



The Newsletter of The North Texas Skeptics

Volume 12 Number 9

www.ntskeptics.org

October 1998

In this month's issue:

- [A skeptical view of exorcism and deliverance \(part IV\)](#)
- [Pseudoscience in Dallas](#)
- [Hawaii Rational Inquirer](#)

A Skeptical View of Exorcism and Deliverance (Part IV)

By Danny Barnett

I wish to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Virginia Vaughn, Pat Reeder, and Laura Ainsworth of the North Texas Skeptics and Harry Guetzlaff of the Trinity Foundation for supplying me with research materials for this report.

With this month's article, I'm bringing this series on exorcism and deliverance to a close. If for any reason you have missed earlier installments, you can either contact us about acquiring back issues, or you can find them on the Internet by accessing the NTS Web site at <http://www.utdallas.edu/orgs/ntskeptics>. Special thanks to Greg Aicklen, our esteemed Vice President, for updating and maintaining our Web site and making it look so darned nice.

Mental Illness and Demoniac Possession

In Part II of this series, I discussed how multiple personality disorder (MPD) fit into the world of deliverance. Some exorcists such as Bob Larson and Rebecca Brown have focused on the links between child abuse, MPD, and demoniac infestation. According to psychiatrist August Piper, author of the book *Hoax and Reality: The Bizarre World of Multiple Personality Disorder*, the theory behind MPD suffers from four serious weaknesses.

There is no plain, understandable definition of an "alter personality." Piper stated, "The imprecision of the alter concept allows MPD adherents to claim that scores of patient behaviors should signal the possible presence of guest personalities...In one case known to the author, a leading MPD proponent claimed that the diagnosis was supported by behavior no more remarkable than the fact that the patient changed clothes several times daily and liked to wear sunglasses."¹

The most dramatic symptoms of MPD do not appear until after patients begin receiving therapy from proponents of MPD, and patients often deteriorate significantly during treatment. According to Piper, "MPD-focused therapists have struggled mightily to explain these rather embarrassing results of their interventions." However, during recent malpractice trials, Piper mentioned that "The juries have preferred a simple and logical explanation for the worsening status of their patients: patients worsen after beginning MPD-focused therapy because therapists cause them to do so – by, among other things, encouraging ever-more-dramatic displays of `alters.'"²

If MPD can result from child abuse, there should be more cases of MPD that have been discovered. Piper cited a 1988

report in the *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry* that found only *one* case of MPD prior to 1979 and twelve from 1979 to 1988 – four of which were later deemed to be false.³

There is no evidence to support the idea that childhood abuse causes MPD. To prove his point, Piper cited various studies on children who survived the concentration camps of Nazi Germany. He found no evidence that any of these children ever developed MPD.⁴

If the evidence for MPD is shaky at best, then that means there is probably no such thing as an alter for demons to possess in the first place. Even so, Bob Larson continues to perform exorcisms on those who believe that MPD is a firmly established diagnosis – and that they suffer from the malady.

What about Robbie, the young boy exorcised by Father William Bowdern in 1949? Didn't he speak Latin and assault Bowdern? According to author Thomas Allen, who has studied the controversial exorcism, Father Walter Halloran believes that Robbie's use of Latin could have simply been an act of repeating the words spoken by the exorcists. Halloran, who assisted Bowdern and was also punched by Robbie during the ordeal, felt that the boy's strength was simply that of an agitated adolescent – hardly evidence of a supernatural presence invading Robbie.⁵

Allen also spoke with Dr. Judith Rapoport, a specialist in obsessive-compulsive disorder, who had this idea to contribute:

Rapoport suggests a very rare mental illness, childhood schizophrenia. Generally, schizophrenia is a disorder of late adolescence or young adulthood. But, she says, "there are atypical cases of children – boys mostly – who develop normally until, say, the age of eight, when they start having typical schizophrenia symptoms, such as hearing voices." She told of examining a boy who heard voices, including the devil, "who is telling him to hurt people and do dangerous things."⁶

Was Robbie truly possessed by evil spirits? The most honest answer I can give is that I can't be certain one way or another. However, when someone makes an unusual claim such as possession, the burden of proof rests upon the shoulders of the person responsible for the claim. If you tell me that you were delivered from demons by Bob Larson or Eddie Smith or Maxwell Whyte, I'd probably show interest in hearing your story. If you want me to believe that this claim is true and valid without any subsequent inquiry or investigation, however, I feel that there is enough reasonable doubt in the claims and teachings of exorcism/deliverance practitioners to prevent me from simply accepting your claim of possession at face value.

When Deliverance Gets Out of Control

In the annals of deliverance, Rebecca Brown is an unusual figure in that she has claimed to rescue people from a particularly powerful and vicious Satanic cult known simply as "The Brotherhood." Her first book, *He Came to Set the Captives Free*, details how she rescued "Elaine," a high priestess in The Brotherhood who claims to have witnessed brutal human sacrifices and sexual orgies. According to the book, Brown cast demons out of Elaine over a period of months. Her next book, *Prepare for War*, not only continued her adventures with Elaine but also discussed how demons could possess individuals and also gave advice on deliverance. She also claimed to have set up an "underground railroad" that rescued over a thousand people from hard-core Satanism.

Over the years, however, Brown's story has been assailed by critics such as G. Richard Fisher, M. Kurt Goedelman, David Alexander, John Baskette, and others who have revealed that Rebecca Brown was once an Indiana doctor named Ruth Bailey. Her promising medical career, however, was ruined when it was learned that she was diagnosing her patients as being possessed by demons and addicting them to powerful drugs that Bailey herself was already hooked on.⁷ In response, the Indiana Medical Licensing Board revoked Bailey's license in 1984.⁸

Bailey then moved to California, changed her name to Rebecca Brown, and started writing books on demons and deliverance. Geraldo Rivera soon featured Brown and "Elaine" on a television special about the supposed dangers of Satanic cults; apparently, he didn't try to research their background. ("Elaine" turned out to be Edna Elaine Moses, one of Brown's former patients.) Researcher David Alexander stated that one of Brown's books, *Prepare for War*, "has been

recommended as a serious reference in law enforcement training material." He then remarked, "With all of the problems modern police agencies have to face, one would not think that 'demon infestation' would be high on the list."⁹

Today, Rebecca Brown's books can still be found in Christian bookstores throughout America despite charges that her stories of battling with demons are unreliable due to her addiction to drugs at the time her adventures allegedly took place. Hounded by investigators, Brown stated defiantly, "I have no need to defend myself. The Lord is my defender. Why should I run around trying to defend myself when I have done nothing wrong?"¹⁰

It's time to raise a disturbing question. In light of the ability of Ruth Bailey/Rebecca Brown to mislead sincere Christians throughout America, how many deliverance ministries run the risk of going off the deep end, exercising complete control over their followers and possibly endangering their health, their sanity – and even their lives? There is evidence that some of them already have. Streiker recounted one tale of psychological torture at the hands of an unnamed deliverance circle:

One of my clients reports that she was delivered from the "spirit of lust" in the following manner: The congregation screamed "Come out of her, O spirit of Jezebel, I command thee through the blood of Jesus" in every-increasing stridency until they were hoarse. She was physically abused by being thrown about and caressed by unwanted contact with human hands, which were "suddenly seized by Satan." The session, which lasted for hours, panicked her into a nervous collapse.¹¹

Recently, there has been a high-profile case involving Word of Faith Fellowship, a church just outside the small town of Spindale, North Carolina. Jane Whaley, an exorcist who pastors the church, has advocated the use of a deliverance technique that has become known as "blasting." This simply consists of devotees surrounding an individual who believes he or she has demons and then shouting prayers or just screaming at full volume, sometimes for hours, in order to drive the demons out. *Shelby Star* reporter Valerie Bauerlein attended services at Word of Faith Fellowship and commented, "I've been to a Guns N' Roses concert that was quieter than this."¹²

Word of Faith Fellowship tried to maintain a low profile since it started using the practice back in 1985, but allegations that the church was mistreating children and other members eventually reached the Trinity Foundation, a religious watchdog organization in Dallas, Texas. In response to the allegations, a member of the Trinity Foundation smuggled a videocamera into Word of Faith Fellowship and recorded some of the stentorian services. The videotape caught disturbing images of the entire congregation shouting and punching their fists into the air. Parishioners were surrounded by fellow disciples who performed exorcisms on them by "blasting" them from only two feet away. Parents even "blasted" toddlers for offenses such as squirming in their seats.

Television news program *Inside Edition* acquired some of the video footage from the Trinity Foundation and broadcast it on February 28, 1995 along with allegations of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse at the hands of church leaders, including Jane Whaley and her husband, Sam. On March 2, the Whaleys called a press conference in order to counteract the negative nationwide publicity their church was receiving. As the church's security force kept vigil over the conference, Jane Whaley denied all of the charges but refused to allow reporters to tour the church or a grade school that it ran:

These doors are open to anyone who wants to worship God. We have done nothing wrong.

But [the church and school] are not for the world to see. But they are open to an individual who wants to know the truth. We in ourselves walk in the love of God. Only God can reveal to you who we are and what we are.¹³

Despite their protests of innocence, Word of Faith Fellowship remained under close scrutiny, especially when evidence was unearthed showing that the Whaleys were slowly taking over other churches and introducing them to the "blasting" method of deliverance. Even disgraced Dallas faith healer Robert Tilton took up the practice for a while after Fellowship disciple Leigh Valentine reportedly cast a Snake demon out of him. Valentine later married – then divorced – Tilton, who has now relocated to Florida.

According to those who left Word of Faith Fellowship, Jane Whaley rules the congregation with an iron hand. Eddie

Taylor, who left the church at 18 years of age after growing up in it for six years, reported that he was forbidden to date: "The church is full of single girls, but I couldn't have a girlfriend. Jane told me that, instead of having a girlfriend, I could have a 'godly' friend and she chose a godly friend for me."¹⁴ Whaley, among other things, has also ordered all of her followers to sell their homes and live in crowded group homes, working only in jobs that meet her approval. Although Streiker did not mention Whaley in *The Gospel Time Bomb*, he did comment about the ability many exorcists have to control their followers:

Exorcism and private revelations received only by the elder, apostle, or prophet of the group are effective means of achieving control and destroying resistance to authority. It is difficult to resist the injunctions of someone who is casting demons out of you. It is much easier to refuse your physician's or CPA's advice.¹⁵

Newspapers have printed stories of other people throughout the United States who have died as a result of attempted deliverance. Some deaths were at the hands of amateurs like Caroline Veal, who drowned her young daughter in 1995 during an attempted exorcism in Oklahoma City.¹⁶ However, there is an organized and very brutal form of exorcism called *anchal* prayer that can be found in some American churches that minister to Korean worshippers. During an *anchal* ritual, the subject is struck repeatedly in order to drive demons out of the subject's body.

One of the most infamous *anchal* exorcisms occurred in March 1995 when five members of Jesus-Amen Ministries, a tiny Korean-American congregation in Emeryville, California, were arrested and charged with the murder of Kyong-a Ha, who died 10 days after she was beaten in an attempt to cure her of insomnia and mild schizophrenia, which the worshippers claimed were caused by a demon. Eun Kyong Park, the minister of Jesus-Amen Ministries, and four of her followers struck Ha up to 100 times in the face, chest, and abdomen during an *anchal* exorcism, breaking at least 10 of her ribs.

In response, Park directed eight members of Jesus-Amen Ministries to maintain a prayer vigil over Ha's body and wait for her spirit to return. Not surprisingly, it didn't, even though the vigil lasted for five days. Park and her followers were put on trial for Ha's death in what was probably the first *anchal* trial in America. Allison Danzig with the Alameda County DA's office prosecuted the case: "Cultural defenses aren't valid in this country. When you come here you have to adhere to the law, whether you like it or not. We can't go down that slippery slope." All five defendants were convicted, but Eun Kyong Park only got manslaughter. Danzig commented afterwards that Park might only serve three months in prison.¹⁷

The Will To Believe

I discussed James Randi's experiment with astrology on *Dateline* in Part III of this series. Randi gave twelve college students horoscopes that were supposed to be personalized, then revealed to them that the horoscopes were not only fake; they were all the same horoscope. Incredibly, despite the overwhelming evidence provided by Randi that seemed to debunk astrology, some of the students told Randi that they still believe in the power of astrology to improve their lives.

This persistence of irrational belief was also demonstrated when Randi exposed the corrupt ministry of evangelist Peter Popoff, who convinced many Christians that he had the power to heal. James Randi exposed Popoff's shenanigans on *The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson* in 1986 by revealing that Popoff's "words of knowledge" were actually radio transmissions by his wife Elizabeth, who read information off of prayer cards and relayed the information to Popoff through a hidden earpiece that the evangelist wore while on stage. Popoff's ministry suffered a powerful blow, and his television program went off the air. Despite being disgraced on national television, Popoff is back on the air, hosting a weekly program on a national cable channel. The reason for Popoff's return is probably best expressed by people such as Lizzie Vincent, a Detroit woman who claimed that Popoff was healing her of arthritis:

I saw that gentleman [Randi] on the Johnny Carson show. He said it was someone behind the scenes talking. I don't believe that. I wouldn't believe that if my neck were about to be pulled. If I contradict what these people are doing, I'm contradicting the Bible.¹⁸

At Bob Larson's deliverance rally in Arlington, I saw people swaying and speaking in tongues, arms waving in the air,

tambourines shaking. Many people were there to get "in the Spirit," to pursue what looked like a spiritual high that fuels much of the modern-day deliverance movement. As an evangelical Christian who, in his own words, later became "a different kind of Christian," anti-cult activist Lowell Streiker had a few comments about this:

It is no longer disgraceful to get high. Ecstasy is fashionable. It is the parents of today's cultists and biblical sect members who are out of step. Most deprogrammings are acts aimed at cutting the enthusiast off from the source of his high more than at anything else. Intensity is a cardinal sin only if you programmed your children to graduate from college and become professionals. Is it really true that the boring, normal kid is the happy, self-fulfilled kid?

But unbridled enthusiasm is no more a guarantee of health, wealth, and goodness than is the unrestricted consumption of hot-fudge sundaes. When I can no longer tell the difference between ecstasy and the behavior of the inmates of a ward for the chronically mentally ill, I am profoundly troubled.¹⁹

The college students in New York wanted to believe. The followers of Peter Popoff wanted to believe. The disciples at Word of Faith Fellowship and Jesus-Amen Ministries wanted to believe. And it was all too evident that the young man I met at Bob Larson's deliverance rally wanted to believe. Streiker understands completely: "We want to believe. In something. In someone. In anything. Millions of Americans are conversions waiting to happen."²⁰

Hopefully, one day soon, that young man will also understand.

Deliver Us From Nonsense

This series is by no means the last word on exorcism and deliverance ministry, and I may not have answered all of the questions that people may have pertaining to the subject. However, I am confident that my research has cast reasonable doubt on the claims of many modern-day exorcists and their followers.

One of the most common misconceptions people have of skeptics is that we reject unusual claims without even bothering to examine them. Granted, sometimes it's very easy to give in to that temptation, as in the case of a New Age channeller from New York who claims that space aliens told her to drink her own urine. As a skeptic, however, my job is simply to study a particular claim, examine whatever evidence is at hand, and see if everything adds up.

Remember that chunk of Martian rock that somehow got blasted off of Mars and wound up in Antarctica? In 1996, some scientists who studied that meteorite announced that they have discovered evidence of ancient Martian lifeforms embedded in the rock. Fast forward to 1998. Other scientists have now come forth with very credible arguments stating that these little microorganisms may actually be native to our own beloved Terra. This is an excellent example of different individuals using the scientific method to review the same evidence only to come up with different conclusions. Some of us may consider it very disappointing that what we thought was hard evidence of extraterrestrial life may have gone bust, but we must be willing to accept the strong possibility that the dissenters are right.

How does this apply to deliverance? Keep in mind that interest in the Martian meteorite centered around the unusual claim that the rock harbored fossils of Martian lifeforms; this claim is therefore subject to peer review because the claim is testable. When a deliverance minister states that evil spirits exist, that is a statement of personal belief. If that same minister claims that someone has been invaded by those evil spirits and is doing unsavory things because of demonic influence, that claim now becomes testable and subject to review by third parties.

It is not up to the skeptic to demonstrate that the claim is invalid, but the burden of proof rests on the shoulders of the deliverance minister to convince the skeptic that his claims are sustainable. This is the same approach we as skeptics take towards psychics, young-earth creationists, homeopaths, cold fusion proponents, and those who claim to have been abducted by extraterrestrials. We ask only one thing of all of these people: "You've presented a claim; now show us the evidence." This is necessary to help stem the tide of nonsensical beliefs that threaten to dominate human society.

Many of these idiosyncrasies are relatively harmless, such as the resilient propitiation of astrology. Sometimes, however, a streak of irrationality is used by a diabolical or insane demagogue to deceive many innocent people. Once in a while, such nonsense results in something like the tragedy at Jonestown, Guyana, back in 1978. The mass

murder/suicide could possibly have been prevented if more people had been alerted early on to the activities of a bogus faith healer named Jim Jones – who had been known to make a few extraordinary claims without any proof.

Let's be careful out there, folks.

References:

1. August Piper Jr., "Multiple Personality Disorder: Witchcraft Survives in the Twentieth Century." *Skeptical Inquirer*; Volume 22, No. 3; May/June 1998; pg. 46.
2. Ibid., pg. 47.
3. Ibid., pg. 48.
4. Ibid., pp. 48-49.
5. Thomas B. Allen, *Possessed: The True Story of an Exorcism*. 1993; Doubleday; New York, NY; pg. 209.
6. Ibid., pg. 214.
7. John Baskette, "The Bizarre Case of Dr. Rebecca Brown." *Answers In Action* Web site;
<http://www.answers.org/Satan/Brown.html>.
8. "Doctor's License Is Revoked For Diagnosis of Evil Spirits." *New York Times*; September 24, 1984.
9. David Alexander, "Giving the Devil More Than His Due." *The Humanist*; March/April 1990.
10. Rebecca Brown, M.D., *Becoming a Vessel of Honor*. 1992; Whitaker House; Springdale, PA; pg. 14.
11. Lowell D. Streiker, *The Gospel Time Bomb*. 1984; Prometheus Books; Buffalo, NY; pg. 117.
12. Valerie Bauerlein, "I prayed...and wrote this story." *The Shelby Star* (Shelby, NC); March 25, 1995.
13. Roberta Borden, "Whaleys say Word of Faith is victim of persecution." *Daily Star* (Shelby, NC); March 3, 1995.
14. Jean Gordon, "Teen: 'I was brainwashed into doing things I didn't want to do'." *The Daily Courier* (Forest City, NC); February 28, 1995.
15. Streiker, *The Gospel Time Bomb*; pg. 119.
16. From wire reports, "Woman charged in daughter's drowning." *Dallas Morning News* (Dallas, TX); July 1, 1995.
17. Paul Salopek, "Korean Exorcism, Bare-Knuckle Style." *Chicago Tribune* (Chicago, IL); August 28, 1996. From wire reports, "5 sect members are held in slaying." *Dallas Morning News* (Dallas TX); March 17, 1995.
18. John Tierney, "Fleecing the Flock." *Discover*; November 1987; pg. 58.
19. Streiker, *The Gospel Time Bomb*; pp. 182-183.
20. Ibid., pg. 124.

Pseudoscience in Dallas

by John Blanton

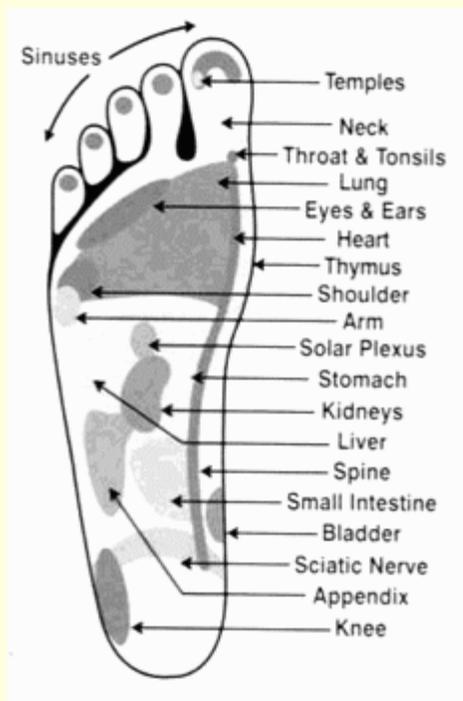
Earlier this year two of us—always thinking of you—journeyed to Paris to look for pseudoscience. We found it readily, if you recall, and we promised to extend our study to the local burgh after it shook off this awful global warming.

Bingo!

It really wasn't hard at all. My first time out after the heat broke I struck pay dirt. Out shopping with Miss Barbara Jean I spied real, honest-to-goodness pseudoscience staring at me from the shelf of an uptown department store.

"Magnetic Therapy," shouted the display. "New Revolutionary Technology" it went on. Package labeling further explained that this was a non-medical method for the treatment of pain and that it improves circulation. There were cautionary notes, however. This should not be used with transdermal drug delivery patches and should not be used over an open wound. Also it was not recommended for use during pregnancy.

A ten-piece magnetic body set was on sale for \$50, but you could get a pair of magnetic insoles for only \$20. There was more. The packaging for the magnetic soles had a diagram (see the figure) showing how different regions of the sole correspond to the different parts of the body being treated. That's reflexology. You could get two medical frauds for the price of one.



Naturally, I could not pass this up. Again thinking of you only, I had Barbara Jean purchase a set of the insoles and donate it to the NTS. After all, it was \$5 off, a Red Apple Special at Foley's. You will be seeing a lot of this product at future meetings. I will pass it around so you too can read in detail all the wondrous claims about this miracle of modern medical science.

I sent off a letter to The Dallas Morning News, hoping they would share my wonderment with their readers. I am also sending a friendly letter to Foley's, reminding them how much Barbara Jean spends each year at their establishment (including \$20 for magnetic insoles). The letter will include a short section on civic responsibility. Hopefully I will be able to report to you that Foley's no longer participates in this scam.

Hawaii Rational Inquirer

by Vic Stenger

Vol. 4 No. 3

A free, open newsletter on issues of interest to the University of Hawaii and international academic communities. Subscriptions are open to all. To subscribe send the following message to listproc@hawaii.edu, with subject blank: *subscribe hri-l first_name last_name*. To unsubscribe send: *unsubscribe hri-l*. Do not send requests to hri-l@hawaii.edu.

To contact the editor privately, send email to vstenger@hawaii.edu.

This and earlier issues are archived at:

<http://www.phys.hawaii.edu/yjs/www/rati.html>.

Feel free to re-distribute this newsletter in full or in part, as long as it is not being done for profit and due credit is given.

•••

Hawaii new center of energy medicine?

Two current items might lead one to think so. First, Thursday's Oprah Winfrey show featured "medical intuitive" Caroline Myss who received a doctorate in "intuition and energy medicine" from Greenwich University in Hilo, Hawaii. Greenwich University is an unaccredited correspondence school with no association to the University of Hawaii or other accredited colleges in Hawaii.

From the promotional material for the show: "Caroline Myss is nothing short of amazing. Time and again on today's show she pinpointed the causes (and often, the cures) of our audience members' maladies. Caroline is not a gifted physician, but a medical intuitive who uses only a patient's name and age — and her own gifts — to diagnose with 93% accuracy. Her visionary powers extend far beyond the origins of illness, however, illuminating the core of what it means to be physically, mentally and emotionally `healthy.'"

The second item concerns the University of Hawaii very directly. Every year the UH Foundation sponsors the "Presidents Club Lecture Series" which is designed to let private donors know about important doings at the university. One of this year's three lectures is by Professor Jane Starn of the UH School of Nursing. The title: "Energy Healing: A Complementary Alternative Therapy."

According to the abstract: "Energy healing is a complementary therapy focused on the mind-body-spirit connection." Starn will present the "scientific/theoretical basis of energy healing" and the clinical applications of Therapeutic Touch. With quacks cleaning up these days, I guess President Mortimer feels like this is a good chance for the UH to cash in on the trend.

If you want to read Emily Rosa's own story about her science fair debunking of Therapeutic Touch, see the first issue of *Jr. Skeptic*, enclosed in the latest *Skeptic Magazine* (Vol. 6 No. 2, 1998).

Medical community taking action against quackery

We have seen how *JAMA* has finally begun to take a stand against non-scientific medicine. Now they have been joined by the *New England Journal of Medicine*. The September 16 issue of <M>NEJM contains an editorial and other reports very critical of alternative practices.

The editorial points out that some herbal remedies can be dangerous, but since they are sold as "food supplements," do not come under FDA control. An article in the same issue warns against use of the herbal mixture PC-SPES, a much-touted herbal treatment for prostate cancer.

The California Department of Health Services has tested 260 traditional Chinese medicines and found one-third were contaminated with heavy metals, such as lead and arsenic, or pharmaceuticals not listed on the labels.

The editorial concludes: "It is time for the scientific community to stop giving alternative medicine a free ride. There cannot be two kinds of medicine — conventional and alternative. There is only medicine that has been adequately tested and medicine that has not, medicine that works and medicine that may or may not work. Once a treatment has been tested rigorously, it no longer matters whether it was considered alternative at the outset. If it is found to be reasonably safe and effective, it will be accepted. But assertions, speculation, and testimonials do not substitute for evidence. Alternative treatments should be subjected to scientific testing no less rigorous than that required for conventional treatments."

Martin Gardner speaks out against fuzzy math

In this week's *NY Review of Books*, Martin Gardner talks about the "new new math" that is being promoted in a number of new textbooks. He says the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) seems to have learned nothing from the "new math" fiasco of the 1960s.

The NCTM is "backing another reform movement that goes by such names as the new new math, whole math, fuzzy math, standards math, and rain forest math. Like the old New Math, it is creating a ferment among teachers and parents, especially in California, where it first caught on. It is estimated that about half of all pre-college mathematics in the United States is now being taught by teachers trained in fuzzy math. The new fad is heavily influenced by multiculturalism, environmentalism, and feminism."

The full essay can be found at:

<http://www.nybooks.com/nyrev/WWWfeatdisplay.cgi?1998092409R>