



Cincinnati Skeptic

Newsletter of The Association for Rational Thought

Vol. 12 No.1

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We generally are better persuaded by the reasons we discover ourselves than by those given to us by others.
— *Blaise Pascal (1623-1662)*

President Signs Bioterrorism Preparedness Act



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The Association for
Rational Thought
Annual Report 2001-2002



This is the eleventh annual report of the Association for Rational Thought. Virginia Jergens, Secretary.

President's Report

The past year has been both good and bittersweet. As always the organization has turned in a great performance with interesting talks and a great newsletter. All of us who have participated have been enriched. I hope those members whose contact is mostly through reading this newsletter feel the same. On the bittersweet side, we are at the point of requiring change in the council that guides the activities.

As in past years we have had an interesting speaker program including talks on Atlantis, Halloween, Oliver Wendell Holmes, paranormal investigations, food fads, evolution in the chapel, anti-vaccine fever, urban legends, and to cap it all off, beer myths with a tasting. This wonderful program list was dutifully written up in the newsletter for all those members who were unable to attend.

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June Meeting

Brew Myths and Beer Tasting

Ed Westemeier, Master Beer Judge, spoke to our group at the Saturday June 8 meeting at the Dubliner Restaurant. He became involved with beer some fifteen years ago when he met a home brewer, then joined a local home brew club and created a newsletter for it. After making his own beer for a few years, he attended a beer judging program and qualified to become a beer judge. He has been writing a bi-weekly beer column for the Cincinnati Enquirer for over the past three years. He also judges beer at competitions, mainly home brew beers.

Ed spoke to our group about the worldwide beer enterprise, its history, and some of the myths surrounding beer. He combined beer tasting with the lecture to help us recognize how different beers taste while we learned what goes into making good beer. To fully appreciate the
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The By-Laws require that officers for the following year be elected annually at the May meeting. They begin their duties on following July 1st.

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A Puzzle for Thinkers

How Old Is Grandpa?

One evening a grandson was talking to his grandfather about current events. He asked what he thought about the shootings at schools, the computer age, and just things in general.

The granddad replied, "Well, let me think a minute.-- I was born before television, penicillin, polio shots, frozen foods, Xerox, contact lenses, Frisbees and the pill. There was no radar, credit cards, laser beams or ball-point pens. Man had not invented pantyhose, air conditioners, dishwashers, clothes dryers so that the clothes were hung out to dry in the fresh air and man hadn't yet walked on the moon.

This was before gay-rights, computer-dating, dual careers, daycare centers, and group therapy. Serving your country was considered a privilege. Draft dodgers were people who closed their front doors when the evening breeze started.

We thought fast food was what people ate during Lent. Having a meaningful relationship meant getting along with your cousins. Time-sharing meant time the family spent together in the evenings and weekends -- not purchasing condominiums.

We never heard of FM radios, tape decks, CDs, electric typewriters, yogurt, or guys wearing earrings. We listened to the Big Bands, Jack Benny, and the President's speeches on our radios. And I don't ever remember any kid blowing his brains out listening to Tommy Dorsey.

If you saw anything with *Made in Japan* on it, it was junk. The term *making out* referred to how you did on your school exam. Pizza Hut, McDonald's, and instant coffee were unheard of. We had 5 & 10-cent stores where you could actually buy things for five and ten cents. Ice cream cones, phone calls, rides on a streetcar, and a Pepsi were all a nickel. And if you didn't want to splurge, you could spend your nickel on enough stamps to mail one letter and two postcards. You could buy a new Chevy Coupe for \$600, but who could afford one? Too bad, because gas was eleven cents a gallon.

In my day, *grass* was mowed, *coke* was a cold drink, *pot* was something your mother cooked in, and *rock music* was your grandmother's lullaby. *Aids* were helpers in the Principal's office, *chip* meant a piece of wood, *hardware* was found in a hardware store, and *software* wasn't even a word.

No wonder people call us "old and confused" and say there is a generation gap and how old do you think I am?"

— contributed by member Nurit Bowman

Solution to the puzzle in the last issue:

The values of the individual digits are not unique, i.e. there are several solutions. In each case the sum of $B+D=10$ because. EA must lie between ten and seventeen: $10 < EA < 17$ because C and D can not be larger than 9 and 8. Combining the two additions gives: $A+B+C+D=C+EA$ or deducting C on both sides $A+B+D=EA$ and $B+D=EA-A$. Any number between ten and seventeen less its last digit leaves ten, hence $B+D=10$.



Too Many Books... Too Little Time....

Dispatches from the Tenth Circle: The Best of the Onion

edited by Robert Siegel

(New York: The River Press, 2001)

Many of us will have looked at the internet website <www.theonion.com> for "America's Finest News Source." *The Onion* is a parody newspaper which provides daily take-offs on the news of the day, on hype and superhype of TV and the press. It makes fun of big-mouthed politicians, American fears and superstitions, religious idiocies and prejudices, and any and everything that strikes the writers fancy or interest.

This book is a collection of *The Onion* humor. It is all here. The inane headlines, the short articles without continuation, the pictures showing the same people with different names and quotes, and the exaggeration of the news which makes the real parody. This is a book for browsing, not cover to cover reading. Every page has six to a dozen short items, many referring to news long dead. Unless you are a real current affairs junky, some items will make little sense without the context of the news of the time.

There are some truly memorable take offs. Perhaps the most famous was the article "Harry Potter Books Spark Rise in Satanism Among Children (p. 36)" This contains the claim, purportedly quoted from a nine year old, "The *Harry Potter* books showed me that magic is real, and that The Bible is nothing but boring lies." *The Onion* scored a bulls eye, when fundamentalists picked the story off the internet and mistakenly propagated it as a real news story. There are probably still some religious folks who believe the claim as fact.

A more serious parody shows the evil of murderous attacks on Women's Medical Clinics. Under the headline "Christ Kills Two, Injures Seven in Abortion-Clinic Attack (p. 23)" *the Onion* provides a straight faced report on the Savior himself committing the crime of murder. Something for the WWJD crowd to think about. The criminal is quoted with the same stupid answers provided by other abortion clinic attackers and their defenders. The news story continues to speculate if Christ could get the death penalty, this time by lethal injection.

Remember when Vermont courts indicated the State could not prohibit benefits for same sex partners? *The Onion* asked the public "What do you think? (p. 92)" And received answers such as "I suppose it's okay for homosexuals to

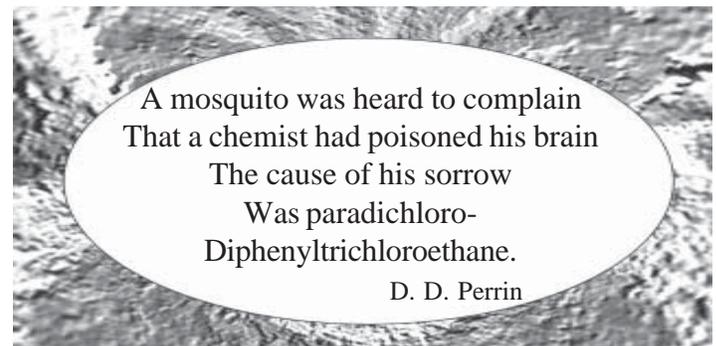
marry—so long as they don't marry each other, of course." Or another, "First the military, now marriage. Why do these gays want in on our worst institutions?"

Presidents, of course, come in for a lot of ribbing. Clinton and his secretary of state can't find the African nation of Bulungi, after they have already sent an Ambassador there. They finally decide to consult a dictionary and an atlas. (p. 45) In a different context Clinton is quoted thus: "We also send the equally important message to our own troops that what's important is not whether you defeat the enemy, but that you try your best and have fun." (p. 91)

"Bush Horrified to Learn Presidential Salary (p. 24)" is another headline. What, a measly \$200,000 for a job on which he spent already sixty million just to get elected. Heck, most of my friends, he claims, make that much in a month. He muses desperately how to increase the salary cap, perhaps get rid of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, or some other downsizing moves, especially if it affects only welfare recipients.

If you like satire and parody, this is the book which puts it on thick. Even the Pope is quoted, calling for "Greater Understanding Between Catholics and the Hellbound." (p. 43)

— Wolf Roder



What I found out, is that damn near everything on television is better with the sound off. And that way it doesn't interfere with the rest of your life. You can read the paper or talk on the phone and the TV doesn't distract you. If you don't look at it, you get so that you forget it's on.

-- Lawrence Block, *Hit List*, p. 92



So who would you believe? Grumpy old professors who examine "evidence" and orate about "facts", or someone who can channel the spirits, read the tarot, and assesses the pull of distant planets on the little elves that abide inside our heads?

— bio-astrologer Esmeralda von
Löwenzahn-Dentdelion

*The Age of Science:**What Scientists Learned in the 20th Century*

by Gerard Piel

(New York: Basic Books, 2001)

It is all here, the whole of scientific knowledge gathered or achieved in the twentieth century. That of course is really all of knowledge since to properly understand the most recent insights we need to review what went before, from Galileo to Darwin. The book sets out to do just that, and quite well too. Of seven chapters, four are devoted to physics and astronomy, all the science of light and matter, space and time, and our understanding of the cosmos. One chapter is devoted to biology and the origin of life, and one chapter to evolution and earth history. The last chapter deals with human evolution and social science. The last is largely economics and our understanding of the world development problem.

The author is extremely well placed to give us an explanation of recent research. Gerard Piel is not a scientist himself, but a writer and editor with a degree in history. However, he was for almost forty years the editor of the magazine *Scientific American*, and thus had a front row seat on the research endeavor. This book is the synthesis of his close study of what the magazine published over four decades.

One thing we could learn from this volume is that scientists know a lot more than most of what even the educated public has caught up with. The understanding of evolution and earth history is much further advanced than you might surmise from the arguments between the science oriented and creationist types. In the past, even Alfred Russel Wallace, one of the discoverers of natural selection was a creationist. He did not think the human brain could have evolved. He thought this, because the "savages" he worked with in the South American rain forest had brains as good as western philosophers. And where could savages have evolved brains much superior to apes.

Creationists like to cite the sudden appearance of multi-celled life in the Cambrian period as "the" unanswered problem of evolution. Darwin himself pointed to the sudden appearance of the major phyla as a difficult issue to explain. In fact, a lot more is known today about ancient pre-Cambrian events. For one thing, scientists have worked out many details of earth history and how the planet was assembled. Plate tectonics, the

slowing rotation of the earth, the outgassing of volcanoes, and the chemistry of ancient rocks tell us much about how the earth's atmosphere evolved. Four billion year old rocks have yielded micro-fossils of replicating bacteria, that is single celled organisms without nuclei. Much of the following billionia was taken up by the generation of the modern oxygen atmosphere by these simple bacteria. This time also saw the slow evolution of the complex eucaryotic cells which constitute the structure of all modern animals and plants. The efflorescence of the earliest plants has now been traced another hundred million years before the Cambrian period. Within the earliest period of the multi-celled kingdom of life, came the invention of sexual reproduction. "To populations sex secures the dissemination in the gene pool of traits that are favored by selection in a given and then in a changing environment." (p. 349) In other words, sex speeds up evolution considerably.

This is a first rate book. I recommend it to all who wish to update their knowledge of the findings of science since they left college. Unfortunately the illustrations are somewhere between useless and atrocious.

— Wolf Roder

**Idiots at Work:**

I was signing the receipt for my credit card purchase when the clerk noticed I had never signed my name on the back of the credit card. She informed me that she could not complete the transaction unless the card was signed. When I asked why, she explained that it was necessary to compare the signature I had just signed on the receipt. So I signed the credit card in front of her. She carefully compared the signature to the one I had just signed on the receipt. As luck would have it, they matched.

Neighborhood Idiots:

I live in a semi-rural area. We recently had a new neighbor call the local township administrative office to request the removal of the Deer Crossing sign on our road. The reason: too many deer were being hit by cars and she didn't want them to cross there anymore.

Fast Food Idiots:

My daughter went to a local Taco Bell and ordered a taco. She asked the person behind the counter for "minimal lettuce." He said he was sorry, but they only had iceberg.

----contributed by Charles Hughes

Brew Myths from page 1...

magnitude and diversity of the worldwide beer enterprise, one can attend the World Beer Cup, held every two years. Over 1,300 beers grouped into 100 recognized styles and 24 categories from over 300 breweries in 37 countries are represented in this competition.

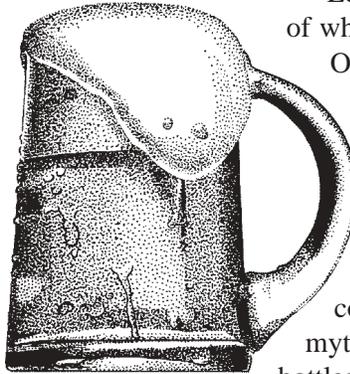
All beers are fermented with yeast, which is all around us and decomposes sugar into carbon dioxide and alcohol in the fermentation process. Yeast is a single-celled organism that reproduces by budding that most experts place in the fungus kingdom. The alcohol content is limited by the particular strain of the yeast, the strains numbering in the thousands, which produce alcohol until they reach their limit and then enter a dormant state. The normal alcohol content of mass market beers ranges from 4½ to 5 percent.

The two main categories of beer are ales and lagers. Most all beers are made from barley. Ales date back to Mesopotamia before written records were kept some ten thousand years ago based upon archeological findings. The best guess of the experts is that someone left a basketful of grain sitting out in the rain during a hunting trip and returned to find the basket fermented by airborne yeasts. Upon sampling this, they found it not only tasted good but made them feel good. These early beers were made with traditional ale yeasts, which work within a 60-70 degrees F. temperature range and create beer in two weeks or less.

From this early start the basic recipe for beer evolved over time. The use of hops is a much later development and was at first by no means universal. They provided bitterness and acted as a natural preservative which lengthened the shelf life of beer. They are a perennial climbing plant whose closest botanical relative is cannabis, used to make marijuana. They were not introduced into England until much later in the sixteenth century because at first they were considered the devil's tool. Now all beer is made with hops.

Most people drank beer rather than water up through the Middle Ages because it was boiled. Parents even gave their children beer. Water was not safe to drink at that time because of lack of sanitation. Aside from producing alcohol, yeast multiplies explosively and so takes over any other reproducing microorganism.

Lager beer has a much more recent history. Lager yeasts were developed from ale yeasts less than two hundred years ago. These yeasts ferment at colder temperatures in the low 50 degrees F. range and work much more slowly with the beer-making process taking months. Lagers have cleaner, crisper flavors while ales have more complex fruity flavors but there is no difference in alcohol content between the two categories.



After presenting this short history of beer, Ed briefly discussed some of the myths surrounding beer. The first myth he mentioned was that darker beer has a higher alcohol content than lighter beer. The stout beers are made with dark roasted malts, giving them a richer, more tangy, malty flavor rather than the crisper, cleaner flavor of other beers. But they actually have less alcohol. Likewise, Guinness beer has a strong flavor but lower alcohol content. In general, flavor is independent of alcohol content and strong flavor does not indicate high alcohol content. A related myth concerning alcohol content is that Canadian beers are stronger than American beers. This confusion results partly from the way the alcohol content is measured. The 7½ percent by volume of the Canadian beers is equivalent to the 6 percent by weight in American beers.

Ed exploded several other beers myth, only a couple of which I mention here because of space limitations. One myth is that carefully sliding beer down the side of the glass improves its taste. Actually, aroma is critical and pouring beer down the middle of the glass creates more bubbles and a head, which enhances the aroma. In this regard, he said never drink beer from the bottle but instead always use a glass to bring out the fruity qualities and complexities of the beer taste. Another persistent myth is that beer in green bottles is superior to brown bottles. The color has no effect on beer taste. The reason for the tinted bottles is that components in the hops in beer are extremely susceptible to light by undergoing changes which make the beer bitter. Another myth concerns draft beer. The genuine draft label is purely a marketing ploy. True draft beer is not pasteurized.

Ed compared the mass produced domestic beers, such as Anheuser, Coors, and Miller, to the top quality beers as analogous to what velveta is to cheese. The beer many experts consider the finest in the world is Czechvar original Pilsner. It is a lager beer developed in the Czech Republic in the town of Pilsen with soft water, a high hop flavor, and a good malt balance. On average beer composition is 91 percent water. So the character of the beer is to a great extent determined by the chemistry of the water used in its production, which varies greatly among localities.

This combination lab-lecture with audience participation made Ed's presentation especially memorable because the audience could actually experience the range of beer flavors while Ed explained why these beer flavors are different because of the beer making ingredients and processes. Every time I drink a beer, I will be reminded of this lecture on the history of beer and beer myths and have a greater appreciation of that beer not only for its flavor but what went into producing it.

-- reported by Bryan Sellers



Comments Corner.....

Skepticism in the News -

It has been nice to see several articles in the last few months that have taken a critical look at items in the news. I am especially glad to see that *Scientific American* has taken a stance under its new editor, John Rennie, to publish more articles and opinions of a skeptical nature. At the same time they run a column by Michael Shermer in almost every issue. Just a few articles of note with their web site connections in case one of our readers would like to read the originals.

Crop Circles - The August edition of *Scientific American* has an short piece written by one of the hoaxers who was making crop circles in England -

<http://www.sciam.com/article.cfm?articleID=00038B16-ED5F-1D29-97CA809EC588EEDF&PageNumber=1&catID=2>

Fifteen Answers to Creationists - The June edition of *Scientific American* contained an article taking fifteen of the most common arguments that creationists use to critique evolution and discussed proper answers. For instance: "Evolution is only a theory. It is not a fact or a scientific law" or "Mutations are essential to evolution theory, but mutations can only eliminate traits. They cannot produce new features." To see the whole article, go to:

<http://www.sciam.com/article.cfm?articleID=000D4FEC-7D5B-1D07-8E49809EC588EEDF>

Skeptical Environmentalist - About a year ago Bjørn Lomborg wrote a book titled *The Skeptical Environmentalist*. In it he characterized himself as a conservationist and a statistician who upon looking at the facts decided that many of the dire warnings coming from scientists and environmentalists were blown out of proportion or were completely wrong. In an "Misleading Math About the Earth" in *Scientific American*, four leading experts in the fields of global warming, energy, population, and biodiversity explain how Lomborg has oversimplified and only considered evidence favorable to his opinion. This article can be found at:

<http://www.sciam.com/article.cfm?articleID=000F3D47-C6D2-1CEB-93F6809EC5880000>

Lomborg's reply was printed in May in the article:

<http://www.sciam.com/article.cfm?articleID=000001E0-157B-1CD4-B4A8809EC588EEDF>

Read them both and you be the judge.

Odds in real life - Finally, I will recommend an article from *The New York Times*, "The Odds of That" by Lisa Belkin. In it she discusses a set of occurrences where several experts in bioterrorism and biology all die within a relatively short time, some under seemingly bizarre and suspicious circumstances. In the article, she discusses the whole issue of coincidence and how some people believe that there aren't any coincidences and then proceeds to show how all the deaths occur under their own internal logic without the need to invoke conspiracies. The article can be found at:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/08/11/magazine/11COINCIDENCE.html?pagewanted=print&position=top>

— Roy Auerbach

Annual Report from page 1...

Similar to last year, our web site is now well established. As a measure of public interest, we get a steady stream of e-mail addressed to the president asking questions or wanting to discuss further topics from the blurbs. The e-mail is mixed with about two thirds opposed to our point of view. Of that two thirds, about half were answered with the respect they deserved. The other half were ignored. The other third, composed of serious inquiry or supportive notes were greatly appreciated. In one case, someone criticized one of our blurbs causing us to rewrite the piece to show greater respect for their religious faith. While this didn't change the skeptical content, it reinforced our policy of separating faith from skepticism. Such e-mail is interesting enough that it found its way into our free-for-all meeting in the spring (without disclosing identities). I would like to thank all the members who have helped answer correspondences. Many times, questions for which I didn't have an educated reply were answered by other members of greater learning. This is a great public service that goes towards one of our organizational goals of education

Our organization has grown yet again modestly and that has allowed us to remain in the black even as some of our costs have increased. As in the last year, our bank balance hasn't been huge but has been large enough so that we don't have to worry about sudden unexpected incidental expenses. I hope and expect that as our membership slowly grows, we will have enough funds to consider expanding our operations beyond supporting membership communication, the web site, and the newsletter.

As always, I want to thank the other officers for making this organization work as smoothly as it does. Executive and general meetings are always fun as well as productive. I encourage all to come to meetings or visit an executive session.

On the bittersweet side, some of the members that have been most active need to cut back on activity, either from failing faculties, lack of time, or just plain old burn-out. We will find the next year more challenging as we feel our way into a new relationship in the leadership. I am sure we can continue providing an entertaining and educational program for our

members and help to provide a rational voice in the community. Volunteer hours, unavailable.

-- Roy Auerbach, President.

Vice-President's Report

Once again the A.R.T. vice-president's office has been characterized by an almost pathological lack of activity. I am leaving this office to work to help with meeting organizational activities. I wish my successor good luck and best wishes and I would like to thank all of the other officers for their diligent service to the organization. Volunteer hours, 4.

-- Lance Moody, Vice-President

Secretary's Report

I took minutes at executive council and membership meetings; entered them in A. R. T.'s records; distributed copies of executive council minutes, action lists and membership meeting minutes to office; maintained and distributed a list of officers' addresses and phone numbers and sent executive council meeting reminders to officers.

In addition, I wrote articles for the newsletter summarizing some of the talks given at A.R.T. meetings. I to picked up and distributed mail at A.R.T.'s post office box once a week.

Over the next few months I plan to prepare the A.R.T. records I have for my successor. I have enjoyed my years as secretary. I greatly regret my inability to continue. Volunteer hours: 100.

-- Virginia Jergens, Secretary.

Treasurer's Report

As of June 30, 2001 the checkbook balance was \$1110.78 with no outstanding bills. This year's balance is \$1509.10, again with no unpaid bills.

INCOME

Membership Dues	\$1,215.00
Cash Donations	1,580.00
Blurb Income	\$8.00
Web Donations	250.00

Total Income	3,053.00

EXPENSES

Membership	
Postage	358.11
Printing of Notices	164.00
P.O. Box Rental	65.00
Newsletter	
Bulk Mail	385.00
Postage	6.33
Printing	688.42



Programs

Guest Meals	121.63
Guest Travel	71.68
Speaker's Fees	80.00
Speaker's Housing	98.35

Other

Web Expenses	600.00
Miscellaneous	16.16

Total Expenses 2,654.68

Net Income 398.32

Compared with last year's income and expenses, income was down \$330, due entirely to no reported In-Kind Donations. Membership Dues and Cash Donations were up over \$100 each. Total expenses decreased about \$1,300, and returned to the expense level of 1999. I spent about twenty hours keeping the books, plus my time at executive meetings.

-- Rick Prairie, Treasurer

Meeting Organizer and Program Committee Chair's Report

No report. Brad Bonham, Meeting Organizer and Program Committee Chair.

Recruitment Committee Chair Report

No report. Brad Bonham, Recruitment Committee Chair.

Membership Secretary's Report

No report. Brad Bonham, Membership Secretary.

Media Coordinator's Report

No report. Bob and Diane Streifthau, Media Coordinators.

Publicity Coordinator's Report

Investigation Officer's Report

No report. Terry Endres, Investigations Officer.

Newsletter Editor's Report

Volume eleven of the Cincinnati Skeptic appeared as six bi-monthly issues this year. There has been little change from previous years. Each issue contained 12 pages.

Each issue generally consisted of these parts:

(1) Short pieces in all or most issues: the motto, comments by bio-astrologer Esmeralda, a limerick, a puzzle with the solution for the previous issue's puzzle. Regular short pieces new this year were the "Poem in a Box" and our front page cartoon.

(2) Long regular pieces were: a full report on the presentation at each meeting. Historical comments were contributed by Joe Gastright and Bill Jensen. Book reviews, short pieces and occasional editorial comment rounded out the newsletter.

(3) Reports on executive committee meetings, election results, etc.

(4) Regular announcements of the two upcoming meetings with programs and/or topics.

(5) A membership application and contribution form.

We continue unable to comment on idiocies written, spoken or shown by the local news media. The CS ought to say more about the local scene. Any help would be appreciated. Call me, write a note, send e-mail: let me know about pseudoscience and other nonsense in the local media.

Cost of printing the most recent newsletter: \$ 50 for the usual 250 copies, we found a new printer. Postage has risen to about \$40 plus a share of the bulk mail permit.

I spent about 120 hours editing the newsletter during the year, plus about 12 hours at executive council meetings. About 30 hours were spent writing reviews, untold additional hours to read the books themselves, for a total of 162 hours. Donna Loughry worked about 80 hours.

— Wolf Roder, Newsletter Editor.

Webmaster's Report

No report. David Wall, Webmaster.

There is a use for almost anything . . .

[Under arrest and held without bail] is the operator of the Pacific Family Funeral Home and Pacific Cremation Care in Lake Elsinore, CA, who is accused of similar dastardly deeds. The operator is charged with selling body parts to research laboratories and anatomy classes at medical schools — secret transactions that brought him \$365,000 a year.

— *The Washington Spectator* (15 March 2002) p. 4

Names of the months from Native American lore:

(these apply to the Full Moon)

January	wolf
February	snow
March	worm or full of sap
April	pink
May	flower
June	strawberry
July	buck or thunder
August	sturgeon or green corn
September	barley or harvest
October	hunter's
November	beaver
December	cold



(Source: *Family Matters* (Summer 2002) p. 7)



Details of Upcoming Events...



There will be no meeting on 14 September!

First meeting of the year: **Friday, 27 September, 7:00 PM** at the Kings Island Resort and Conference Center. Room: Main Street Annex. Our speaker will be Jim Moseley who will be in town in connection with a national UFO conference.

Our Speaker

Jim Moseley is a living legend in his field. Unfortunately, that field is UFO's. Since the 1950's, he has tweaked the many characters of the Flying Saucer community with his razor-sharp wit and his immortal *Saucer Smear* newsletter.

Moseley was the author of one of the first (and best) skeptical UFO exposes when he demolished the stories of contactee George Adamski. And when Jim needed a film of a real flying saucer for his lecture series, he quickly hit upon the ideal means of getting one (involving a fishing pole and a little imaginative camera work).

Moseley's new book, "Shockingly Close to the Truth" from Prometheus tells many more stories from the wild world of Ufology.. Jim will be speaking live to the Cincinnati Skeptics Sept. 27th at 7pm at The Kings Island Inn with more shocking secrets and more irreverence. Learn why Mothman Prophecies author, John Keel, has called Jim "a boil on the ass of Ufology."

The **NATIONAL UFO CONFERENCE** is on Saturday, September 28, 2002. The conference will be held at the Kings Island Resort and Conference Center and begin at 2:00 p.m.

Speakers for the conference will include NUFOC founder and lecturer Rick Hilberg, controversial UFO Watchdog Jerry Black, *Saucer Smear* editor James Moseley, Congressional Candidate Stephen Bassett of the Paradigm Research Group, and John Timmerman of the Center for UFO Studies.

Also lecturing will be Don Weatherby of WUFOD Database, Cincinnati investigator Donnie Blessing and Investigations Coordinator Terry Endres. There will also be special appearances by Cincinnati psychologist Dr. Greg Tyree Ph.D., Bill Jones of Ohio MUFON, Earle Benezet of Kentucky MUFON, and researcher Kenny Young. Tickets at the door will be \$ 15.

Poem in a /Box

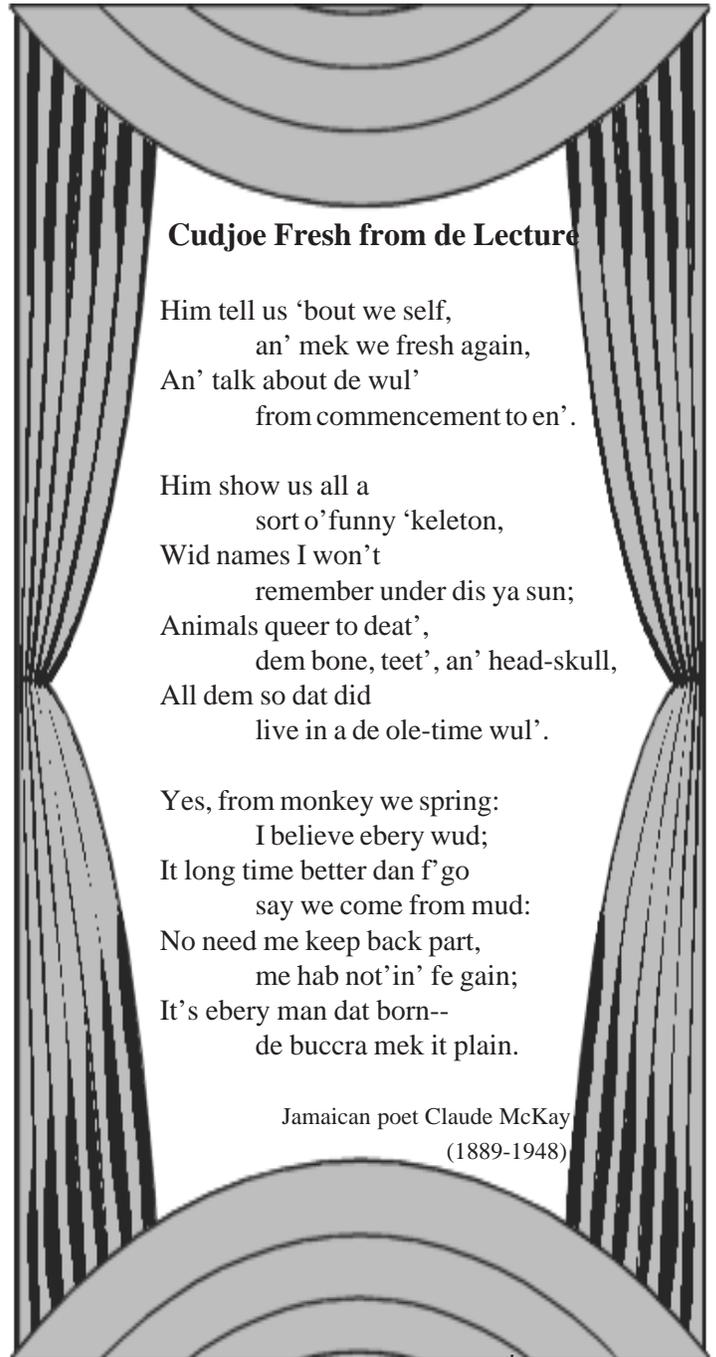
Cudjoe Fresh from de Lecture

Him tell us 'bout we self,
an' mek we fresh again,
An' talk about de wul'
from commencement to en'.

Him show us all a
sort o'funny 'keleton,
Wid names I won't
remember under dis ya sun;
Animals queer to deat',
dem bone, teet', an' head-skull,
All dem so dat did
live in a de ole-time wul'.

Yes, from monkey we spring:
I believe ebery wud;
It long time better dan f' go
say we come from mud:
No need me keep back part,
me hab not'in' fe gain;
It's ebery man dat born--
de buccra mek it plain.

Jamaican poet Claude McKay
(1889-1948)





Idiots Checking Baggage:

I was at the airport, checking in at the gate when an airport employee asked, "Has anyone put anything in your baggage without your knowledge?" To which I replied, "If it was without my knowledge, how would I know?" She smiled knowingly and nodded, "That's why we ask."

Idiots in Traffic:

The stoplight on the corner buzzes when it's safe to cross the street. I was crossing with a coworker when she asked if I knew what the buzzer was for. I explained that it signals blind people when the light is red. Appalled, she responded, "What on earth are blind people doing driving?"

Downsizing:

At a good-bye luncheon for a coworker who is leaving the company due to "down sizing," our manager commented cheerfully, "This is fun. We should do this more often." Not a word was spoken. We all just looked at each other with that deer-in-the-headlights stare.

Computer Idiots:

I work with an individual who plugged her power strip back into itself and for the life of her couldn't understand why her system would not turn on.

Idiots at Work:

When my husband and I arrived at an automobile dealership to pick up our car, we were told the keys had been locked in it. We went to the service department and found a mechanic working feverishly to unlock the driver's side door. As I watched from the passenger side, I instinctively tried the door handle and discovered that it was unlocked. "Hey," I announced to the technician, "it's open!" To which he replied, "I know - I already got that side."

— contributed by Charles Hughes

Membership Duration And Dues.....

REMINDER.....

All memberships start in August, coordinated with our fiscal year, from 1 August to 31 July of the next year. This will allow us to mail renewal requests only once a year in the Fall.

REMINDER....

YEARLY

MEMBERSHIPS ARE

DUE NOW!

Please Pay/Send In Your
Membership Dues Now!

SEE THE
FORM ON
PAGE 11.....



Science Book-Club Meetings for 2002

All meetings are held at the downtown Cincinnati Public Library in meeting room 3A on the 3rd floor at 2:30 pm on the 4th Sunday of each month unless otherwise specified.

Oct 27 - *Extinct Humans* by Ian Tattersall and Jeffrey H. Schwartz

Nov 24 - *E=MC²* by David Bodanis

Dec 15 - Sunday at 2:30 *Seven Daughters of Eve* by Bryan Sykes)



The Association for Rational Thought is an independent, nonprofit, scientific and educational organization. We share the ideas and philosophies of CSICOP, the Skeptics Society, and JREF.

CSICOP : the *Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal* publishes the *Skeptical Inquirer*, a journal of investigations of paranormal claims. PO. Box 703, Amherst, NY 14226-0703, phone: 800-634-1610, fax: 716-636-1733, www.scicop.org

The Skeptics Society, publishes *The Skeptic Magazine*. PO Box 338, Altadena, CA 91001; phone: 626-794-3119; fax 626-794-1300; skepticsmag@aol.com and www.skeptic.com,.

JREF: the James Randi Educational Foundation publishes the *Swift Newsletter*. 201 SE Davie Blvd. Fort Lauderdale, FL 33316-1815. phone: (954) 467-1112, fax: (954)467-1660, www.randi.org

A.R.T. meets on the second Saturday of each month September through June, 10:00 AM and publishes *Cincinnati Skeptic* bi-monthly. 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 Rick Davis (513) 474-3087 or visit our website. **Address Changes & Corrections, Membership Questions:** Brad Bonham(513) 761-5613 (bonham@compuserve.)

Mailing Label Information: "00/00/00 Member": You are a member in good standing; your membership will expire on the date on the label. "Lapsed": (*highlighted*) - your membership has expired. Please send your dues as soon as possible.

Yes! — I want to support the important work of **The Association for Rational Thought** and receive *Cincinnati Skeptic* and meeting notices. I have enclosed funds for:

New Member

Renewing Member

Contribution

Gift membership for/by:

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Work: Home: _____ E-mail: _____

We have kept dues low and will continue to do so in spite of rising costs. However, if you are able to, your additional contributions are very much appreciated. Please give generously, if possible. Thank you very much!

I would like to make a contribution in addition to my dues to further the important work of the Association:

Contribution Amount: \$ _____ Dues: \$ _____ Total Enclosed: _____

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. 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 skeptical website at <http://www.cincinnati-skeptics.org> --- It contains: our BLURBS on various subjects; lots of nifty links to skeptical thinking around the world; the information for joining SANE; 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; other ways to reach us; and how to send sample copies of the newsletter to potential members.

—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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What is a skeptic?

Modern skepticism is a response to the torrent of paranormal and pseudoscientific claims that pervade our lives. The stories of ghosts, flying saucers, miracle cures, lake monsters and many other fringe beliefs often go unchallenged. Skeptics provide the challenge.

While many of us are not scientists, we embrace the scientific method as mankind's best invention for seeking knowledge. Skeptics are not cynics. We don't simply reject every unusual idea. We do know extraordinary claims demand extraordinary evidence. We insist on the evidence.

Cincinnati Skeptics, The Association for Rational Thought, meet to discuss such claims. We debate the merits; we skewer dogmatism. We have fun.

The truth is out there. And skeptics are looking for it.

Preview Of Coming Attractions....

First Meeting of the 2002-2003 Season! *Date and Day:* Fri. Sept. 27, 2002
Time: 7:00 PM

See Inside (p.9) for Details!

Second Meeting of the 2002-2003 Season! *Date and Day:* Sat. Oct. 12, 2002
Time: 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM -- program -->12:15PM - 2:00 PM Lunch (usual place.)

Watch your mail for further details!

**This year there will be a Friday 13th in December, and June.
Help the program committee think about a celebration!**

Join US!