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From The Editor -- Bob Ladendorf

As the French policeman played by Claude Rains said in Casablanca\_--"Round up the usual suspects"--we have done something similar for our special, expanded anniversary issue by rounding up our usual authors and subject matters.

Martin Kottmeyer, one of our popular authors as shown in our survey results (p. 7), again takes on the alien advocates by examining a purported feature of aliens, and consequently, he delves into the nature of evidence.

Robert E. McGrath has another portrait of a skeptic, this one being of Ray Hyman, a founding member of the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP) and author of a classic book on dowsing.

Chairman David Bloomberg has added an extra touch to this special issue: a checklist of awards for the best and worst efforts of the media in covering paranormal and pseudoscientific issues. In addition, David adds his usual sardonic touch to his popular media watch column, "REALLity Check."

As you can see, this 12-page anniversary issue is packed with information about these issues. I hope you enjoy the smorgasbord of features.

And make every moment a REALL one.

/s/ Bob Ladendorf

From the Chairman -- David Bloomberg

I'm happy to start our anniversary issue by announcing that in addition to our four original Patron members, we welcome three NEW Patrons! I'd like to personally thank Bob Smet, David Brown, and John Lockard, along with Alan Burge, Wally Hartshorn, and Bob Ladendorf for their Patron memberships, which will help us do some of the things we had to put off last year due to lack of funds. These include sending out informational letters to subscribers of Skeptical Inquirer and letting them all know what we've been doing, sending similar letters to science teachers in the area, and possibly again going to this years Illinois Science Teachers Association meeting and similar events. In addition, we are in the midst of exploring exactly what is necessary to become an official non-profit organization. You may be feeling a bit of deja vu now, since I've mentioned these activities before, but I think it's important to keep our members informed of just what we are doing and what our plans are.

For those of you who have not yet renewed your membership, remember that this is the last issue for quite a few of us. Renew now so you don't miss an issue!

In other news, you can find the results of the survey from the November and December newsletters elsewhere in this issue. I must admit that we didn't get the response we were hoping for, but I'll be an optimist and surmise that we're doing ok, and that most of you agree with what we've done so far.

I don't want to take up any more room, since even the 12 pages we have in this special issue doesn't seem like enough to fit everything we wanted. Hopefully, I'll be seeing you at the meetings!

/s/ David Bloomberg

===== Alien Suckers  
by Martin Kottmeyer

Abduction researchers believe an important source of verification of the claims of abductees lies in details that cases share but which are unpublished and unknown to the public. This is an important point since investigators in criminal cases routinely withhold details of cases from the media so they can trip up fraudulent confessors and copycat criminals. The repetition of the unpublicized details acts as a form of corroboration that the same individual is involved.

Such statements would normally carry some weight, but skeptics tend to reserve judgment because UFOlogists usually find similarities at the expense of ignoring substantial differences. Philip J. Klass cites a number of examples in *UFOs: A Dangerous Game*. In the 1991 volume of the *Journal of UFO Studies*, John S. Carpenter has revealed one of these secret verifying details and provides an opportunity to assess how much weight to give this argument.

Reporting on the double abduction of "Jennifer" and "Susan," Carpenter states one of the pair saw "little round suction cups on the bottom of their finger tips." He recalled hearing this same detail in a case reported by Budd Hopkins at a private abduction conference in Aspen, Colorado, six months earlier. Two other researchers immediately commented to Carpenter that they had encountered these details in some of their cases. Two years later an abductee who had never read a UFO book also recalled round suction cups on the tips of four long fingers. The usefulness of the detail was finally compromised when a drawing was published in *UFO Crash at Roswell* involving autopsies of aliens taken from the 1947 crash. The drawing showed sets of four circles on the tips of each finger. The crash-retrieval researchers had no direct association with abduction claims.

There are numerous problems here. First, the autopsy drawing shows only circles. There is no notation that they are suckers. They could be protuberances, markings involving differences in pigmentation, or slight ridges analogous to human fingerprints. The text doesn't elaborate on what they are either. The nurse who provided the drawing described a number of things about the body such as its mummy-like fragility and the absence of opposable thumbs, but not that detail. Carpenter might be right in thinking they are suction cups, but it doesn't seem certain.

These autopsy drawings are different from an autopsy drawing in Leonard Stringfield's 1982 *UFO Crash/Retrievals* status report. That one was based on an incident in the early 1950s and showed a four-finger arrangement with no opposable thumb. However, it was distinctly different in possessing elegantly long-pointed fingernails that looked unambiguously dangerous--that is very "un-fragile." There is no mention of suckers, and one senses they would not be workable in conjunction with those claw-like nails.

Carpenter does not include drawings of Jennifer's alien's hands and finger-tip suction cups. There also are no drawings of the suction cup finger tips of Hopkins' private case or the other cases mentioned. This precludes detailed comparison. Do they all have the four-circle arrangement of the Roswell autopsy? Are the suckers single-lobed? Do they protrude from the axial tip of the finger, or are they perpendicular from the axis and protrude from the pad of the finger-tip? How large or small are they compared to the rest of the finger? There could be substantial differences which would alter one's assessment of whether these people are seeing the same things or not.

Another problem is deciding how much significant it is to have a detail that recurs in only five or six cases. There are hundreds of abduction cases. If we take the radical assumption that people are randomly creating each detail, even independent invention is bound to yield some repetition if only because the range of imaginable possibilities is finite. In addition, factor in the likelihood that people are likely to borrow details from the surrounding culture and the significance becomes even less.

In the case of alien suction cups, there are significant cultural sources where this detail could have been borrowed from. Carpenter may be right in saying this detail never appeared in the UFO literature before the late spring of 1991. Offhand I can't recall anyone mentioning it before, and I am pretty sure I would have remembered because I would have enjoyed discovering such an instance too much. I say that because I loved George Pal's movie *War of the Worlds* and would have immediately recognized the influence. Every science fiction (SF) movie buff has the image of the suckered hand approaching the back of Sylvia and her subsequent scream of terror permanently etched in their memories as one of the best scenes of horrific suspense put to the screen.

There is an amusing bit of history behind that image. There were no finger-tip suckers to the aliens in the original 1898 story by H.G. Wells. The Martians had degenerated to the extent that they were down to having a large head and two

bundles of 8 delicate tentacles. They mainly just wanted our planet because theirs was dying from the long-term cooling of the sun. Cecil B. DeMille planned, in 1925, to make it into a film epic and had Roy Pomeroy prepare an outline to make the story more cinematic. He changes things a tad. In the new version the aliens aren't looking for a new summer home; their "desire is to find beautiful women with whom they plan to breed and propagate a mixed Martian-Earth race which is to populate the Earth anew." The female encounters the three-foot tall amorphous Thing to her disgust and loathing and she is eventually captured by a huge, mechanical claw.

Over the years several major film directors Alfred Hitchcock, Sergei Eisenstein, and Alexander Korda considered filming War of the Worlds but backed away when they learned the rights were locked up by Paramount. Around 1951, with flying saucer scares being the talk of the day, Paramount approached George Pal, who had just produced When Worlds Collide for them, with the idea of working up their property. Pal commissioned Barre Lyndon to do a new screenplay. It is Lyndon who introduces the suckers.

He describes the encounter in almost Gothic tones. An arm that isn't an arm passes through an opening in a broken glass door. It has "ribbed degenerate musculature, thick veins," and ends "in a hand-shape with three finger-like suckers." They fasten on Sylvia's shoulder and draw her back. She tries to scream but paralysis takes her voice. Forrester, the man with her, tries to kill the creature and ends up chopping off the Thing's arm. Lyndon continues, "The suckers still cling to the girl's shoulder. Forrester pulls off the loathsome arm with the suckers tearing away part of her blouse." The dramatic function of the suckers is all too evident in Lyndon's screenplay. If this were the Eighties the scene would have been written to have had dead talons piercing deep into bleeding flesh; this being the Fifties, the horror is more superficial.

Pal had the scene changed before the filming. The arm approaches Sylvia out of curiosity instead of for the purpose of capture. This had the effect of heightened suspense and doubtless plays better than Lyndon's version. We don't get the hanging dead arm, and that makes the suckers somewhat superfluous from a dramatic perspective. Aesthetically, it lends the hand a uniquely different shape and emphasizes the wholly alien character of the Martian as it moves in on Sylvia. Nobody quarrels with the results.

George Pal's War of the Worlds has been justly praised many times over the years and regularly graces Ten-Best lists of SF films. It has played on TV many times. As recently as 1989, it inspired a short-lived series of the same name. (I don't recall if they used sucker fingers, but I doubt it.) The percentage of the population exposed to the image of the sucker fingers from this source alone cannot be negligible.

Nor is it the only source. Explorers (1985) has a pair of goofy-looking aliens with conspicuous sucker fingers. Rob Bottin, the make-up designer indicated their form was no accident. The producer, Joe Dante, "wanted War of the Worlds-type long skinny fingers and we did that with the feet also." Trekkies will recall the salt Vampire of the episode "The Man Trap" which sucked salt out of people leaving giant round hickeys on their bodies. I stumbled across one publicity shot from the virtually forgotten SF comedy series Quark that seemed to have an alien possessing sucker fingers. I have no reason to doubt there may be other obscure examples in the huge body of SF films and videos.

Given these cultural sources, five or six cases of aliens with sucker fingers seem rather unimpressive. I am tempted to say it is rather less than one might expect given the generally Wellsian sources detectable in the abduction literature, but expectations are subject to many amorphous factors like selection effects by abductees and UFOlogists, the influence of current UFO literature and associated drawings, the unknown percentage of conscious hoaxing relative to unconscious borrowing, and so on. It is hard to know what to expect with respect to an issue like suckers on aliens. I consider it an open question whether the presence of suckers is a point in favor of a psychosocial view of the alien abduction phenomenon. The absence of drawings again precludes an assessment of the nature or degree of cultural influence versus independent invention.

One point is easily grasped; the argument that abductions are real because of a corroboration using unpublicized details no longer holds.

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Ray Hyman: "The Very Model of the Modern Major Skeptic"

by Robert E. McGrath

Ray Hyman recounts that when he was young he worked as a fortune teller reading palms. He followed the signs and the clients were pleased and astonished at how he could tell all about them. Like many people, he was sure palm reading worked, although he wasn't sure how. Unlike most people, he tried an experiment: he told a client the opposite of what the signs said. To his astonishment, this reading was even more successful than regular ones! The customer was amazed with how accurate the reversed reading was. He had discovered the power of what psychologists call "self-validation". The clients wanted him to succeed, and convinced themselves that he had great insight.[14]

For the past 40 years, Ray Hyman has earned a "dishonest living", not as a fortune teller, but as a professor of psychology. He has studied the psychology of belief, deception, and human error in many settings. He is one of the very few "mainstream" scientists who have taken parapsychology seriously enough to critically examine its claims to scientific validity. As a founding member of the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP), he has helped set the standards of scientific inquiry into the claims of the paranormal.

One of Professor Hyman's first major works was a study of dowsing, *Water Witching, USA* [1]. This book, although more than 30 years old now, is still the definitive study of dowsing. Vogt and Hyman show that, although dowsing does not work, most people are convinced that it does because of natural psychological biases and social processes. Just as in the case of palm reading, dowsing appears to work because of selective perception and "self-validation".

In one classic study discussed in *Water Witching, USA*, the dowser was highly accurate as long as anyone in the room—the dowser, the experimenter, a member of the audience—knew the correct answer. When the test was totally blind, the dowsers were unable to detect the target more often than by chance. [1, pp. 77-79] This is known as the "Clever Hans" phenomenon. ("Clever Hans" was a horse that could do arithmetic as long as someone was present who knew the right answer.) The dowser (or horse or palm reader) is able to pick up subtle, unconscious cues from the people, such as drawn breath, body language, or facial expressions, which can guide him to the target. It is important to emphasize, though, that the dowser is usually not aware he is doing this.

Scientists have long known the importance of unconscious cueing and self-validation and how they can deceive the observer. Scientific studies use randomization and "blinding" to avoid unconscious cueing, and statistical tests to help draw valid conclusions from a body of data. These methods are not used in everyday life, of course, which leaves us all to make errors of perception and judgment. As Hyman makes clear, such errors are the natural consequence of the way we deal with the world.[1,3] These normal human errors also lead, perhaps almost inevitably, to the perception of apparently paranormal phenomena.

In addition to being a cagey psychologist, Ray Hyman is a pretty fair magician. This has given him yet another angle on these questions—a magician is in the business of fooling people, magic tricks work by taking advantage of human psychology to deliberately cause erroneous perceptions and judgments. His article on "The Psychology of Deception" is destined to become a classic.[11]

Ray Hyman is one of the few "mainstream" psychologists who have given careful attention to scientific studies that seem to show Extrasensory Perception (ESP) and Psychokinesis (PK).[6,7,8,9] Perhaps the most significant effort in this area was his review, with Charles Honorton, of the "ganzfeld" psi experiments, a body of experiments that seemed to show scientific evidence of ESP. The Hyman and Honorton review showed that the data was much weaker than claimed, and that almost all the studies were grievously flawed.[7,9] This has led, if nothing else, to a significant improvement in the methodology of parapsychological studies.

Hyman has been a strong leader and role model of the "organized skeptics" movement. Besides dowsing and parapsychology, he has examined faith healing[4], "The Oregon Vortex"[13], and expertly criticized popular books such as *The Geller Papers* [2] and *The Mind Race* [5]. In all these efforts, he has set a consistent high standard of inquiry, combining careful observation, broad knowledge of human psychology (and conjuring), with gentle, good-humored, courtesy.

Two short works by Ray Hyman are absolutely essential reading for any skeptic. The first is "Cold Reading": How to

Convince Strangers That You Know All About Them" [3]. In this short paper, Hyman explains the psychology that underlies successful fortune telling and shows exactly how to do it, "Cold reading" is simple and natural, requires no special abilities or mental abnormalities, and is critical to understanding a whole variety of "psychic" experiences.

The second essential work is called "Proper Criticism." [10][Reprinted in The REALL News, Vol. 1, No. 2, March 1993 -- Ed.] This is a short, simple, and elegant guide to how to criticize paranormal claims. Every skeptic should know this article by heart. Hyman complains that skeptics have had to spend too much time on "damage control\_precipitated by the careless remarks of a fellow skeptic". [12, p.438]

"If we envision ourselves as champions of rationality, science, and objectivity, then we ought to display these very same qualities in our criticism. Just as by trying to speak in the spirit of precision, science, logic and rationality\_those attributes we supposedly admire\_we would raise the quality of our critiques by at least one order of magnitude." [12, p. 438]

Hyman gives eight rules to follow and his exposition of these points describes the essence of good skepticism, rational argument, and civilized discourse. Fortunately, Professor Hyman's most important skeptical works are collected in one volume, *The Elusive Quarry: A Scientific Appraisal of Psychical Research* [12]. This collection is a fabulous source of information and inspiration. Ray Hyman is a skeptic, a scholar, and a gentleman,

...in things psychological, psychical, or magical

he is the very model of the modern major skeptic-al.

#### Notes

1. with Evan Z. Vogt, *Water Witching*, USA.

University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1959. (Second edition, 1972).

2. "Review of The Geller Papers by Charles Panati",  
\_The Zetetic, Volume 1, Number 1, Fall 1976, pp. 73-80.

3. "'Cold Reading': How to Convince Strangers That  
You Know All About Them", *The Zetetic*, Volume 1,  
Spring 77, pp. 18-37.

4. "Occult Healing", in S. Barrett (ed.), *The  
Health Robbers: How To Protect Your Money and Your  
Life*, 2nd edition, George P. Stickley, Philadelphia,  
1980, pp. 26-34.

5. "Outracing the Evidence: The Muddled 'Mind  
Race'", (Review of *The Mind* by Russel Targ and Keith  
Harary), *Skeptical Inquirer*, Volume 9, Number 2,

Winter 1984-85, pp. 125-145.

6. "A Critical Historical Overview of Parapsychology", in Paul Kurtz (ed.), *A Skeptic's Handbook of Parapsychology*, Prometheus Books, Buffalo, 1985, pp. 3-96.

7. "The Ganzfeld Psi Experiment: A Critical Appraisal", *Journal of Parapsychology*, Volume 49, March, 1985, pp. 3-49.

8. "Parapsychological Research: A Tutorial Review and Critical Appraisal", *Proceedings of the IEEE*, Volume 74, Number 6, June, 1986, pp. 823-849.

9. with Charles Honorton, "A Joint Communique': The Psi Ganzfeld Controversy", *Journal of Parapsychology*, Volume 50, December, 1986, pp. 351-364.

10. "Proper Criticism", *Skeptical Briefs*, number 3, May, 1987, pp. 4-5.

11. "The Psychology of Deception", *Annual Review of Psychology*, Volume 40, 1989, pp. 133-154.

12. *The Elusive Quarry: A Scientific Appraisal of Psychical Research*, Prometheus Books, Buffalo, 1989. (Includes reprints of 2-5 and 7-10 above).

13. The "Oregon Vortex" is a tourist attraction based on what appears to be an optical illusion. The case was discussed at a seminar, "The Skeptics Toolbox", in Eugene, Oregon, August, 1992.

14. Hyman has told versions of this story many times, including on NOVA on PBS television.

REALLity Check  
by David Bloomberg

The new year started off, well, weird.

The REAL Miracle Would Be If I Vote For Him Now

State Rep. Mike Curran (D-Springfield) took a risky trip to Bosnia-Herzegovina recently. According to the State Journal-Register (Jan. 24), there he was witness to miraculous events (unfortunately, one of those events was not a cease-fire that lasted).

Among those places that Curran visited was Medjugorje (it's times like this I'm glad that I only have to write\_ this column, instead of trying to talk about these things- I would never be able to pronounce that name!), apparently a place where the Virgin Mary makes frequent visits, and has done so for about 12 years. Curran said he did not actually see Mary, but was in the same room as somebody who did (those politicians--always looking the other way). Also, Curran claims that some members in his visiting group were healed, including one case of pancreatic cancer. I don't know about anybody else, but I'd like to see this guy's medical records before I go around proclaiming a miracle. I would hope that a person involved in governing our state and representing us would also look for evidence before making such an extraordinary claim. However, Curran's statement to skeptics, as quoted in this story, was, "If people want to be skeptical, that's OK. I went through this and I don't feel any need to convince people."

To the contrary, Mr. Curran. If you expect to be respected by skeptics and critical thinkers, convincing people is exactly what you need to do.

The Write Stuff

\_Parade magazine took a sample of President Clinton's handwriting and submitted it to Roger Rubin, a New York City graphologist who uses handwriting to do character analysis for "dozens of corporations" (Jan. 9). Along with that sample, they sent a description of Clinton, saying "only" that he was a 47-year-old man being considered for a CEO position at an international corporation.

Rubin sent back an analysis which, of course, looks like it fits Clinton pretty darned well. But, on looking at it more carefully, it fits a lot of other people equally well. In other words, it's darned similar to many cold readings. The description of Clinton's character could have come out of a "How to Cold Read People and Make Them Think You're Psychic" manual. It said he struggles to achieve goals and assert himself, but he also wants to please others. He can sometimes have a short fuse. He's used to being in a position of power. He's ambitious. Etc. Well, heck, they told Rubin that the guy was only 47 and being considered as a CEO for a large company! It pretty much goes without saying that he is ambitious, asserts himself but pleases others, etc.!

Why did Parade have to tell Rubin \_anything\_? If his analysis works so well, he should be able to do it without knowing anything at all about the person.

Perhaps the scariest part of this whole story is that several dozen corporations use this type of analysis to determine who to hire. Why not just send the potential employee to a store-front psychic or do an astrological chart instead? The answers will probably be similar, and all methods will be equally useless in determining whether or not the employee can do the job.

Fish Story

According to Adrian Shine, a "Nessie-hunter" for 20 years, the Loch Ness Monster might just be a fish.

AP reported (Jan. 2) that a new study done by Shine found that there isn't enough fish to keep a "monster" of the size often described alive. Instead, it showed that the "monster" could probably be no more than about 600 pounds, which is the size of a large sturgeon. Sturgeons have long snouts, which could have been mistaken for a neck, and prominent dorsal fins. They move from saltwater to fresh water to mate, and Shine says it isn't impossible to believe that some

could stumble into the lake and start the legend.

The FMS Front

Well, false memory syndrome (FMS) is becoming almost as popular in "REALLity Check" as alternative medicine (which is conspicuously absent from this edition). In February, there were two prominent discussions of FMS in two days.

First (Feb. 9), the Chicago Tribune had a front-page article discussing the problems faced by Steven J. Cook, the man accusing Cardinal Bernardin of molesting him. The main problem seems to be the validity, or lack thereof, of the methods used to "recover" his memories. In the past, courts have generally held that evidence obtained through hypnosis is admissible only under certain conditions, including that the therapist is properly trained and uses widely recognized techniques and safeguards to guard against the introduction of false memories. Cook's therapist, Michele Moul, is not a licensed psychiatrist, but received a master's degree in applied psychology from the University of Santa Monica, an unaccredited institution. Since graduating, she has operated a graphic arts studio. Defense lawyers said they expect to challenge her techniques in court; there appears to be no evidence that Cook had any memory of abuse by Bernardin before his therapy, and the attorneys say this raises questions of whether or not they were actually introduced during that therapy.

The following day, Ann Landers' column featured two letters from people who said they have been victimized by therapists who have implanted false memories. One letter is from a parent whose grown daughter is now accusing her of abuse that never happened, and the second is from somebody who also said they were victimized and describe the way therapists induce such memories. In response, I was pleased to see Landers mentioned the recent American Medical Association resolution and referred people to the FMS Foundation.

REALLity Checklist -- 1993 In Review

by David Bloomberg

Like any other year, 1993 had its ups and downs. Sometimes the media did a great job, sometimes they needed to go back to the basics, and sometimes it was the same paper or even author! What's different about this year is that it's REALL's first year of existence, and so I can summarize the highlights and the lowlights for you. \* Worst Research Award

This has to go to Sun Pictures and CBS for their series of creationist-biased shows including Ancient Secrets of the Bible, Part II (V1, #5) and, of course, The Incredible Discovery of Noah's Ark (V1, #2, 6, 8, and V2 #1). George Jammal has said that the whole goal of his hoax was to expose the faulty research by similar organization, and I'd say he did just that. As reported last issue, Sun is out of the pseudo-science TV business for at least several years, if not more. And hopefully CBS will be somewhat more careful in their choice of programming in the future. \* Best Expose Award

\_Dateline NBC wins this award for two of their stories, both relating to alternative medicine. The first, reported by that show in December of 1992 (and thus, technically, shouldn't be in this list, but I won't tell if you don't) and the second in November of this year (V1, #1 and 11, respectively). The first dealt with homeopathy and, in particular, one practitioner who diagnosed an actually healthy producer as having a variety of illnesses. To "cure" him, he was given homeopathic "remedies" which, when analyzed, turned out to be 85% water and 15% ethanol. The second exposed a doctor who claims to cure cancer in a hospital in Mexico. The only problem was that his hydrogen peroxide "therapy" doesn't seem to be doing quite as well as he'd like us to think. Dateline showed that this "doctor" is actually a "graduate chiropractor" with a supposed doctorate in naturopathy (but the college he supposedly went to said they had no such courses when he claims to have gotten the degree). The interview with this "doctor" was priceless. \* Worst Idea Award

As we reported in V1, #5, an amateur alchemist decided he could make gold by baking mercury in a potato. One is forced to wonder if he had inhaled a bit of mercury before\_ deciding that this was a good idea. \* Oddest Piece of Advice Award

Ann Landers received and printed a number of "cures" for warts (V1, #6). None of them were exactly what I would call "medically sound," but the one that wins this award is: "rub 20 pennies on the warts and then give the coins to a

beggar." Also, it's not very politically correct. \* Best Local Story Award

The Illinois Times wins this award for their November 24th cover story on the evolution/creation controversy in Illinois public schools (V1, #11). This in-depth article discussed the laws, the facts, and the opinions, and put each in their proper perspective to end up with a great article! \* We Told You So Award

This award goes to almost the entire media, and is given with respect to false memory syndrome (FMS) and facilitated communications (V1, #7, 8, 10, 11, and V2, #1). Skeptics (in particular, the Skeptical Inquirer) picked up on these stories well in advance of the majority of the news media. Unfortunately, it took a number of high-profile cases to draw the attention of the general media. Those cases include the Lil Rascals day care trials in North Carolina and the accusations of abuse against Cardinal Bernardin of Chicago. Now there are even cases of former patients suing their therapists for allegedly implanting memories that turned out to be false. Objective scientific testing has begun, and has shown that it certainly is possible to intentionally or accidentally implant false memories. The problem is in knowing how often this happens, and in applying it to specific cases.

## REALL Survey Results

Following are the results of the survey which was included as part of the November and again in the December issue of The REALL News. We only received 14 responses, most of which were gathered at meetings rather than sent in through the mail. 1. Membership type: 6 regular, 2 subscription, 5 patron, 1 student. 2. Suggested goals for REALL in 1994: These were broken down into two categories, subjects to cover and activities to undertake.

Some of the activities included establishing a local panel of experts, establishing an awards program, increasing membership, establishing a way in which we can let the public know more about us (such as through a membership/publicity coordinator), doing some actual debunking, and trying to affect the world and undertaking education, etc. Of these, we have already started, such as trying to increase membership through mail-outs and the like, trying to help educate and affect the world through our booth at the Illinois Science Teachers Association meeting, etc.

Subjects to cover included: psychic detectives, local psychics (the only subject to get more than one vote), cryptozoology, philosophy of life, natural science, fakery, satanism, creation/evolution, false memory syndrome, and ESP. Once again, we have already hit some of these topics, and it's good to know that our members want even more! 3. Attendance at REALL's monthly meetings: 2 always (yes, that included me), 5 sometimes, and 7 seldom or never. 4. If don't always attend, why: 4 due to the location being inconvenient, 3 due to Monday nights being inconvenient, 4 "other" including working all evenings and just being too lazy (yes, one person did write that). 5. How you would make meetings better: The only suggestions we received here were to have occasional informal and/or dinner meetings, and to have some meetings in Champaign- Urbana. Well, last month's meeting was an informal lunch meeting, which is pretty close, and we are currently working on getting at least one, if not two, meetings or presentations in the Champaign area in the near future. 6. Topics or speakers you would like to see: We got four suggestions here. A representative from the media, a government representative dealing with scams, something on alternative medicine, and more of the same were all suggested. All of these are great ideas, and we have already been working on getting some of these people to upcoming meetings. 7. Favorite night of the week for a REALL meeting: 4 for Monday, 3 for Tuesday (one for anything BUT Tuesday), 0 for Wednesday, 3 for Thursday, 1 for Friday, 2 for Saturday, and 3 for Sunday. (Note: Some people voted for more than one day.) So, it looks like we'll be staying with Monday for a while. 8. How much of The REALL News you read: 13 read it in its entirety, 1 reads some of it, with an arrow pointing towards "in its entirety."

The second part of question 8 asked about your favorite articles. Those results, in order of vote count and then alphabetical, are: Everything 4 Martin Kottmeyer's Articles 3 "REALLity Check" 2 Sun Pictures exposé-related 2 "Vampires--Myth and Reality" 2 "The Misconceptions of Evolution" 2 "Proper Criticism" 1 Psychic Detective related 1 Anything by Det. Walstad 1 "Who Is Susan Blackmore?" 1

The third part of question 8 asked what topics you'd like to see. They are in the same order as described above: Anything 3 Scientific Parapsychology 2 Alternative Medicine 1 Creation/Evolution 1 Dream Theories 1 ESP 1 False Memory Syndrome 1 Glossary of Terms 1 Graphology 1 Nature & Philosophy 1 Nutrition deficiency/pseudo-sci. 1 Marxist & Post-Modernist Feminist

Critiques of Science and an

Evaluation of Their Validity 1 Psychohistorical Studies 1

Some of these we have hit in the past and we will continue to cover. We'll need some new authors to cover others, so if you've got something to write, send it on in! 9. Would you be willing to work on a committee: 5 yes, 4 no, 2 maybe.

The only suggestions for such a committee were for recruiting new members (2 suggestions). 10. Other comments: Don't put the survey form on the back of the directions to the meeting. [We've already acted on this one, and including it as a separate pull-out sheet in the December issue.] Keep it up! Good work! [Thanks!!]

Remember, just because we've printed the survey results doesn't mean we no longer want your input! To the contrary, please write and tell us what you think. If you haven't filled out your survey yet, go ahead and send it in. We can use all the good ideas we can get!

Finally, I'd like to thank all of you who sent in your responses. REALL is an organization for its members, and your input lets us know how we're doing!

A Nod to Our Patrons

REALL would like to thank our patron members. Through their extra generosity, REALL is able to continue to grow as a force for critical thinking in Central Illinois. Patron members are those giving \$50 or more. To become a patron of REALL, please see the membership form below. Patron members are:

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