

## ESSAY

**Bob Jahn, Co-Founder of SSE**

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Thank you for the tributes to Bob Jahn published in the Spring issue of the *Journal*.

As I describe in *A Tale of Two Sciences* (Exoscience 2009:81–95), my meeting with Bob in March 1978, when he was spending a sabbatical leave at Stanford University, was the beginning of many discussions that led to the creation of the Society for Scientific Exploration (SSE) in 1982.



Bob was a remarkable individual and a tremendous asset to SSE. He was a wise councilor and an efficient and effective officer, who was a mainstay of the Society over the last three decades of our history. Bob did more than anyone to help SSE grow into the sound, effective, and productive organization it is today.

Bob also exemplified what is best in science. He was open-minded, he paid attention to the evidence, and he thought long and hard about theoretical implications and interpretations.

Are not all scientists open-minded? Regrettably, the answer is no. Scientists are also human beings, and the human tendency is to believe what one wants to believe. When faced with a new idea, most scientists will look for—and manage to find—a reason to discount it. Bob was not like that. He would refrain from giving an off-the-cuff response, he would ask a few probing questions, and then he would go away and think about it.

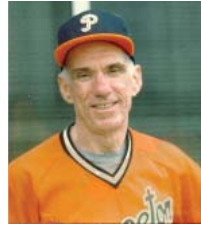
When faced with the challenge of understanding the branch of parapsychology that deals with mind–matter interaction, he wisely decided to first acquire the best set of data that he could. This led to a sequence of very carefully planned experiments that extended over decades, and which now comprise one of the most reliable and informative datasets in the field.

After many years of innovative experimental work, Bob was ready to start thinking about its theoretical interpretation. These thoughts evolved over time, leading eventually to the sophisticated concepts embodied in his M<sup>5</sup> model (for Modular Model of Mind–Matter Manifestations).

To properly appreciate Bob’s achievement, one needs to compare this response to the challenge of mind–matter interaction with that of most scientists—which is to look for some excuse not to face up to the problem.

A typical response would be “Well if A were true, that would imply B, but of course B is incompatible with C which is well-established, so I am sorry that I cannot take your ideas about A too seriously.” All sounding very reasonable on the surface, but typically invalid when examined carefully and objectively.

Bob was a true scientist, seeking the best evidence of any topic he investigated—generating much of that evidence in the PEAR Laboratory in collaboration with Brenda Dunne and other luminaries of that enterprise—and then proceeding to explore the theoretical implications of that evidence.



**PETER A. STURROCK**

Co-Founder, Society for Scientific Exploration

### Reference Cited

Sturrock, P. A. (2009). *A Tale of Two Sciences*. Palo Alto, CA: Exoscience Publishing.