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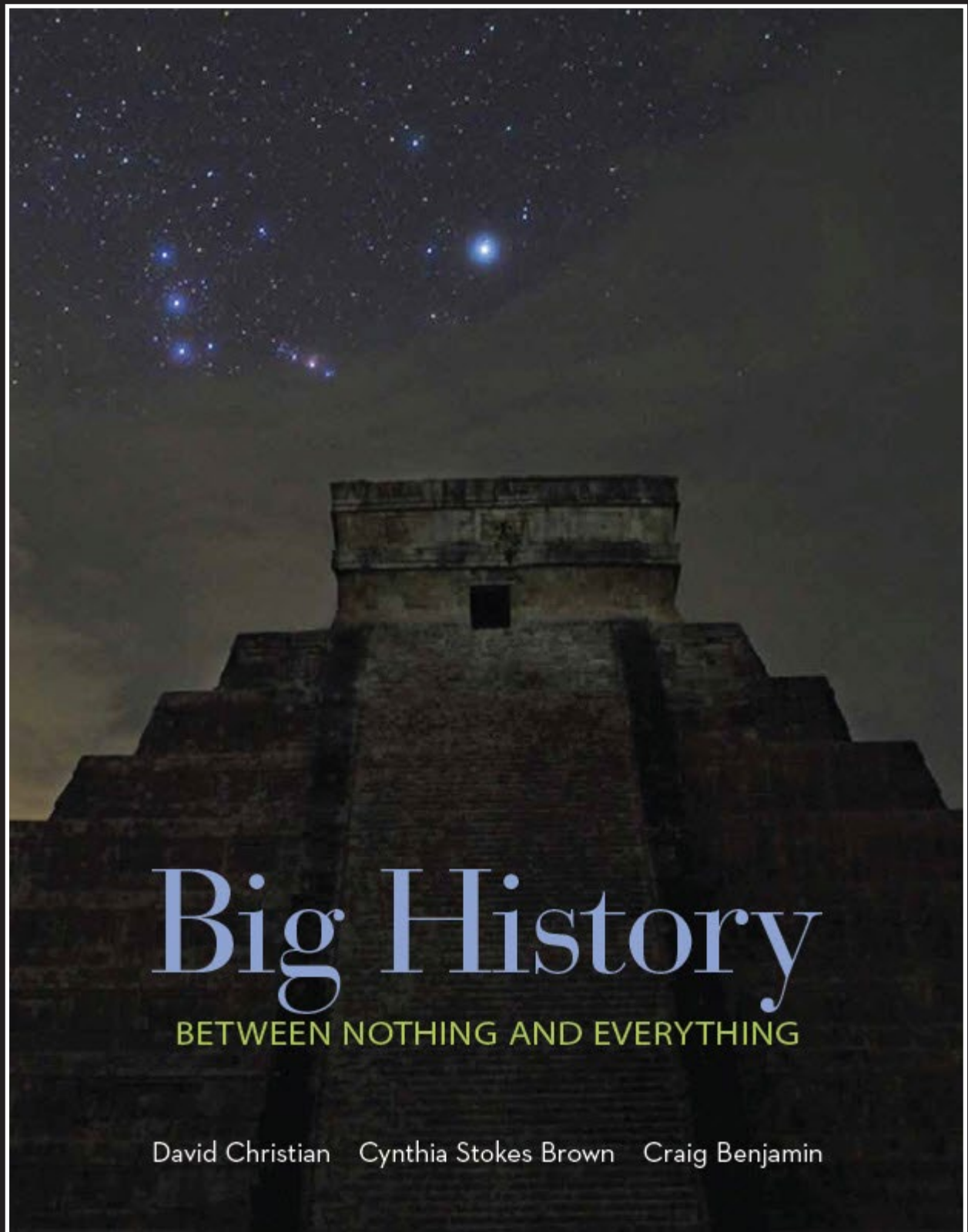
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International
Big History
Association

Members'
Newsletter

Volume III Number 8



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Big History: Between Nothing and Everything just published

B*ig History: Between Nothing and Everything* surveys the past not just of humanity, or even of planet Earth, but of the entire universe. In reading this book instructors and students will retrace a voyage that began 13.82 billion years ago with the Big Bang and the appearance of the universe. Big history incorporates findings from cosmology, earth and life sciences, and human history, and assembles them into a single, universal historical narrative of our universe and of our place within it. The first edition of *Big History: Between Nothing and Everything*, is written by the pioneers of the field, and presents a framework for learning about anything and everything. It encourages students to think critically about our cumulative history and the future of the world through a variety of lenses.

About the Authors

DAVID CHRISTIAN (DPhil, Oxford University) is by training a historian of Russia and the Soviet Union. He has spent most of his career at Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia, apart from an eight-year period teaching at San Diego State University from 2001 to 2008. Christian has published histories of modern Russia and also a study of the role of the trade in vodka in nineteenth-century Russia. In 1998, he published *A History of Russia, Central Asia and Mongolia*, the first volume in the Blackwell History of the World Series. He began teaching courses on Big History in 1989 at Macquarie University. He first used the phrase *Big History* for such courses in an article published in the *Journal of World History* in 1991 titled "The Case for 'Big History.'" In 2010, with Bill Gates, he founded the "Big History Project," which is building a free online high school course in Big History due for release in late 2013. Christian is a member of the Australian Academy of Humanities and the Royal Holland Society of Sciences and Humanities. He is the founding president of the International Big History Association.

CYNTHIA STOKES BROWN (PhD, Johns Hopkins University) spent most of her career directing the secondary teaching credential program at Dominican University of California. She taught selected courses in the history department and wrote books about civil rights history and teachers. Brown's book *Big History: From the Big Bang to the Present* was published in 2007. Since then her interests have been consulting with the Big History program at Dominican, serving on the board of the International Big History Association since its inception, and writing Big History essays for high school students through the Big History Project funded by Bill Gates.

CRAIG BENJAMIN (PhD, Macquarie University) is an associate professor of history in the Meijer Honors College at Grand Valley State University in Michigan. Like both his co-authors, Benjamin is a frequent presenter of lectures at conferences worldwide, and the author of numerous publications including books, chapters, and essays on ancient Central Asian history, Big History, and world history. In addition, Benjamin has recorded lectures for the History Channel, The Teaching Company, and the Big History Project. He is currently a member of both the Advanced Placement and SAT World History Test Development Committees, vice president (president elect) of the World History Association, and has been treasurer of the International Big History Association since its inception in January 2011.

Please see the advertisement on page 18.

The Big History Project is now available
for free online for educators; a public version will soon be available! It's a joint effort between a group of dedicated teachers, schools and supporters, committed to helping students develop vital skills, knowledge and a deep, enduring passion for learning.

Review of the First Students' Big History Research Conference

By Shanshan Liu

Ph.D. candidate in architectural history at Tsinghua University Beijing

From June 13th to 15th 2013, the first Students' Big History Research Conference was held at University of Amsterdam.

Students and scholars from Netherlands, the United States, Australia, Russia and China gathered together in the Netherlands to share their recent studies on Big History research and education and to discuss the future and challenges of Big History research.

In the welcome speech at the opening ceremony, Lucy Wenting, Director of the Institute for Interdisciplinary Studies at University of Amsterdam, underlined the potential of Big History research and pointed out how the conference could help shape a global community of young Big History researchers. After the opening there were two non-research oriented presentations. Roland Saekow gave a presentation on "Personal timelines in Chronozoom" via Google Hangouts at UC Berkeley, California. He introduced some promising new features of the Chronozoom project, which is an online project that aims to visualize the history of everything. Amongst other things, he demonstrated how personal timelines functioned and invited the participants to be the first explorers of this feature. After Roland's talk, Constance van Hall and Joris Burmeister talked about their experience of teaching Big History at the Dutch Roland Holst high school in their presentation "The Big History project in The Netherlands". Videos of their students showed how learning about Big

History in a high school classroom setting had inspired these students to wonder about the world around them and ask questions about anything.

The second day of conference continued with the discussion about Big History education, albeit in a more research oriented context. Tracy Sullivan from Macquarie University in Sydney gave a presentation on "Teaching Big History in Australia: Challenges for Interdisciplinary Courses in the Secondary Context" via Skype. She summarized some of the challenges Big History teachers had encountered, such as what they should focus on within a limited time frame, what should be cut and what should be kept, and to what discussions and solutions these experiences had led. Jos Werkhoven, a former Montessori teacher, and Anne-Marie Poorthuis, a network specialist at Eigentijdse Verbindingen shared their plan to investigate "Big History in Primary Education". They described their research environment, and the steps they are taking to build methods of asking question on Big History in primary schools. They also gave some examples of initiatives they are encouraging and demonstrated the website where they are making their ideas visible as building blocks.

Next, David Baker from Macquarie University, Sydney put forward the idea of "The Darwinian Algorithm as a New Research Agenda in Big History." He argued that this unique approach used

in Big History has opened up a vast horizon of research agendas, and has triggered a speciation event where hundreds of new niches have opened up waiting to be filled. Jeroen Hopster from the University of Amsterdam talked about "Gould's Paradox: Chance and Contingency in Macroevolutionary History". He connected Gould's notion of contingency to the notion of path dependency and the Goldilocks



Principle and claimed it is helpful for our understanding of Big History.

Geologist Victor Petri gave a presentation on “The Golden Ratio and Complexity in Big History”. He wondered about the importance of the Golden Ratio, Phi, in the growth of complexity. Ekaterina Sazhienko from Dubna International University of Nature, Society and Man talked about the “Evolution of Morality as a Result of Humankind’s Development” and pointed out that identification with various macro-groups (national, religious or class), coupled with the extreme forms of fundamentalism, can exacerbate systemic crisis and lead to the collapse of civilization. Only the formation of critical thinking and the principles of a new morality are able to solve future conflicts by peaceful means.

Two Dutch PhD students introduced their current research in the more traditional fields of biochemistry and marine biology and explored the possibility of integrating Big History research within their PhD projects. Rebecca de Leeuw from Utrecht University talked about “Self-Assembly in Nature: Protein Folding”, Alice Burrridge from Naturalis Biodiversity Center in Leiden used



The workshop led by Professor Fred Spier

Keynote speech by Professor Henry Hooghiemstra

fossil record of a group of pteropods (‘sea butterflies’), holoplanktonic marine snails from the pelagic zone to discuss “The Origination of Marine Biodiversity, Illustrated by a Group of Pteropods (‘Sea Butterflies’)”

In the afternoon, during a workshop “Energy and Complexity in Big History”, Professor Fred Spier led a vigorous discussion about the core issues of Big History research. He posed several questions such as how complexity can be defined, and how it can be related to everyone’s own research. Participants stated their own opinions on the core questions of big history research, and Professor Fred Spier tried to take away some confusion about certain research concepts. The second day of conference was concluded by a keynote speech titled ‘Climate in Big History’ by Professor Henry Hooghiemstra from the University of Amsterdam. Professor Hooghiemstra is a paleo-ecologist, trying to bridge the two cultures by explaining how he thinks climate change and changing environments have influenced human history.



Discussion at Conference

Like the second day, the third day of the conference also began with online presentations. Rich Blundell from Macquarie University, Sydney, talked

about “The Transformative Potential of Big History from Personal to Cultural Levels.” He examined the use of transformative experiences in big history teaching and he proposed the epiphany as the base unit of a transformative experience. Stephanie Poppe from Indiana University Bloomington gave a presentation on a study for her master thesis “Connecting the Pieces: A Topical Analysis of Big History” and pointed out that data analysis applied to Big History can help discover current and past trends in Big History research, can help connect important texts, concepts peoples and places, and can help uncover under-researched areas and other topics of interest.

Bree Faulkenberg from California State University, San Marcos, gave a Google Hangouts presentation on “The Big History of Infectious Disease and the Athenian Plague”, and demonstrated her Big History website “Threshold of Time”. Jonne Harsma from Groningen University gave a presentation on “Exploring Biography, Individual and Event on the Micro & Macro level of (Big) History”; he shared his research on historical biographies and presented some inspiring ideas for Big History research.

Hans van Twuiver, a Big History enthusiast from Rijkswaterstaat, and an aspiring Big History Ph.D. student, talked about “Big History and Spinoza”. He discussed what scientific, religious and societal factors have contributed to the writings of Spinoza in the 17th century Dutch Republic, and claimed that the theory of Spinoza is useful for constructing an all-embracing theory of Big History. Melanie During from University of Amsterdam gave a presentation on “The Role of Geological Processes in Shaping Evolutionary Niches

& Speciation”, and discussed her intention of continuing her research into the correlation between paleontological and paleoecological data and into quantifying how geology drives evolution.

The last session of paper presentations focused on little Big History research. Esther Quaedackers from the University of Amsterdam talked about some new aspects of her “Little Big History of Tiananmen”, while I, a Ph.D. student in architectural history from Tsinghua University Beijing, gave a presentation on “A Little Big History of the Amsterdam Royal Palace”. Esther Quaedackers explained the origin of little Big Histories as a teaching tool that helped students see “a world in a grain of sand”, or the history of everything in relatively small scaled objects or subjects. She analyzed Tiananmen from the aspects of inanimate history and the history of life and human history, and concluded that writing a little Big History can seem a bit tough at first but can quickly lead to overlooked questions and insights. It can also help to give all kinds of more specialized research a Big History twist. My own presentation complemented Esther’s research of Tiananmen. I tried to use the notion of entropy to explain the evolution process of architecture style and suggested that the appearance of Royal palace is the result of the cooperative and competitive systems of architectures in Amsterdam. Fred Spier led another discussion on “Challenges



for Big History researchers” in the afternoon and gave a concluding keynote about the future of Big History research. He reviewed the history of universe and expressed his concern about world’s energy crisis led by the pressure of population growth and other challenges we are facing nowadays. He wondered whether, if we could successfully define all inhabitants of our planet as insiders and the threats their survival as outsiders, maybe Big History research could help us to respond to those challenges better.

On the last day of the conference, participants had dinner together and continued their discussions on the themes of the conference. They exchanged their opinions on the questions posed during the conference and had in depth conversation about the Big History topics that interested them. Participants also established deeper relationship with each other and some of them remained engrossed in conversations long after dinner.

This first Students’ Big History Research Conference was very spirited and successful. It was an ideal

opportunity for big history students and teachers from all over the world to compare experiences and exchange views and it brought together attendees and speakers from a wide range of research fields and varied disciplines. The organizers of the conference did a good job preparing the conference and were very considerate and caring, which made the conference a perfect chance for participants to get to know each other and become friends. It helped students pursuing Big History research to build friendship and alliances with their peers, to exchange knowledge, and to discuss solutions to problems that affect their studies. The conference definitely contributed to the development of a community of young Big Historians and challenged participants to both broaden and deepen their research projects.

All in all, the first Students’ Big History Research Conference was a delightful experience. I wish a second Students’ Big History Research will continue its success.



Statements by Candidates for IBHA Board

In keeping with Article 3.1 of the IBHA Bylaws, as a member of the International Big History Association, you will be invited mid September to vote in the election of four people to fill the four seats on the Board of Directors that will become vacant because their terms expire. As stipulated by Article 3.1, from now on each of these Board members' terms will run for three years.

Fred Spier

My task as Vice President in charge of leading IBHA procedures is to ensure that IBHA runs smoothly according to our Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. After having served as Program Chair of our inaugural conference, I will continue to work for IBHA's main goal: stimulating Big History teaching and research worldwide. Fostering a wide range of discussions and allowing room for innovative initiatives are also high on my agenda. Another major goal is to attract younger scholars worldwide, so that we will be able to make a successful transition from the generation of founding scholars to younger generations, thus enriching our organization and assuring its future.

Barry Rodrigue

Barry Rodrigue is an associate professor at the University of Southern Maine (USA), where he set up the Collaborative for Global & Big History, established the first Big History course in a general education curriculum, and developed the first online course of Big History. After composing the *Directory of Big History*, he proposed the formation of the IBHA and chaired its first meeting at the Coldigiocco Geological Observatory in 2010. Barry served as the IBHA's first Secretary and then as International Coordinator. In the latter role, he participated in the founding of the Eurasian Center for Big History in the Russian Academy of Sciences (Moscow) and has extended IBHA contacts in India, Central Asia, Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East. Most recently, he was scholar in residence in Shandong Province, assisting in promotion of the first Big History course in China. An editor of the second *Evolution* almanac on Big History he is also an editor of the soon to be produced Big History reader.

Each of these scholars have agreed to serve in this capacity:

Lowell Gustafson

Andrey Korotayev

Barry Rodrigue

Fred Spier

We will send you the electronic voting procedure ultimately by mid September. Thank you very much for your participation in the IBHA.

Andrey Korotayev

Born in Moscow, Andrey Korotayev attended Moscow State University, where he received a B.A. degree in 1984 and an M.A. in 1989. He earned a Ph.D. in 1993 from Manchester University, and in 1998 a Doctor of Sciences degree from the Russian Academy of Sciences. He is currently a Senior Research Professor at the Center for Big History and System Forecasting of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Moscow). His main research in the Big History is concentrated in the search for evolutionary patterns that are common for different phases of the history of the Universe and development of their mathematical models.

Lowell Gustafson

I am a professor of political science at Villanova University in Pennsylvania (USA). My research interest is in how the sciences help us better understand and practice politics. My goal as Secretary of the IBHA is to communicate the important, fascinating, and varied work on Big History that is being done by an increasing number of members. This is being done with the help of a talented Communications Committee on Twitter, Facebook, the Members' Newsletter, the IBHA website, and other means.

Letter by Vice President Fred Spier to the IBHA members concerning the upcoming Board Director Elections

Dear IBHA members,

In addition to the formal announcement about the upcoming elections in September sent to you by the IBHA office on August 8, I would like to share with you the rationale for the choice of Board Director candidates.

First of all, we need to adhere to our IBHA Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, which you can find on our web site. The election procedure for board members is ruled by Article 3.1 of our Bylaws.

As David Christian and I explained during our general membership meeting in Grand Rapids on August 4, 2012, (see also the Minutes on our website), both the IBHA Board and the members can propose candidates for Board Director positions. The specific rules for how to propose candidates are stated in Article 3.1. The Board consists of a maximum of eleven elected Directors, five of which are elected by the Board to serve as officers in the Executive Committee.

In principle, all Board Director's terms expire after three years. The positions that are now becoming vacant after only one year are the result of the fact that, following Article 3.1, the Board Directors' terms elected during the first membership meeting were intentionally staggered. Four terms were to expire after only one year, four other terms after two years, and the remaining three terms will expire after three years. This will create the situation that from now on, every year about one-third of the Board Directors will stand for reelection.

Before the 2012 Grand Rapids membership meeting, the Board internally decided who would stand for reelection, and for how long. Eric Chaisson, Lowell Gustafson, Barry Rodrigue and Fred Spier all volunteered to opt for a one-year term.

No candidates for Board Directors have been proposed by members during the past year. As a result, the Board has taken the decision to appoint the candidates. Our considerations were as follows: we need Board Directors who are knowledgeable about Big History. They must also be willing to engage in our continuous internal, often intensive, email discussions concerning a great many issues. If they are to become officers of the Executive Committee, they must be able and willing to execute these tasks. Furthermore, being an international organization, we would like to see this reflected in the geographical composition of the Board. And finally, because we are still a very young organization struggling to define itself while dealing with a great many important issues, we would like to secure a certain degree of continuity, combining this with as much fresh input as possible.

Because Eric Chaisson, who was not an officer, decided not to stand for reelection, the Board decided to propose Andrey Korotayev from the Russian Federation as a new candidate. However, the other candidates standing for reelection are all officers fulfilling crucial functions. Because of the considerations just mentioned, and because we currently do not know other candidates able and willing to fulfill these crucial officer functions, it seemed prudent to the Board to request the membership to reelect the sitting officers as Board Directors.

It is certainly not our intention to stay on the IBHA Board indefinitely. In the coming years, we will be happy to welcome new Board Directors who would be willing, and able, to fulfill these functions. We encourage the initiatives of all IBHA members volunteering to participate in future IBHA activities, and by doing so, become acquainted with the governing aspects of our organization. This would be very helpful for broadening the base of Board Director candidates for future elections.

So if you are willing to start contributing your expertise to IBHA, please do not hesitate to contact Leslye Allen at our IBHA Office in Allendale, MI. Thank you very much for your kind attention. Looking forward to a most exciting future for IBHA with your help,

Fred Spier, Founding Vice President, IBHA

The Challenges of Teaching Big History: Reflections of a U.S. High School Teacher

Tamara L. Shreiner

In 2011, when I became a pilot teacher for the Big History Project (BHP), I was an experienced world history teacher who thought I knew well how it felt to be overwhelmed by the subject I was teaching. Ten years earlier, I had been assigned to teach my first world history course, but had learned about the “world” only through Western Civilization classes and some coursework in Southeast Asian and Latin American history. So when I was assigned the task of making my school’s curriculum more “global,” I was faced with the daunting task of teaching myself about the world outside the West, as well as how to weave together a coherent narrative for students. Despite its challenges, though, I was still learning and teaching history. I was still within my comfort zone, where I was familiar with the disciplinary concepts and strategies that would help students learn. As valuable as the experience was, it scarcely prepared me for the challenges I would face as a Big History teacher.

Teaching Big History meant not only knowing the history of the world, but also the history of the Universe. This meant becoming familiar with concepts and theories from physics, chemistry, geology, biology, anthropology, and more. Being a teacher in BHP’s first year also entailed designing a curriculum nearly from scratch, using only the small number of content pieces available at the time. As I sat in the initial BHP meeting, faced with the task of planning and teaching Big History, a sense of inadequacy and apprehension washed over me. I felt I was an imposter who knew very little about even less. It was difficult to remember when I had ever felt so overwhelmed as a teacher.

Two years later, as I now plan for the upcoming school year, I feel no more overwhelmed with the prospect of teaching Big History than I do with that of teaching world history. I still feel as if I know little — a feeling I think will never go away — but I now embrace that

feeling and see it as a catalyst for good teaching. My lack of knowledge about any given subject is merely a trigger for further exploration, for seeking answers to questions I could not previously answer, only because I never asked them. And I readily expose both my ignorance and my curiosities to students in my classroom so that I might inspire them to ask their own questions and then work toward the answers.

How did I become so comfortable in the skin of a Big History teacher? How did I meet the challenges posed by a course that seemed to be, at first, the most challenging I would ever teach?

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In reflecting back on my early days with BHP, I believe what first helped me face the challenges of teaching Big History was trying to better understand the what and the why of Big History. Though I had included some elements of Big History in my world history class, I now had to conceive of Big History as something other than world history — something distinctive enough to offer as a separate course. I turned first to the experts — to the work of Big Historians like David Christian and Fred Spier, who provided me with their own definitions and rationales for studying and teaching Big History. The first chapters of *Maps of Time and Big History and the Future of Humanity* provided the reasoning I needed to help me clarify the purpose for my course. What is more, their work, particularly Spier’s introductory chapter, provided me reminders of world history’s bumpy passage into the U.S. school curriculum. Though I did not fully realize it in the initial planning stages, this information would become crucial as I talked with administrators and parents who were skeptical of Big History, yet

part of a generation who readily accepted world history. Retracing the story of world history helped me see Big History as the logical next step in a field that has grown in both depth and scale, beginning with emphasis on the nation-state, but then expanding its focus as people became more aware of the global sphere in which they lived. And like world history has offered fresh opportunities to see ourselves not just as part of a nation-state, but as part of a global human web, Big History offers opportunities to see ourselves as part of the natural world.

The thought of standing up in front of students and helping them grasp the Big History narrative, though, made me confront my next major challenge — the number of concepts in the course I simply did not know. Though I knew the basic outline of the Big History story, I was unfamiliar with some of its language. And just as a child must learn the meaning of individual words before she can string together a meaningful sentence, I needed to learn concepts that were completely new to me in order to piece together a meaningful narrative. Here, beginning with outside research only overwhelmed me even further — I did not need to know as much as a physicist or biologist, and often the information I found was written with far more detail than I thought, or hoped, I needed. The key to making learning manageable was first considering the concept's meaning within the context of the Big History narrative. I turned again to the work of Big Historians like Christian, Spier and Cynthia Stokes Brown, who helped me better understand exactly what I needed to know and why I needed to know it. When I was trying to learn about the Big Bang, for example, I looked across all the authors' work, seeing how each explained the event, fit it in the larger narrative, and built upon each others' explanations. The works these authors referenced often became my next stop, for they presumably provided explanations that helped the Big Historians themselves weave their narratives.

It would be an understatement to say that I became

a zealous student of big history at this point. I became aware of how many books now exist that are written by experts in their respective fields, but for the lay public. Each door that I opened led me to three more, and I became a shameless hoarder of books, thirsty for knowledge but unable to quench it. I realized at some point I had to set limits for myself, and decided that I would study concepts only well enough that I was able to explain or illustrate them in at least two ways, both for myself and for students. If I found an especially powerful explanation, illustration, or analogy I filed it away to use it in my class.

Another realization that hit me at some point in my self-education was that I had only nine months to teach, well, everything. How could I teach 14 billion years of history in a single school year when I had typically found it challenging to teach 500 years? I had to remind myself that, in fact, I had faced this same problem in world history, and in U.S. history for that matter. I always felt as if I had too much to teach. What allowed me to teach in my other courses was determining what was significant to the story at the particular scale I was teaching. Big History was the study of the past at

It would be an understatement to say that I became a zealous student of Big History at this point. I became aware of how many books now exist that are written by experts in their respective fields, but for the lay public. Each door that I opened led me to three more, and I became a shameless hoarder of books, thirsty for knowledge but unable to quench it.

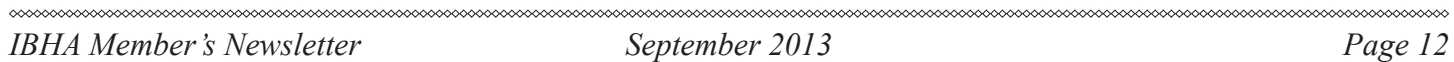
the largest scale possible, so the details were different from those in a world history course, just as the details in world history were different from those in a U.S. history course. Faced with the challenge of keeping my focus “big,” thresholds of increasing complexity became my anchor. The

eight thresholds in the BHP course, what it took to cross them, and then what more complex and fragile entities emerged helped me to focus instruction. So too did thinking about how I would help students understand how humans are able to tell this story—how knowledge from multiple disciplines has given us the picture of the past now available to us.

Facing these three big challenges — determining

I often tell people when they ask me about teaching Big History that my lack of knowledge made me a better teacher. It helped me to recognize where there seemed to be logical gaps in texts and videos I planned to use, or which concepts were most difficult to learn. Since

I was learning myself, I could recognize when other people were teaching well, and not so well. Becoming a Big History teacher has been both humbling and invigorating. It has reminded me that I can never take what students know or don't know for granted, that just because an explanation makes sense to some does not mean it makes sense to others, and that as teachers we should always be searching for new ways to excite and engage students. And sometimes the best way to do that is to make sure we remain excited and engaged as teachers. But most of all, teaching this course has reminded me that the ultimate goal for education is making our students life-long learners. I am proud to tell students that "I don't know," so long as I finish with "but let's find out together." We are, after all, only human.

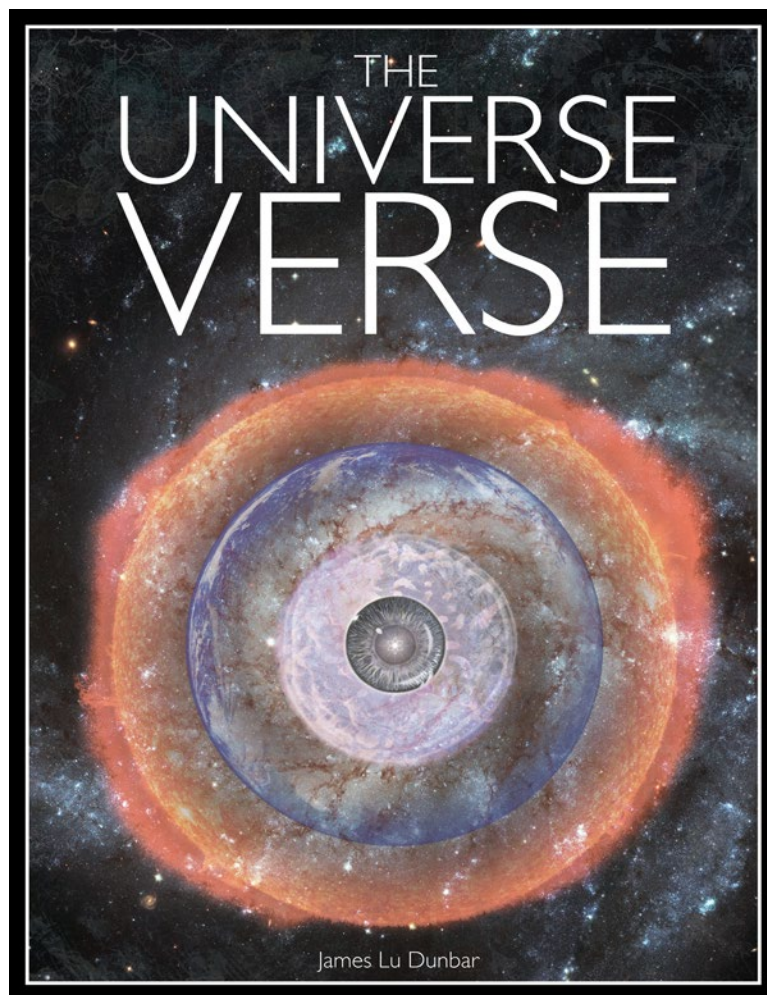


Latest Universe Story by James Lu Dunbar **Kickstarter Campaign**

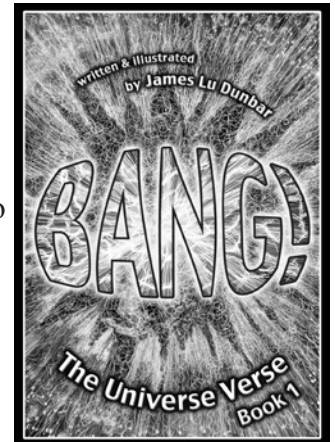
An earlier IBHA Member Newsletter ([Volume I, Number 6](#)) presented *It's Alive!* the second book in James Lu Dunbar's Universe Story Trilogy.

The Universe Verse is finally complete and is currently raising money on [Kickstarter.com](#) for a high volume, hard-cover print run. You can help create an exciting new resource for celebrating science and Big History. [Check it out now!](#)

The Universe Verse is a series of three scientifically accurate rhyming comic books about the origins of the Universe, life on Earth, and the human race. Essentially it is an illustrated, rhyming, ode to Big History. If you were at the IBHA's inaugural conference in Grand Rapids you may have met the author, James Dunbar, showing off the first two books in the series:



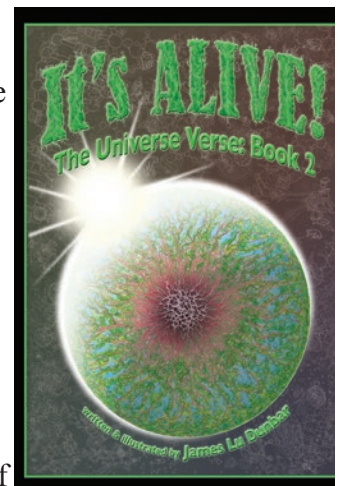
BANG! & It's Alive! Now James has finally finished the third and final book in the series, *Great Apes!* and he's hoping to put all three of them together into a single book and raise enough money for a large print run.

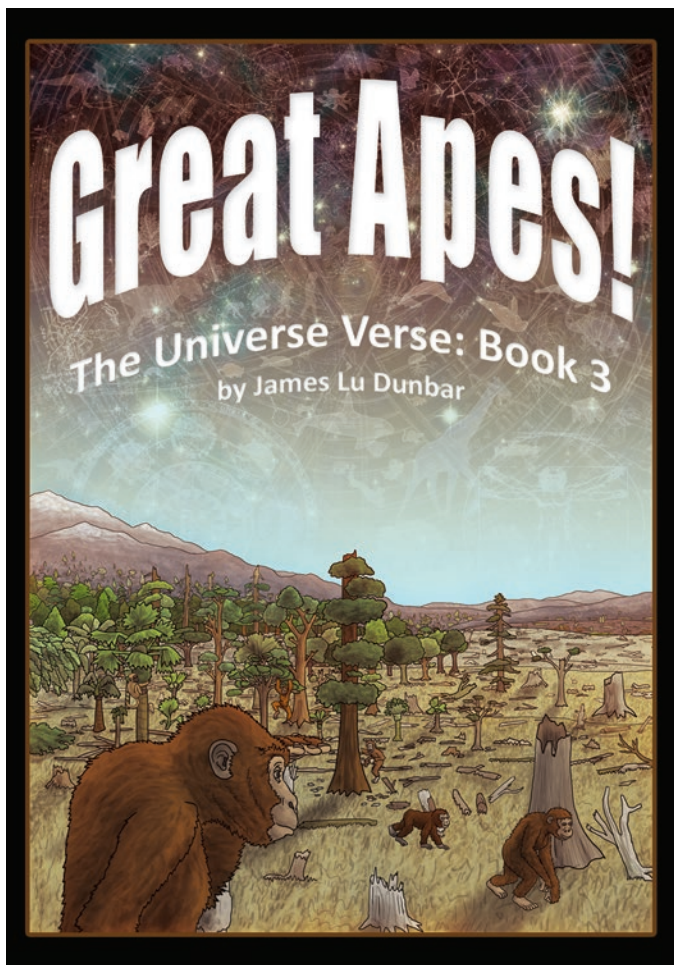


In order to raise money for the printing James is using a crowdfunding service called Kickstarter. If you haven't already heard of Kickstarter, it's an amazing website that allows people with a creative project to raise the money they need to make their project a reality by offering exciting and valuable rewards to the people who pledge to support, or "back" their projects. If the funding goal is met the project happens and everyone gets their rewards. If the funding goal is not reached then the project doesn't happen, no one gives any money and no one gets any rewards.

In order to print *The Universe Verse* in hardcover James has set a goal of \$10,000. If that goal is not met, the book will not be printed and the world will have missed out on an amazing and engaging resource for promoting Big History. If the goal is greatly exceeded, James will give away additional copies of the books to his backers and to schools.

Back in 2010 James used Kickstarter to raise over \$6,000 for the creation of *It's Alive!* the second book in the *Universe Verse* series, so while \$10,000 may sound ambitious, it's certainly achievable, especially given the exciting rewards that are available as a part of





(including a children's story about calculus and a book or original river riddles), fun *Universe Verse* goodies like a Video DVD, Audiobook CD, greeting cards, a t-shirt, and even framed original sketches.

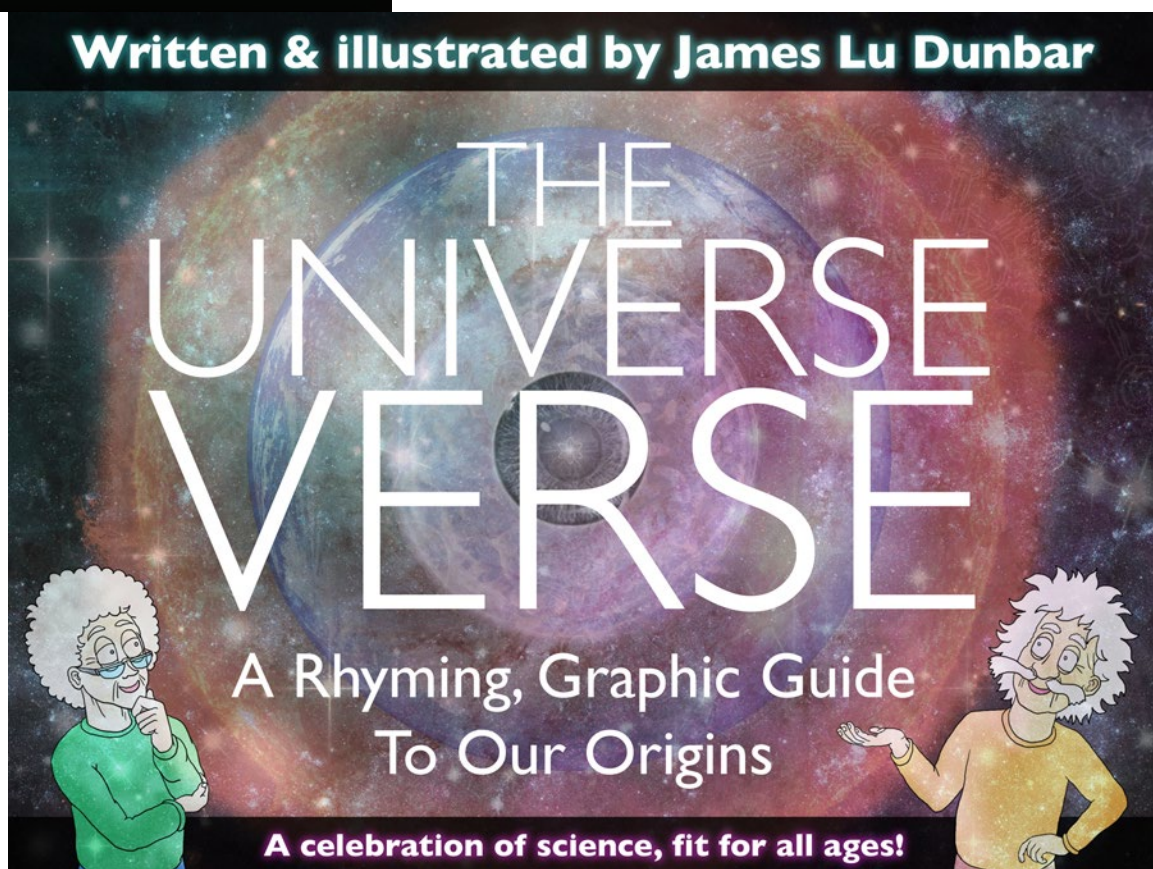
And if you really want to be a part of this project James will even draw you, or a loved one into one of the illustrations in the book!

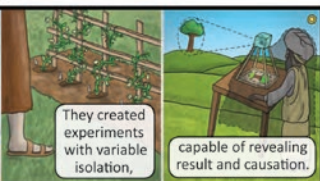
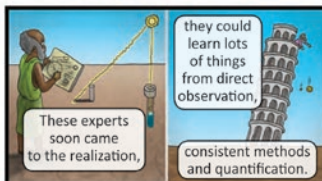
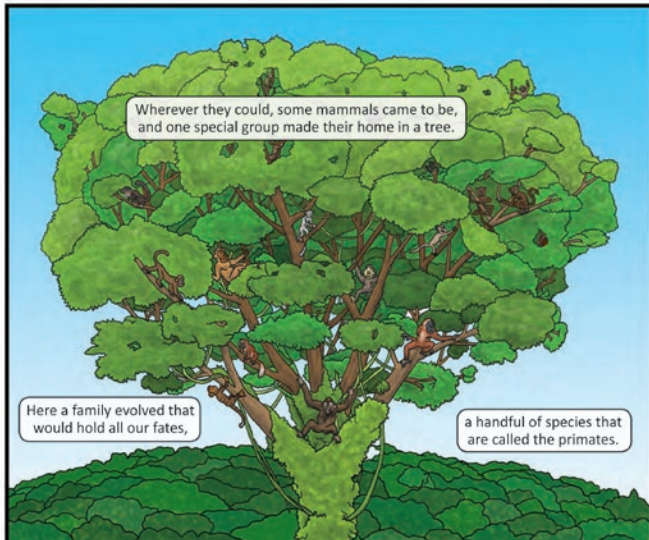
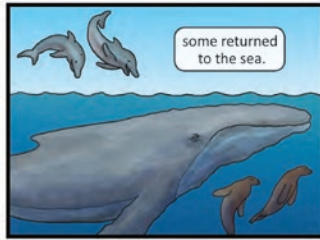
So if you believe more people should understand and appreciate the amazing and awe-inspiring story that is Big History, take a look at *The Universe Verse* on Kickstarter and consider pledging your support. Even if you can't contribute any money you can always help by spreading the word (and as a member of the IBHA I'll even send you a free PDF copy of *The Universe Verse* if you email me at dunbarjameslu@gmail.com)

KICKSTARTER

this new campaign. Of course, the primary reward will be a hardcover copy of *The Universe Verse*. Not just any copies though, these will be signed and numbered, limited, first-edition copies of the book. And if you pledge enough you'll even be thanked, by name in the credits at the end of the book.

Additional rewards include copies of Jamie's other rhyming, illustrated paperback books





As the process we use has become more specific, the growth of our knowledge has been truly terrific.



Example pages from Volume 3 of the Universe Verse.

Investors may be drawn into a still unfinished page.

This could be you



CALL FOR PAPERS
INTERNATIONAL BIG HISTORY ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE
AUGUST 6 - 10, 2014
DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
SAN RAFAEL (SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA), CALIFORNIA

***TEACHING AND RESEARCHING BIG HISTORY:
BIG PICTURE, BIG QUESTIONS***

DEADLINE FOR [PAPER](#) / [PANEL](#) SUBMISSIONS IS FEBRUARY 10, 2014

The International Big History Association (IBHA) defines its purpose as “to promote, support and sponsor the diffusion and improvement of the academic and scholarly knowledge of the scientific field of endeavor commonly known as “Big History” by means of teaching and research and to engage in activities related thereto.”

Article 2 of the IBHA Articles of Incorporation.

The theme for the 2014 conference is “Teaching and Researching Big History: Big Picture, Big Questions.” The conference seeks to continue the dialog begun at the first IBHA conference in 2012. In addition IBHA seeks to create a forum for the articulation, discussion, and distillation of questions central to Big History. Among the topics that are to be addressed at the conference through a series of panels, roundtables, and discussions are:

- Big History and energy
- Big History in education
- Big History pedagogy
- Big History scholarship
- Big History research agenda
- Evolution of complexity
- Identification and analysis of thresholds
- Continuity and Contingency in our Universe
- Big History: interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, or trans-disciplinary?
- Big History and the future
- Big History and meaning
- Big History outcomes and assessment
- Politics and Big History
- Little Big Histories



Along with regular panels and roundtables, presentations might consist of:

- Question and answer sessions – where Big Historians will be able to answer questions and discuss research questions that are worth pursuing
- Brainstorming sessions – with very short, provocative papers
- General discussion panels – where different points of view about Big History can be addressed in 5 minute increments, specifically addressing the different cultural perceptions of Big History
- Workshops – where participants will view short film fragments and other art forms chosen by Big Historians, and presentations on Big History from the artistic point of view from artists, musicians, and storytellers
- Conference roundup – with a keynote address that summarizes the most important things outcomes of the conference

We encourage proposals on any topic related to Big History. A select group of papers will be included in a compilation of Big History Research that will be published after the 2014 conference.

The time limit for presenting papers will be 20 minutes, and the deadline for submitting papers to the session moderator is three weeks in advance of the conference. Individual paper proposals must include a 250 word abstract with the title of the paper, name, institutional affiliation, e-mail address, phone and fax numbers, and brief curriculum vitae, all integrated into a single file, preferably in MS-Word. Proposals for complete sessions or panels must contain the same information for each participant, as well as contact information and a brief C.V. for the moderator if you suggest one. (The program committee can help find moderators, if necessary.) Please submit your [paper](#) or [panel](#) proposal by clicking on one of these links, which allow for submission information. The deadline for paper and panel submissions is February 10, 2014.

All presenters at the conference must be members of IBHA. Presenters may become members at www.ibhanet.org and will need to do so prior to registration for the conference.

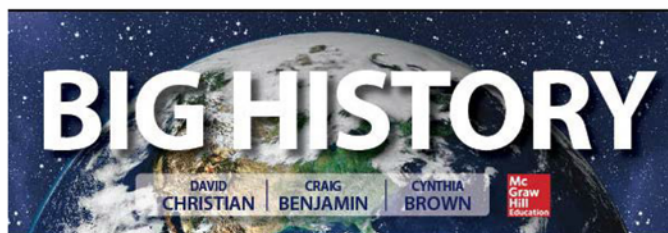
The IBHA Conference will convene on the campus of Dominican University of California in San Rafael, which is located twelve miles north of the Golden Gate Bridge. Attendees will have the option of selecting from one of several hotels in San Rafael and the surrounding area or staying in on-campus accommodation. San Rafael is a wonderful destination in Marin County surround by woods and beaches. For all things San Rafael go to <http://www.sanrafael.com>. For a complete guide to San Francisco and its many attractions, visit <http://www.sanfrancisco.com/>. And if you have more time to explore the larger Bay Area, see <http://www.visitcalifornia.com/Explore/Bay-Area/>.

Please find more details on the conference at www.ibhanet.org. We hope you can join us for this fantastic second IBHA conference!



Edgehill Mansion, Dominican University of California

*Program Committee: Mojgan Behmand, Cynthia Brown, Eric Chaisson,
William Grassie, Lowell Gustafson, Fred Spier, and Joseph Voros*



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by David Christian, Cynthia Stokes Brown, and Craig Benjamin

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