

Astronomer who tried to save Pluto looks farther

AP Weekly Features

Too bad about Pluto — the planet, not the Disney dog — and that humiliating descent to mere “dwarf planet” status in our solar system.

Don't blame Harvard University's Owen Gingerich. He led the International Astronomical Union panel on how to define a planet, which wanted to keep tiny Pluto among 12 planets on an expanded official list. Instead, the world's astronomers voted down Pluto and recognized only eight full-fledged planets.

When not politicking about planets, Gingerich is the sort to ponder more cosmic questions. For instance: Why do any planets exist at all? Or self-aware organisms such as humans, given the spectacular odds against this? And: Is the biblical God involved? He wonders at scientific specifics:

—The number of grains of sand on all of Earth's beaches is vastly exceeded by the number of stars in the universe. But the total of stars is vastly exceeded by the unimaginable connections within any human brain (100 billion neurons, each linked with 10,000 other neurons).

—All the gold ever mined throughout human history would fit into a cube measuring only 18 yards per side having the same weight as the steel that American mills produce every four hours.

Gingerich's book on all this, “God's Universe” (Harvard University Press), is, like Pluto, relatively small. Yet it's big in ambition. The author is both a believing Christian and a world-class scientist, now retired as a Harvard historian of science and senior astronomer with the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory.

It appears just after “The Language of God” (Free Press), a best-seller in which faith gets similar defense from another Christian and distinguished biologist, Francis Collins, director of the international Human Genome Project.

Both Gingerich and Collins believe in God as the creator of the universe, yet neither advocates the much-debated “intelligent design” movement.

This theory holds that earthly species are too complex to have occurred without guidance from some intelligent power (for instance, God).

That's religion, not science, Gingerich objects, although as a believer he's personally impressed with divine intelligence as he surveys the astonishing structures of the cosmos.

He also thinks Darwin's theory of evolution has more potential for explanation than devotees of intelligent design do.

Gingerich says the universe and life on Earth make more sense if the divine will designed things in a purposeful way. But this “can be

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Owen Gingerich, Harvard University

neither denied nor proved by scientific means,” any more than science explains realities such as love or beauty.

Scientists, whether believers or atheists, use the same methods in the laboratory. “Science cannot rule out miracles” but miracles aren't part of scientific explanations, he says. The fact that scientists don't refer to God “does not mean that the universe is actually godless, just that science within its own framework has no other way of working.”

He complains that some fellow scientists overreach — and build support for intelligent design — when they turn evolution into an argument for atheism. That's ideology, not science, he maintains, and should be resisted for the same reason that intelligent-design thought doesn't belong in science classes.

Summary: “I am personally persuaded that a superintelligent Creator exists beyond and within the cosmos” and that “encouraging the existence of self-conscious life is part of the Creator's design and purpose.”

“Somehow, the universe seems rigged.”

Further, there's “no contradiction between holding a staunch belief in supernatural design and working as a creative scientist.” To him, the fact that the universe is coherent enough to be studied shows it has purpose, “though probably it takes the eyes of faith to accept that idea.”

Note: Another Harvard retiree, biologist E.O. Wilson, simultaneously issued “The Creation: A Meeting of Science and Religion” (Norton). The “meeting” doesn't mean this boyhood Southern Baptist has forsaken his militant secular humanism. Rather, he asks believers to ally with skeptics to preserve the planet and its species.

On the Net:

Gingerich publicity: <http://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog/GINGOD.html>

Kansas seat belt usage improving

More Kansans are buckling up, according to survey results announced by the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT). The 2006 survey shows that 73 percent of Kansans are using their seat belts, up 4 percent from 69 percent in 2005.

“While it's encouraging to see this increase, as a state we still have a lot of room for improvement,” said KDOT Secretary of Transportation Deb Miller. “The statistics are clear: the number one way to reduce fatalities and injuries on our roadways is through proper seat belt use.”

In 2005, Kansas ranked 43rd in the nation in seat belt use.

“Kansas' low seatbelt usage can be partially attributed to not having a primary seat belt law which means that drivers cannot be pulled over for not wearing a seat belt,” said Col. William Seck, Superintendent, Kansas Highway Patrol.

“If they are pulled over for another infraction and are not wear-

ing a seat belt, they can be ticketed,” added Seck. “States with a primary seat belt law show higher seat belt usage rates and lower fatality rates. It's clear, seat belts save lives.”

Seat belt usage among children also improved somewhat:

Age 0-4; 83 percent, up from 81 percent

Age 5-9; 53 percent, up from 49 percent

Age 10-14, 49 percent, up from 48 percent.

“We owe it to our children and ourselves to take that simple step of buckling up. It could mean the difference between life and death,” said Secretary Rod Bremby, Kansas Department of Health and Environment. “Buckling up also means injuries are reduced, which ultimately results in lower health care costs for all Kansans, and helps Kansas become a healthier state overall.”

Each year KDOT conducts surveys throughout the state to estimate the percentage of motorists who are buckling up. Based on federal guidelines the surveys are con-

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Rod Bremby, Kansas Department of Health and Environment

ducted at 548 sites on six different road types in 20 randomly selected counties, which encompass 85 percent of the population of Kansas. The 2006 survey included more than 62,000 vehicle observations.

The Kansas Department of Transportation, the Kansas Highway Patrol, and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment each are extremely concerned about the number of deaths and injuries on Kansas roadways and continue to

work hard to reduce the numbers.

In response to this epidemic, the heads of these agencies have joined together in a unique cross-agency endeavor, the Kansas Safe Driving Campaign.

A component of the Kansas Safe Driving Campaign is The Driving Force, a task force formed to develop recommendations of ways to decrease the number of fatalities and injuries on Kansas roadways.



Worship in the church of your choice this weekend.



LEVANT COMMUNITY CHURCH, 205 1st St., Pastor Jerry Vincent, 586-2376, Sunday School (classes for 3 years & up and 3 adult classes) 9:30 a.m., Morning worship 10:30 a.m.

Schedule of church services

ASCENSION-ON-THE-PRAIRIE EPISCOPAL, Rev. Don Martin, College Drive & Wheatridge Rd., 462-3041, Holy Eucharist, 9:00 a.m. every Sunday, Evening Prayer, 5:15 p.m. Wednesday, September through May. Christian Education for Youth, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, September through May

COLLEGE DRIVE ASSEMBLY OF GOD, Pastor, Jeremy Gundling, 245 W. College Dr. - 462-8234, Early Service - 8:00 a.m.; Sunday School 9:30 a.m., Morning Worship - 10:45 a.m.

BEREAN CHURCH, 1000 S. Franklin, 460-2763, www.colbyborean.com; Sunday School 9:30 a.m., Sunday Worship 10:45 a.m. Awana Clubs, Wednesday, 7 p.m., Middle & High School, Wednesday, 7 p.m. @ the Heartland Christian School Gym

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, Grant & Webster Street, 462-2867. Sunday School 9:15 a.m., Morning Worship 10:30 a.m., Youth Group 7:00 p.m., Wednesday Kids Club (K-6) 7:00 p.m.

COLLEGE VIEW BAPTIST CHURCH, (SBC), Pastor Tom Huffman, 1185 Wheatridge Rd. at College Drive, 460-7144, Sunday Bible Study 9:30 a.m., Sunday Worship services, 10:45 a.m.

MINGO BIBLE CHURCH, 420 Main Mingo, 785-462-2992: An independent community church served by Village Missions Pastor Chris Shubert. Sunday School: 9:30AM - all ages. Sunday Services: 10:45AM. Sunday Nights: 1st Sunday of the month: potluck following morning service - no evening service; 2nd Sunday: services at 6:30 PM; 3rd Sunday: informal fellowship - bring a snack to share!; 4th and 5th Sunday: services at 6:30 p.m.

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC, 462-2179, Father Dana Clark, Pastor, Saturday Eve. Mass 5:30 p.m., Sunday Masses 8:00 & 10:00 a.m., Confessions will be heard Saturday 4:30-5:05 p.m. and from 7:30-7:45 a.m. and 9:25-9:40 a.m. on Sunday.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, Rev. Carol Rahn, 515 W. 4th, 462-6342, Worship, 9:00 a.m.

WESLEYAN CHURCH, 320 W. Pine - 462-8391, Sunday School 9:30 a.m., Sunday Worship 10:40 a.m., Sunday Evening Cell groups at 6:00 p.m., Wednesday Youth Ministries, Kids Clubhouse 7 p.m.

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS, 1145 S. Franklin - 460-6605, President Gary Slavens, 460-2656; Rocky Robbins, 1st counselor, 460-1101; Tim Wilson, 2nd counselor, 785-846-7796. Sacrament meeting 10 a.m., Sunday School and Primary 11:20 a.m., Priesthood, Relief Society, YM/YW, 12:10 p.m.; Family History Center open to public, 7-9 p.m. Thursdays or by appointment. Call 462-3571.

COLBY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, Rev. James Mardock, pastor, 950 S. Franklin, 462-6521, Sunday Worship Services at 8:30 and 11:00 a.m., 6:30 p.m., Fellowship coffee 9:30 a.m., Sunday School, 9:45 a.m., KXXX broadcasts 11:00 worship. <http://www.gbpm-umc.org/colby-umc/>

REDEEMING LOVE MINISTRIES, INC., 345 N. Franklin, Apostle W.G. and Rev. Orvella Romine, Equipping Class, Sunday, 10 a.m., Sunday worship, 11 a.m., Wednesday, R.L.M Training Center (Bible School), 7 p.m.

CHURCH OF CHRIST, 510 E. 4th, Jay Kelley, minister, Sunday Bible Study 9:30 a.m., Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m., Sunday Eve. Worship 6:00 p.m., Wednesday, Bible Study 7:00 p.m.

COLBY EVANGELISM CENTER, Rev. Robert Cooper, 815 West 3rd - 462-2062, Sunday School 9:45; Sunday service 10:00 and 6:30 p.m.; Wednesday Bible Study 6:30 p.m.; Friday Youth Power Hour at 7:00 p.m.

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, (Disciples of Christ), Pastor Bradley L. Herndon, 385 W. 3rd - 460-2718, Sunday Morning Worship at 9:00 a.m.; Sunday School at 10:30 a.m. E-mail: fccolby@st-tel.net

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH, Rev. John L. Schmidt, East 5th & Country Club, 462-3497, Services, Sat., 5:30 p.m., Sunday; Sunday School and Adult Bible Class 9:15 a.m.; Services, 10:30 a.m.

OUR SAVIORS LUTHERAN CHURCH, Brewster, Sunday worship 9:00 a.m.; 2nd Sunday of the month at 8:00 a.m.

PLEASANT HOME CHURCH, Pastor, Charlie Busch, 694-2242, 3190 Road 70, Edson, Worship, 9:00 a.m., Sunday School 10:00 a.m., Evening service, 6:00 p.m.

LEVANT COMMUNITY CHURCH, 205 1st St., Pastor Jerry Vincent, 586-2376, Sunday School (classes for 3 years & up and 3 adult classes) 9:30 a.m., Morning worship 10:30 a.m.

WINONA METHODIST CHURCH, Rev. Michael Eurit, Sunday School, 10:30 a.m., Morning Worship 9:30 a.m. (CDT)

BREWSTER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, PO Box 250, Brewster. Pastor Dorine Chambers, 785-462-6044, Summer Worship Service, 9:30 a.m.

THE SHEPHERD'S STAFF, REXFORD, Joan Dingwerth, Director, 687-2565

REXFORD COMMUNITY CHURCH, Rexford, Pastor Lane Purcell, 687-3305, Sunday School 9:30 a.m., Worship Service 10:30 a.m.

BREWSTER COMMUNITY CHURCH, Mike Pinkelman, Pastor, Brewster - 694-2720, Sunday School (all ages) 9:30 a.m., Worship Service 10:30 a.m., Bible Study 7:00 p.m., Wed. mornings 6:30 a.m. - Men's Bible Study, Wed. 7:00 p.m. - Children's Ministries (Royal Rangers/Missionettes), Wed. 7:15 p.m. - Intercessory & Prayer, Thurs. 4:00 p.m. - Women's Bible Study

Warehouse Auctions

Tuesday, September 26

5:00pm CDT

Wellsville Storage Auction

711 Maple St

Wellsville, KS

Wednesday, September 27

5:00pm CDT

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