



# ***Cincinnati Skeptic***

***Newsletter of The Association for Rational Thought***

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November 1998

***A scientific world view grows hand in hand with science itself...consistent with the naturalistic world view prevalent in the contemporary scientific community.***

***-- Mario Bunge, in Philosophy of the Social Sciences 22 (1992) 65***

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## ***Amazing Randi on 20/20 miracle broadcast:***

### **The Santos Girl**

ABC-TV's "20/20 Sunday" program last night was about 20/80. They featured the case of Audrey Marie Santos, a comatose 14-year-old girl of Worcester, MA, who is believed by thousands of persons to be interceding with God to heal them. The coverage was, in my opinion, biased and superficial, most kindly described as mildly skeptical.

This unfortunate little girl has spent ten years in a coma, following a swimming-pool accident, and is now displayed in the family home through a window for the faithful to adore. Seldom have I seen such a callous, opportunistic use of misfortune. The state pays for the three shifts of nurses who maintain Audrey's life support. She is fed intravenously, has breathing tubes inserted, and a respirator pumps at her body. Her only reaction to stimulus is that her eyes sometimes follow movement, and she grasps a finger placed in her hand. These are expected automatic reactions that newborn babies exhibit, and not, as the exhibitors would have us believe, signs of recognition by Audrey. Her legs and arms are grotesquely crooked due to "contractures," an expected result of being bedridden without application of proper therapy. Audrey simply cannot manage without 24-hours-a-day care. It's a heartbreaking situation, I'm not surprised that those who flock there to see her, come away emotionally affected. It was hard enough to take on TV.

The ABC interviewer oohed and aahed her way through an interview with the girl's parents. When the "clincher" for miracles was described — the presence of olive oil on some religious statues and holy pictures in the display room — she wonderingly turned a picture around to show the back of it, and said to the camera that there was "nothing there." Lest you think that's rather naive, I must tell you that I have been receiving e-mail and calls all day from magicians — who should certainly know better —

(cont. pg 9)

## ***October Meeting***

### **He Saw It Go: Fred Carroll Tells All**

In 1996 Cincinnati Post reporter Dave Wecker wrote about a spate of UFO sightings in the Middletown, Ohio, area. His article attracted a call from Fred Carroll, who hinted that he knew something about the origin of the 1996 wave of sightings. Carroll certainly did know something about them as he was one of three conspirators who carried off the midnight UFO launchings reported in Wecker's November 26, 1996, article. But Fred did not reveal the full extent of his shenanigans to Dave Wecker.

That had to wait until the October A.R.T. meeting, when Fred told the full story to A.R.T. members. Fred has been interested in UFO's for many years, the result of his experience as a pilot in the air force where he flew 50 combat missions. During his flying years, he saw and "exchanged fire" with UFO's, and has maintained a skeptical interest in them since. But his major activity in the UFO realm began early in the spring of 1969, when Project Blue Book at Wright Patterson Air Force Base was just finishing up. At that time a small section of southwest Ohio, the area around Middletown, was experiencing a flurry of UFO sightings. Everyone agreed that these alleged UFO's had red, green, blue and amber lights, but no one could describe the UFO's except for these lights.

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**President****& Membership Secretary**

Roy Auerbach: (513) 731-2774

E-mail: raa@one.net

**Vice President**

Nurit Bowman(513) 731-0642

**Media Resources Coordinator:**

Joe Gastright: (606) 581-7315

E-mail: joegskep@aol.com

**Program & Membership Chairman:**

Brad Bonham: (513) 761-5613

E-mail: bonham@compuserve.com

**Newsletter Editor:**

Wolf Roder: (513) 556-3424

E-mail: roder@uc.edu

**Treasurer:**

Rick Prairie (513) -681-8444

E-mail: Richard.Prairie@uc.edu

**Investigations Officer:**

Dick McGrath(606)344-3395

**Recording Secretary :**

Virginia Jergens:(513) 871-4876

E-mail:vhj@one.net

**Publicity Coordinator:**

Gary Himes (513) 752-5135

**Web Site Manager &****SANE Manager****(Skeptical Area Network Effort)**

David Wall (513) 321-3381

E-mail: darkon@one.net

The By-Laws require that officers for the following year be elected annually at the May meeting. They begin their duties on following July 1.

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**President's Corner****Sagan and Scientism**

by Joe Gastright

While on the internet recently, I hit the ubiquitous "more like this" button and found myself in strange territory. The first article was entitled "Carl Sagan Prophet of Scientism." As a great fan of Sir Peter Medawar's book *Pluto's Republic*, I was surprised to find Sagan consigned to those scientific sinners who in Sir Peter's words "apply what they believe to be the methods of science to the investigation of matters upon which science has no bearing." Carl Sagan was certainly attacked by colleagues for popularizing science and probably for being the most popular spokesman for science on the late night talk show circuit. What did he do to cause a charge of Scientism? I decided to look into it a little more.

It turns out that philosophers, and theologians use the concept to attack science whenever they feel that science is treading on their exclusive domain. Its hard enough to picture any real science preaching that it alone has the tools to reach knowledge in every conceivable field of study. So I discovered that Scientism can be a straw man developed by the enemies of science to put distinguished, especially popular scientific spokesmen, back into their place. This sort of Scientism is defined as requiring the elimination of all metaphysical, philosophical, and theological claims. It turns out that one sentence in Sagan's work converted him into a *scientismist*, or *scientish* if you prefer. He stated that he believed "there is only a quantitative, not a qualitative difference between men and animals." As I looked at the surrounding articles it was clear that fundamentalist believers find Scientism a favorite pejorative. Within scientific disciplines scientism is recognized as an indefensible viewpoint and is therefore very scarce. This does not prevent frustrated researchers, even Nobel Prize winners, from promulgating silly opinions in fields remote from their own. David Bohm and Fritjoff Capra come to mind. Sir Peter invented the term *Poetism* to cover this sin common in the New Age. Poetism is the belief that imaginative insight and a mysteriously privileged sensibility can tell us all the answers. I think that despite all of talk about deconstruction, Postmodernist Critics also feed at this trough of mystical and very personal truth.

Scientism is often confused with atheism, materialism, physicalism, logical positivism, determinism, and naturalism. Space does not allow a comparison of these exceedingly interesting philosophical positions, but science does not absolutely rest on any of them as long as there are data to test falsifiable hypotheses. Besides science has always mistrusted too much philosophy, or too much rhetoric in the presentation of its results.

There is a kind of scientism that is a current problem. It is the use of science as a part of policy development and therefore of political positioning. In an article which can be found on the internet at (<http://www.vision.net.au/~daly/scientism.htm>) a meteorologist makes a case that global warming has become a world issue because a 1995 report was amended after approval by adding, "...a discernible human influence on global climate." The author of this article, John Daly, makes a case that the American Meteorological Society was advocating scientism when it arbitrarily connected humans to global warming on the basis of an inferior sub-science, "Greenhouse science." He implies that the green scientists will peer-review and publish anything, provided that it proudly proclaims "our results are consistent with the warming of the atmosphere due to anthropogenic carbon dioxide." The data on warming, however, are also consistent with many, many alternate hypotheses.

Is science then, when she acts as the handmaiden of public policy always explain why ideological talk show hosts discourse so passionately on certain favorite scientific disputes.

(Editor's comment: John L. Daly, an Australian meteorologist, is one of a group of scientists who strongly question the accuracy of data on global warming, i.e. they conclude, there has been no global warming.)

## From the Un-Easy Chair....



### The Pseudo-Scientist Mind.

Last summer I visited the Museum of the Institute for Creation Research in Santee, a suburb of San Diego. Their displays are standard museum fare, excellent pictures, rocks and fossils, an organized progression in time, and lengthy explanations. All very well done and beautifully laid out. There is, however, no “creation science,” that is, no science different from standard biology and earth science. Rather, while the pictures are from generally accepted sources, textbooks, National Geographic, NASA, etc. the interpretation is strictly biblical. For each display various verses from the Bible are quoted, many, but by no means all from *the Book of Genesis*.

A scientifically oriented visitor looking for original “creation science” will be disappointed, the remarkable aspect is that there simply is none. The institute calls itself a religious missionary undertaking, rather than a scientific research organization. The Museum accepts much of standard science, and will propagate this in its teachings. DNA as the building blocks for living things for instance is accepted. So are the fact of fossils, and that dinosaurs are former living animals. That there were ice ages is taken as true. Virtually all measurements of geologic time are rejected, carbon 14 dating, other nuclear dating, red shift for ages of the Universe, even qualitative dating of fossils by superposition is rejected. What is accepted and what is rejected seems entirely arbitrary from a scientific standpoint, which sees interconnections that make knowledge a seamless web. You walk along the display path of the Museum saying to yourself: “ah, yes, they got this right,” when the next picture is totally misinterpreted and the science garbled.

We are tempted to think these people must be fully bereft of sense, in short crazy, but they are not. Some are quite bright and function well in the world, a few have even occupied academic posts or research positions in industry. There is something very odd about the mind which has the intelligence to understand, yet will reject some ordinary insights completely. The novelist and skeptic Kurt Vonnegut has tried a mechanical metaphor for this kind of totalitarian mind, and I really want to quote it at length: [*Mother Night* (Avon Books, 1966) p. 162-163.]

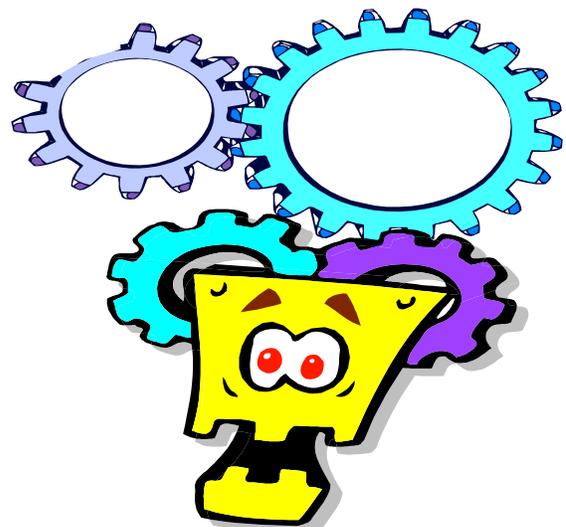
The dismaying thing about the classic totalitarian mind is that any given gear, though mutilated, will have at its circumference unbroken sequences of teeth that are immaculately maintained, that are exquisitely machined. Hence the cuckoo clock in Hell—keeping perfect time for eight minutes and thirty-three seconds, jumping ahead fourteen minutes, keeping perfect time for six seconds, jumping ahead two seconds, keeping perfect time for two hours and one second, then jumping ahead a year.

The missing teeth, of course, are simple, obvious truths, truths available and comprehensible even to ten-year-olds, in most cases. The willful filing off of gear teeth, the willful doing without certain obvious pieces of information— ...

That is the closest I can come to explaining the legions, the nations of lunatics I’ve seen in my time.

Vonnegut’s hero goes on to distinguish between some teeth of knowledge missing because they never learned or forgot something, and the deliberate omitting, expelling, or rejecting of knowledge by the pseudo-science mind. Vonnegut’s metaphor suggests some of the gear teeth of these kinds of mind have been deliberately filed off. It has been my experience that reason or rational discourse will not replace them. People who accept “creation science” are not interested in challenging their faith or open to an examination of earth science questions, although they may be quite rational in other areas of life.

— the editor





## *Too Many Books.... Too Little Time....*

*End-Time Visions: The Road to Armageddon?*  
by Richard Abanes  
(NY: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1998)

Let there be no mistake about this, the author is a believing Christian, a religious person who has a devout and thoughtful concern for his and other person's faith. Yet, he debunks, and that is the only accurate word to use, the modern concern with spirituality and most of all the prurient concern with the impending end of the world in general and the millenium specifically. To convince us that no apocalypse is impending, or at least that we can not know whether there is, Abanes takes us through the history of failed and fatal predictions of the end-time visions. First he recounts recent disasters, and then takes on the older prophets who failed.

Abanes' first chapter is devoted to such losses as the Jim Jones suicides in Guiana, the flaming disaster in Waco, the murders by the Japanese led Aum-Shinrikyo (supreme truth), the macabre deaths of the Order of the Solar Temple folks, and many others around the world, with last but not least the end of the members of the Heavensgate cult. Clearly, the author is telling us, these expectations of the apocalypse are the very opposite of harmless.

This book is a record of abysmal, repeated failure by religious soothsayers and prophets to forecast the end of the world, the second coming, or the beginning of Christ's millenium. The really remarkable part is that no matter how much they blunder, how little they are able to prognosticate, how often the predicted date passes, the leaders never admit failure and some of the followers remain true. Hal Lindsey for instance has rewritten his best selling books about the end of time several times. He keeps finding reasons to recalculate his data and push "the date" further into the future.

"Humanity's preoccupation with doomsday may go back as far as our earliest evidence of communal living. Many ancient civilizations were influenced by end-time visions." (p. 159). Abanes looks at earliest history, at the Roman period, and critically discusses the events around the year one thousand AD, and other events during the Middle Ages. Of great interest is the history of the Millerites, because so many of their intellectual descendants are still with us. William Miller started preaching the coming of the Lord in Dresden, New York, in 1833. (Incidentally the year

and the place of the birth of Robert Green Ingersoll. Shall we count that coincidence a miracle?)

Miller's 1836 book predicting the end of the world for 1843 gained him a huge following. After great expectations came the great disappointment. But not all of his followers were prepared to give up. The Seventh Day Adventist Church grew out of the Millerite movement initially to set the date for Jesus second coming for 1873/74. Another church, Jehovah's Witnesses, also descended from the Millerites. When Christ failed to return in 1873 or 1874, they decided he had returned invisibly, and that 1914 would be the year, or later 1925, and so on, and on, and on....

To the believers in doomsday prophecies facts don't seem to matter. Neither the natural history of disasters, nor the historical examination of the Scriptures provides any indication when the end might come, or that it is near. This book is good background, good history, and good reading.

— Wolf Roder

*Skeptics and True Believers:  
The Exhilarating Connection Between Science and  
Religion*  
by Chet Raymo  
(New York: Walker and Company, 1998)

Let me say I think all skeptics ought to read this book, and that is intended as high praise indeed. For one thing this book by a physics professor is extremely clearly written in a prose that often achieves a lyrical quality. It is also concise, in that the author say what he means with an economy of words. Raymo firmly rejects the mythical and supernatural, yet argues there need not be any conflict between science and religion.

Raymo divides the world into "skeptics," those, who follow and accept science and the scientific picture of reality, and "true believers," those whose world view includes the non-rational, angels, ghosts, miracles, and other god and not god supernatural. He clearly is on the side of science, on the side of skeptics who demand rational evidence for their conclusions. He quotes Newton's restatement of William of Ockham (1295-1349), "We are to admit no more causes of natural things than such as are both true and sufficient to explain their appearance," (p. 107) as the defining difference between skeptics and true believer. He describes the enterprise we call science as organized skepticism. In other words Raymo throws over board the entire mythical baggage, from astrology to UFO's, from "creationism" and the stable in Bethlehem or Mt. Sinai, to prayer, with all the tribal myths, scriptures, and church traditions. These may have been the best knowledge of their

time, but they have been superseded by the scientific story of the universe.

Raymo is quite clear that the scientific world view is incompatible with traditional religion, with the idea that humans are the point and purpose of creation, with doctrinaire moral precepts, and with a biblical interpretation of the universe. But science, skepticism, tolerance, and belief in progress need not be alien to spiritual understanding and ethical behavior. "It is the thesis of this book that these qualities *must* be associated with any religion that will lead us out of our present spiritual malaise and provide a satisfactory moral compass for our inevitably scientific and technological future." (p. 162) He sees no reason why religion can not come to terms with the scientific understanding of the cosmos, the earth, or the nature of humans.

The Hebrew scriptures tell us God created humans from the slime of the earth, and such is our understanding of what happened through geological history. But, to say God fashioned man from dust, like a potter throws a clay pot on a wheel, "is a lovely story, but in its charming anthropomorphism vastly underestimates the power and process of God." (p. 181)

The God of the spiraling powers resides in nature beyond all metaphors, beyond all scriptures, beyond all "final theories." It is the ground and source of our sense of wonderment, of power, of powerlessness, of light, of dark, of meaning, and of bafflement. It is the God whose history began with the first human who experienced awe, contingency, fear. It is the God of mystics of all cultures and creeds. We stand on the shore of knowledge and look out into the sea of mystery and speak his name. His name eludes all creeds and all theories of science. he is indeed the "dread essence beyond logic." (p. 214)

Ultimately, Raymo's God is beyond words as well. He speaks of research as a sacred process, of the capacity for wonder at the existence of the cosmos, of the worlds, the stars, and the galaxies as a form of worship. He comments on the famous deep space photograph of the Hubble Space Telescope as looking deep into the soul of the night. We see a breathtaking snowstorm of galaxies in living color, the most distant not long after the beginning of the universe. Since the beginning of religion wise men have asked, "What is the use of praying if God does not answer?" "In this wonderful image of more than a 1000 galaxies, caught by a magnificent instrument lofted into space by a questioning creature, God answers." (p. 244)

-- Wolf Roder

## A Puzzle for Thinkers



### Some puzzles are very old.

This puzzle has been attributed to the famous Greek mathematician Euclid who flourished about 300 BCE.

A horse and a donkey were carrying sacks of grain. The horse said to the donkey: "If you gave me one of your sacks, I would be carrying twice as many sacks of grain as you, but if I loaded you with one of my sacks, we would carry equal numbers." So how many sacks of grain were they each carrying?

### Solution to last month's puzzle:

Age in years and square of years. The year was 1980, and Jennifer was 44, i.e. born in 1936 which is 44 squared. The last year which was a square is 1849, so that someone 43 in 1892 could make this observation; the next such year is 2025 so that not until 2070 a 45 year old will contemplate such great insights. The puzzle is best solved by trial as to which recent years have been squares.



In the fall of 1930, New York's Belmont racetrack hired a "professional rainmaker" in Dr. George Ambrosias Immanuel Morrison Sykes from California (where else?). He was to prevent rain from falling on the 15 day fall racing meet, for which he would get \$1,000 for each day it did not rain, while he would have to cough up \$2,000 for each wet day. His theories of "meteorology," "thermurgy" and "pneumaturgy," plus his belief in a flat earth must have worked—he left town ahead of a curious pack of reporters some \$7,000 ahead of the game.



Randi and his ilk may insist there is no real magic, but here is one genuine, absolute, historical case of rain making. Guaranteed, I'm willing and ready to make rain under those conditions myself.



### Art Business



The Association for Rational Thought  
Membership Meeting, October 10, 1998

#### Minutes

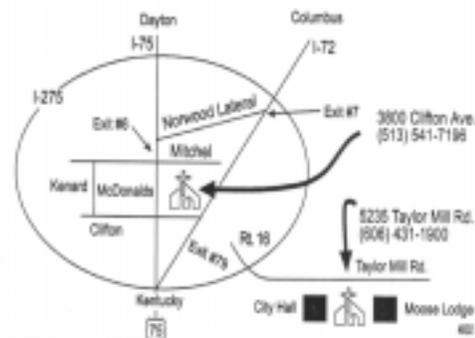
Brad Bonham, Program Chair, announced the program for November will be Joe Gastright speaking on biomagnetism, the use of magnets to allegedly reduce pain. In December George Bishop, University of Cincinnati, will speak on the relation of creation beliefs to scientific literacy in industrialized countries. January will be Gary Klein speaking on research suggesting that decisions made quickly under great pressure that seem to the decision maker to have been made "without thinking," are the result of intuition learned through experience, not extrasensory perception as some believe, and that intuition has a role to play in effective decision making when goals are unclear and information is inadequate. We may be able to offer copies of the speaker's book Sources of Power: How People Make Decisions at the meeting.



### Crazy of the month

Along with the usual junk a very elaborate advertisement for an End of the World lecture drifted through my mail slot recently. "Live via Satellite" it offered a world wide lecture explaining my future on the eve of the millenium, including "what kind of god" and "how much time is left." It further offered to "share in a fresh contemporary exploration of Bible Prophecy and cyber-space research." "Through the Apocalypse's window to the future and through big-screen technology," I was promised to "join in this global quest for a personal encounter with God."

To partake of this wonder I was directed to visit one of two places in the Cincinnati area. The map directing me was a marvel by itself. If you can read it, perhaps you understand how this kind of mind works.



### Now on Video! James "The Amazing" Randi Live at Lexington

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from: The KASES File  
*The Journal of the Kentucky Association of Science  
Educators and Skeptics*  
Vol. 11 No. 1 Spring 1998



### Fred Carroll (from pg 1)

The truth is that these remarkable UFO's were the direct result of the activities of Fred and two of his co-workers working the night shift at a large Middletown industrial complex which shall go unnamed. It appears that the night shift at this large industrial complex provided little to occupy the remarkable talents of Fred and friends. The result was a series of super-secret, self-directed, creative projects developed by this trio to occupy the wee hours. The name chosen for this undertaking was properly industrial: CITGO, pronounced, appropriately, C-IT-GO, to suggest the high hopes of the three co-conspirators.

These projects were not mere frivolity, but an attempt to study the responses of the local population, both civilian and military, to real, flying UFO's. This was of interest to the researchers because they already knew people's responses to weather phenomena and the like interpreted as UFO's: anything that the viewer couldn't identify must be an interstellar alien spaceship.

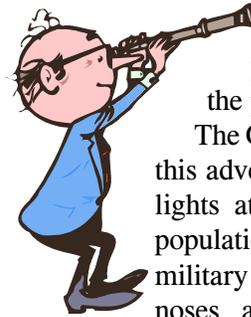
They knew that Project Blue Book researchers had been able to explain 98 percent of all the unidentified flying objects they investigated, the remaining unexplained events amounting to a mere two percent error rate, a rate acceptable to any scientist. But what is acceptable to a scientist need not be good enough for a true believer. True believers often think Project Blue Book is a cover up designed to hide the true galactic origins of those last unexplained two percent of UFO sightings. Our nocturnal crew knew the woods were full of true believers, and sought to engage their interest.

So they gathered the materials they needed, helium, balloons, flashlights, aluminum foil, furnace tape and all the other advanced, technologically cutting edge stuff that one might build a UFO and began. Their first project was designed to see what people would report if they saw a real UFO.

To make the effort as realistic as possible, the co-conspirators worked in total secret, as real space aliens would. Deep within the large industrial complex which shall go unnamed, unknown to the President of the United States, or NASA, or the FBI or even the CIA, they developed their project, striving to act as much like real space aliens as possible. They focused their thoughts on the question: "What would real aliens do in these circumstances?"

The first answer that occurred to them was the Ghost Series. They used plastic bags of unknown origin and use, putting one 14 foot long, 12 foot wide bag inside of another, to give their project more durability, just the way Russian subs are built with two hulls, one inside the other. Aliens would, of course, no doubt think like Russians. Then they filled the bags with helium that by unexplained means appeared in their super-secret work space. To the bags they attached flashlights whose lights were covered with red,

blue, green or amber cellophane. (Aliens always use colored cellophane.) On a night when the weather seemed likely to provide the proper wind direction for the flight, a ghostly "UFO," showing its colored lights and not much else, rose over the large industrial complex which shall go unnamed and drifted out over the Middletown area. In time, several more Ghost Series balloons were launched.



Response from the public and the media was gratifying. Many newspaper clippings were duly entered in the project diary.

The Ghost Series was only the beginning of this adventure. UFO's sporting multi-colored lights attracted the attention of the civilian population, but were of no interest to the local military units. Military pilots turn up their noses at mere UFO's. What they were interested in is UFO's that appear on their radar screens. Thus the Black Hole Series. These were designed to be invisible in the night sky, invisible to everything except radar.

One of the aliens stopped by the supermarket and bought several rolls of aluminum foil. The inner bag was covered completely with foil held together just as real aliens might have done it, with the *Force*, in this case, duct tape, which has a light side and a dark side and holds the universe together. The outer bag was painted black. No flashlights with cellophane lenses went on these missions, which were conducted under strict blackout conditions. The release of the Black Holes resulted in reports of military planes unsuccessfully chasing UFO's traveling at unimaginable speeds. After these flights, puzzled citizens must have carried fairly large amounts of duct tape and foil to the trash, little knowing they were pitching a genuine UFO into the garbage.

The next series, the Teaser Series, was more ambitious yet. These were also unlighted black balloons, but included only three strips of aluminum foil around the inner balloon. These balloons appeared and disappeared on the radar as the balloons turned and twisted in the night air. Two balloons in the dark on radar thus appeared as a single UFO moving with astonishing rapidity from one place to another. And that is exactly what the military who spotted these creations on their radar screens believed: that there was a single ultra-fast UFO bobbing erratically about in their air space. This approach worked well until one night two UFO's were sighted at the same time on a single radar. A series of security and quality control meetings resulted in a firm decision to drop the Teasers in favor of projects less likely to let the cat out of the bag.

The Teasers were supplanted by the Shazzam series, a charming UFO complete with battery operated

Christmas tree lights on timers set to allow it to travel towards its target in the dark undetected, then on in the daylight, with the lights going on about the time it appeared over Chicago after dark the next night. There it would appear as a saucer-shaped circle of blue lights surrounded by a circle of white lights, in true alien flying saucer style. These did not rise to sixty to eighty thousand feet as had been hoped, and may or may not have reached Chicago, but the newspaper clipping file continued to grow.



The last of these remarkable projects was the Mother Ship Series, larger than the earlier versions, featuring an inner ring of flashing blue lights and an outer ring of flashing white lights. These resulted in wonderfully inaccurate reports of saucer shaped UFO's, which were of course actually not saucer shaped, but balloon shaped, the viewers misled because they saw only the bottom of the craft where the circles of lights were.

About this time our hardworking co-conspirators realized that the authorities inside and outside the large industrial complex in the Middletown area were about to close in on them. Believing that there is no boundary on earth that a little imagination can't cross, they carefully restored the midnight production site to its pre-production condition and prepared a selection of explanations. The missing helium was a little hard to account for, but even that was smoothed over with a little handy, if slightly misleading, accounting. You may be wondering how it was that the co-conspirators timed their disappearing act so neatly. That may have had something to do with the fact that the management of the large industrial complex chose the lead conspirator himself to investigate the rumors.

Breathing a large collective sigh of relief, the three surveyed the possible difficulties they could have landed in, including 33 charges of littering at \$500 each, a number of instances of interfering with commercial air flight, which could have landed them in prison, and no one knows how many OSHA and EPA regulations flouted and military dollars spent on wild balloon chases, not to mention the cost of law enforcement investigations and the improper disposal of hazardous material, violating the Clean Air Act, and other assorted charges. They considered themselves fortunate indeed to have avoided all of these while indulging themselves in a bit of truly splendid skeptical legerdemain.



My account barely scratches the surface of this wonderful tale of skeptics unleashed. I urge you all to encourage Fred Carroll to commit all of this -- he has detailed logs -- to book form for us and all skeptics everywhere to

enjoy long after the last eyewitnesses vanishes into the mists of history.

-- Reported by Virginia Jergens.

***Be on the look out!!!***



*Investigations* arise from the membership's desire to investigate something in the light of reason and truth. Consequently, **every** member is invited to submit to the Investigations Officer any proposal or item that could be studied together. So far, most investigations have been done by individuals within the Association. If you are doing such now, the whole membership would be delighted to hear from on your research. Please contact the Investigations Officer, Dick McGrath, (606) 334-3395, and let him know what

### *Mathematicians Clean Comprehensible Limerick*

(contributed by David Wall)

$$\int_1^{\sqrt[3]{3}} z^2 dz \times \cos\left(\frac{3 \times \pi}{9}\right) = \ln(\sqrt[3]{e})$$

Integral zee-squared dee zee  
From one to the cube root of three  
Times the cosine  
Of three pi over nine  
Equals log of the cube root of ee.

*Let me comment, for those who are differentially challenged, that the integral evaluates to one-third of three minus one. In case of uncertainty, that means a third of two. English just doesn't hack it here. The pi indicates that the angle is to be in radians, and the natural logarithm of the third root of e comes to one-third. All this can be carried out on a little hand calculator without much thought. I know all this because I looked it up in the textbook, the CRC tables, and had the help of my daughter, her boyfriend, my girl friend, and assorted other people with knowledge of differential calculus. And besides David Wall explained it to me.*

— your editor

## From the Amazing Randi....

### Santos Girl (from pg 1)

asking me how this could possibly be a trick, and if it is, how it could be accomplished! I have responded thus: when an artist shows a completed canvas, no one expresses astonishment about how the paint got there. The assumption is that the artist simply applied it, with a brush or palette knife. That was done in his studio, out of sight of the observer. Similarly, to get oil onto a picture or an icon, you can simply put it there during the 16 hours that the display room is closed and out of view, or during any of the many periods during which Audrey is being attended to, and not on display. A squirt of oil takes only a few seconds. That should not be any sort of mystery.

The ABC commentary said that the presence of the oil has “baffled the experts.” No, it hasn’t. It’s very simple to do. What “experts” do they refer to? A committee of “psychologists and clergy.” I’m sorry, but I must ask: where is the expertise here? There is nothing here that indicates anything but a parsimonious conclusion: while no one is looking, someone puts oil onto the figures and pictures. Is there any evidence that this is *not* the explanation? No, none.



More importantly, was any evidence offered to show *one* healing as a result of Audrey’s presence or intercession? No. Not one example. ABC-TV did cite the case of an 18-year-old boy who visited this shrine after serious leg damage, and showed him walking quite well. But they also mentioned that his doctors had given him a 75% likelihood of recovering from his condition, so we end up with zero supporting evidence — except for reports of phone calls and letters from persons who aver that they’ve been healed. No evidence.

Yes, the psychologists and clergy on that committee looked behind the pictures and found nothing, too. I’m not at all surprised, but I fail to understand their surprise. A report was made that a religious figure the committee brought with them “suddenly oozed oil.” Were they there when this happened? No, they noticed it after it had appeared. The local priest, apparently a devout, well-meaning, and honest man, said that he has “not seen the slightest evidence of fraud” in this case. I remind him that he’s also not seen the slightest evidence that the oil is not simply placed there.

I was interviewed here at the JREF for the “Inside Edition” program a few weeks ago, on the same case. They brought along with them a plaster figure purchased — for an incredible sum — from a local religious store. During the interview, I was asked about how oil could appear on such

a figure. We examined the statue in detail, close up, and found it unprepared in any way. We continued the conversation, and then I asked the interviewer to look at the face of the figure. Olive oil was running down the face, dripping from the chin and from the hands of the statue. Without any closing of curtains, turning out of lights, or other subterfuge, I had accomplished something that appeared similar to the Audrey miracle. A moment later, a religious print in a frame showed oil flowing down its surface, too.



The oil that runs down the figures in the Santos home was analyzed by ABC. It was declared to be “75% olive oil and 25% unidentifiable.” That’s nonsense. A good forensic analysis would identify 100% of the substance.

But what really got me in this case was that there was no mention, anywhere, of how the Santos family supports itself and the poor little girl they are exploiting. There were no questions about offerings or fees asked of those who crowd the place daily. Nor of the very substantial fees that the parents ask, to appear on camera. This is a small industry, turning out a product that is of questionable merit, and no track record at all. A family tragedy is being used to make money, probably a very substantial amount, to judge from what could have been a much more complete and penetrating examination of a claimed miracle.

In closing, the ABC interviewer told the TV audience that their request to set up a surveillance camera in Audrey’s room — to see if anyone applied oil to any of the artifacts — had been refused. The reason? The family preferred to await the conclusions of the church committee, which we are told may take “months or even years.” I’m sure it will. My question: why would a surveillance camera in any way interfere with any investigation? In my opinion, that would aid substantially in an investigation, and perhaps save “months or even years” of time and expense.

Audrey Santos, my heart goes out to you. I wish you had been granted the dignity of an anonymous life, such as it is, rather than the circus that has been created around you.

— James Randi.

(Randi credits doctors Bob Imrie and Wally Sampson for this story)

The program *Sightings* was playing, and someone was describing yet another Bridey Murphy like account wherein “amazing proof” of past lives had been revealed — through hypnosis, of course.

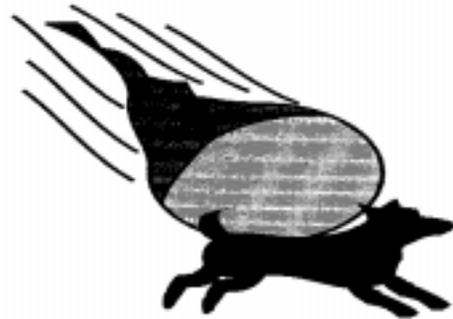
Apparently several patients of a “hypnotherapist” somewhere in the South were amazed to learn under hypnosis that they had all lived in the same community, some distance away, during the Civil War. Of course, when the Sightings crew went to said village, they found abundant evidence

“proving” these claims were true. They even interviewed a bona fide MD-type psychiatrist describing how very “important” this kind of work is. One of their star subjects explained how his mission during the war had been to make sure that, should the South not fare well, the Union Army couldn’t utilize one or more tunnels in or near the town. He explained quite clearly that, in that event, he was supposed to “blow up the tunnels with dynamite.” With the aid of the film crew, he even showed the audience holes in the brick lining of the tunnel where he was “supposed to place the dynamite.” The Sightings folks even provided a brief “recreation” for the benefit of viewers wherein an actor was handling sticks of dynamite wrapped in a bundle.

I suspect some of you will already have noticed something this past life experiencer, his hypnotherapist, and the entire Sightings production crew apparently missed. Dynamite was patented by Alfred Nobel in 1867 — two years after the end of the Civil War.

Somehow I doubt this gaffe will tarnish Sightings sterling credibility. I guess this is what happens when you sleep through all your history classes *and* all your science classes. It also demonstrates how easily TV writers and researchers can be led to mislead.

**Mean  
Martians  
Murder  
Measly  
Mutt**



“Dog Killed by Martians.” A supermarket tabloid headline? Not quite. On June 28, 1911, a dog was struck and killed by a meteor in Nakla, Egypt. The meteor was found to have originated on Mars, and may have contained some of those fossilized bacteria that lately have caused such a scientific stir.

Here is the careful phrasing the researchers actually used about the Martian meteorite:

“The carbonate globules are similar in texture and size to some terrestrial bacterially induced carbonate precipitates. Although inorganic formation is possible, formation of the globules by biogenic processes could explain many of the observed features .... and could thus be fossil remains of past Martian biota.”

(as cited in *Natural History*, Oct. '98 p. 87)



**BUILD YOUR OWN HOT AIR BALLOON**  
An ideal aeronautical science fair project for the class, the family or your club. These colorful red and white balloons are easy to assemble and can be repaired if damaged. Includes ten pre-cut panels of #1 grade tissue paper and a 16 gauge wire for the bottom ring. Balloons ascend to 200 feet high and can be released or tethered with kite string. The hot air, supplied from 2 to 3 cans of cooking fuel, is funneled up a 1 or 2 foot stove pipe. For children over 15 years of age. **Caution: Adult supervision recommended.**

|                                                       |         |
|-------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| A) 12 Foot Balloon Kit #V31-333                       | \$19.95 |
| B) 9 Foot Balloon Kit #V60-691                        | \$14.95 |
| C) 6 Foot Balloon Kit, Package of 2 Balloons #V71-866 | \$12.95 |



**SOLAR SHUTTLE**  
When exposed to the heat of the sun the air in the black solar shuttle heats up lifting it up into the sky. You control this dirigible with the line. Just tie one end of the balloon with the attached wire, run with the mouth of the balloon open to inflate to 10' x 2', then tie the other end shut and affix the tow line. Weight: 2 oz.

|                                  |           |
|----------------------------------|-----------|
| Package of 2 Shuttles #V53-627   | \$8.95    |
| 500' of 50lb. Test Line #V81-742 | \$4.95    |
| 2 or More (B)                    | \$3.95ea. |



**IS IT A UFO? NO, IT'S AN INVADER KITE!**  
The Invader Turbo Kite is a dynamic new kite model that attracts attention wherever it is flown. A 24-inch wingspan and a 14-inch stabilizing disc enable the craft to fly in winds ranging from 8 to 25 mph. As the kite rotates in the wind, it emits strobe-like flashes in bright sunlight and loud whirring sounds at high speed. Kite only.

|                                     |           |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| A) UFO Kite #V72-418                | \$9.50    |
| 2 or More                           | \$8.87ea. |
| B) 500' of 50lb. Test Line #V81-742 | \$4.95    |
| 2 or More                           | \$3.95ea. |

<-----In light of our last meeting on C-it-go, I saw this add in a catalog put out by Edmund Scientific's (C989B). Of particular curiosity is the Solar Shuttle. Now I am not a scientist, just a little curious. With some adaptation what could we/ART do with this, in light of what we have learned? I sometimes look out at the lights in the night sky and wonder -- with a little foil, some christmas lights and???....hummm

-- Donna

**The Association for Rational Thought** is an independent, nonprofit, scientific and educational organization. We share the philosophy of the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP), an international organization which investigates allegedly paranormal events, sponsors workshops and publishes *Skeptical Inquirer*, a journal of investigations of paranormal claims.

**A.R.T.** meets on the second Saturday of each month September through June, 10:00 AM at James Tavern in Blue Ash and publishes *Cincinnati Skeptic* each month. A.R.T. meetings are open to the public. A.R.T. also maintains a database of information on paranormal claims for local new media to consult and investigates local paranormal claims. A.R.T. was founded by Cincinnati area skeptics in 1991. Annual dues are \$15.00 and include a subscription to the *Cincinnati Skeptic*.

For more information call: President Roy Auerbach (513)731-2774 or Nurit Bowman, (513) 731-0642 or visit our website. **Address Changes and Corrections, Membership Questions:** Roy Auerbach (513) 731-2774 E-mail: raa@one.net

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Make your check payable to the **Association for Rational Thought** and mail to A.R.T., P.O. Box 12896, Cincinnati OH 45212. *Contributions are not at present tax deductible, but we are working on it.*

Request subjects for future meetings \_\_\_\_\_

Please do *not* include my name and address in mailing lists exchanged with other groups.



### *Skepticism and ART on the Electronic Media*

For the latest in skeptical news via e-mail, join SANE, the Skeptical Area Network Effort. Send your e-mail address to list manager David Wall at darkon@one.net with subject "subscribe." You will find cheerful, rational messages from CSICOP, James "The Amazing" Randi, your fellow local skeptics and ART in your e-mail box every week.

This is our means of staying in touch between issues of the *Cincinnati Skeptic*.

Be sure to check out our handsome skeptical web page at <http://www.cincinnati-skeptics.org> --- lots of nifty links to skeptical thinking around the world. Our web site contains the basic definition of who we are, what we do, and our bylaws. In addition, you'll find such things as how to get to our meetings held at James Tavern, other ways to reach us, how to sign up for our e-mail list service, how to send sample copies of the newsletter to potential members, and links to other sites of interest.

For the future, all of the draft skeptical objections will be entered in the web site and eventually, it will be possible to download an electronic version of the newsletter.

—David Wall, Web Site Manager

Web: <http://www.cincinnati-skeptics.org>

E-mail: darkon@one.net



Association for Rational Thought  
P.O. Box 12896  
Cincinnati, OH 45212

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The Association for Rational Thought is an organization committed to encouraging rational, well-informed evaluation of fringe-science, pseudoscience, and paranormal claims. A.R.T. encourages the investigation of paranormal and pseudoscientific claims from a responsible, scientific viewpoint and the distribution of the results of such investigations to the public. You are cordially invited to become a member of A.R.T. Membership information is included elsewhere in this issue.

## Preview Of Coming Attractions....

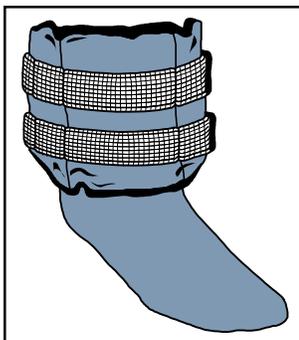
**Third Meeting of the 1998-1999 Season!**

**Please mark your calendar and plan to attend!**

**Date and Day:** 14 November 1998 -- Saturday

**Time:** 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM -- program  
12:00PM - 20:00 PM -- lunch

**Place:** James Tavern at Cooper Road and Reed Hartman Highway. It is a great place to gather and then have the lunch/social portion of each meeting. This location is very accessible for folks wielding walkers, wheelchairs and the like. Coffee is available with a small donation during the meeting.



**Topic:** Biomagnetism

**Speaker:** Joe Gastright

Do small permanent magnets cure diseases and reduce pain? How do magnetic fields interact with living tissue? Why isn't the research on magnetic medicine more promising? All of these questions will be answered along with a review of the history of magnetic cures.