



The Newsletter of The North Texas Skeptics

Volume 7 Number 4

www.ntskeptics.org

April 1993

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The speaker guy

By Mike Sullivan

Have you met The Speaker Guy? I have lived in Dallas for less than three years, and I've already met The Speaker Guy three times. Each time I see The Speaker Guy, I wonder about him more and more. I call him The Speaker Guy because I don't know his name, despite our three meetings. Perhaps you've met him as well.

In case you haven't run across him yet, The Speaker Guy is a young man who drives around Dallas in a plain, unmarked white Ford Econoline cargo van. Typically, The Speaker Guy will pull up alongside you in traffic and motion excitedly to you to roll down your window, as if he wants to ask directions or tell you your headlights are on or something. Then it gets interesting.

The first time I met The Speaker Guy, I was driving northbound on Marsh lane from Beltline in Addison. It was mid-afternoon on a warm, sunny day and I had the windows down and the radio on. I happened to be the first car stopped at a traffic light, with an empty lane on either side of me. I saw The Speaker Guy coming up directly behind me, but when he saw both lanes open alongside me, he quickly pulled up along my left side.

Through his already-open passenger-side window, The Speaker Guy motioned toward my front wheels and shouted something at me, which I couldn't hear clearly because of the radio. As soon as I turned the volume down, he again shouted across to me, "Hey, wanna buy some good speakers for your house? I've got some good ones I'll sell ya! Wanna take a look?"

The light turned green and I got back to the business of driving, ignoring The Speaker Guy as much as possible. He was undeterred, because he soon paced along with me, still shouting and encouraging me to pull over for a look at these allegedly great speakers he was offering.

Hot Pursuit

I made a few moves in traffic to separate myself from The Speaker Guy, and soon took up position a few cars behind him. As it happened, we both made a turn onto westbound Trinity Mills Road, and I was able to watch The Speaker Guy in action for a few more miles.

From what I could see, he repeated his pitch to several other motorists, while stopped at traffic lights and while driving. Since the weather was nice enough for most drivers to have their windows down, he was able to attract the attention of several folks during the few minutes I was able to watch.

The mere fact that he did this at speeds up to 50 miles per hour in fairly busy suburban traffic amazed me. He was clearly distracting other motorists, changing lanes and tooting his horn to gain their attention, all while negotiating traffic at near-highway speeds.

I thought about The Speaker Guy for some time after my first encounter with him. I lived in Chicago before moving to Dallas, and Chicago certainly has its share of roadside peddlers, flower hawkers and velvet-painting dealers. On any particular weekend in Chicago, you could take your pick of black velvet Elvis portraits, plastic pelicans, "fresh Gulf-coast shrimp," or beanbag furniture on display at nearly every abandoned service station in town. But never, in all my years driving around the suburbs and city, had I ever run into anybody like The Speaker Guy.

Just when the memory of my first episode with The Speaker Guy had almost faded, I ran across him again, in a totally different part of Dallas. He was using the same approach, still shouting his appeal to drivers over the din of wind noise and traffic. The same plain white van, and from what I could remember, the same Speaker Guy, alone inside it.

Nailed at Blimpie's

Then today, he saw me again. This time, I was in the parking lot of a small strip center along Lemmon Avenue near Oak Lawn, and I was just pulling out of my space from lunch at Blimpie's. By this time in the noon hour, every parking space in the lot was filled and as I pulled out, I saw another driver coming into the lot waiting behind me ready to take my place. As I pulled out and started toward the street, I saw the white Ford Econoline coming toward me.

It was overcast and cool, so I didn't have my windows down, but that hardly stopped The Speaker Guy from starting another sales pitch. He stopped right in the middle of the traffic lane and hung his head and arm out the window, motioning for me to listen to him. As unsuspecting as ever, I stopped alongside him so that our two windows were next to each other and rolled mine down to hear him.

"Hey, I saw you pulling out and I thought I'd ask," he said cheerfully.

"Yeah?", I asked. I still didn't see it coming.

"Wanna buy some speakers for your house?"

Window up. I was off like a shot.

Nailed by The Speaker Guy again. Now I was really starting to think about this guy, to the point where I felt I had to write about him for The Skeptic.

Now I know The Speaker Guy is not one of the great threats to America that skeptics routinely face in the battle for truth and reason. Compared to Scientology, Robert Tilton, psychics and other big-time flim-flammers, The Speaker Guy is definitely small potatoes. But a little thought about The Speaker Guy and what keeps him going might provide an object lesson in why America needs more critical thinkers.

Based on what I know about The Speaker Guy, he spends his days tooling around town, randomly shouting at drivers on the road, trying to sell them stereo speakers, of all things. He must succeed in this effort at least once in a while, because he has been doing this for at least the three years during which I've had my three chance meetings with him.

From this, I can only assume that he finds enough people driving around out there who fit his required customer profile: willing and ready to buy a fairly costly piece of high-fidelity gear, in cash, from a person they have never met before, who is doing business from the back of an unmarked van.

Now call me old-fashioned, but I'm still cautious enough to prefer to make all my electronics-related purchases from people who have a permanent place of business, and who bother enough to have things like a cash register, a telephone,

electric lights and wall-to-wall carpeting. I also try to check out the reputation and service policies of the merchant against the day when anything goes wrong with the little bugger and I need some help.

Apparently, there are enough people out there who have a different set of major-purchase criteria to maintain The Speaker Guy as a going concern. These people must have a train of thought that goes something like this:

"Hey, what's this guy want? Huh? Oh, OK, roll down the window... Sell me some speakers? For the house? Hmm...why not? I was thinking of getting some speakers, and this guy has some for sale! What the heck! Let's pull over and see what he's got!"

This leaves me to wonder about the things that The Speaker Guy's clients seem not to worry about or ask when making an addition to their home entertainment system. Questions like, "By any chance, are these speakers hot?", "Who are you?", "Why are you selling speakers out of the back of an unmarked van?", "Where did you get them?", "What about a receipt?", "What if I don't like them or they don't work when I get them home?", or perhaps most obviously, "What do I do if they need service?"

I am now interested enough in The Speaker Guy to have made a conscious decision that if I'm lucky enough to run across him again, I will stop and listen to his whole pitch. Of course, there may be some danger, because for all I know The Speaker Guy may be using his opening line to start a shakedown or a roadside robbery, but I doubt it. Even he would be taking a risk doing those types of things on a busy street in broad daylight.

If I do run across The Speaker Guy again, I will turn our encounter into an interview for a story in The Skeptic. And if you run into him, tell him I said hi, and please have him call me. I'm thinking about adding some speakers to the home stereo ...

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Healthy skepticism

Nutritional Supplements

By Tim Gorski, M.D.

In 1989 an epidemic of a rare disease called eosinophilia-myalgia syndrome (EMS) in the United States claimed the lives of 27 people and sickened hundreds more. The outbreak was linked to "nutritional supplements" of L-tryptophan and a link between EMS and L-lysine has also been questioned.¹ The FDA, besides pulling L-tryptophan from store shelves, responded by commissioning a study on the safety of amino acid supplements.

That study has now been released in the form of a 324-page report issued by the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB).² Among its conclusions was the almost obvious fact that hardly anyone takes these "nutritional supplements," as their manufacturers and promoters call them, for the purpose of supplementing their nutrition. Rather, the huge market for these products is sustained by the many claims of alleged beneficial physiologic and/or pharmacologic effects of amino acid supplements.

The FASEB report also noted that there is little information about the use of these supplements taken for such purposes, especially concerning their safety, and that no rational justification exists for healthy individuals to be using them. It recommends that a systematic approach be taken to ascertaining the safety of these products.

FDA Issues Warning, Obtains Injunction

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued a warning against the use of chaparral, an herbal product prepared from the leaves of the desert shrub *Larrea tridentata*. Chaparral tea is an old Indian remedy and is also sold as

capsules and tablets,³ allegedly for the relief of a wide variety of ailments including cancer. The herb is known to contain nordihydroguaiaretic acid (NGDA), a potent antioxidant having considerable toxicity. NGDA was removed from the FDA's generally recognized as safe (GRAS) list in 1968, though the U.S. Department of Agriculture continued to allow its addition to animal fats. The grounds for the present FDA warning are several reported cases of liver toxicity in individuals taking chaparral supplements, one of whom developed hepatorenal failure. Physicians who suspect adverse effects caused by the herb are encouraged to contact the FDA or the federal Centers for Disease Control.

The FDA has been granted an injunction against the distribution of the notorious quack cancer remedy Cancell, also known as Entelev, Jim's Juice, Crocinic Acid, Sheridan's Formula, JS-114, JS-101 and 126-F. The remedy's history dates to 1936 when James V. Sheridan claimed he was inspired by God to create the formula. He finally got around to requesting investigational new drug (IND) status from the FDA in 1982. But Sheridan never acted on the IND that he was granted. In 1984 Edward J. Sopcak acquired the formula, registered it under the name Cancell, and proceeded to promote it for the treatment of cancer, AIDS, epilepsy, and many other medical conditions. Sopcak sought to escape FDA oversight by claiming that Cancell isn't a drug after all, but "an assembly of synthetic chemicals" that supposedly cure 80% of cancers without side effects by causing cancer cells to "self-destruct." Cancell is made of inositol, sodium sulfite, potassium hydroxide, catechol, and nitric, sulfuric and crocinic acids, none of which have anticancer activities.⁴ The FDA obtained a permanent injunction in 1989 against interstate commerce in Cancell, but its manufacture and distribution continued anyway on the grounds that Sopcak and Sheridan were making "gifts" of the preparation. With luck, the current injunction will be more effective at curtailing this fraud.⁵

Local Cancer Quackery

On nearly the same subject, right-wing Christian Reconstructionist Gary North is now promoting an unspecified "food supplement" as a cancer cure from a Post Office Box in Colleyville, Texas.⁶ In a promotional mailing, North offers information about this "very ancient substance" in the form of an audio tape for \$90. The unnamed product, he claims, "reduces tumors to a harmless jelly-like material which is then absorbed by the body and eliminated" without any harmful side-effects. "Dr." North, who holds no medical degree, urges his readers to act quickly before the "brief window of opportunity" to obtain the unnamed product is shut by "bureaucratic interference." Sadly, my curiosity isn't so great that I'm anxious to part with \$90 when reliable information about effective cancer treatments can be had for so much less.

Recommended Reading

A new book (1993) published by the American Medical Association is recommended reading. The authors of Reader's Guide to "Alternative" Health Methods⁷ include Stephen Barrett, M.D., and William Jarvis, Ph.D., noted authorities on medical and nutritional fraud and quackery, Jarvis being the President of the National Council Against Health Fraud (NCAHF). The 348-page book deals with scores of fraudulent, questionable, and "alternative" health-related claims and practices, identifying and synopsisizing key sources of information for each. Proponents' literature is covered as well, making nearly every entry a case-study in skepticism concerning questionable medical and nutritional claims.

Notes:

See also *The Skeptic*, September 1992.

1. A copy of the report is \$40 from FASEB, 9650 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, MD 20814.
2. But it's still a "nutritional supplement" say its promoters!
3. Well, maybe if you dropped a tumor into a vat of concentrated nitric and sulfuric acids ...
4. Some of the information here comes from an excellent article that appeared in the January/February 1993 issue of *CA-A Cancer Journal for Clinicians*.
5. These are folks who want to institute a theocracy of "Biblical Law" including the death penalty for homosexuals as commanded by God in the Old Testament.
6. Not to be confused with the *Consumer's Guide* from Prometheus Press.
7. Copies can be had for \$34.50, postpaid, from NCAHF Books, P.O. Box 1747, Allentown, PA 18105.

This information is provided by the D/FW Council Against Health Fraud. For more information, or to report suspected health fraud, please contact the Council at Box 202577, Arlington, TX 76006, or call metro 817-792-2000. Dr. Gorski is

a practicing physician, chairman of the D/FW Council Against Health Fraud and an NTS Technical Advisor.

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Fringe Theory of the Month

Special Quake-Prediction Installment *Number Four in an Occasional Series*

By Mike Sullivan

To hear the supermarket-tabloid psychics tell it, they have predicted all of the world's major disasters. They boast that every flood, tidal wave, hurricane and volcano was specifically and correctly predicted, thanks to their special powers allowing them to see into the future.

Skeptics try to point out that these claims are almost never supported by evidence and that these alleged predictions were published in advance of the event, as in the case of the famous Tamara Rand hoax. Rand claimed to have specifically predicted the assassination attempt on President Reagan; James Randi and others showed that Rand had made her prediction more than 24 hours after the event!

It is also useful to point out that based on the huge number of predictions made by these folks, at least a few are bound to "come true," owing to chance alone. Skeptic columnist Pat Reeder has an admirable score on this account on his 1991 predictions (see *The Skeptic*, February 1992). And finally, we never seem to get an exact, specific prediction of the truly astonishing events that happen in the world, as the Bay Area Skeptics recount every year in their annual appraisal of the psychics' flops. As BAS's Robert Schaffer says, in order to predict those truly unusual events you would have to be psychic!

This month we present somewhat of an oddity among predictions. Unlike the usual seer, our Fringe Theorist this month is confident enough about his vision to put his prediction in print, and specify a date certain by which he says it will occur. Granted, predicting that an earthquake will strike California can hardly be said to be extraordinary. In fact, the U.S. Geological Service employs dozens of folks whose job it is to do just that. What make those folks different from our guest Theorist is that they base their estimates on science, while he bases it on ... well, we'll let you try to figure it out.

In one respect, Mr. Scallion is to be commended for his effort to be specific about his prediction. On the other hand, you must wonder about his knowledge of the subject when, in the article that follows, he says that the quake he is predicting will exceed 10 on the Richter scale and that a new scale will need to be created. In fact, the Richter scale is open-ended and logarithmic.

Long about May 10th, we'll be the first to sing Mr. Scallion's praises if his prediction plays out as he describes it. He was specific enough to name a date and a quake strength to make evaluating his prediction an objective exercise. We'll be equally specific in interpreting the outcome of his prediction in our June issue.

We present Mr. Scallion's article here as we found it on the CompuServe computer network. We can't vouch for the accuracy of his other claimed correct predictions, of course, but we will report back on this one...that is, if we're still here in June!

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The Earth Changes Report

February 1993 *The Survival Guide for the Nineties*
Gordon-Michael Scallion, Publisher SPECIAL REPORT

Final Warning Signs for California Super-Mega Quakes 8-12 on the Richter scale — Predicted to Occur NO LATER THAN MAY 9, 1993

In December, Earth Changes Report predicted that the next two months would be highly volatile for earth changes west of the Rockies — floods and storms have devastated California and a 5+ quake hit northern California in an area that had, up until now, been seismically quiet. East of the Rockies storms racked the Northeast and portions of New York City went under water. Additionally, significant earth changes have occurred globally in December and January — a 7.5 quake hit Japan (ECR prediction 12/92) and on December 12th the first Indian Ocean quake and subsequent tidal wave occurred (ECR prediction 10/92). In my opinion, the final warning bell has been sounded for California.

Previously Published West Coast Warning Signs:

- Erratic weather pattern changes and severe storm predictions — now on-going.
- First L.A. Quake Prediction — occurred April 22, 1991.
- Second L.A. Quake Prediction — occurred June 28, 1991.
- First Indian Ocean Quake/Tidal Wave Prediction — occurred December 12, 1992.
- 7.5 quake predicted for Japan — occurred January 15, 1993.
- West Coast Migrations predicted to begin — 200,000 left in '92.
- Prediction for partial land mass fracture in CA — 44 Mile Fracture Occurred along ECR-predicted fracture line on June 28, 1992.
- Prediction for Third L.A. Quake — 8+ has not occurred. However, my prophecy states that it will happen NO LATER THAN MAY 9, 1993 and may occur along with super-mega quakes.

Time is short — WITHIN 4 MONTHS. Back in '83 my information was, "watch August 1991 to May 1993." Later, in April '91, the date became more specific — NO LATER THAN MAY 9, 1993. I have sought guidance as to how I could best assist at this late hour. Here is what I received:

"If an 8.0+ (Richter scale) quake occurs in the Indian Ocean region — Sri Lanka should be watched carefully — then within days major earth changes shall occur in Japan, Alaska, Italy, Martinique and the western United States and Canada." As to the day and hour of the "big one" [California quake], this should not be seen as a singular event. While May of this year will be remembered as the month when the great plates shifted, events shall occur even before this — many [earthquakes] exceeding 7 on the Richter scale occurring roughly along a line drawn from Vancouver, B.C. to Eureka to San Diego. Think in terms of quakes lasting not seconds, but minutes!

Now, to clarify so there may be preparation and knowing. The super-mega quake shall not have a singular epicenter. Rather the land itself displaces its forces from north to south. The current Richter scale will not be able to measure its magnitude. Later, it shall be computed to have been in excess of 10 and a new scale shall be created. The following areas of California will experience inundations. Portions of San Diego shall go underwater as well as much of the Imperial Valley. Tidal waves shall be created traveling south and southwest along the whole West Coast. Los Angeles shall be the hardest hit and initially will be thought to be the location of epicenter, though later found to be only a portion of same. Multiple quakes shall occur. The aqueducts feeding many cities such as Los Angeles shall fail and much of California shall be without power. Roads that cross other roads shall come down and become impassable. Portions of land from San Francisco to Sacramento shall be displaced by hundreds of feet in some areas. Numerous bridges shall collapse throughout California causing many highways to become impassable. Migrations will be to Arizona, Oregon, Nevada, Utah and Idaho. Loss of life shall be great. Property damage and business loss shall be measured in the hundreds of billions of dollars, causing the national and global economy to severely decline."

If the final warning signs occur as presented, the areas close to my predicted fracture zone (see ECR 6/92) — 50 miles either side — will be the hardest hit.

Thousands of ECR readers have written to me saying that they know the BIG ONE is coming, but feel they have no

choice but to stay because of jobs, family, home, investments, etc. As I have repeatedly stated, each must trust his or her own intuition in this, as well as in all matters. I can only give you the signs.

PLEASE PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR INTUITION, NOW, MORE THAN EVER. We have been warned on all levels (see Reading the Signs by Cynthia Keyes in this issue. [Sorry, Skeptic readers! — Ed.]) If you have consciously decided to stay during these changes for whatever reason, maybe you will be able to help others. I believe only 1 in 3 will choose, or be able to, leave California during Tribulation. Healers in the thousands will be needed, especially at the emotional-mental levels.

Definitions: "Mega-quakes" when used in ECR, indicate earth-quakes having a magnitude range of 7.5 - 8.9 [on the Richter scale]. "Super-mega quakes" used in ECR indicates earthquakes having a magnitude higher than 9. "Tribulation" means the time period from 1991 to 1997 and it is further defined as a time period of spiritual choosing and great Earth changes.

*The **EARTH CHANGES REPORT** is published Monthly by Matrix Institute, RR1 Box 391, Westmoreland, NH 03467, (603) 399-4916. The above article appeared in the 12-page Feb. issue, Copyright (c) January 27, 1993 by Gordon-Michael Scallion. Photocopying or printing ECR for sale or resale is strictly prohibited. Photocopying ECR to GIVE AWAY is encouraged. This transcript is being shared by interested parties as a public service to increase awareness of impending earth changes being predicted by those with the gifts of prophecy and clairvoyance. The reader assumes sole responsibility for his present and future actions in light of this information.*

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The third eye

By Pat Reeder

As of this writing, we are eight days deep into the *Fire In The Sky* movie hoopla, and some of us have had our hands full in trying to hold back the tidal wave of nonsense. I know I certainly feel like the boy who had to put his finger in the dike ... if I can say that in a family newsletter. Here's a recap of our first week of Travis Walton-inspired media hysteria ...

As you know from our last issue, CSICOP formally challenged Paramount either to offer proof that their potboiler is "based on a true story," as the ads claim, or else quit trying to deceive the public and change the ads (not likely; remember, this is the same studio that claimed *Harlem Nights* was a "comedy"). But CSICOP is not alone in its skepticism this time.

During the movie's opening week, *Entertainment Weekly* magazine reported that Paramount executives admitted they found Travis Walton's story to be vague and unoriginal, so they ordered their screenwriters and special effects people to make it flashier and more provocative. It's now become a lie on top of a lie ... which is the definition Stephen King once offered for "fiction." It is so far from the truth now that saying it's "based on a true story" is like saying that Tchaikovsky's "Swan Lake" ballet is based on duck hunting season.

The story of Paramount's embellishments was picked up by other media outlets, including ABC's *Good Morning, America*, and the Associated Press carried an interview with Phil Klass debunking the tale. But I doubt that Paramount is concerned, since I have a feeling they knew this movie would make most of its money the first weekend anyway, before being killed by bad word of mouth. They tipped their hand before the movie ever opened.

I've reviewed films for radio and newspapers, but for those of you who haven't, here's how it works. The studios open most of their films on Friday, which means they have special screenings for critics on Wednesday night or Thursday morning, thereby giving them enough time to write reviews and get them into the paper on Friday. When studio execs smell a dog, they don't hold screenings for critics. This forces the reviewers to wait until Friday to see the film, which

means that daily papers can't possibly run a review until Saturday, and weekly magazines and TV shows (such as Siskel & Ebert) often have to wait until the following week. Thus, the filmmakers buy anywhere from one to seven days in which to lure unsuspecting moviegoers before the bad reviews get out. So ... did you notice how long it took before you saw reviews on *Fire In The Sky*?

So ask yourself: if Paramount would do that to critics, just to hoodwink the public, what WOULDN'T they say to increase their chances of making big money off this space turkey?

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Of course, I was doing my little bit to stem the tide, too ... posting notes on the Prodigy computer network bulletin boards telling the facts about Walton's yarn, etc. I also made a guest appearance on WIOD radio in Miami, when my DJ friends, Ron Stevens & Joy Grdnic, asked me to appear and discuss the subject. In each case, whether reading the notes responding to my Prodigy posts, or handling callers to the radio show, I never ceased to be amazed at how much people want to believe this stuff, no matter how ridiculous it is, nor how hazy their grasp of the facts.

I talked to people who believed wholeheartedly in Walton's story and in alien abductions in general ... they even claimed that they had followed these cases for years and studied them closely ... yet in every single case, when they started to recount a story, I found that they had all the details wrong. Names, dates, places, events, alleged proofs, you name it ... any fact that could possibly be screwed up, had been. But no matter how gentle or diplomatic I tried to be in correcting their facts, most of them became indignant and suggested that I was close-minded for actually trying to get the story straight. It's as if you are questioning their religion ... which in a way you are, since they obviously believe in taking urban legends purely on faith. They reminded me of one of David Letterman's "Top Ten Signs That You've Joined A Bad Cult ... The entire religion is based on something the leader overheard on a bus."

On more than one occasion, I found myself questioning why I even bother to be a skeptic, to try to promote critical thinking and an uncompromising search for the truth. I just kept thinking, "Why don't I just start my own psychic hotline?! I could get rich!" As Penn and Teller say, "Sucker-wise, it's an embarrassment of riches" out there!

But then, I got a private note on Prodigy from a 13-year old boy in Ogden, Utah. He had been very much frightened by alien abduction tales, and the more he read about the subject, the more frightened he became. Of course, he had no idea that he was reading only one side of the story. He wrote to tell me that my fact-filled notes had made him realize HE was being close-minded, by believing in things that he didn't really know about, and he asked me for suggestions on books he could read to learn more. I gladly turned him on to Phil Klass, Robert Sheaffer, and other authors who provide the welcome antidote to the unscientific fear-mongering of the Bud Hopkinses of the world. And I thought, "Hey, I reached one kid, and I started him asking questions and thinking critically. Maybe that alone is worth all this grief."

So I won't go buy a pack of Tarot cards and get a 900-number listing just yet.

But don't tempt me.

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At this writing, the standoff between the FBI and the Branch Davidians continues in Waco. I don't know how it will turn out, but at least it has brought some much-needed public attention to doomsday cults. The Associated Press carried an excellent interview with Steve Allen on the subject (Allen's son was a member of such a cult for years, and Allen wrote a book, *Beloved Son*, about the painful experience of losing a family member to a cult). Television reporters are also covering the story in almost ludicrous detail.

I'm glad to see this subject getting some attention now, though. Doomsday cults (those built around a messiah-like leader who claims to have inside info on when the world will end) tend to congregate around major calendar dates, such as the turn of the century or the end of a millennium ... and guess what? We're coming up on both! So look for more of

this insanity in the next few years. And for a good list of all the cults who knew for certain that the world was about to end ... going back at least 1500 years ... check out the appendix on false prophets in James Randi's wonderful book on Nostradamus.

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Inside Edition recently ran a story on a haunted ski lodge in the Rockies, and an "experiment" involving a group of about 25 locals (who were shown getting into the mood by consuming vast quantities of "spirits" in the ski lodge bar), and led by the Amazing Kreskin. In the "experiment," people placed their fingertips on card tables ... and the tables started tipping and moving!! They said they weren't even pushing them! Can you imagine that?! Next, some strange power made some of the people fall to the floor and not be able to move, until a signal from Kreskin brought back their mobility (if ghosts were causing their paralysis, I'm not sure why a signal from Kreskin cured it ... unless he's even more powerful than I thought!). It is also worth noting that only some of the people fell to the floor ... the rest, presumably those who were less suggestible, stood at the periphery, unmoved by the ectoplasmic forces.

It's funny: I once saw Kreskin do the exact same stunt at a show in Waco Hall at Baylor. I never knew until now that Waco Hall was haunted!

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The Associated Press reports that despite a slowing economy in Japan, the Astra Agency in Tokyo is still doing a booming business. For \$43, they provide psychic advice and horoscope charts for your pets. A spokesman says about 60 percent of their business comes from young girls who are worried about their cats. But they were recently hired by a dairy to do horoscopes on their cows and find out why milk production had dropped. Talk about milking the suckers! They probably found that the cows just weren't spending enough time under Taurus the bull.

And finally, you fans of *Sightings* and other incisive documentary programs will be happy to hear that Fox TV is producing a new pilot called *The X Files*, about a federal agent investigating UFOs and alien abductions. Well, don't believe a UFO story just because it comes from a pilot. If we're all lucky, *The X Files* will appear on Fox's fall schedule this year, thus giving Travis Walton yet another paying outlet in which to tell that story he still finds much too painful to recount.

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