
March 1987 "BASIS", newsletter of the Bay Area Skeptics

Bay Area Skeptics Information Sheet
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Editor: Kent Harker

STEINER IN THE TRENCHES

By Thren Kerak

If a picture is worth a thousand words, a demonstration is worth a book. Mr. BAS himself, our own inimitable Bob Steiner, wowed the public in a tour de force at the San Mateo Neighborhood Watch Assn.

This all started when Bob was invited to talk to the San Mateo PD, specifically their Bunko Squad. The veterans of the department were apparently skeptical that they could be fooled in anything, so widespread was their knowledge and experience. Steiner just knocked their sox off -- they were so impressed that they asked him to give a similar demonstration to the NWA, whose members are naturally interested in scams. Bob invited me to the proceedings as a BAS representative.

Bob was introduced with glowing plaudits to an audience of about 200 -- the normal turnout is around 50. Our resident Merlin introduced his presentation with a distinction between bunkum and bunko, and then asked all those who believed in ESP to raise their hands. He then performed some stunning card illusions that left the folks breathless.

A sweet little Sr. Citizen sitting next to me said, "I noticed you didn't raise your hand about belief in ESP. What do you think NOW?" I just smiled at her and told her to wait awhile.

Bob had distributed some "Bunkum Bucks" (his home-made funny money) which members of the audience used to bet on some card demonstrations he ran. The heavy losses shocked the players who thought they had a sure thing. The display was sobering for just how easily we, as Mr./Mrs. Average Streetpersons, can be separated from our money. Bob extended the illusions to things that purport to take control of our lives outside our own power, which would include "psychics," of course.

The final act was a "psychic" surgery demonstration. The sustained, warm applause at the conclusion of the evening was a rousing approval of the subject treatment in general and Robert Steiner in particular.

The little lady? I asked her what she thought about ESP at the end. "I'm really going to have to seriously think about that again. I had no idea it would be so easy to mislead me!"

I reflected on the evening on my way home. How many discussions would it have taken with that woman for her to review her own thinking? What and how many books could she be pressed to read to see another side? If she had witnessed a debate between psychic and skeptic how might she have been effected? It is clear that Bob's entertaining, hour-and-a-half demonstration substantially moved 200 minds. It was equally clear to me that all the other methods of influence pale by contrast. THAT is an accomplishment to behold.

Bob's force and talent are sought more and more for balance in psi matters. BAS credits are growing in scope and stature in the Bay Area with every major TV and radio station requesting Bob's appearance. The voice of the Bay Area Skeptics is no longer a voice in the wilderness. We don't have the quantitative role that "the other side" has, but the wallop we pack is sharp, thanks mostly to Robert Steiner.

BAS CALENDAR: MARCH

MARCH MEETING: "Parapsychology and Skeptics: Searching For Common Ground" Topics will include: What is the public perception of parapsychology? How skeptics and parapsychologists can correct misconceptions; Misconceptions about parapsychology; legal battles. Loyd Auerbach, parapsychologist, author, lecturer, and instructor at John F. Kennedy University will address BAS on this interesting and important subject.

TIME: Wednesday, April 1, 8pm.

PLACE: JFK University, 201 Altarinda Rd, Orinda.

DIRECTIONS: From S.F., take highway 24 to Orinda exit, turn left at the bottom of the exit, then right at the next light. Go thru the next light uphill (about 100 yards) and the university is on the right side. From Concord, go highway 24 to the first Orinda exit and take the first right. The rest of the directions are the same after that.

NOTE: If you have ideas about locations for future meetings or possible topics and/or speakers, please leave a message for Larry Loebig on the LA TRUTH hotline (415-528-7784).

COMING: Watch for coming events in the BASIS CALENDAR, or call LA TRUTH for up-to-the-minute details on meetings, events, etc. Send all materials for publication to The Editor, Box 32451, San Jose, CA 95152. All other correspondence should be addressed Bay Area Skeptics, Box 60, Concord, CA 94522.

WARNING: We STRONGLY RECOMMEND that you check our LA TRUTH hotline shortly before attending any Calendar activity to see if there have been any changes since publication of BASIS. Thanks!

SAY GOOD NIGHT, GRACIE
by Don Henvick

I'm sitting around minding my own business one night in June when Bob Steiner calls. "Another faith healer is coming to town. Can you do your thing?" I say yes and ask what he knows about it. "Not much," he says. "This one is called Amazing Grace, and she is coming on AM San Francisco tomorrow to do her routine, whatever it is, then I'll come on and show it's a lot of hooey if we can get some evidence. Everybody says it's a lousy deal for me, but if you go with me and get called out it would be great."

"You're right," I say. "It's going to be hard to make something on her with such short notice. I may be five for five, but my luck can't last forever. I'll try, but I'm not real hopeful."

It's time to set up costume and makeup (as I make a note to change my phone number so Steiner can't find me again the next time a faith healer blows into town) -- old man with a cane should do the job.

Next morning I mingle with the crowd in the waiting room. I find out only later that some of Grace's staff were also mingling. I find out that almost all the people there have been invited by Grace to come and be healed. We've walked into a hornet's nest. Thanks Bob. (He's in the green room with fingers crossed.)

The show starts. Terry Lowry introduces Grace, who sings, then starts healing. She does semi-cold readings, warmed a bit by info gleaned by her staff, but mainly by throwing out symptoms and seeing who catches them.

I don't talk. I don't move. I don't nod. But I smile at her till my face feels like it will crack. That's enough. She throws "pain in the left side" at my part of the audience but nobody catches it. She throws again. Still nobody catches. Finally she points to me and says, "I believe it's this man here. You? Even though you're not saying anything." She has me come up, heals me and throws my cane away -- my cane budget just took another jolt. I ask her how she knew about me and she says, "It's called the word of knowledge. It's a small inner voice from God." As I take my seat she says, "I don't know you, do I. (No) All right, then so how do we know this?" All agree it's that doggone Word of Knowledge. I figger it's obvious since she's picked me. Silly me.

Meanwhile, back in the green room, Steiner sees me picked and he jumps up and down in his chair, happy as a pig in slop. A show staffer comes in to say somebody watching has called in to say that the "old man" was the same one healed on Peter Popoff's show months ago. Boy, sharp eyes! Bob begs him to zip his lip and then settles back to wait 'till he's to go on.

During a break, Terry asks me why I waited so long before admitting I was the one Grace was talking about. I say I wanted her to be sure in her own mind that the Holy Spirit and not anything I did caused her to pick me. Everybody smiles. Next break Terry says a

skeptic is coming on who doesn't believe in this and won't I have something to tell him? "I sure will!" I say. Everyone smiles.

Bob comes on the show and asks Grace just two questions: "How do you select who to heal here?"

"By God," comes her answer.

"Is God ever wrong?" he queries.

"Never!" the reply.

Bob has me come forward to say I had nothing to be healed of and Terry Lowry's jaw falls to the floor. Grace, however, makes a quick recovery and announces she knew all along I was a plant, she just never got around to mentioning it to anyone. Then she claims I jumped up and said "It's me!" to the question she threw out, so I urge them to run the tape back. When they do it's plain that I haven't stood up or spoken, but since the camera isn't on me all the time, Grace now claims I was nodding my head (not true) and Terry announces the tape is inconclusive. Ya can't win.

Bob presses with the Grace believers and points out the facts: Grace claims God directs her choice of healees, so either God is wrong or Gracie is wrong. He also points out that the true believers jump up and select themselves when Grace calls some symptoms like theirs and when they think they're better it only proves the placebo effect is alive and well. We hope it's plain to the TV audience that several things claimed by Grace were contradicted by the events of the show and nothing Bob says was so contradicted. The audience of Grace fans, however, is a lost cause. As far as they're concerned, Bob is the devil, so whatever he says can't be true.

Amid all the heat and smoke, he contributes the only light. When the battle ends, they're left with their faith and we have the facts. I'll take the facts.

CSICOP CONFERENCE

The annual international conference of CSICOP will be held this year in Los Angeles at the Pasadena Center. Some of the topics will include ETI, Animal Language, Medical Controversies, Astrology, and Spontaneous Human Combustion.

The slate of speakers is impressive. Each year sees attendance grow and the significance of the work of CSICOP flourish.

Mail your registration to: 1987 CSICOP CONFERENCE, P.O. BOX 229, BUFFALO, NY 14215. You can send check or Visa in the amount(s) as follows: \$75.00 per person (includes Keynote Address) and \$29.00 for Awards Banquet. The time is almost here, so set your plans now!

If you want additional information, write CSICOP at the same address and they will send you a formal registration form.

RAMPARTS

The "L.A. Times" tells us about a Ruth Norman, a.k.a. "Uriel" (an acronym for Universal, Radiant, Infinite, Eternal Light) who founded the Unarius Academy of Science which claims 10,000 members around the world. The hub of her world-wide organization is in El Cajon (near the Institute for Creation Research), so you see, not all zanies are in San Francisco. Although a grade-school dropout, Uriel has an impressive list of credentials as you shall see.

The 86-year-old founder accepts monthly contributions from her followers in return for "cosmic world teaching" for what she calls "the dawning of the age of Unarius." The grateful converts have typically shucked all semblance of rational behavior if Gordon and Decie Hook are examples. The pair claim that their lives have completely changed because of Unarius. Mrs. Hook could not drive a car, work, or stay off the sauce, and was on the verge of being committed when she found Unarius.

Ah, yes. The "total change of life." It has almost become a cliché. EVERYTHING totally changes lives anymore. Shopping at K-Mart will totally change your life.

Seems Uriel has really been around. Among her "55 other lives" she was Socrates, Buddha, Charlemagne, King Arthur, Mary Magdalene (her late husband was Jesus) and Peter the Great! I told you credentials? Apparently if chronology is unimportant, historicity certainly should be. If fictional characters are a part of the play she might have had a role as Snow White or Hera. Modern psychology should have a clearer understanding of multiple personalities now because Norman is certainly not the first to have claimed these illustrious bodies. With all that activity in those high-powered lives, what ever happened to our "eternal rest?"

Additionally, the anonymous of history are give short shrift. Have you ever heard a past lifer say he/she was Millard Frump? Oh give me oblivion!

The only significant item in the article was that CSICOP was mentioned. Media people are calling on us. We are having an impact. There is hope.

In the meantime, Ruthie has declared that 2001 is the year in which a fleet of UFOs will land near San Diego. Tuck this prophecy away in your scrapbooks.

The "Chronicle" reported from the North Counties that the Twin-Cities PD had used the services of a "psychic" in a frustrating rape/murder case. BASIS reader, Dr. Arnold Knepper, a member of the

psychology dept. of Sonoma State contacted the Chief for details after the "Chron" article appeared.

It seem that the investigation had ground to a halt after a year of fruitless leads. Of course, local newspapers featured some of the dealings in the case especially descriptions of the suspect, so nothing earthshaking can be determined about whatever the "psychic" said in this realm.

The statement the psychic made that apparently turned the formerly skeptical heads of the department was, "What does this have to do with a telephone pole?" The victim worked for a private phone company and was installing phone lines in a remodeled shopping complex when the crime occurred.

This is classic "cold reading" technique: Throw something out and see if it sticks -- let the subject read what he/she will into it. No one bothers with a dozen misses if I hit one single thing. Had the psychic said, "What does this have to do with bells?" the result would be the same. One can hardly go wrong.

BAS does not wish to cast any aspersion on the Twin Cities PD at all. They were frustrated and angry. There is little harm in trying anything after all the work they had done. If any real harm is done it was done by the news release. Another "psychic" has a "validation" to show to his/her potential client. And what a juicy validation: "Psychic Helps Twin Cities PD Solve Crime."

From the "Chron", skeptic John Taube responds to a Mr. Kemppe's fears that "asking questions about the Hubble space program would risk drawing the wrath of the scientific community." John responds, "His [Kemppe's] fears are unfounded. The scientific community is not disturbed by Kemppe's narrow consideration. He is engrossed with one thought: what financial benefits will the Hubble Space Telescope Program render to mankind. I would recommend he broaden his horizons. If the same question had been asked about the scientific research of Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, Newton, et. al., and their research was based on a financial criterion, then all would have been stopped in their tracks. Not all scientific knowledge sees fruition in applied science [At least not at the moment. Often we see the applications later - Ed] but all adds to our rich cultural heritage."

BARGAIN OF THE YEAR

by Bob Steiner

Sylvia Brown:

Business Consultation, One Session \$600.00

Past Life Regression, One Session \$500.00

Psychic Reading, One Session \$400.00

Bay Area Skeptics:
Subscription for an Entire Year \$15.00

FROM THE CHAIR
by Robert Sheaffer

This month's column is a continuation of last month's, giving the responses to the readers' survey in last November's issue.

8. What Kinds of Things Would You Like to See in Future Issues?

"Prefer 'hard news' to essays".

"More 'how it's done' on psychic 'miracles'". There are problems here. First, magicians have an understandable reluctance to publicize their tricks outside the circle of other magicians (and, of course, magicians and "psychics" share many of the same tricks). Also, "psychics" may perform a particular miracle in one of a dozen ways, and may do it differently each time. Thus, if we say "Uri Geller does trick X by using Y", somebody will see him do X a different way, when Y is nowhere nearby, so Geller really must be psychic! We can (and do) talk in general terms about how "psychic miracles" are done.

"Exposes of psychiatry". An excellent suggestion. Now none of us will deny that psychiatry can offer people enormous benefit. However, there are many doctrines and sects in psychiatry that are at best questionable, and at worst downright quackery. Wilhelm Reich's "orgone therapy" is plainly in the latter category. Much Freudian theory is highly questionable, while a lot of psychiatric research represents the best in medical science. How do we draw the line?

"Expose of other questionable beliefs, such as the 'big bang' hypothesis, which at best is dubious." I beg to disagree here. An enormous amount of solid astronomical evidence supporting the "big bang" has turned up in recent years.

"Examination of the media's role in promoting nonsense, & their reluctance to admit mistakes." Another excellent suggestion. Philip J. Klass and other skeptics have already written much about this (see UFOs- The Public Deceived), but more needs to be said.

"Investigation of Graphoanalysis". Excellent. Now, will our expert in graphoanalysis please step forward? (What? We don't have one?)

"Debunking of Astrology". Aren't you tired of it yet? I am. (And yet the believers in astrology never get the message.)

"Investigate the mind control techniques of the 'human potential' people." Another good suggestion. Experts, step forward, please.

"Debunk John Sladek and his 'Arachne Rising' hoax, Gerardus Bouw's

fundamentalist geocentric astronomy, Heliobiology (as in 'The Cycles of Heaven'), 'The Rebirth of Pan' by Jim Brandon." I'm always amazed how some people are ready to go out and debunk things that I haven't even heard about yet! (Well, I do know about Gerardus Bouw.) Quick, somebody go out and read these books, and then let us know if they need debunking.

11. Do You Have Any Suggestion for Improving Meetings?

"Meetings a bit too casual - participants not prepared".
Occasionally true - but not always.

Need a better defined format: presentation's, Q & A period, etc. should be carefully timed. "If there is anything about BAS meetings that galls my gears it's to have a meeting that goes on without defined limit." Mine too. That has happened sometimes, but any meeting where I've been in charge I pull the plug after about two hours, max. Never again must we have "free form" meanderings!

13. Suggest Topics for Future Meetings:

"Law enforcement personnel on use of 'psychics'". Good! [See the RAMPARTS column -- Ed]

"Bible Expose. Religion". Out of our territory. We deal only with claims that can be empirically proven either true or false, and one thing that theists and atheists all agree on is that people believe, or disbelieve, on the basis of faith (or the absence thereof), and not because of scientific evidence.

"Food fads & nutrition quackery," and "More medical-related subjects." We have done some meetings on this. We could do more.

"Velikovsky". Another good subject.

14. What Kind of Activity Would You Like to Get Involved In?

"Sell Skeptical Posters, Bumper Stickers". A good idea. The Colorado Skeptics are selling bumper stickers!

"Sell Skeptics' Jewelry". I'm not sure I know what "skeptics' jewelry" is, but it sounds interesting.

"'Infiltrating' phony groups". This is treading on thin ice! To attend public meetings of oddball groups and report on them is perfectly OK, but any "infiltration" is best left to law enforcement personnel.

15. What, If Anything, Should be Changed About How BAS Is Run?

"Nothing -- very good." We love you, too!

"Bigger Newsletter". Fine. Now who will write the articles, who will edit and publish them, and who will pay the extra cost in reproduction and postage?

"Charge more (for BASIS) to get funds for more active investigations of scams." But will that cause BAS revenues to increase, or decline?

"Volunteer groups such as this always have the problem of getting people involved. I have not found an answer. 'Willingness' is always involved. A few are willing to do the work, others are willing to let them." Amen, friend!

16. Do You Have Any Other Comments to Share With Us?

"I like Dr. Sampson, would like another chance to hear him." "Give us more Randi". We're giving you as much as we have; there is only so much of Randi to go around.

"Drop those vaporheaded California neologisms from your vocabulary. A chairman calling himself a 'chair' indeed!" Whassa madda, betcha don't like granola neidda? Go back ta Noo Joisey!

"Religious miracles." We are indeed now working on the investigation of certain other alleged miracles. Stay tuned. "I get the impression - probably incorrect - that BASIS and other skeptic activities are limited to 'professionals' (psychologists, physicians, scientists, science writers, strident advocates). These people are important, but I would like to see more effort to bringing in ordinary folks." We at BASIS welcome the assistance of anyone who shares our goals. Among the occupations of active Bay Area Skeptics are writer, magician, letter carrier, computer professional, physician, elevator serviceman, physicist, chemist, editor, teacher, cookie tycoon, realtor, and psychologist. If you know any "ordinary folk" who are interested, bring 'em in.

"I came to one of your meetings a year prior to the Peter Popoff story, and suggested looking into such churches and was told that this was too hot of a potato and the skeptics did not get involved in religion - much to my surprise when your "God" Randi decided to go after them, it was OK. I am still quite miffed." Randi is not our "God"; maybe a saint, but in any case his status as a "genius" has now been officially certified. Remember the subtle distinction which has been made many times before: religious beliefs we do not challenge, for they can neither be proven nor disproved, but claims of actual religious "miracles", alleged violations of established natural laws, are vigorously scrutinized. (Please don't be miffed!)

"Haven't you ever seen the following? 'Assembly of God' - Haven't you ever been curious as to how you put one together?" Groan.

"Bear in mind that Charles Trilling has rewarded our efforts. He said that we are the garbagemen of the scientific field. I cannot say whether it was a compliment or an insult... If I knew what we were all about, the task would be easier." Can you imagine how terrible the scientific field would eventually smell if there were no garbagemen? And on that lofty thought, we end our survey.

Finally, let me remind everyone about the big 1987 International CSICOP Conference in Pasadena April 3 and 4. This is going to be a BIG event. The Keynote Speaker will be Carl Sagan. Tickets will go fast, so don't wait. A registration form is included in this issue (send it directly to CSICOP, not to us). More details are in the current Skeptical Inquirer. See you in Pasadena.

SJSU GOES PSEUDOSCIENCE

Skeptic Vaso Bovan, a San Jose State University MBA grad, noticed a brochure from dear alma mater which announced the establishment of their "Pre-Chiropractic Institute." This institute is founded in "special cooperation" with the Palmer School of Chiropractic.

Bovan points out in his letter to the Dean of the School of Science (of which BAS received a copy) that the very basis of chiropractic, "subluxations" (misalignment of the vertebrae, which causes disease), is without scientific foundation.

Over the years this branch of pseudoscience has increased its credibility enormously; chiropractors are fast approaching full medical recognition. [Of course, there are exceptions. I ran across a chiropractor at the flea market last weekend. He was giving free spinal exams right there on the blacktop. - Ed]

The open participation of SJSU in this matter is deplorable. Bovan asks Dean Lange if the School of Science will soon formalize a course of study in pre-astrology.

Other alums and concerned taxpayers should write Dr. Lester Lange at SJSU, 1 Washington Square, San Jose, CA 95192. Congrats to Vaso for his alert and concerned attention.

EDITOR'S CORNER

Pseudoscience and conspiracy theories seem to go hand-in-glove.

When ideas come on the scene that run counter to reigning theories they usually meet with resistance. Change is difficult. When the new ideas don't win out, there are other avenues available to the would-be Galileos.

Science is a very broad area of human knowledge, and for that fact it can be ponderous and cumbersome, viewed as a whole. Because it is so vast, it is sub and, sub-sub-classified, on and on. At the very fine specialty, progress, and hence change, can be quite rapid. A group of theoretical particle physicists may alter thinking about neutrino absorption with only some abstruse mathematical derivations, for example.

The problem comes when a complete paradigm shift is proposed. Such a move calls for science as a whole to take note, which is akin to moving mountains. When major revisions in thinking are proffered it is proper that we look very carefully. Such changes require powerful evidence. Difficult though it may be, major revisions in thinking have occurred -- we call them revolutions -- and they mark the milestones in science history.

But some proponents of paradigm shift are impatient and impertinent. They tend to see themselves as voices in the wind, outcasts, prophets unloved in their own country, and even martyrs. When a large group is involved in the proposed reconstitution the cry of conspiracy is an ever-present slogan. In their eyes the scientific community becomes the stodgy "establishment," bent on suppressing new ideas. Monetary considerations are frequently raised. The AMA, for example, is so often charged with this because all "know" that money-grubbing physicians would rather keep us sick and coming to them rather than accept the newest nostrum.

Conspiracy theories are a substitute for real theories. If one can keep ones opponents fighting conspiracy charges the real issues get lost in the garbage, because conspiracy notions are usually easier to understand than complex scientific matters. And conspiracy notions have a life of their own. They metastasize arrantly and vigorously -- the imagination is the only barrier to their growth.

The heads of this Hydra are as numerous as the junk at a garage sale -- hack away though you may, nary drop of blood flows. It is like trying to paint pictures on water. (Recall the recent exhumation of the late Oswald in which the conspiratorialists pressed for years to have his body re-examined. They were CERTAIN someone else was in that grave and that was why there were such powerful forces against the disinterment. Actually viewing the remains would be the final evidence of the conspiracy. Of course Oswald was there safe and dead; and the conspiracy theory did not die with the episode. The definitive "proof" is the rainbow, always just out of reach.)

Another classic manifestation of pseudoscience is the "circling wagon" mentality. If a group considers its position rejected by "standard" science, it pulls itself together to form a tight Brotherhood of Believers, gaining mutual support and comfort. They will publish their OWN journals in a thumb-their-noses attitude, rather than submit their claims to recognized publications for peer review and critique.

If there is evidence it will ultimately prevail. Experience has shown that when the revision finally comes it takes hold quickly. When I hear talk of a conspiracy I count that as evidence that the plaintiff has no evidence. The High Court of science works. Yes, ponderously in some cases, and rightly so. If we are to undergo a paradigm shift it better well be after the most careful scrutiny and the most powerful evidence.

Health quackery, medical miracles, creationism, psi phenomena, and ufology are some of more notable examples that fit these classic roles of pseudoscience. When talk of conspiracy arises I hit the wall.

MORE "PREDICTIONS"

San Francisco was not struck by a severe earthquake last March. Madonna and Princess Di did not have babies in 1986. There was no assassination attempt against Mikhail Gorbachov, New York City was not blacked out for sixteen days, and, alas, there was no vaccine or cure developed for AIDS. There were just a few of the specific predictions made by well-known psychics for 1986 that failed to happen in case you don't keep your issues of the "National Enquirer".

Of the hundreds of predictions the "psychics" make every year many are so vaguely worded they are impossible to judge true or false. Others simply involve phenomena that happen every year, such as hurricanes in Florida or continued terrorist activity. Still other prognostications were not predictions at all, but actually disclosures already under way before 1986 began. Not one prediction that was both SPECIFIC AND SURPRISING came true in 1986.

Jeane Dixon, who supposedly has a "gift of prophecy" predicted that famine in Ethiopia and other African nations would be relieved in '86 when space shuttle astronauts would locate water beneath barren deserts [Note: of all the places on the planet where we are CERTAIN there is water, it is under the deserts -- Ed]. She also predicted that shuttle flights would lead to the creation of artificial gems.

Her "gift" apparently failed to foresee the Challenger disaster, after which no shuttle made it into orbit. Dixon also predicted that Princess Di and Madonna would have another baby, and that Tom Selleck would lose a valuable automobile which would sink into water.

Chicago "psychic" Irene Hughes predicted that severe earthquakes would strike S. F. in March, and Missouri in May, killing hundreds. Di would have twins, and there would be another attempt on the Pope's life. The assailant's bullet would hit Il Papa's crucifix, saving his life.

Miami "psychic" Micki Dahne predicted Reagan would turn the presidency over to Bush, that vaccines for AIDS and herpes would be developed and administered nationwide.

Clarissa Bernhardt predicted that Old Faithful would dry up, that scientists would accidentally shoot down a UFO with a laser, and that John McEnroe would retire from tennis to play ball with the SF Giants!

Our local, Sylvia Brown, got in on Di's being in a family way again and that Superbowl XXI would see the Raiders and the Bears fight it out. [See last issue for other Brown flops. - Ed]

Barbara Mousalam of Redwood City, who has in recent years been prognosticating for the City's prestigious Commonwealth Club, predicted that the hostages in Lebanon would be released this year, Ed Zschau would defeat Cranston, the GOP would retain control of the Senate and the Giants would build a new stadium in the City. She said the Dow-Jones average would not go above 1,800. It rose above 1,950.

Keep those tabloids this year and let's see if they improve next time. Don't hold your collective breath.

"THE VICTIMS YOU'RE TRYING TO RELIEVE OF THEIR DELUSIONS ARE WILLING SUPPORTERS OF THOSE WHO HAVE CHEATED THEM." -James Randi

"THE KNAVERY AND FOLLY OF MEN ARE SUCH A COMMON PHENOMENON THAT I SHOULD RATHER BELIEVE THE MOST EXTRAORDINARY EVENTS TO ARISE FROM THEIR CONCURRENCE, THAN ADMIT OF A SINGLE VIOLATION OF THE LAWS OF NATURE." -David Hume

Opinions expressed in "BASIS" are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of BAS, its board or its advisors.

The above are selected articles from the March, 1987 issue of "BASIS", the monthly publication of Bay Area Skeptics. You can obtain a free sample copy by sending your name and address to BAY AREA SKEPTICS, 4030 Moraga, San Francisco, CA 94122-3928 or by leaving a message on "The Skeptic's Board" BBS (415-648-8944) or on the 415-LA-TRUTH (voice) hotline.

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