter Houck, Bob Wimer, Tom Ledford, Joe Stinnett, Dr. Wright and others. President Nancy Marion's graphic arts skills, her encyclopedic knowledge of local history, and her hard work are responsible for the magazine's very high production values. Dr. Wright urged members to subscribe.

Regrets were extended to the speaker by: Doyle, Kershner, Morrison-Shetlar, Ott Rowlands, and Salmon.

President Marion introduced Judge John Cook, our speaker for the evening:

Judge Cook received his B.A. and J.D. degrees from the University of Virginia. He was elected a Circuit Court Judge for the Twenty-Fourth Judicial Circuit in 2008 and primarily presides in Campbell County,

He has been an adjunct faculty member at the University of Virginia Law School for the last twelve years. Prior to 2008, he was a member of the law firm of Caskie & Frost for twenty-five years.

As a lawyer, he served as the representative of the Twenty-Fourth Circuit on the State Bar Council. He also served on the State Bar Committee of Lawyer Discipline. He is a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers and past chair of the Virginia Chapter of the American Board of Trial Advocates. For the last four years, he has served on the National Trial Competition committee for law schools and will be one of the judges for the finals in Houston in April.

He is a member and past president of the Lynchburg Morning Rotary Club. He has served on the boards of Kid's Haven, Lynchburg Symphony Orchestra, Lynchburg Historical Society, Lynchburg Youth Services, Boonsboro Country Club and James River Day School.

His oldest daughter gave him his favorite T shirt, which reads, "You Can't Scare Me- I Have Three Daughters"

John is married to Elizabeth Wills Cook and they do have three daughters and one grandson, who just turned three.

Judge Cook began his remarks by saying that this was the first court trial he remembered learning about. He read about it in high school in the early 1970s.

The trial occurred exactly one hundred years ago. Historian Jon Meacham hears rhyming between then and now. “Given the demographic and technological changes, the anti-immigrant and racist sentiments, and the anxiety of a large white-dominated culture, 1924 has long struck me as an analogous period to our own.”

He learned of the trial from the play, Inherit the Wind, by Jerome Lawrence and Robert Edwin Lee, and the movie based on the play of the same name starring Spencer Tracy. From his learning of the trial as a high school student, his impression was that the trial known as the Trial of the Century resulted in a triumph of science, freedom of thought and truth. Never again would we need to wrestle what would be taught in school.

What he found on his journey was that most of his impressions were wrong. From the perspective of over forty years in law, what would he think of the Trial of the Century? Jon Meacham says that the trial sheds light not only on the battles of the past but the struggles of the present. What really happened?

The case was voluntarily dismissed on appeal (*Nolle Prosequi*). So, the title of this paper is the *Nolle prosequi* of the Century. From a legal standpoint, the Trial of the Century was a disappointment. It was voluntarily dismissed by the State. It was a manufactured case. No one had claimed harm. There were only four witnesses and about 90 minutes of testimony before the jury. There was no fiancé that testified against him. There were no closing arguments and the jury deliberated only nine minutes. In addition, a lot of Judge Cook’s other impressions were wrong. Scopes was never jailed. He was not arrested while he was teaching out of Darwin’s book. He was recruited to be a defendant and he taught out of the textbook approved by the state and sold at the local drug store. No one was surprised by the verdict. Bryan did not collapse in the courtroom. He did die in his sleep five days after the trial. There is no evidence that his death was connected to the trial. And lastly, did it resolve the issue of what we teach in school?

The Scopes trial did not resolve the issue of teaching evolution. Each side left Dayton confident it had achieved its objective to convince the public. Discussion did not resolve the disagreement, but further information increased the divide.

Most of the South passed laws that restricted the teaching of evolution. The Butler Act remained the law in Tennessee until it was repealed due to a pending Federal class action suit. In Epperson v. Arkansas, the Court held that a similar Arkansas law violated the establishment clause of the first amendment and the fourteenth amendment.

Louisiana passed a Creationism Act in 1982. It forbade the teaching of evolution unless it was accompanied by instruction in “creation science.” In 1987, the U.S. Supreme Court found the act to be a violation of the establishment clause of the first amendment by a 7-2 vote [Edwards v. Aguillard].

In 2008, Louisiana passed the Louisiana Science Education Act. The law permits public school teachers to use materials critical of established scientific thought with “evolution, the origins of life, global warming and human cloning”. It allows teachers to teach students alternate theories and teach the controversy over these issues. Tennessee passed a similar act in 2012.

In 2011, the New York Times reported a national survey of more than 900 public high school biology teachers concerning the teaching of evolution. Researchers found that only 28 per cent of biology teachers consistently followed the recommendations of the National Research Council to describe straight forwardly the evidence for evolution and explain the ways in which it is a unifying theme in all biology.

Earlier this year, Louisiana passed a law that requires all classrooms to display the Ten Commandments. In June, Oklahoma's state superintendent of education announced that all schools are required to incorporate the Bible and the ten commandments in the curriculum. Each class in the state from grades 5-12 must have a Bible and teachers must teach from it.

What is for sure is that the battle that started in that little town in Tennessee one hundred years ago has not resolved.

A brief Q&A session followed the talk, with questions and remarks provided by Michael Gillette and Cham Light.

Ms. Marion reminded members that the next meeting will be on January 23, when Ms. Christina Delzingaro will present a paper entitled "There Are Four of Us Right Here: The Hidden Minority." The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
James W. Wright
Secretary

SPHEX Club
Minutes of the 1508th meeting
January 23, 2025

President Nancy Marion called the 1,508th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on January 23, 2025. We met in Room 217 of Schewel Hall on the University of Lynchburg campus.

Active members present were: Bradford, Cook, Dawson, Delaney, Delzingaro, Doyle, Edwards, Frantz, Hansen, Jablonski, Lewis, Marion, McDonald, Payne, Roberts, Ott Rowlands, Salmon, Sanders, Schewel, Sigler, Stinnett, Sydnor, Tiller, West, Wodicka and Wright.

The minutes of the January 9 meeting were approved by acclamation.

Guests for the evening: The speaker had no guests.

Business:

Membership Committee: Chairman Walker Sydnor reported that the committee has assembled a list of seven candidates. Mr. Wodicka will compile biographies of the candidates and give them to the secretary for distribution to members.

Nominating Committee: Dr. Salmon reported that the committee is hard at work and will present a slate of officers in March.

Program Committee: Mr. Hansen likewise reported that his committee has been busy.

Ad Hoc Committee on Club Archives: Dr. Wright explained to members that the club has two decisions to make: (1) shall the 520-odd papers that have not been uploaded into the Omeka-S system be uploaded, and (2) will the club continue to maintain both hard copy and digital archives. Mr. Dawson proposed that the question of uploading the remaining papers be postponed until the next meeting. Time will be reserved in a future meeting to discuss the second question.

Treasurer's Report: Ms. Marion recognized Mr. Schewel, who gave the following report:

After hearing Judge Cook's enlightening paper two weeks ago, we now know where William Jennings Bryan and Clarence Darrow were on July 21, 1925. They were in Dayton, Tennessee participating in the famous Scopes Trial. We know also that Bryan died there on July 26th. But do we know where both men were during that five-day hiatus?

Well, thanks to the digital Sphex archives at Jones Library, we do now. I googled their names and dates and much to my surprise learned they were both in Lynchburg, Virginia on July 24th attending a specially called meeting of the Sphex Club.

It seems that the scion of the Lynchburg Bar and a founding member of the Club, Judge Mosby Cook Moon Johnston IV had contacted Messrs. Darrow and Bryan to help him adjudicate a controversial matter involving the expulsion of Club member and Treasurer C. Marc Shein for behavior detrimental to the Club's mission, policies, and reputation. Mr. Shein had appealed his expulsion and was granted a hearing before a jury of his peers presided over by the Judge.

Since Mr. Shein kept the Club's meager funds in a piggy bank, the trial was forever known to posterity as the "Piggy Trial."

There was no movie or play to memorialize the event, but there was a song written about it. The refrain went something like this: "When, oh when, will this report ever end? The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind."

Mr. Shein's expulsion had been based on the following violations of the Club's code of ethics, a code which, by the way, had been drafted by the Club's officers only a week prior to his expulsion in a smoke-filled back room at Lola's Café: (1) Mr. Shein's Treasurer's reports were entirely too long and reduced the time available for the speaker's presentation; (2) Mr. Shein had reportedly used profanity at a Club social gathering; and (3) Mr. Shein invariably managed to inject his political opinion into his reports.

Only five witnesses were called to testify. The first was a woman who had attended the Club social. She was so outraged by Mr. Shein's language that she yanked her husband out of his seat and stormed out the door yelling, "I thought this was a group of intellectuals, not a bunch of old farts sitting around telling dirty jokes."

The second witness was City Councilman Robert E. Lee Payne, who claimed Shein had misstated his position on Confederate statues and almost cost him the recent election. "He said my slogan was 'More statues should come down' when what I really said was 'More statues for downtown.'" Remember, Confederate statues were in vogue in 1925.

The other three witnesses were club members whose talks had been affected by Shein's lengthy treasurer's reports. Two were upset because they had prepared fifty-minute talks but couldn't deliver them in their entirety due to Shein's thirty-minute discourses. The third speaker, anticipating the usual report, had prepared only twenty minutes and was flummoxed when Shein deviated from his usual practice and spoke for just five.

The climax of the trial was Darrow's closing statement to the jury, in which he defended Shein's improprieties as merely his exercising his rights of freedom of thought and freedom of speech.

"Shein didn't swear just for the hell of it," said Darrow. "Language is a poor enough means of communication. I think we should use all the words we've got. Besides, there are damn few words anybody understands."

Regarding Shein's verbosity, Darrow spoke passionately and amazingly predicted the future. "An idea cannot be confined to an hourglass. The advance of man's learning cannot be impeded by

the barrier of time. Are we to forgo progress because the clock runs out? Ladies and gentlemen, progress has never been a bargain. You have to pay for it. Sometimes I think there's a man behind the counter who says, 'All right, you can have a cell phone, but you lose all privacy and you risk annoying everyone in the room.' To share fully the knowledge we have gained from study and observation requires sacrificing the stopwatch.

"As for politics," said Darrow, "it's obvious my client detests both parties and abhors all politicians. I rest my case."

The jury was convinced. They voted unanimously to reinstate Shein. The Judge, however, felt he needed a slap on the wrist and a dose of humility. He ordered Shein to contribute \$1 to the Club Treasury, bringing its balance to \$5003.09.

New Business: Dr. Wright reported that Mr. Kershner has expressed interest in requesting inactive status at the end of the current semester. We currently have two vacancies, so the Membership Committee can propose the selection of two new members. In the likely event that Mr. Kershner elects inactive status, the Membership Committee can propose the election three new members. Dr. Wright proposed that three new members be elected, that the top two vote getters be invited to join and that the third top vote getter be invited when Mr. Kershner is granted inactive status.

Regrets were extended to the speaker by: Cyphert, Morrison-Shetlar and Smith.

President Marion introduced Ms. Delzingaro, our speaker for the evening:

Christina Delzingaro is the co-founder and Chief Executive Officer of Community Access Network. In this role, she works to increase access to high-quality, compassionate and comprehensive healthcare for every member of our community, regardless of circumstance, health history or insurance coverage.

Christina's prior positions include CEO of the Free Clinic of Central Virginia, Director of Programs for the AIDS/HIV Services Group, the Director of Mission Services of Goodwill of Central and Eastern Virginia, Executive Director of the Arc of the Piedmont, and Director of the Richmond County Department of Social Services.

Christina received her BA from Randolph-Macon Woman's College and her MBA from Averette University. She has been a member of the Blue Ridge Institute of Southern Human Services Executives for over 30 years and currently serves as Past President. Her service also includes the Board of Directors of the Greater Lynchburg Community Foundation, where she chairs the Distribution Committee; the Board of Roads to Recovery as Treasurer; the Board of the Fifth Street CDC; as well as being a founding Board member and Treasurer of the Pierce Street Gateway. Christina is a recipient of the Center for Inclusive Communities' Humanitarian Award.

Christina returned to Lynchburg in 2012 and resides in the Garland Hill Neighborhood.

Ms. Delzingaro provided the following summary of her paper:

The Romani people, or Roma, have a rich and complex history marked by migration, persecutions, and resilience. Roma, also known as “gypsies”, are an Indo-Aryan ethnic group who traditionally lived a nomadic, itinerant lifestyle. The global Roma population is estimated to be between 10 and 12 million, with the majority living in Europe, and an estimated 1 million in the US. In the US, where ethnic Roma often hide their identity to prevent discrimination, many people are still unaware that Roma are a true ethnic group with a distinct language and culture.

Analysis of mitochondrial DNA and Y-chromosomal data has shown that the Romani possess genetic markers that are predominantly found among the peoples of Northern India. They began migrating westward around the 5th century, with significant movements into Persia by the 11th century and into southeastern Europe by the 14th century. Over the centuries, they moved westward into Europe and northern Africa, adapting the language and culture of those countries during their migrations.

Roma were initially welcomed in their new countries, but as they moved further into Europe, they encountered increasing hostility. In the 1300s, Romani people migrated to what is now Romania, where they were then enslaved. By the 15th century, Roma were present in most European countries, where they often lived on the margins of society and where they were often enslaved.

The first Romani people arrived in the Americas with Christopher Columbus in 1498, as enslaved people. The first Roma to arrive from Britain did so in the 17th century, as British law called for the execution of male gypsies and the banishment of women and children. By the end of the seventeenth century, every European country with holdings in North and South America followed the practice of deporting Roma to the Americas.

Significant Romani immigration to the United States did not begin until the late 19th century, largely driven by the abolition of slavery in Romania in 1864. Additional waves of immigration occurred in the late 20th century, following the Holocaust in Nazi Germany and its occupied European territories. More recently, the collapse of Communism has brought more Eastern European Roma to the US.

Estimates of the total population of ethnic Roma in the United States range from fewer than 100,000 to one million, with significant communities in Southern California, the Pacific Northwest, Texas, Louisiana, Florida and New Jersey.

One of the darkest chapters in Romani history is the Baro Porajmos, also known as “The Great Devouring.” During World War II, the Nazi regime targeted the Roma, including the Roma Sinti subgroup, for extermination alongside Jews and other groups. It is estimated that more than 70% of the Roma population in Europe was murdered by the Nazis in concentration camps, through disease, starvation and mass executions.

The Nazi genocide of Roma and Sinti had origins as early as the 1880s, with legislation in Bavaria which called for the incarceration of undocumented Roma. In 1899, Bavaria established

its Intelligence Service Regarding the Gypsies, which issued identification cards, prevented the Roma from using public services, and implemented general surveillance of them. Beginning in 1933, the Nazi regime targeted the Roma as part of their racial purity policies.

The total number of Roma and Sinti reported killed during the Holocaust varies widely, ranging between 250,000 and 1.5 million, depending upon the source. Dr. Ian Hancock of the University of Texas suggests "... of the estimated 20,000 Romanies in Germany in 1939, fully three quarters had been murdered by 1945. Of the 11,200 in Austria, a half were murdered. Of the 50,000 in Poland, 35,000. In Croatia, Estonia, the Netherlands, Lithuania and Luxembourg, almost the entire Romani populations were eradicated."

The Bora Porajmos is known as the "forgotten Holocaust," as the experience of the Roma under the Nazis is often neglected, minimized or unacknowledged. There have been few recorded and archived testimonies directly from Roma and Sinti. Historical documents are currently being revised to correctly identify Roma and Sinti victims previously identified as Jewish.

Some historians still maintain that Nazis did not target Roma for racial reasons, as they did the Jews, but rather because they were criminals. The German government did not acknowledge the Roma persecution by Nazis until 1965. In 1982 the Germany government finally called the mass killings of Roma a genocide. The US Congress did not acknowledge the genocide of the Romani people by the Nazis until 2022.

Roma coming to the United States hoped to escape the racial prejudice, including enslavement, they had endured in Europe. However, since their first arrival in America the Romani people have suffered social oppression, including legally codified discrimination. Fearful of the racism they experienced and continue to experience in Europe, as well as police profiling and discrimination in the US, many Roma choose to not identify themselves as Roma, opting instead to identify with the country they come from, making them a hidden minority.

A lively Q&A session followed the talk. Dr. Frantz asked about the religious affiliation of Roma. Ms. Delzingaro that it typically follows the country in which they are found. Hence, Italian Roma are typically Roman Catholic. Dr. Tiller asked about the motivations for the nomadic lifestyle of the Roma. Ms. Delzingaro pointed out that they are culturally nomadic and fiercely independent, but persecution has also been a factor in their movement. Mr. Stinnett asked whether any of her family were killed by the Nazis. Ms. Delzingaro responded that most of her family stayed in Italy during the war. Her uncle emigrated to Canada and her father to the U.S. The Delzingaro home still stands, a sixteenth century structure built into the side of a cliff in the Naples area, and remains in the family. Mr. Stinnett recalled the cover of Bob Dylan's album, "John Wesley Harding," and said that the photograph was originally thought to depicts several Native Americans with Dylan but it was later revealed that the Native Americans were actually Roma. (Mr. Stinnett later issued a correction, noting that the people in the photo with Dylan were actually Bauls from Bengal/India/Bangladesh.) Mr. Sydnor asked whether the term Gypsie is considered a slur. Ms. Delzingaro responded that it is, though in her family the term has been

used without negative connotations. She quoted a Harvard University study that found that 45% of Roma in the U.S. consider “Gypsie” a slur. Ms. Marion asked whether her family hid their ethnicity when the author was growing up. Ms. Delzingaro responded that they identified as Italian and didn’t speak of their Roma heritage. Ms. Marion recalled the slide in the presentation that depicted a nurse measuring the head of a Roma woman. The description included the term “scientific racism” which recalled to her mind the eugenics movement in the U.S. and the campaign of forced sterilization at the Lynchburg Colony and elsewhere. Rev.

Roberts asked about Roma culinary traditions. He noted that in German restaurants today one can order dishes in the Roma style. Ms. Delzingaro responded that her family’s food was very much in the Italian tradition, though perhaps with use of spices such as paprika usually associated with Roma cuisine. Dr. Ott Rowlands said that she had the good fortune to live with Roma families in Pennsylvania and in Hungary and was fascinated by their traditions and the close-knit family structures. She has photographs of those families and invited Ms. Delzingaro to see them.

Ms. Marion reminded members that the next meeting will be on February 6, when Dr. Sue Ott Rowlands will present a paper entitled "Mercury 7 with Signs Following; Mud Nostalgia." The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
James W. Wright
Secretary



SPHEX Club
Minutes of the 1509th meeting
February 6, 2025

President Nancy Marion called the 1,509th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:31 p.m. on February 6, 2025. We met in Room 217 of Schewel Hall on the University of Lynchburg campus.

Active members present were: Blackman, Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Delzingaro, Doyle, Frantz, Gillette, Kershner, Lewis, Marion, McDonald, Morrison-Shetlar, Payne, Roberts, Ott Rowlands, Salmon, Schewel, Sigler, Smith, Stinnett, Tiller, West, Wodicka and Wright.

The minutes of the January 23 meeting were approved in that there were no objections to approval..

Guests for the evening: The speaker introduced Stephanie Earle and Steve Willis.

Business:

Membership Committee: No report

Nominating Committee: Dr. Salmon reported that the committee has determined a slate of officer candidates and will present it at the next meeting.

Program Committee: Illness prevented Mr. Hansen from attending but he provided this report, which was read by President Marion: "Our annual dinner meeting will be on Wednesday, April 30th in the East Room at the University of Lynchburg. Our speaker will be John M. Cardwell, a former Sphex member (2003–2005) and retired CIA officer. Dr. Sigler recommended Mr. Cardwell and can provide a little more insight about our speaker at tonight's meeting if so desired." Dr. Sigler reported that Mr. Cardwell attended Lynchburg College at the same time he did and was, in fact, his roommate. Mr. Cardwell was also a physics major. He worked for the CIA, which required many postings abroad. He retired and moved to Lynchburg in the early 1990's and became a member of the Sphex Club. He was recalled to the CIA in 1995, which necessitated a move to D.C. and his withdrawal from the club. Mr. Cardwell has been involved as an advisor in the production of several television dramas, most recently a series called "Spy-Ops."

Ad Hoc Committee on Club Archives: Discussion of the matter of placing all Sphex papers online was taken up in Old Business.

Treasurer's Report: Ms. Marion recognized Mr. Schewel, who gave the following report:

A strange thing happened to the Sphex Club last week. Your president and I received a very disturbing letter on January 30th that put the Club's future in jeopardy. We made a management decision which we are sharing with you this evening and hope you will approve.

The letter reads as follows.

Office of the President of the United States
Executive Order #8,436

Dear Ms. Marion and Mr. Schewel:

By the authority vested in me as the 47th President of the United States who was elected president by the greatest majority in the history of our country which was almost destroyed by Joe Biden and his radical left lunatics, the Sphex Club of Lynchburg, Virginia is ordered to shut down no later than February 10th, 2025.

This is just another one of the 8,000 actions I have taken in the past fifteen days to reverse the horrible failures and betrayals we inherited from a group of people who didn't know what the hell they were doing. Just as DOGE Director Elon Musk has identified billions of dollars of waste and fraud in the USAID, so has he found similar corruption, misuse of funds, and subversion in the activities of SPHEX.

For example, does anyone know what USAID stands for? I don't, but it must be bad, really bad. For that matter, does anyone know what DOGE stands for? If you don't, you're stupid and deserve to be a member of the Democrat party. It stands for "Don't Overpay Government Employees." Not a problem, since we plan to get rid of all of them except the ones who drive Teslas. Does anyone know what SPHEX stands for, or even how to pronounce it. Someone told Elon it was pronounced SPHE-X, which threw a scare into him because it sounded a lot like Space-X.

But it's not just the name of this Club – well, you call it a club, but I call it a secret society – that's a problem. It's the kind of things that are talked about behind these closed doors. They're a problem, a real problem. Like immigration, which was talked about in your club just two weeks ago. And when you talk about immigration, when you have people wandering across borders all around the world, you know some of it's illegal and 21 million of those aliens came into this country because the Biden Administration opened our borders. And many of them were criminals and murderers and charlatans.

What a calamity for our country. But we're getting them out. You saw it yesterday. You saw it today. You'll see it tomorrow. We can't have this talked about at the Sphex Club. Because America's decline is over. We were laughed at all over the world. But we're not laughed at anymore.

I understand you had a talk in this club about a famous woman athlete named Babe Didrickson Zaharias, whom the speaker called "The Greatest of All Time." That was a decent talk except the speaker forgot to mention that I, Donald Trump, once played a round of golf against Babe Didrickson, and I beat her, two and one. Because I don't lose. I'm a winner. And if you're going to talk about the "Greatest of All Time," how could you ever forget "The Greatest President of

All Time,” and not just once, but twice. It’s things like that that make it necessary to shut down this club.

But even worse than that was a talk given several months ago which really was so full of fake news that there’s no way to describe it other than to say it was, well, “False All Through.” [In his letter, President Trump didn’t realize he was using a phrase which was the actual title of the paper given by Dennis Roberts.] I’m sorry to say your speaker, a minister, no less, had some nasty things to say about some real heroes in our country, like the brave folks who peacefully protested the election that was stolen from me on January 6th, 2021; the Christian Evangelicals who are fighting along with me to rescue our country from dangerous movements like transgender rights in sports and DEI programs; and the patriots of our country who wrote Project 2025 and the Watchman Decree which are my blueprints for fixing our government.

I can rescind this order, but only if your Club joins me to bring back the American dream. We’re bringing back religion in this country. Our power will stop wars and bring a new spirit of unity to the world. Together we will be prosperous. We will be free. Together we will make America powerful again, make America wealthy again, make America healthy again, make America strong, proud, and safe again. Together we will make America great again.

Tell you what. Just go to the “Trump Store” page on Amazon, take your \$5003.09 bank balance, and buy fifty Donald Trump Gold Plated Coin Sets, fifty Donald Trump America’s 47th President Double Matted Photo Sets, fifty Proud Patriots Donald Trump Bobbleheads, and fifty Donald Trump Inauguration Day 2025 Tee Shirts (extra-large only). You can trash this letter, and we’ll call it even.

And so, we did. That’s the Art of the Deal.

Old Business: Dr. Wright reintroduced the topic of placing the Sphex archive of papers online. He said that approximately 60 papers are already online but Ms. Deb Smith, head librarian at the Jones Memorial Library, awaits instructions from the club before uploading the rest. Dr. Wright spoke with Ms. Smith, who addressed some of the concerns voiced earlier by members:

- She opined that legal liability for using images obtained on the internet and used without permission in papers would be minimal because Jones Memorial Library is the organization posting the papers online. She said that the library is covered under more lenient copyright and fair use restrictions than are private individuals.
- Ms. Smith said that it would be possible to attach a disclaimer to each paper.
- She said that the library honors "take down" requests, meaning that if a third party makes a reasonable request to remove a club paper, the library would do so, though the paper copy would remain in the archives.

Several members voiced concerns that individuals, living and deceased, intended the papers for the enjoyment and edification of club members and did not envision or give permission for wider distribution of their work. Concerns were expressed that at least one paper included personal information that the writer would not want released, and that several included dated opinions

regarding minority groups, especially racial, that would reflect poorly on the writer or the club. Mr. Gillette opined that only papers for which the writer has given express permission should be uploaded. He suggested that the club could adopt an “opt-out” policy by which all papers would be posted online unless the author expressly chooses to opt out. Mr. Stinnett pointed out that we already have 100-word summaries of all of the papers online, so interested parties would be able to follow up by finding the physical paper at the library. Mr. Payne asked whether there is a compelling reason that the archives should be online at all. Ms. Marion said that rather than using the JML, the club could have its own website and post all of the papers there, where they would be password protected and available only to club members. Ms. Delzingaro countered Mr. Gillette’s concern by noting that all papers placed in the Jones Memorial Library were put there with the knowledge and therefore the implied permission of the author, and all such papers are and have been available to the public. Therefore, the debate should focus on the method of access. Mr. Gillette suggested that the president appoint a small committee to weigh the pros and cons and make a recommendation to the club at a later meeting. This suggestion met with general approval and no objections.

Regrets were extended to the speaker by: Bradford, Hansen, Sanders and Sydnor.

President Marion introduced Dr. Sue Ott Rowlands, our speaker for the evening:

We are very happy to welcome Sue Ott Rowlands to the podium. As all of you know, Sue became the 11th president of Randolph College in July 2022. Prior to coming to Randolph, she was provost and executive vice president for academic affairs at Northern Kentucky University, where she also was a professor of theater arts. Prior to that, she was Dean of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences at Virginia Tech. And I believe prior to that she was Interim Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences as well as professor and Chair of the Theatre Department at the University of Toledo. She was also Chair of the Ohio State University’s Acting and Directing Program in the Department of Theater and before that was head of the acting program at Webster University in St. Louis. You have gathered by now that Sue has had a long, rich career in academic theater. She has also been involved in a number of professional theater programs outside of academia. Many of you know that Sue’s acting career has placed her on stages all over the world and that her travels, both for theater and for pleasure, have helped her further her passion for art collecting. Her collection of paintings, sculpture, furniture and other objects of art graces the college president’s home on Rivermont Avenue. She seeks out opportunities to share it with others. Locally, Dr. Ott Rowlands serves on the Boards of the Academy Center of the Arts, Amazement Square and Opera on the James.

Dr. Ott Rowlands provided the following summary of her paper:

Practiced in small, independent churches, primarily in rural Appalachian communities, snake-handling, along with the drinking of poison, speaking in tongues, and handling fire, is a long tradition in the American South. Though its prevalence has declined due to legal restrictions and public safety concerns, it remains a deeply held tradition for some. Contemporary snake handlers

see the practice as an expression of unwavering faith, a demonstration of God's power, and a way to maintain religious heritage despite external opposition.

Modern practitioners continue to face legal challenges, media scrutiny, and social stigma, but they persist in their beliefs. Some churches operate in secrecy to avoid legal repercussions, while others openly embrace their identity, defending their practices as constitutionally protected expressions of religious freedom. Though snake handling remains controversial, it reflects broader themes of religious conviction, cultural identity, and the complexities of faith in marginalized communities. The narrative of snake handling in churches today continues to evolve, serving as a testament to both religious devotion and the power of human resilience.

Dennis Covington's book, *Salvation on Sand Mountain: Snake Handling and Redemption in Southern Appalachia*, is a non-fiction book that explores the mysterious and often misunderstood world of snake-handling churches in the Appalachian region. Published in 1995, the book blends investigative journalism, memoir, and cultural analysis.

Covington initially sets out to cover the 1992 trial of Glenn Summerford, a preacher in Scottsboro, Alabama, accused of attempting to murder his wife by forcing her hand into a cage of venomous snakes. However, as he delves deeper into the world of snake-handling churches, he finds himself increasingly drawn to the practice and the people who embrace it. His reporting becomes personal as he examines his own Southern roots, religious upbringing, and struggles with faith.

Throughout the book, Covington immerses himself in the community of believers who handle snakes as a demonstration of their trust in God, based on a literal interpretation of Mark 16:17-18. He meets preachers, congregants, and fellow seekers who are both fascinating and deeply human, wrestling with faith, poverty, and identity in the rural South. As Covington's journey unfolds, he experiences moments of religious fervor and even participates in the ritual himself. However, he also confronts the darker aspects of the community, including the abuse of power and the dangers of blind faith. His exploration becomes a meditation on belief, redemption, and the ways in which people seek meaning in their lives.

The intertwined histories of snake handling, personal faith, and cultural memory come to life in *Mud Nostalgia*, a one-woman play written by Mark Edwards Bryan and performed by Sue Ott Rowlands. Through experimental storytelling, lyrical imagery, and historical analysis, these works explore how faith shapes personal and communal identities, how traditions endure despite opposition, and how nostalgia plays a role in the construction of meaning. The narrative of snake handling in churches today continues to evolve, serving as a testament to both religious devotion and the power of human resilience.

Dr. Ott Rowland's presentation, enhanced by dramatic readings of selections from the play *Mud Nostalgia*, generated considerable interest. Ms. Marion asked Dr. Ott Rowlands if she is still

performing. She responded that in March 2026 she will be performing *Mud Nostalgia* for Endstation Theatre. Stephanie Earle will be the director. Dr. Gillette related the story of an ethics consult on a mentally challenged young man at a training center who returned from a weekend visit to his family with fang punctures on one calf but no signs or symptoms of envenomation. The family admitted to taking him to their church where snakes were handled and that the young man had been bitten. The absence of signs of envenomation confirmed for the family that the young man was protected by his faith. Gillette had the impression that the church moved around and Ott Rowlands confirmed that many of these churches travel a revival circuit, but others are well established as far north as Detroit. She specifically mentioned a church in Jolo, W.Va. Dr. Lewis asked about the mechanics of snake handling and the fact that handlers are not bitten more often. Dr. Ott Rowlands responded that the rhythmic nature of the service might result in a trance-like state in the snakes. She speculated that the manner of handling might render the animals disoriented. Most snakes are caught in the wild though there are “snake fairs” where they can be bought. McDonald asked whether preachers have been known to remove the venom to render the snakes harmless. Dr. Ott Rowlands said that doing so would be a form of blasphemy and she expressed doubt that it is done. Dr. Blackman pointed out that mature pit vipers can regulate the amount of venom they inject and so can produce a “dry bite.” Young snakes lack this ability. Dr. Smith then noted that one would want to be the second person bitten by a young snake. Mr. Dawson asked how many times Dr. Ott Rowlands has presented the play and she estimated 60 to 70 times. He asked about her thoughts on the intersection of religious freedom, personal belief and government regulation. She responded that she has become sympathetic to the snake handlers. They have a certain ethic that says one should not handle a snake unless one is anointed, so many will stay at the back of the church when the snakes are being handled. The question was asked how one came to be anointed and she responded that it is an intense feeling of being possessed, of being in the heavenly garden—a certain charismatic feeling that arises in some during the intensity of the church service, not unlike ecstatic states experienced in other faith traditions. Dr. Wright asked about the film clip shown during the talk that took one into a snake handling service. Dr. Ott Rowlands assured him that the film is authentic. She uses it at the beginning of the play to help bring her audience into the world that the play describes. Ms. Marion asked that Dr. Ott Rowlands explain the title of her talk. She responded that in a related play called *Middle Truth*, the protagonist describes the feeling of flying through space the way John Glenn did, at 17,000 miles per hour. In the second play, *Mud Nostalgia*, that feeling is described again in the context of the charismatic experience. “Signs following,” from a verse in the Gospel of Mark, is a tagline for many of the churches that practice snake handling.

Ms. Marion reminded members that the next meeting will be on February 20, when Nikki Sanders will present her first Sphex paper. The meeting was adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
James W. Wright
Secretary

The February 20, 2025 meeting of the Sphex Club
was postponed until April 3, 2025
due to snow.

SPHEX Club
Minutes of the 1510th meeting
March 6, 2025

President Nancy Marion called the 1,510th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:34 p.m. on March 6, 2025. We met in Room 217 of Schewel Hall on the University of Lynchburg campus.

Active members present were: Bradford, Cook, Cyphert, Delaney, Delzingaro, Edwards, Frantz, Gillette, Hansen, Kershner, Marion, McDonald, Morrison-Shetlar, Payne, Roberts, Salmon, Sanders, Tiller, West, and Wright.

The minutes of the February 6 meeting were approved in that President Marion declared them approved. There were no objections. The club did not meet on February 20 due to snow.

Guests for the evening: Mr. Kershner introduced Dr. Patty West; his parents, Bill and Nancy Kershner; and Ms. Michelline Hall and her husband, Jawansa Hall.

Business:

Membership Committee: Ms. Marion dismissed guests prior to Mr. Walker's report. Mr. Walker then conducted the election two new members of the club. Per the by-laws, a qualifying vote was conducted. Seven candidates were proposed. Three emerged from the qualifying round and two of those three were chosen. As of this writing, one of the two, Dr. Price Blair, has accepted the invitation to join the club.

Nominating Committee: Dr. Salmon reported that the committee proposes the following candidates for election to office for the next Sphex year: President: Steve Smith; VP: Christina Delzingaro; Secretary: James Wright; and Treasurer: Marc Schewel.

Program Committee: Mr. Hansen announced that the annual dinner will take place at 6 p.m. on April 30. The University of Lynchburg will host the gathering in the West Room. With regard to price, Dr. Wright interjected that Mr. Schewel told him that given the robust health of our treasury, we ought to either forego the collection of dues this year or not charge for the dinner. Discussion ensued. No vote was taken though members present expressed a preference for collecting \$35 annual dues but subsidizing a portion of the dinner expenses. One arrangement brought forth would not charge members but would charge \$25 per guest. It was finally decided that Mr. Hansen should compile a schedule of possible charges and the impact of each on our bank balance at the next meeting.

Treasurer's Report: In the interest of time, and because Dr. Wright left the treasurer's report at home, the report was not read but is included here:

I regret I cannot be with you tonight as I am out of town. But don't worry, I won't bore you with where I am or where I'll be, because no one really cares about someone else's travels.

I struggled mightily to come up with a report worthy of Sue Ott's captivating presentation: Mercury Seven with Signs Following: Mud Nostalgia. Even with two extra weeks to prepare, I could hardly do it justice. Maybe it's fortunate I'm not present to deliver it in person, and my stand-in can bear the brunt of the booing sure to be heaped upon it.

First, I thought about saying that I went to the synagogue the Friday night after the meeting, ran into a snake, got bitten, and was laid up in bed for two weeks. But who would believe that?

Then I thought about a one-act soliloquy, maybe titled "Half-Price Sale with Credit Following, Family Nostalgia," about the trials and tribulations of a cerebral Jewish kid growing up in a small southern town compelled by circumstances to take over a furniture empire, but I rejected it as too self-serving.

Finally, in desperation and considering our subject is the lowest form of animal life, the snake, I settled on the lowest form of humor: the pun.

So, a snake walks into a bar. There's only one customer, an elderly woman. She gets hiss-terical, and bolts for the door.

A snake walks into a bar and asks, "Where's the bathroom?" The bartender replies, "Hiss or Hers?"

A snake walks into a saloon, and says to the bartender, "My that's a beautiful bar you have there? What kind is it?" The bartender says, "Serpentine."

A snake walks into a bar and has several drinks. The bartender says, "How about a cup of coffee?" "No thanks," says the snake. "I'm viperactive."

A snake walks into a bar and strikes up a conversation with the bartender. The bartender asks the snake if he has a job. "I work for the government," says the snake, "but I'm harmless. I'm a civil serpent."

"I'm so glad I have a desk job, because I used to work in a factory, an airplane factory. Back then I was Boeing Constrictor. And that's where I met my wife, another constrictor. Boa, did we have a crush on each other."

"Who's your favorite author?" asks the bartender. "William Snakespeare." "And your favorite TV show?" "Monty Python."

A female rattlesnake walks into a bar with a glum look on her face. "Why are you so sad?" asks the bartender?" "I just said good-bye to my children," says the mother rattlesnake. "It was time for them to strike out on their own."

A snake walks into a bar dressed in a police officer's uniform. "Don't tell me," says the bartender. "You're a copperhead."

A snake walks into a bar. “You’re not from around here,” says the bartender. “Nope,” says the snake. “I’m from Santo Domingo. Just call me Hiss-spanic.”

A snake walks into a bar with a sad look on his face. “What’s wrong?” asks the bartender. “I’ve just been to the doctor. He says I have reptile dysfunction.” “Don’t worry,” says the bartender as he sets a bottle on the bar. “Try this. It’s called viperagra.”

And finally, a snake walks into a bar. “How did you do that?” says the bartender.

Of the 5003 snake jokes I found on the internet (also, the amount of dollars in our treasury), those are the best.

Old Business:

- (1) Ms. Marion announced that Cham Light has taken a leave of absence for this semester because he has been scheduled to teach a class at the Liberty Law School on Thursday nights.
- (2) Ms. Marion called for volunteers to serve on a committee to advise the club on whether and how to proceed with making the club’s archives available online. Dr. Gillette and Mr. Delaney volunteered.

Regrets were extended to the speaker by: Doyle, Jablonski, Lewis, Schewel, Stinnett, Wodicka, and Blackman.

President Marion introduced Geoff Kershner, whose paper was entitled “Not Like Us.” Mr. Kershner provided the following summary of his paper:

Many may have watched the Super Bowl 59 halftime show featuring Kendrick Lamar and may not have understood some of the nuance of what he was messaging, what he was referencing, and the history behind his massive summer hit, “Not Like Us,” is and was part of a “rap battle” between Kendrick Lamar and the hit-making hip-hop artist Drake.

I will examine the historical development of MCing and rap battles as a fundamental element of hip-hop culture. I will share some notable rivalries, investigate the artistic and cultural significance of competitive lyricism, tracing its evolution from early party MCing to modern digital-age diss tracks.

The tradition of MCing emerged in the 1970s, when DJs like Kool Herc pioneered the use of breakbeats, allowing MCs to hype up crowds. Early battles were rooted in boasting and crowd engagement, as seen in the Busy Bee vs. Kool Moe Dee battle in 1981, where Kool Moe Dee introduced a more aggressive, direct lyrical attack, shifting rap battles from party-rocking to competitive lyrical dexterity.

The 1980s saw the rise of regional rivalries, most notably The Bridge Wars between MC Shan and KRS-One. The feud began when MC Shan’s “The Bridge” was interpreted as a claim that hip-hop originated in Queensbridge, prompting KRS-One to respond with “South Bronx”,

reinforcing the Bronx's claim as hip-hop's birthplace. The battle escalated with KRS-One's brutal takedown in "The Bridge Is Over", which not only dismantled MC Shan's credibility but also cemented battle rap's role in defending territorial and cultural identity. Around the same time, the LL Cool J vs. Kool Moe Dee feud highlighted a generational divide in MCing styles. Kool Moe Dee, an early lyrical technician, felt disrespected by LL Cool J's brash confidence and commercial success, leading to tracks like "How Ya Like Me Now" and "Jack the Ripper", where each artist claimed superiority over the other.

The 1990s introduced personal and violent rivalries, most infamously 2Pac vs. The Notorious B.I.G., which escalated into the East Coast vs. West Coast feud. Initially friends, the relationship soured after 2Pac was shot at Quad Studios, leading him to believe Biggie and Bad Boy Records had prior knowledge of the attack. The feud manifested in scathing diss tracks, with 2Pac dropping the infamous "Hit 'Em Up." Meanwhile, Biggie's "Who Shot Ya?" was widely perceived as a subliminal response. Tragically, the rivalry ended in the deaths of both artists, highlighting the dangerous intersection of music, ego, and real-world violence in hip-hop.

The 2000s brought the Jay-Z vs. Nas feud. Jay-Z fired the first major shot in 2001 with "Takeover", a track that criticized Nas's career and questioned his relevance, rapping. Jay-Z painted Nas as inconsistent and outdated, claiming he had lost his status as a king in rap. However, Nas struck back with "Ether", an explosive diss track that is widely regarded as one of the most scathing responses in hip-hop history.

In the 2010s, rap battles became even more public and meme-driven, with social media shaping the narrative. The Drake vs. Meek Mill feud (2015–2016) demonstrated the power of online discourse, as Drake's "Back to Back" became a viral sensation, turning a diss track into a mainstream hit. However, in 2018, Pusha T's "The Story of Adidon" took things to another level, exposing deeply personal aspects of Drake's life, proving that modern rap battles could be just as much about reputation destruction as lyrical skill.

The 2024 feud between Kendrick Lamar and Drake was one of the most intense in modern rap history. Tensions between them had simmered since Kendrick's verse on "Control" (2013), where he called out Drake among others. However, the battle escalated in 2024 with Kendrick dropping "Euphoria" and "6:16 in LA", taking direct shots at Drake's credibility. Drake responded with "Family Matters", but Kendrick sealed his victory with "Not Like Us", a West Coast anthem mocking Drake's persona. The song became a cultural phenomenon, played in clubs, sports arenas, and social gatherings, solidifying Kendrick's dominance climaxing with the songs being featured in the Super Bowl halftime show.

The evolution of rap battles from local street competitions to global events underscores their enduring influence on hip-hop's artistic and commercial landscape. These battles are a proving ground for authenticity, creativity, and dominance, ensuring that competitive lyricism remains a defining feature of hip-hop culture. Whether fought with subliminal shots or explosive diss tracks, rap battles continue to push the boundaries of the genre, shaping both public perception and industry power dynamics.

Mr. Kershner's talk elicited robust applause, followed by questions ranging from the mechanics of hip-hop to the deeply philosophical. Dr. Morrison-Shetlar asked whether hip-hop artists are using music that already exists ("sampling") or are they producing it themselves. Kershner responded that in the early days, artists were using sampling, but as the art form has evolved, most of the music is originally produced by the artist, though some sampling is still used. He said that hip-hop has always been a collage art form, pulling from a variety of sources. Gillette asked whether the early "battles" were extemporaneous or prepared. Kershner said that it depended in part on the MC. Some are known for their uncanny ability to compose extemporaneously, and to prove that that is what is happening, they will reference things in the room. He cited Eminem as an artist known for this ability. Others will prep works already in their repertoire. Gillette then asked whether feuds, or "battles," are always on a personal level, or are they also sometimes based on political or other divisions. Kershner responded that battles are all different and evolve over time, but audiences are attracted by the personal clashes and the drama. He said that there are regional conflicts but most conflict is based on the personal. Ms. Hall interjected that some rap is very territorial (Bronx or not, East Coast versus West Coast) but much of it is about who is more authentic, who has the right to dominate the genre. She said that sometimes a battle might begin about territory but evolve into personal attacks. Kershner added that not all of hip-hop is a battle, that it might be about other subjects. Dr. Edwards asked about women in hip-hop, and whether they gain a place by battling with men or separately battling with each other. Kershner recalled a major battle between two women performers in the early 1980s but admitted that hip-hop is primarily male. He laughed and noted that women tend to be more collaborative. Dr. Tiller noted that hip-hop seems to be based primarily in urban areas and asked whether it is found in rural areas. Kershner said that while it is primarily urban, there are artists in smaller communities. He noted that hip-hop is about authenticity, so an artist from a rural setting should not try to pretend that he is from an urban environment. He noted that we have MCs in Lynchburg. Ms. Delzingaro noted that much of hip-hop is about violence and misogyny and wondered if, since authenticity is a major theme, the recording artists are "unpleasant people." She noted that the violence and misogyny often makes it difficult to hear the lyricism. Kershner said that the form is complex and wide-reaching and some of his favorite artists are socially and politically conscious. He said that there is a core of hip-hop that is not about violence and misogyny, citing different sub-genres such as the Wu-Tang Clan. He said he tries to discern the intent. Rev. Roberts asked how old Kershner was when he developed an interest in hip-hop. Kershner said he was probably in elementary school, at a time when he didn't fit in and found hip-hop to be empowering. In college in Philadelphia he had the opportunity to attend cypher events that also fueled his interest.

Ms. Marion reminded members that the next meeting will be on March 20, when Walker Sydnor will present his first Sphinx paper, entitled "How the Pie is Sliced." The meeting was adjourned at 9:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
James W. Wright

SPHEX Club
Minutes of the 1511th Meeting
March 20, 2025

President Nancy Marion called the 1,511th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on March 20, 2025. We met in Room 217 of Schewel Hall on the University of Lynchburg campus.

Active members present were: Blackman, Blair, Coleman, Cook, Cyphert, Dawson, Delaney, Delzingaro, Frantz, Gillette, Hansen, Lewis, Marion, McDonald, Payne, Roberts, Sanders, Schewel, Sigler, Smith, Stinnett, Sydnor, Tiller, West, and Wodicka.

Introduction of New Members

Ms. Marion began the meeting by welcoming Dr. Price Blair and Dr. James Coleman to the club. Each was given a copy of James Elson's history of the club.

Guests for the Evening

Mr. Sydnor introduced his guests, which included his wife Sallie, daughter Brantley and her fiancée Brian Rainsford, his sister Betty Blevins, Dr. Tom Nygaard, Dr. Danielle Lewis (wife of member Chris Lewis), Barb Schewel, Patty West, and Michael Maxwell—a friend of Travis McDonald visiting from Florida.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the March 6 meeting were approved by acclamation. There were no objections.

Reports

Membership Committee: No report.

Nominating Committee: No report.

Program Committee: Mr. Hansen reminded members that the annual dinner will take place at 6 p.m. on April 30 in the West Room of the Drysdale Student Center. His committee discussed various ways that the club might subsidize the true cost of \$55 per person and recommends that we charge club members \$20 and guests \$35. Assuming that 70 people attend, the club treasury would be subsidizing about fifty percent of the cost. It was moved by Smith and seconded by Stinnett that Mr. Hansen's proposal be accepted. Treasurer Schewel said that the club could cover the cost. The motion carried unanimously. Mr. Hansen said that we have to give a final head count to the University's catering service by April 15 and urged members to bring their checks to the next meeting.

Ad hoc Archives Committee:

Ms. Marion reported that she, Gillette, and Delaney met as instructed. They researched standards that archivists use for handling papers of persons deceased, and based primarily on Mr. Delaney's discussion with a prior archivist, recommend that going forward, the club post online at the end of the SpheX year papers submitted that year unless a member chooses to opt out or provide a redacted version. The committee recommends that we use a standard 75-year hold for old papers, meaning that this year we will post online all papers written before 1950. Any current or emeritus

members may have their past papers posted online by opting in. All papers of any date can be viewed at the Jones Memorial Library by Sphex Club members. Members wishing to have digital access to the entire Sphex archives or to any paper not posted online may request access from the club secretary.

Discussion followed. Mr. Payne asked whether a list of papers that fall within the 75-year hold would be available online. Ms. Marion responded that all Sphex papers in the Jones Library archive are listed online, along with a 100-word summary. Dr. Frantz asked for clarification that members would have access to all papers electronically. Ms. Marion affirmed that that was the case. Dr. Gillette said that the committee discussed creation of a club website that would be password protected, or just making them available upon request to the secretary. Dr. Frantz observed that paper titles will not be of much use, so it is important to be able to access the summaries posted online. A motion to approve this plan was made and seconded. It carried with one dissenting vote.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Marion recognized Mr. Schewel, who offered the following report:

Let's get some business out of the way first. Since the last meeting I attended I've done some traveling, first to an island in the Grenadines in the Lesser Antilles and back, and then last week to Memphis, TN for three days and from there to Scottsdale, AZ, returning yesterday. After calculating the number of miles I covered, I realized the total, 5,003.09, was, remarkably, the same as the amount of dollars in our treasury (unless someone spent some while I was gone). On October 7, 2004, I delivered my first Sphex Club paper. The title was "The King is Dead; Long Live the King." The subject was Elvis Presley. Focusing not on his life or his music but rather on his enduring legacy as a cultural icon, I explored why his fame and popularity are as vibrant and widespread as they were at his death almost fifty years ago.

Among the reasons for this phenomenon is Elvis's decision to remain in Memphis living with his family in the home he purchased in 1957, Graceland. According to one source, Graceland gave "his stardom a physical anchor in the real world." It linked Elvis to a specific spot on the map in a way no other star ever was or has been since, "thus transforming his home into a publicly visible site of pilgrimage and congregation."

Last week I went to Memphis not for the purpose of visiting Graceland, but since I was there and had the time, I took the opportunity to see what the place was all about.

The two-hour tour is well worth the \$84 price of admission. Your audio guide conducts you through the mansion and adjacent property which includes a smokehouse, stables, racquetball court, office, the family burial site, and car and costume museums while educating you on Elvis's career, family history, attachment to Graceland, and cultural impact.

One amazing feature of the museum is an app that enables you to produce your own version of your favorite Elvis song. How could I pass this up, even though I can't sing a note. So here it is: "Jailhouse Rock" reimaged as "The Sphex Club Rock" and performed by the one and only Steve Freeman.

"The Sphex Club Rock" (to the tune of "Jailhouse Rock")

Madame Pres threw a party in old Schewel Hall.
An oldies band was there and they began to bawl.
The band was jumpin' and the Club began to swing.
You should have heard those jacked up eggheads sing.
S-P-H-E-X, let's rock.
Everybody round the whole school block
Was dancin' to the Sphex Club Rock.

Judge John Cook crooned like he was runnin' a trial.
Cham Light and some Quakers broke out in a smile.
Sue Ott and George Dawson sung out of their minds;
It was hard to know which was the greatest of all time.
For science, philosophy, let's rock.
Everybody round the whole school block
Was dancin' to the Sphex Club Rock.

Julie Doyle sung too fast for the recorder.
Alison MS tried to bring the meeting to order.
Deputy Reid was all about fixin' public spaces,
And Slick Willy Hansen showed up with seven aces.
For education, history, let's rock.
Everybody round the whole school block
Was dancin' to the Sphex Club Rock.

Where was Dr. Blackman cause he missed the musicale?
He was home sick in bed attacked by alpha gal.
Christina was showin' all the moves of Roma
While poor Ms. Katie looked punch drunk in a coma.
For the X in Sphex, let's rock.
Everybody round the whole school block
Was dancin' to the Sphex Club Rock.

The preacher Dennis Roberts was quite the rage
Until the rapper Geoff Kershner hip hopped on stage.
So that's the whole crew. Was no one left to play fool?
When up jumped Schewel to give the report he thought cool.
S-P-H-E-X, let's rock.
Everybody round the whole school block
Was dancin' to the Sphex Club Rock.

Mr. Steve Freeman accompanied himself on guitar. The lyrics were written by Mr. Schewel. This was received with robust applause and some hoots and hollers of affirmation.

Regrets

Regrets were extended to the speaker by: Doyle, Edwards, Kershner, Morrison-Shetlar, Ott, Rowland, Salmon, and Wright.

Introduction of Speaker

President Marion introduced Walker Sydnor. Mr. Sydnor was born in Richmond but raised in Lynchburg, where he graduated from E.C. Glass High School. He is a graduate of Hampden-Sydney College. He was employed by two national insurance companies, first in Dallas and then in Roanoke. He joined Scott Insurance in 1976 and rose to become president in 1986 and served in that capacity until 2014, when he retired. He has been active in the community, notably serving as president of the Lynchburg College and Centra Health boards. He is married to Sallie. They have three children and, at present, two grandchildren.

Summary of Paper

This paper examines wealth inequality in America, its historical context, and its potential consequences on democracy. The paper begins with a personal anecdote about realizing the extent of wealth disparity, followed by a quote from President Joe Biden's farewell speech warning of an emerging oligarchy threatening American democracy. The paper argues that America is experiencing a dangerous concentration of wealth and power among a small elite, drawing parallels to oligarchies in totalitarian states.

The discussion turns to the Trump administration's close relationships with tech billionaires, highlighting their significant political influence. The paper notes that during Trump's inauguration, several major tech figures, including Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, and Mark Zuckerberg, were seated in front of elected officials. This, coupled with reports of wealthy individuals paying millions for access to Trump, raises concerns about a government increasingly influenced by extreme wealth. Additionally, Trump's controversial executive order allowing wealthy immigrants to purchase citizenship is cited as another example of transactional politics benefiting the elite.

The historical perspective on wealth accumulation follows, tracing its roots from medieval feudal landholdings to the rise of commerce and finance. The paper explores how societies have historically dealt with extreme wealth, such as ancient Athens imposing civic responsibilities on the wealthy and early 20th-century American tycoons stepping in to stabilize financial crises. However, with the establishment of the Federal Reserve, this burden was shifted away from private wealth.

A key focus of the paper is the impact of tax policy on wealth inequality. It critiques the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which disproportionately benefited the top 1% of earners while significantly increasing the national debt. The paper warns that Trump's plan to extend these cuts would further exacerbate inequality and necessitate deep cuts to essential programs like Medicaid, Social Security, and veterans' benefits. The rise of tech billionaires and their involvement in politics—particularly Elon Musk's influence within the Trump administration—is highlighted as a concerning shift toward oligarchic control. The paper also discusses the role of AI and social media, emphasizing that tech billionaires now control a majority of online information, often without fact-checking, which poses a threat to democracy.

The final section pivots to solutions, particularly employee ownership as a method to redistribute wealth more fairly. The paper shares experiences with Scott Insurance's Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP), emphasizing its benefits in wealth distribution, company performance,

and employee motivation. It argues that while ESOPs will not eliminate oligarchs, they can help mitigate wealth inequality by providing employees with financial stakes in their companies. The paper concludes by asking whether America's growing wealth imbalance threatens its democratic institutions. It cites the extreme wealth concentration in Russia as a cautionary tale, warning that entrenched oligarchs become difficult to dislodge. Ultimately, the paper presents the issue as a fundamental question for America's future: Can democracy survive increasing wealth inequality, or will the nation succumb to oligarchic rule?

Discussion of Paper

The speaker then opened the floor for questions. Dr. Tiller asked why, if employee-owned companies (employee stock ownership plans—ESOPs) are a win-win for everyone, everyone is not doing it. Mr. Sydnor responded that each situation is different but it ultimately comes down to one's philosophy about business and its purpose.

Dr. Gillette repeated the speaker's assertion that income inequality in the U.S. is greater than it has been in fifty years, and noted that there was anti-democratic sentiment among our founding fathers, who distrusted the "rabble." He asked Mr. Sydnor whether he had any information about income inequality greater than fifty years ago, and then asked whether the current level of inequality is close to what existed at the time of the nation's founding. Mr. Sydnor framed his answer in terms of ESOPs, noting that employees vote through a single trustee representative on the board. How that trustee is viewed within the board varies from company to company. Gillette observed that ESOPs are a profit-sharing plan and the workers do not actually control the means of production.

Ms. Marion asked how the employee representative trustee is selected. Sydnor responded that the board selects that individual, but he emphasized that there is a complicated weighing of rights and responsibilities that depends on the integrity of management and the board.

Mr. Dawson asked how income inequality in the U.S. compared with Europe. Mr. Sydnor said that he has not investigated that comparison, but he agreed with Mr. Dawson's thought that inequality is greater in the U.S. than in Europe.

Rev. Roberts noted that measures of the happiness index are much higher in the Scandinavian countries, which provide a robust social safety net and have less income inequality.

Mr. Payne mentioned the marked income inequality that characterized the Gilded Age and the great power that industrialists of the era wielded in government, and drew a parallel to our current situation. He recalled the nonviolent adjustments of the early twentieth century and speculated we are currently going through another cycle. Mr. Sydnor said that one difference is that in the Gilded Age industry required many workers, but now technology is generating massive wealth with relatively few workers. He questioned how wealth can be redistributed and noted that it might involve sending checks to those below certain income thresholds.

Mr. Schewel spoke in favor of defined benefit plans run by companies as a retirement plan for employees. He said that regulations that govern the operation of such plans have become so onerous that most have ceased to exist in favor of 401K plans.

Mr. Dawson agreed that defined benefit plans were a benefit to employees and relieved them of having to make investment decisions. Dr. Frantz opined that the income inequality problem cannot be solved by changing our tax structure. Mr. Sydnor disagreed, citing the 2017 tax act, which favored the ultra-rich. Dr. Frantz said that the country makes it far too easy to pass enormous wealth from one generation to the next.

Ms. Cyphert asked what the country will do about our ballooning debt, now 120 percent of GDP.

Mr. Sydnor responded that the answer is far above his pay grade, and that, actually, no one has a cogent answer to that question.

New Business

Ms. Marion then introduced an item of new business: shall the club collect dues this year? Mr. Schewel opined that the treasury is healthy and dues can be waived. It was moved and seconded that dues be waived. The motion carried.

Closing

Ms. Marion reminded members of the final meeting of the year, which will take place on April 3. Dr. Nikki Sanders will present her first Sphex paper, titled “Hugs Not Bullets: a Tangled Web.” The meeting was adjourned at 9 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James W. Wright
Secretary

SPHEX Club
Minutes of the 1512th meeting
April 3, 2025

President Nancy Marion called the 1,512th meeting of the SPHEX Club of Lynchburg to order at 7:30 p.m. on April 3, 2025. We met in Room 217 of Schewel Hall on the University of Lynchburg campus.

Active members present were: Blackman, Blair, Bradford, Coleman, Cyphert, Dawson, Doyle, Frantz, Gillette, Hansen, Lewis, Marion, McDonald, Payne, Sanders, Schewel, Sigler, Smith, Sydnor, Tiller, and Wodicka.

Minutes: The minutes of the March 20 meeting have not been written and will be sent to members by mid-April.

Guests for the evening: Dr. Sanders had no guests.

Reports

Nominating Committee: Dr. Salmon was not present. The election of officers was postponed to the annual dinner meeting.

Program Committee: Mr. Hansen reminded members that the annual dinner will take place at 6 p.m. on April 30. The University of Lynchburg will host the gathering in the West Room. He asked that members who have not yet paid do so by April 15 so we will have an accurate head count to give the university catering service.

Treasurer: Ms. Marion recognized treasurer Marc Schewel, who provided the following report:

Many of you may remember—or have decided to forget—the report I gave several weeks ago in which I disclosed a letter from President Donald Trump directing our Club to cease operations, a calamity which was averted thanks to some adroit negotiations.

I guess some folks in the Trump Administration subscribe to the theory that “If you can’t beat them, join them,” since, remarkably, the Club this week received a letter from none other than DOGE Director Elon Musk. Apparently, Mr. Musk has decided that the Sphex Club will be an asset to his financial empire and is tendering an offer to buy the Club, for cash, fortunately, since his Tesla stock is currently in a tailspin.

I was as flummoxed by this letter as I am sure all of you are, so I took it upon myself to contact Mr. Musk to find out just what it was about our illustrious Club that piqued his interest.

“Marc,” he said, “you might think I took offense at the disparaging remarks made about me at your last meeting. But rest assured, I’ve been called a lot worse than a heartless billionaire—like heartless trillionaire and heartless quadrillionaire. Some have stooped so low as to call me a measly millionaire, but even that insult doesn’t really bother me. As Mr. Sydnor aptly observed, ‘America is still the land of opportunity, where anyone can get rich.’ Just ask some of our past and current political leaders, who entered the field with very little and retired, or will retire as, well, millionaires.

“And if you think ‘oligarch’ is a slur, how would you like it if people referred to you as ‘Elongated Muskrat’ (on my own website, no less) and then tweeted apologies to the muskrats of the world for demeaning them? I’ve been tagged ‘Space Karen’ for complaining about the effectiveness of covid tests. I’ve been called a fascist. I’ve been nicknamed ‘Rocket Musk,’ the ‘Musketeer,’ and, because of my efforts to downsize the bureaucracy, the ‘Elonator’ (i.e., Elon the terminator). But I just smile and keep on firing.

“Across the United States and Europe, activists are boycotting and vandalizing Tesla dealerships. Do they understand that I own only twenty percent of the company stock, with much of the rest residing in their families’ and friends’ personal investment or retirement accounts? Whatever happened to all the love I used to get for developing a viable alternative to fossil fuels? I’ve never done anything harmful; I’ve always done productive things.

“I’ve carefully studied your Club and its membership. I don’t want to embarrass anyone by naming names but there just may be a few on your roster who might be considered oligarchs, at least on a local level. Having watched a recent City Council meeting on television, I suggest your local government might benefit by restoring them to power. I know of at least one club member who drives a Tesla, which I certainly appreciate, considering the protests I mentioned.

“Beyond all that, I admire your Club’s longevity and the intellectual integrity and curiosity it embodies. When I consummate this purchase, I intend to expand your concept dramatically and roll out chapters nationwide. There will be a lot of former government employees looking for a worthwhile avocation, and none could be a better use of their free time than your Club.

“Also, I love your name, Sphex. Actually, I’m trying to corner the market on all institutions whose names end in X.

“Of course, I would only do this if I thought I could make some money. When I audited your books, I discovered you had on hand a brilliant treasurer. Collecting a meager \$35 in dues per member two years ago, he kept the Club operating, funded an annual meeting, and accumulated a bank account of \$5,003.09. This is a model that when replicated several hundred times can be

extremely lucrative.

“Marc, the whole world is my pie, and the Sphex Club is a dollop of whipped cream on top. Please convey my offer of twice your treasury balance to the membership.”

Well, I have, tonight. But don’t worry, I’ve already turned him down. This Club is too unique and special to be duplicated, and no amount of money can change that. So, I had to tell Mr. Musk, “Sorry, Elon, but no matter how you slice the pie, our Club is not for sale at any price.” He took it gracefully. “I understand,” he said. “Sometimes that’s just the way the cookie crumbles.”

Old Business

By-laws change regarding the digital archives: President Marion asked Dr. Gillette to present the proposed change to the by-laws to incorporate the policy adopted by the membership at the March 20 meeting. This policy sets forth guidelines governing the posting of Sphex papers online. Since the vote at the last meeting, Dr. Gillette has proposed an amendment to clarify expectations of speakers, which include a short bio provided prior to the presentation of the paper, a brief summary of the paper, and a hard copy of the paper, provided to the secretary after the presentation.

There was discussion regarding whether the paper should be provided as a hard copy or a digital file (the secretary would appreciate both but will accept either), whether images used from the internet without expressed permission present a problem (this has been discussed before and it has been determined that fair use laws governing libraries generally permit this practice), whether we should continue to maintain both paper and digital archives (this was not decided), and how image files that accompany the paper should be handled (this has generally been left to the secretary, who decides on the proper format in consultation with the presenter).

Mr. Dawson moved that the amended version of the by-laws change be adopted. The motion was seconded and was approved unanimously. The wording of the new addition to the by-laws is as follows (the new text is in bold type):

7. Sphex members presenting papers at the club’s regular meetings are expected to furnish the Secretary a short autobiography **and a brief abstract of the paper** before the meeting and a copy of his/her paper at its conclusion. **A hard copy of all papers presented to the Secretary shall be housed at the Jones Memorial Library where they will be made available to the public. Commencing with all papers presented in the 2025-2026 season, papers presented to the secretary will also be added to an online collection available for internet searches and will be accessible to the public in that manner. Individuals who do not wish for their papers to be published in this manner may communicate their preference to the Secretary, who will then include only the title and abstract of the paper in the online**

collection. Members may also provide an alternate, redacted copy of their paper for electronic publication. SPHEX papers delivered prior to the 2025-2026 season will be added to the online collection if either a) permission has been granted by the author, or b) a period of 75 years has elapsed since the paper was originally presented to the SPHEX club.

New Business

Visit to the region by Clay Jenkinson: Mr. McDonald announced that noted Jefferson scholar Clay Jenkinson will be in Lynchburg on May 6. He reminded members that Mr. Jenkinson has produced an NPR program, *The Thomas Jefferson Hour*, for over 20 years. He holds professorships at several universities and has written three books on the Lewis & Clark expedition. The occasion of his visit is a driving tour of the expedition, with podcasts planned along the way. Mr. McDonald has convinced Mr. Jenkinson to begin the journey at Poplar Forest rather than at Monticello. He will provide details to the secretary, who will send a reminder to members.

Death of Brian Jablonski: Dr. Gillette informed members that Brian Jablonski, husband of member Allison Jablonski, died earlier today. Brian had a history of glioblastoma. Julie Doyle agreed to write a note of condolence on behalf of the club.

Regrets were extended to the speaker by: Cook, Delaney, Edwards, Jablonski, Morrison-Shetlar, Ott, Rowland, Roberts, Stinnett, and Wright.

Introduction of speaker:

President Marion introduced Dr. Nichole Sanders, whose paper was titled “Hugs Not Bullets: a Tangled Web.” Nikki Sanders has been a professor of history at the University of Lynchburg for over twenty years, where she teaches courses on Latin American history. Her research has centered on Mexico—exploring the ties between gender, sexuality, political legitimacy, and economic development. Her first book, *Gender and Welfare in Mexico: The Consolidation of a Postrevolutionary State*, was published by Penn State University Press, and she is currently working on a book about gender, consumption, and motherhood in Cold War Mexico. She has also served as an expert witness for asylum cases pending in U.S. immigration courts. Nikki holds a B.A. in History from the University of Texas at Austin, and a Ph.D. in History from the University of California, Irvine. Locally, she serves on the boards of Historic Sandusky and the Community Access Network, and is the former chair of the Lynchburg Democratic Committee.

Summary of paper:

Dr. Sanders began her paper by reading from a NY Times op-ed piece written in 2015 that decried American hypocrisy regarding the illicit drug trade. It made the point that while we as a nation fight the drug trade, some 20 million of us buy and use illegal drugs. It states that drug

use is not a victimless crime, that it has resulted in over 185,000 deaths in Mexico over the preceding decade and has radically affected the safety and security of the Mexican population. It quoted estimates of the size of the drug trade: over \$150 billion spent each year in the U.S., more than the federal government spends on education. Dr. Sanders said that not much has changed in the ten years since the editorial was written. She went on to talk about drug trafficking and drug policy between the U.S. and Mexico. Her perspective comes from having Mexico and a chief academic focus and having lived in that country. She warned her audience that the topic is large and complicated that she would only be able to address limited aspects. She reviewed the history of the illicit drug trade from Mexico, beginning with Prohibition. This included the birth of the modern cartels in the early 1990s and the cooperation of Mexico's governing party, the PRI. The PRI ceded control to the National Action Party (PAN) in 2000. An escalation of anti-cartel government action ensued. she explained that the capture of leaders resulted in fights within cartels and between cartels for control and a larger part of the market. She then reviewed the current state of the drug trade with Mexico. She noted that it is both a drug-producing and a transit country. It is a main supplier of marijuana, methamphetamines and heroin. The cartels control 70 percent of the flow of drugs into the U.S. , including 90 percent of the cocaine. U.S. Republicans have argued that the drugs come in with migrants and that building a wall will stop migrants and thus most of the drug traffic, but Dr. Sanders argued that most of the drugs seized are coming through our ports, and 80% of those convicted of drug trafficking are U.S. citizens. She then reviewed the currently active cartels, the most important being the Sinaloa and the Cartel Jalisco Nueva Generacion (CJNG). The cartels control drug production sites, transportation routes inside Mexico, smuggling corridors into the U.S., large network hubs in major U.S. cities and other key locations. These cartels are engaged in a wide range of criminal activities, including extortion, human trafficking, arms trafficking, migrant smuggling, etc. The even control the avocado trade. She then reviewed the Mexican government response to the cartels. Recent presidents have operated on the kingpin strategy, which argues that removing the head person would cause the organization to collapse. It has been supported by the U.S. AS noted earlier in her paper, this strategy has resulted in an exacerbation of violence. When President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador took over in 2018 he instituted a policy called "hugs not bullets" which would focus on increasing regional security cooperation to reduce homicide rates. He sought to address some of the socioeconomic forces that have contributed to cartel growth, and he coupled that with an anti-corruption campaign. He has been accused of corruption and the homicide rate has increased. Dr. S anders then turned her attention to other factors that have fueled the violence in Mexico. She noted that following the expiration of our assault weapons ban in 2004, these military grade weapons have flooded the Mexican market. She briefly mentioned the controversial Operation Fast and Furious. She noted that violence is used for intimidation and is used routinely to intimidate politicians and journalists. She asked why this is such a huge problem in Mexico. Among the factors discussed were poverty, corruption within the Mexican government, and unreliability of the justice system. Last, she discussed possibly solutions, noting that this is an extremely complicated problem and there is no simple solution. Arguments that have been made include sending more money and weapons to the Mexican military and government, others argue for building a border wall, others for using military grade drones to assassinate cartel leaders, or to concentrate on the supply side by

destroying poppy crops. The problem is that these approaches have not worked. One of the reasons they have moved to fentanyl is that it does not have to be grown; it is produced in a lab. She said that government reform is needed. She said the real issue is one of supply and demand. There is a huge demand in this country and that needs to be addressed. She argued that the assault weapons ban should be restored. More financial disruptions would help; crack-downs on money laundering. She stressed that this is a very complex, difficult problem and she does not have the answers.

Discussion of paper:

At the completion of her paper, Dr. Sanders entertained questions. Dr. Gillette asked what effect, if any, the broadening legalization of cannabis in the U.S. has had on the drug trafficking problem, and whether there is any evidence that further legalization of drugs in this country would help to “dry up” the demand for illegal drugs. Dr. Sanders noted that with decriminalization of marijuana, the cartels have moved to fentanyl.

Dr. Tiller asked about the use of these drugs in Mexico. Dr. Sanders responded that drug use in Mexico has been low historically, but has increased in recent years, though it is still far below the levels seen in the U.S. Dr. Tiller asked what the cartels would do if demands in the U.S. dried up. She responded that they would look elsewhere, probably Africa, though any other market would be more difficult for them.

Ms. Marion asked the speaker to expand on the “hugs not bullets” policy. Dr. Sanders explained that this was the policy of the last Mexican president. It implied that the approach ought to be to provide more opportunity for citizens, such as a higher minimum wage and more jobs for young people, so there are alternatives to working for the cartels. She said this approach was successful in reducing the poverty rate but had no measurable effect on the drug trade.

Ms. Marion asked about the current president, Claudia Sheinbaum. Dr. Sanders said that she has a Ph.D. in environmental sciences. She must differentiate herself from the previous president, who had an outsized personality. She is more of a technocrat.

Dr. Wodicka asked about the strength of social institutions in cities, noting that when they are weak, lawlessness increases and in some cases gangs end up providing services that other institutions are not. He asked whether cartels gained strength because social institutions were weak or nonexistent, or did the opposite happen. Dr. Sanders noted that the Mexican government has dramatically cut back on social spending since the 1980s. Others argue that even if the government invested more in social services, it wouldn’t matter because rampant corruption would siphon off much of that money. Having said that, she said that the lack of a positive governmental presence in communities, particularly rural communities, contributes to the

problem.

Judge Cook asked what the U.S. can do to slow the flow of firearms into Mexico. She responded that an assault weapons ban would help. But the U.S. has its own issues that it needs to address. Mr. Dawson noted that it has been a long time since the U.S. has had a coherent policy to address economic and social issues in our hemisphere. He compared the U.S.–Mexican border to a semipermeable membrane. He said that we cannot achieve homeostasis in the U.S. when there is disorder all around us. We cannot have stability when our neighbors (he cited Haiti) are engulfed in poverty and violence. He said that we need to look at the issue from the other side.

Closing:

President Marion reminded members once again of the annual dinner on April 30 and urged them to send their checks (\$20 for members, \$35 for guests) to Mr. Marc Schewel (P.O. Box 6120, Lynchburg 24505) by April 15.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James W. Wright
Secretary

SPHEX Club
Minutes of the 1513th meeting
April 30, 2025

This was the annual dinner meeting and was held in the West Room of the Drysdale Student Center on the campus of the University of Lynchburg.

After a social hour from 6 to 7 pm, president Nancy Marion welcomed approximately 26 members and 37 guests. Secretary Wright was then called to the podium to read a brief history of the club. For the occasion, the secretary used a history written by former Sphex member, Dr. James Elson.

Ms. Marion then called a brief business meeting. Minutes of the March 30 and April 3 meetings were approved by acclamation. Chair of the nominating committee, Dr. Nina Salmon, was recognized. Dr. Salmon presented the committee's proposed slate of officers for the 2025 - 2026 Sphex year: Dr. Steve Smith, President; Ms. Christina Delzingaro, Vice President; James Wright, Secretary; and Marc Schewel, Treasurer. This slate was adopted by members present; there were no dissenting votes. Ms. Marion then turned the meeting over to Dr. Smith.

Dr. Smith recognized the program committee (Billy Hansen, Chair; Geoff Kershner, and Ted Delaney) for its efforts to arrange this dinner meeting. He then recognized the other standing committees: Membership (Walker Sydnor, Chair, and Reid Wodicka, Julie Doyle and Marc Schewel) and Nominating (Nina Salmon, Chair, and Reid Wodicka and Katie Cyphert).

After recognizing the committees, Dr. Smith recognized the outgoing officers, reviewing briefly the duties of each office. He then invited guests to the buffet.

Following dinner, President Smith called upon his old friend and mentor, Dr. Julius Sigler, to introduce the speaker. Dr. Sigler first met Mr. John M. Cardwell when they were first year undergraduates at Lynchburg College. Both were physics majors and they were later roommates. After reflecting on their life-long friendship, Dr. Sigler recounted the particulars of Mr. Cardwell's life. He is a graduate of Woodrow Wilson High School in Norfolk in 1959 and Lynchburg College in 1963. He attended Wake Forest University 1963 to 64 and afterward taught physics and math at the high school level for two years before joining the CIA. His career with the CIA has focused on the technical aspects of reconnaissance, including optical imaging, radar, microwave, acoustic, seismic, chemical and biologic sensors. He was promoted to Senior Intelligence Service rank in 1982 and served as the senior technical officer in Europe 1997 - 2001, where he was responsible for clandestine technical operations in Europe, Africa, the Middle East and the former Soviet republics. During his 36-year career he visited 43 countries.

His work has been recognized by numerous citations, including the CIA's Distinguished Career Intelligence Medal in 2001. He retired in 2002.

Mr. Cardwell began by saying that he applied to the CIA "as a joke," but received in response a 25-page application packet. He completed that and was hired. The bulk of his talk pertained to the Azorian Project, which dominated his work between 1969 and 1977. The Project's aim was to recover from the stormy North Pacific a soviet submarine that was lost in early 1968. The sub carried three nuclear warheads. The Soviets were unable to locate the wreckage but the Americans were able to do so. They then hatched an elaborate plan to recover the sub, using as a cover an ocean mining effort by Howard Hughes. Mr. Cardwell discussed many of the technical aspects of the plan, including the building of an enormous, specially-designed recovery ship, and helped his audience understand and appreciate the myriad technical challenges that had to be overcome to raise a large section of the submarine from a tremendous depth. We learned that the project was partially successful, in that a portion of the submarine was recovered. Mr. Cardwell recommended the book "The CIA's Greatest Covert Operation" by David H. Sharp and the DVD "Azorian: The Raising of the K-129" as reputable sources of additional information.

Following his presentation, Mr. Cardwell placed a number of photos, citations, awards and other memorabilia on a table for members to inspect. He took about ten questions from the audience, most pertaining to the technicalities of the project. Several he was unable to answer because the information is still sensitive or classified.

Dr. Smith adjourned the meeting at 9:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
James W. Wright
Secretary



Correspondence

2024–2025

JAMES W. WRIGHT
412 MILL LANE ROAD
LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA 24503

September 13, 2024

Mr. Wynter Benda
900 Church Street
Lynchburg, VA 24504

Re: Sphex Club Attendance

Dear Wynter:

As secretary of the Sphex Club, I am obliged to notify members whose attendance at meetings during the year just past was less than fifty percent. I do not have an attendance record for the annual dinner meeting in April, but my records show that you were not present at any of the twelve regular meetings.

The club by-laws require that members attend at least half of the meetings. Those who fail to meet this minimum requirement are put on probation the following year and may be expelled if they fail to meet the requirement for a second year.

All of the Sphex members value your membership and the interests and experiences that you bring to the club and we hope that the club can provide you the opportunity to get to know a variety of Lynchburg citizens in a relaxed, convivial atmosphere. We understand, though, that your professional and family obligations might make continued membership difficult or impossible.

Please let me know if you intend to remain a member or think it best to withdraw. I can be reached at jimrite@mac.com.

Sincerely,

James W. Wright
Secretary

From: Benda, Wynter Wynter.Benda@lynchburgva.gov 
Subject: Sphex Club Attendance
Date: September 25, 2024 at 10:01
To: James W. Wright jimrite@mac.com
Cc: Braun, Metchi metchi.braun@lynchburgva.gov

WB

Jim:

I am in receipt of your letter about my lack of attendance at the Sphex Club.

First off, super kind to be invited to participate with such a good group of people, and as such, thank you and your peers for voting me to become a member.

Next, you're correct, during my Sphex Club tenure, my attendance has not been what it needs to be per your by laws as a mix of personal and professional responsibilities have come first and kept me busy.

In the immediate term, unfortunately, I do not foresee my being able to give the Sphex Club the attention that it requires. With that said, I do hope that when and if the timing is better for me, the Sphex Club would consider my lacing 'em up and joining the team again – all the best!



Wynter C. Benda

CITY MANAGER

434.455.3990
lynchburgva.gov

Received from Dr. Chris Lewis via Email
May 7, 2025

Steve, Walker, Nina and Jim,

It is with significant sadness that I tender my resignation as a member of the SPHEX organization. As at least one of you know, Danielle and I will be relocating to Fredericksburg, as I have accepted a job at the Mary Washington Hospital system. I am very honored to have been able to participate with such a wonderful organization with deep roots in Lynchburg history, even if only for a short time. I know that you played a significant role in bringing me into the group, Walker, and for that I am very thankful. For better or worse, I will never know the thrill and anxiety associated with presenting a paper in front of such an illustrious crowd, but have greatly enjoyed being able to be part of the meetings over the last season.

Please relay my regrets to other members if that is appropriate - I am not sure what the proper protocol is. Thank you also for your leadership in making such an excellent club possible.

Sincerely,
Chris



May 8, 2025

Dear Active or Emeritus Sphex Club Member:

Now that all Sphex papers in our archives have been digitized and prepared for uploading to the Jones Memorial Library web site, the club has addressed the question of which papers should be uploaded and thereby made available to the public through the JML site. At its April 3 meeting, the following changes were made to the club's by-laws (changes in bold type):

7. Sphex members presenting papers at the club's regular meetings are expected to furnish the Secretary a short autobiography **and a brief abstract of the paper** before the meeting and a copy of his/her paper at its conclusion. **A hard copy of all papers presented to the Secretary shall be housed at the Jones Memorial Library where they will be made available to the public. Commencing with all papers presented in the 2025-2026 season, papers presented to the secretary will also be added to an online collection available for internet searches and will be accessible to the public in that manner. Individuals who do not wish for their papers to be published in this manner may communicate their preference to the Secretary, who will then include only the title and abstract of the paper in the online collection. Members may also provide an alternate, redacted copy of their paper for electronic publication. SPHEX papers delivered prior to the 2025-2026 season will be added to the online collection if either a) permission has been granted by the author, or b) a period of 75 years has elapsed since the paper was originally presented to the SPHEX club.**

The purpose of this letter is to ascertain your wishes regarding the posting of your papers online. As stated above, you may choose to allow the club to post your papers on the Jones Memorial Library web site, or decline to allow them to be posted, or you may elect to post them with redactions. Unless I receive instructions from you, your paper(s) will not be uploaded now but will be eligible for uploading in the year 2100 or thereafter.

Please complete the enclosed form and return it to me at your earliest convenience. Thank you.

Sincerely,

James W. Wright
Secretary



To the Secretary of the Sphex Club:

I hereby express my wishes regarding the online availability of the following papers which I have delivered to the Sphex Club:

1/19/12	The Lost Boys
10/30/14	Softly, with Feelings: The Life of Joe Wilder

It is my wish that

- ☐ All of the above listed papers be made available electronically through the Jones Memorial Library web site.
- ☐ None of the above papers be made available through the Jones Memorial Library website
- ☐ Some or all of the above listed papers be made available in redacted form through the Jones Memorial Library website. The details of these arrangements will be discussed with the club secretary.

(Your signature)

Wilder

(Print Last Name)

(Date)

On Jun 5, 2025, at 20:53, Reid Wodicka <rwodicka@gmail.com> wrote:

Good evening Jim,

Sorry to be slow in responding to the request for permission to publish my papers. I was waiting for some news that I can now share.

I have accepted a job in Chesterfield County as the chief operating officer for the school system, so Elizabeth and I are moving to Richmond. As a result, I think it's best to resign my membership in SPHEX since I'll be out of town during our meetings moving forward, though we intend to continue to be a part of the Lynchburg community on weekends and holidays.

This is very bittersweet for us because we love Lynchburg dearly, but this is a great career opportunity. Plus, given the condition of the city council at this point, I'm sure you can imagine our need to find a more stable situation as we get married and start our family.

I have sincerely enjoyed my time in SPHEX. I have learned a great deal and have appreciated the friendships I've gained as a result of my membership. I hope that if we ever return to Lynchburg that I might be considered for membership again.

Hope all is well, Jim.

Reid

Reid A. Wodicka

434-221-8039