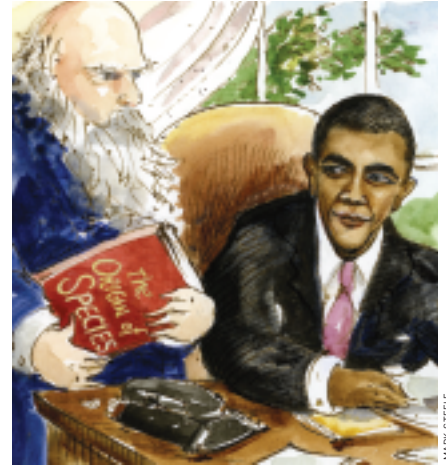


In the Beginning

As an alumna, I was quite disappointed to see the article “Dear Mr. President” [Winter 2009]. Apparently its author, Professor Gregory Petsko, is unaware that the so-called “science” of evolution is known as the theory of evolution for a reason. It is just that, a theory. While the perspective known as creationism is also a theory, little is done for science as a whole [when you] engage in attacking the side that happens to disagree with your point of view. There are reputable scientists on both sides of the coin, and Professor Petsko would do well to investigate the creationism side thoroughly without discrediting the whole lot of the scientists associated with the theory.

—Brenda Peter '86

North Dartmouth, Massachusetts



Remembering Kevin Smith

I was much surprised that there was no mention in your article on film at Brandeis [“Take Two for Brandeis Filmmakers,” Winter 2009] of the film department run by Kevin Smith in the seventies, after David Hardy’s terrible accident. There was no money, and the offerings to students had to be limited, but Kevin did his best. My son, then a Brandeis student, remembers him well.

Kevin had been head of the remarkable film studio at Education Development Center (formerly ESI) that produced hundreds of outstanding educational films, among them the PSSC Physics series. Under his oversight, many young filmmakers got their start and many curriculum fields were enriched. In the early seventies, working out of Kevin’s studios, I produced, with Joyce (Kalina) Chopra '57, a series of films on women’s lives.

I had first encountered Kevin when I was a young editor at Little, Brown in the forties, and he occasionally visited my boss, Angus Cameron, who was married to Sheila Smith, Kevin’s sister. Kevin used to stop off

in Boston as the glamorous stage manager of Broadway shows on the road. When I went to work for EDC in 1964, there he was—making films, a dazzling new field to most.

I don’t know how many Brandeis students got their start in filmmaking because of Kevin Smith, but I think the record should acknowledge his contribution.

—Adeline Naiman
Lincoln, Massachusetts

I was disappointed to see that your article didn’t mention Kevin Smith, who taught a film course out of Ford Hall during the 1970s. A retired documentary filmmaker for CBS, Kevin was universally adored by all his students. He inspired and enabled at least a dozen Brandeis graduates from that decade to launch careers in “the industry,” including, most notably, writer, director, producer, Oscar nominee, and Emmy winner Marshall Herskovitz '73 and producer and Emmy winner Jeffrey Silver '77. Kevin’s influence is still being felt in the television and movie industries.

—Michael Jacobs '78
Renton, Washington

Maddened by the Military Machine

I wish to convey my reaction to the propaganda piece by Ilan Troen '63 in your magazine [“The War Against Civilians,” Winter 2009]. The assault on the Palestinian civilians in Gaza was, I believe, a war crime of horrifying proportions. There have been such things in history. During World War II, the occupying forces in countries such as Norway and Yugoslavia also slaughtered innocent people whenever their own soldiers were attacked. For one German soldier killed, the occupiers would slay up to 100 randomly chosen civilians.

In Professor Troen’s piece, all this is hidden away. There are many Israelis and Jews from other countries who have come to think that Israel is losing its soul. This is not to excuse or condone the use by Hamas of rockets. They are maddened, of course, by the persecution of their people, the blockade, and the occupation of their territories by a military machine, not to mention the theft of their land by the so-called settlers.

—William Barker, PhD'68
East Orleans, Massachusetts