

Bay Area Skeptics Information Sheet
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Editor: Kent Harker

THE CASE OF THE COUNTERFEIT CHRISTIANS
by Don Henvick

[The inimitable Don Henvick, scourge of the fundamentalist Christian healing crusaders, is at it again -- this time with a decidedly different approach. For the benefit of new "BASIS" readers a little background is in order. Don has for the last three years dogged the trail of some of the more infamous healers (Peter Popoff, W. V. Grant, et al.) posing under a variety of aliases and disguises. Many cures of non-existent maladies have been pronounced upon his pate and he has been "called out" in the spirit by different names by the SAME healer (three times by poor Popoff alone). Popoff even called out and healed "Bernice," a rather masculine-looking matron, of uterine cancer. Popoff's spiritual eyes failed to discern Don in drag.

It was early in 1986 that CSICOP, working with BAS, put the final nail in Popoff's coffin in San Francisco: We caught him with a tiny device in his ear, receiving revelation from his wife who was backstage radioing information from prayer cards collected from the audience. -- Ed.]

Faith healers come in all shapes, sizes and flavors. Some small timers ask a person what ails him, pray for him and hope for the best. Others claim that their prayers have effected a healing. Some, like Pat Robertson, use a shotgun approach "word of knowledge" by saying someone in the audience is being healed of back pain, for example, and then waiting to see who responds. Others, like Peter Popoff, enhance this process by researching the audience and later spitting back the information as divine knowledge. All of the faith healers have one thing in common: faith in the value of unsupported testimonials to prove miraculous cures.

However, the "Happy Hunters" are in a class by themselves.

Charles and Frances Hunter are a sixty-ish couple out of Texas; they draw audiences in the thousands with a unique formula. Not only can they perform healing miracles themselves, but they teach thousands of others how to do faith healing! David Alexander had written about their operation in "Free Inquiry" some time ago after he and BAS director Shawn Carlson had checked out one of their get-togethers. Picture an audience of about five thousand people gathered on the floor of an arena while the Hunters turn loose

about a thousand true believers who have read books, watched videos and taken a three-day class to learn how to do "the stuff." Picture arms and legs growing out, hundreds of people at a time falling down at the healer's touch, and hundreds of others exclaiming that they have been healed. Whew!

I read Alexander's report, talked to him, and started thinking. What claims do the Hunters make? What evidence do they offer for those claims? What opportunities do they leave for an investigation? Well, as usual, they don't follow up on the people they heal -- they merely wait for those who get better to come back and claim they have been healed. Then they accept those testimonials without further inquiry. Since they ignore all the people who are not cured, their success rate by their reckoning is 100%. One could always track down some people who go to their show and come away disappointed, but the Hunters don't specifically claim that everyone will be healed. They leave the healing to their thousand students so they can't be personally blamed for failures. The Hunters don't claim that they hear God telling them who has what problem because people hand in little cards detailing their afflictions.

With so few gimmicks going for them, what explains the Hunter's success in attracting so many people? The answer is, like the cut-rate car dealer: VOLUME! With a thousand trained healers in attendance, every member of the public gets personal, hands-on treatment, and the power of suggestion convinces most that they are or will be better. This is in dramatic contrast to other healers on the circuit who, working alone, can only reach a few.

The Hunter's point of vulnerability is their claim that **ONLY TRUE BELIEVERS WHO HAVE COMPLETED THEIR TRAINING CAN INVOKE THE POWER FROM GOD TO HEAL PEOPLE**; i.e., if non-believers tried it they would get no results. Now this is a proposition that can be tested.

Let's assume that the healings are the result of the placebo effect. Let's assume that we can get people -- non-believers -- into the Hunter's program and that these people lay hands on the faithful who in turn voluntarily testify that they have been healed. Let's assume that with the mere touch of a finger, our counterfeit Christians could cause people to fall over, "slain in the spirit," just like the "real" faith healers do. Let's assume that if we could do this we would demonstrate that something other than the power of God can explain what happens to these people. Let's stop assuming. Let's do it!

First off, we've got to research the Hunter's operation to find out IF -- Big IF -- it can be penetrated. They will be coming to Oakland in a couple of months, so I call their office for information. Several evangelical churches in the area that have organized study groups to watch fourteen hours of the Hunters' video tape and to read their book. I call one of the churches, borrow the tapes, buy a copy of the book and study at home.

Checking out the video produces some hints on how to proceed. Yes, **THEY DO CLAIM THAT ONLY BELIEVERS CAN HEAL.** God does not work through those who lack faith. We definitely have something to shoot for. Almost as interesting from a medical point of view is their theory of how diseases originate -- something they tend to soft-pedal in their public appearances. The Happy Hunters, it turns out, are nothing less than born-again chiropractors! Their video and book, both called "How to Heal the Sick," are filled with seemingly sage medical advice about relieving pressure on nerves in various spots on the spine, thereby healing all kinds of ailments. However, unlike a chiropractor's manipulation, the Hunter's method involves simply touching or very lightly moving the body at various points and **COMMANDING** a healing, because, after all, the believers have God on their side, and He does all of the actual work.

The students are regaled with stories of miracles performed by the Hunters using these methods. My personal favorite is the story Charles Hunter tells about how he prayed over the amputated thumb of a young boy and, before everyone's eyes, it grew out to full length, including a thumb nail! Wow! (He only talks about this on the tape, and never shows it. I wonder why?) In the excitement of the moment, Charles also forgot to get the boy's name, so I guess this miracle can't be checked by the doctors. But we have Charles' word for it, so it must all be true.

Before you get **TOO** excited about their miraculous claims, however, I need to point out that the Hunters are not necessarily the best walking ads for their own methods. Frances, whose bulk would make a '49er linebacker envious, also claims to be able to cure obesity, and Charles, whose chrome dome rivals a billiard ball, claims to be able to cure baldness. Furthermore, don't go whining to the Happys about your lousy eyesight and expect God to give you 20/20. Sure He can do it, and sure, He likes to please the Hunters and make the blind see and all that. But face it. It's much easier and, yes, even fun, just to wear glasses and not bother the Big Guy about not being able to see. Oh, did I mention that Frances Hunter wears glasses herself?

Soon the Hunter's resident chiropractor shows up on the video to explain the **SCIENTIFIC** basis for their method! He uses a model backbone, a pointer, and big words, so I guess what he's saying must be physiologically correct. I must confess, however, that he loses me when he explains that since all the nerves are interconnected, Charles Hunter is able to touch a man's earlobe and cure his hemorrhoids. Isn't science wonderful?

In short, the Hunter method of divine healing doesn't involve anything so mundane as laying hands on a person and praying for God to heal. Come on folks! If it were that easy, there would be no market . . . er, I mean, no **NEED** for the Happy Hunters to go traipsing round the country holding classes, collecting donations and graduating certified divine healers.

The Hunter method includes several techniques for different parts

of the body. The "Neck Thing" consists of placing ones hands on the back of a person's neck and very gently moving the head around. The Hunters claim that this will unpinch the nerves and realign the vertebrae, curing anything from a headache to a broken back. A skeptic might counter that any relief a person might feel would be due to the soothing effects of a nice neck massage, but I'm a believer. The "Pelvic Thing" is based on the notion that movement of the pelvic bones will not only relieve lower back pain, but that the nerves leading to internal organs will also "unpinch" and relieve any number of diseases. (The Hunters do not explain why, if pinched nerves discombobulate all the organs, there are many paralyzed people whose nerves are completely nonfunctional, and yet aside from their paralysis, are cruising along quite nicely with no noticeable distress to their innards.) The technique for this is more subtle since it does not involve any manipulation. The healer places his or her hands on the patient's hips and commands the pelvis to rotate and the lower vertebrae to properly align themselves.*

Since this command must be done in a very forceful, authoritative manner, it may seem to the uninformed that this is a prime example of the power of suggestion at work on an eager subject, but we are assured that it's just that God prefers to work through pushy people. The meek may inherit the earth, but they'll never make the grade as Hunter Healers. The trainees are constantly exhorted to speak with AUTHORITY and to COMMAND miracles to happen. I tell you one thing, when you see this stuff being demonstrated on the video it LOOKS miraculous.

Growing out arms and legs is pretty powerful stuff, too. This is not the crass trick as performed by W. V. Grant, who slowly swings a person's outstretched legs to one side to make it look as if one of them is really growing. The Hunter's don't claim that one leg is actually shorter, only that a misaligned spine or pelvis will cause the leg to be held crookedly so it will appear to be shorter. The Hunters have the person sit back straight in a chair, legs stretched out in front. They grasp the legs at the ankles and note by the position of their thumbs if the legs are the same length. If there is an apparent difference, they command the shorter limb to lengthen, accompanied by helpful hints such as, "I can see it moving a little bit now." This reinforces the belief that it's miracle time as the patient watches the healer's thumbs come to parallel alignment as the legs relax under suggestion and appear to grow out.

The patients tend to want to close their eyes in emotional anticipation, but the healers are instructed to tell them, "Open your eyes and watch the miracle." After all, the purpose of the whole exercise is to get the patients to SEE a miracle (the growing of a leg) and so to BELIEVE that another miracle is also happening (the curing of an illness). (The healer DOES NOT pull on the legs. In the case of arm lengthening, the healer does not even touch the outstretched arms to make one of them "grow." It is all accomplished by the power of suggestion.)

The "Whole Thing" is the application of all the previous, plus "slaying in the spirit," a ritual common to all the evangelicals. It is done by placing a hand on the person's forehead, calling upon God, and watching the person fall over. Simple, but immensely impressive. In fact, slaying in the spirit seems to be the one thing that impresses people most who look at faith healing, especially when hundreds at a time are keeling over. Folks say, "I don't know if these people are really being healed or not, but when they're being merely touched on the head and they fall right over, something must be happening."

William Jarvis, MD, was interviewed by "20-20" in a segment about the Hunters, and he came up with a complex physical explanation in which if the neck is held stiffly while the head is pushed back, pressure on a nerve can cause temporary blackout. This may be true for a mechanic like Peter Popoff, but unfortunately, it doesn't explain how a thousand Hunter healers can do the same thing, and they don't apply any pressure to the head. They touch lightly as they say the "right" words. It seems clear that Randi was closer to the mark when he said that people fall over because they know they're supposed to fall over, and they're supposed to feel the power of the Holy Ghost when the anointed healer touches them on the head.**

Can the power of suggestion really have such profound effects on people? We'll soon find out.

The Hunters are coming to Oakland for the three days of training sessions meant to turn out a thousand or more qualified healers. I decide to go, and I recruit a colleague who prefers to be anonymous. Our purpose: To scout out the terrain, to find out what happens in training and take it ourselves if possible, and to try to get hold of as many Healing Team badges as we can. (The badges will be used by other skeptics as passports to go out on the floor next to the "real" healers to see if they can do the same things themselves.) If my suppositions are correct, our counterfeit Christians will be just as successful knocking folks over and getting them to affirm they have been healed.

Wednesday we go into the first training session (the Hunters personally conduct the Wed., Thurs., and Fri. sessions) armed with the knowledge that we were supposed to have read all the book, to have seen all the video and are to attend all the training sessions (two each on Wed. and Thurs. and a last one on Fri., each of which lasts about three hours). I assume security will be tight, so I'm surprised to walk into the hall to find no one checking IDs or taking attendance. It becomes clear that they expect threats of heavenly revenge to weed out those who are less than sincere. It's also clear that any damn scoundrel who has the time and the inclination can become a Hunter faith healer -- and maybe some already have. I know at least two more who will.

We're prepared with cover stories to put on a good act, but with

about 1,500 people in attendance, the Hunter's staff has no way of verifying who belongs and who doesn't. We settle in to watch the live class, and a long show it is, with lots of lively hymn singing, prayers, standing up, sitting down and listening to the warm-up acts at every session. My favorite acts include the medical "experts" who travel with the Hunters to testify to the legitimacy of their miracles. The chiropractor who was on the video is there, gleefully mixing legitimate information about nerves with stuff no medical doctor could confirm. (When I later show that part to an MD on one of our teams he laughs out loud.)

The gist of the pronouncement is that the working of all of our innards can be vastly improved by having God straighten our spines. Another charmer is the nutritionist who expands on the benefits of the Hunter treatment to warn of the dangers of eating or drinking virtually anything but distilled water. Most of us already know that butter can load us up with potentially harmful cholesterol, but this dear lady cues us in that margarine is no better, since, as a polyunsaturated oil, it forms a "partial plastic" when it gets in our bodies. If you think that's nutritious, try chewing on a Baggie.

Toward the latter portion of each of the training sessions, Charles and Frances Hunter come on in person and elaborate on the techniques taught in the video and in the book. We also get some practice sessions for the trainees to try out the techniques on volunteers. At first I figure this will be just a dry run for lack of real sick people, but when the Hunters, looking for volunteers, ask how many of the would-be healers are themselves in need of healing, almost two thirds of the hands go up! It's becoming clear that there are reasons other than altruism compelling many of these people to learn how to heal others. Lots of these folks have serious problems of their own and they must figure that if they do God's miracles for other people, maybe, just maybe, God will do a miracle on them. Sad. So, for hours on end they lay hands on each other, commanding those spines to straighten, arms and legs to grow, and imagine they are feeling the power of the Holy Ghost when somebody touches them on the head and they fall over into the arms of a catcher.

We're still in the training sessions, and a big part of the show is the night we cast out demons. The Hunters call up some pastors from the crowd and "slay them with the spirit." Now the pastors have the stuff to do it to us. All one thousand-plus of us line the walls of the room, half standing in front to receive the spirit, half standing behind to catch the slain when they drop. The Hunters, their staff and the pastors go to different sections to touch people, and in no time at all folks are dropping like flies, scores at a time, 'cause they've all seen it before and they all know their parts.

I'm lucky enough to get a good insight into the procedure when Frances Hunter's daughter touches the man standing next to me. He doesn't go down. She's a bit taken aback. She tells him to hold

out his arms and really let the spirit come into him when she touches him. He does. He still doesn't go down. Now she looks peeved. She tells him to not resist the spirit when she touches and to REALLY let himself feel the spirit. She touches once more; He wobbles but still does not go down. She glowers at him, and, muttering that he needs to pray, leaves him to his disgrace. I'm next. She touches me and down I go right away, "YES MA'AM!" I know that you gotta go along to get along. So do all the rest of the folks as the spirit slays five hundred en masse. Next it's switch places, and we get up to catch the other five hundred as the anointed healers make a second go-round.

As we get near the end of the training session, another angle to the operation is becoming clearer: the money. Ah yes, the money. There's a lot of it to be extracted from an operation of this magnitude, but like other aspects of what the Hunters do, this is pretty subtle. If one had to buy their videotape, it would cost \$175, but almost all watch the tape at their own churches, which borrow it from the Hunters. The book must be bought, but for five bucks, well, it's almost worth it.

The Hunter's training sessions themselves cost nothing -- yep, free of charge. So what's the catch? Well, a collection is taken at each of the five training sessions, and if you have ever heard high pressure preachers lean on their congregations, you ain't heard nothing yet. The Hunters start with the premise that each of us trainees is highly motivated to do God's work, and if we show enough faith, we will learn how to perform miracles. If we show enough faith, we will be cured. If we show enough faith, our loved ones will be cured. If we don't show faith in God, how can we expect God to show faith in us? How can we best show faith in God and in this miracle ministry? We need look no further than our wallets.

Five times we are given this pitch over the three days. On the last day we are instructed to take out our wallets and checkbooks and hand them to someone we don't know, as a show of faith. We do get them back and get to remove the cash ourselves, but it's a brilliant ploy because it gets the money physically away from our persons, and it gets the suckers to confront whether or not they are REALLY sincere about obeying God.

It occurs to me I've heard this pitch before: the pep-rally atmosphere, the elite nature of the inner group and the pressure on them to perform, and especially the emphasis on getting more new members into the group rather than on getting more new patients (or customers). The Hunter Ministry is Amway in drag! If you think about it, it makes sense. Not only do you have people on your mailing list who show up to be healed, you've got people who think you've made them miracle workers and so are much more committed to sending in contributions.

A lot more emphasis is placed on recruiting new healers and collecting from them than on bringing in the sick to be healed

(and pitched) in the Friday night Healing Explosion. On the afternoon before the public show in Oakland, the healers are told that their donations have already paid the operating expenses and that anything collected from the public is just gravy. Of course, the crowd which shows up on Friday night is given no such message and is hit hard for donations, but not as hard as the healers were. And when the money comes in, only the Hunters know where it goes. They refuse a public accounting of their finances.

In the graduation ceremonies on Friday at 4 p.m., me, my anonymous friend and the other 1,000 grads get our final instructions on how to act at the 7 p.m. Healing Explosion that night. No attendance records have been made at any of the training sessions and none are made here, but we fill out cards saying we have read all the books, seen all the videos, attended all the classes and that we are true believers. We turn in the completed cards to receive coveted little red healing team badges in exchange.

None of the info on the cards is ever confirmed or checked, but then we are all treated to a little skit from the Bible. Somebody lied to God and God smote him up one side and down the other and left him d-e-a-d. We both wait for a lightning bolt but nothing happens and we breathe a little easier as we collect our badges. I manage to get several ushers' badges for our team so several of us will be able to get onto the floor of the arena. We are only able to get Healer badges for the two of us who are at the final briefing, but that's enough for a try.

Before the 7 p.m. opening time we go to the Oakland arena and pick up other members of our party. Aside from the two certified healers, our ushers include Brian McDonald, Wilma Russell, and Ivars Lauersons. Ivars is allowed on the floor to take pictures freely. None of us knows exactly what will happen, so we all have to stick around for nearly three hours of singing and preaching before the real healing stuff begins at around ten. They need time to pitch for bucks, but the public gets off cheap compared to the healers.

The high -- or low -- point before we get to work is when Charles and Frances call all the cancer and AIDS cases down on the floor for a mass laying-on of hands. The Dynamic Duo goes down the rows of people and knocks 'em over. Now the rest of the five thousand folks can see what is expected of them when one of us lesser healers gets to them. There are quite a few people who get up out of wheelchairs when they are touched, to the delirious rejoicing of the throng. The crowd's enthusiasm is undiminished when those same folks, after walking a few steps, get back into their wheelchairs and are wheeled away.

Finally, our turn comes. The Hunters call the healing teams down to the floor. The people seeking healing are sent down there with little cards listing their names and ailments. We're supposed to grab someone with a card and go to work. You bet we're nervous. Will we be spotted as fakes? When we touch people's heads, will

they feel nothing and refuse to fall? Will they go away feeling unhealed?

Our first customer is a young woman with head and backaches. Despite my nervousness, I try hard to turn on the charm and pile on as much bedside manner as is practical in this madhouse packed with 5,000 people. I command her vertebrae to straighten out and her back pain to end. Not much happens. Are we on the right track here? The training book says if one thing doesn't work, try another. We move on to the Neck Thing, with my voice alternately soothing and commanding -- then I touch her forehead and command a healing. Over she goes into the arms of our ushers! When she gets up again she's smiling. The pain in her head and neck are gone, she says. We sit her down in a chair and grow out her short leg as she watches. Her muscles relax and she stares wide-eyed as her leg seems to grow longer by itself. That gets her but not as much as when she stands up, and to her surprise and ours, finds that the pain in her lower back has disappeared and we send her on her way, smiling and incredulous.

As we look around we can see the same scene being enacted all around us. Some seem dramatically better, others less so. The next woman who comes to us has already had her arms lengthened by somebody else there, but she's still feeling pain, so she's gone looking for a second opinion and has come to us. We do the Neck Thing, then a slight touch on the head sends her to the carpet, and she stays down for a full minute, dead to the world. When she finally gets up I put my hands on her hips for the Pelvic Thing and talk her lower spine and pelvis into place. After about a minute of this, her hips start swiveling from side to side, much to her surprise. She says, "I'm not doing it!" I say, "I'M not doing it either," and take my hands away to prove it. Her hips keep swiveling, apparently all by themselves, and when they stop she reports her discomfort has lessened if not disappeared. She goes away all smiles and we search around for another client.

The pickings are gettin' kind of slim because just about everybody has already been worked on now, and the healers are casting about for any warm bodies. Some of the healees are dissatisfied with their first treatment, but the nice thing about this setup is that a second opinion is only a few steps away. My better judgment deserts me (if that's possible, considering that I got myself into this whole thing in the first place) and I approach a morose-looking woman whose card states that her problem is mental illness and depression. Trouble! If anybody is unlikely to respond to placebo and a few minutes of kind words, this lady is it. But we try like hell to comfort her because we don't want to send her away depressed. She falls over with a touch like all the rest, but when she gets up she's just as sad as ever. In desperation I call over a supervisor, a true believer, in hopes that she will have at least more finely developed personal skills, plus I don't want it said that this woman failed to respond because a real true believer didn't work on her.

It's getting late now; the rest of the evening is spent assisting the supervisor, who has no more luck with the woman than we did, but we at least gave her the benefit of everything the Hunter's claim they offer. As we look around the auditorium, some folks are going out smiling, others are still looking around for another, more successful treatment. At two for three, we have done pretty well, but I want a larger sampling to see if we are for real.

The Hunters won't return to the area for several months, when they will be in Sacramento. Now we are able to make more extensive plans. I call up Joe Morrow, who puts me in touch with several folks from the Sacramento group, including Robert Lee, Saul Silverman and others. From the Bay Area, we have Ivars Lauersons and Brian McDonald again, along with Wally Sampson and Tom Gibson. By this time I have a video of the Hunter's pitch and our Oakland effort, so on the night of the Hunter's Sacramento rally we can hunker down at Robert's house for a detailed briefing. In essence, 30 hours of official Hunter training is compressed into a one-hour crash course, the Official Henvick "No-Fail-How-To-Succeed-in-Faith-Healing-Without-Really-Trying" Seminar. (The title is longer than the course.) Since we now know the schedule, we can get there just before 10 pm in time for our gig and not have to sweat through the whole tedious show. It's nice to know what you're doing ONCE in a while.

Anyway, we decide on jobs, and I hand out the appropriate badges. Those who got the badges that afternoon aren't necessarily the ones who will be wearing them tonight, but what the Hunters don't know won't hurt them.

We get there just as the Hunters are teaching the audience in how to speak in tongues. Oh, you thought speaking in tongues was something that just happened to folks? That they got delirious or God touched them and they just started babbling? Oh gracious, no. The Hunters claim that people have to PRACTICE babbling BEFORE God touches them, so when the big moment arrives they won't embarrass themselves by mumbling their babbles. So we all spend a few minutes enunciating our gibberish. Hey, when in Rome. . . .

The healing teams are called down to the floor and we go through the same routine, except now we have Wally, Brian, Robert and I taking turns doing the healing, plus ushers, two video cameras and one still camera to record it all. The faces are different but the results are pretty much the same. People come up to us with various ailments and respond to what they believe is the power of God working through us. Without exception they fall over when touched on the head. Some of the dozen or so people we get to are dramatically better, a couple even shedding tears of joy when we've finished treating them. In fact, our brand new counterfeit Christians seem to be getting even better results than I am tonight. Beginner's luck.

We don't have any obvious failures tonight and everybody seems to go away glad. I'm too busy to notice if any of our customers

wander off in search of a second opinion, but we do get some folks who have been to true believers, and have come over to us for a better deal. People are urged to go up to the stage to testify to their miracles and encourage those who are not doing so well. Charles makes sure that only the really enthusiastic get up to speak. We could send up one or two of our patients but we're busy trying to heal as many people as possible. We also don't have the people or the time to follow up on those who do testify to see if their miracles last. Experience suggests they won't, and most of the "cured" people will find their ailments have returned; but we'll have to leave those aspects of the investigation to other groups of skeptics.

All of our healers, despite a thorough briefing, are amazed at the power they are able to exert over people. Our little red badges are like the doctor's white coat, only more so, because these people believe we are using the infallible power of God to heal, not just several years of medical training. At no point does anybody suggest that we are any different from the other thousand people on the arena floor, doing what the Hunters call miracles. Our results compare very favorably with theirs as arms and legs grow out, spines straighten and pain vanishes with the laying on of our hands. It's been an exhilarating and yet sobering experience for us to see how easily people can be manipulated. Our experiment has been successful: Our healers, contrary to the Hunters' claims, can perform apparent miracles just as well as the true believers.

Out of respect for the people we worked on, we'll never let them know that we are not true believers. If they realized any benefits from our treatments we won't jeopardize that by disillusioning them. But there is no basis for the faith healers' claims that their "miracles" are the results of supernatural, divine intervention or that God works only through believers.

So what have we accomplished? We certainly haven't done anything that will discourage the true believers. Maybe others will repeat and expand this investigation, and this information will get to the undecided, people who go to the healers out of curiosity, think they see miracles, and contribute to the miracle workers.

Yeah, we're controversial, but we haven't hurt anybody and we might have helped some people out there who will better understand the facts behind the Happy Hunters' Healing Explosion.

(FLASH!! As of this writing, the Hunters have sent a fund-raising letter saying: ". . . we need \$100,000 or more just to be in the black because of Frances having been sick. . . .")

Physician, heal thyself.

*The Hunters have taken careful precautions here. Healers are instructed to COMMAND healing, not manipulate pelvises. Rotating a pelvis could result in serious injury if the client has a valid

medical condition. The Hunters reiterate through all of the sessions that they aren't doctors and that they are not practicing medicine; they urge people to continue seeing their doctors and to follow his or her orders and continue with prescribed medication. The Hunters had a mistake in which an elderly woman was spirit slain and there was no one to catch her as she went down. The spirit was apparently unable to correct the damage, so the lady decided her attorney would be more help than Charles -- she sued.

**There is always a danger in explaining something about which one knows little. Magicians -- and certainly psychics -- have many different ways of doing something, and as soon as we explain one way (or the wrong way!), a procedural change puts egg on the face of the skeptic and turns an uncommitted observer into a believer. Uri Geller still crows about the absurdity of an explanation that he has a miniature receiver in his tooth, and absurd it is. If we aren't sure how something is done, there is certainly no need to accept the burden of proof by trying to explain it.

MORE FOLLY

In July we will resume publication of "Degrees of Folly," Bill Bennetta's serialized article about the Institute for Creation Research and the State Department of Education. Along with new information about the Department's cover-up, Part V will include a consideration of this question: Was Roy Steeves acting on his own initiative when he named imposers to the committee that would examine the ICR, and when he let the legitimate members of the committee think that they were taking part in a legitimate proceeding? Or was he acting on orders from higher officers of the Department?

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STEINHART AQUARIUM TOUR

This privileged tour takes you behind and above the tanks of the aquarium to view the animals up close (we will be with the seals and dolphins at feeding time), to the saltwater filtration area, and the pathology lab.

Make your check payable to "Bay Area Skeptics -- Steinhart tour" for \$10 per person, and send it to the BAS address. A ticket will be sent you by return mail. **DON'T FORGET IT!** Because of space limitations, only about 32 people can be accommodated: first come, first served! Should there be an over-subscription, you will be offered an alternate date or a refund by return mail.

Wear comfortable, non-slip shoes. Because this special tour includes work areas, seven or eight years is the minimum age if you want to bring children.

We are especially indebted to BAS advisor Dr. John McCosker, director of the aquarium, and his staff for providing us with this special opportunity.

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

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