



April, 1996

ILLUSIONS & CONFUSIONS: Magic, Science and Why We Get Fooled

A special program for Children ages 8-12 and their Parents

How can you encourage a child's natural curiosity while fostering a healthy skepticism? How can kids be challenged to think critically about weird science, superstitions and magical beliefs?

Chip Denman will conduct a special hands-on program for 8-12 year olds and their parents. We will peek into principles behind magic tricks, optical illusions and other intuition-busters. We will see common ways in which we can fool ourselves, and we will perform simple but scientific experiments to investigate common magical beliefs like ESP and astrology.

Kids will receive a workbook to keep. Additional resource material will be available to help keep the scientific skepticism and investigative spirit going for months.

Chip Denman has previously presented this workshop for the "Adventures in Science" weekend programs run by the Cooperative Extension Service. He also teaches "Science & Pseudoscience" for the University of Maryland Honors Program. His columns on critical thinking have appeared in The Washington Post Horizon: The Learning Section.

This special program is free but reservations are required. The program is limited to the first 20 kids and their parents. The activities are primarily for the kids, but at least one adult is expected to attend and supervise each group of youngsters. Call the NCAS line at 301-587-3827 to make reservations. Leave a message with your number; we will call you back to confirm your reservation.

NCAS Members: Space is limited. Reserve your place today before this is announced to the general public.

Saturday, April 20, 1996, 2:00pm -- 4:00pm

**Davis Library,
6400 Democracy Blvd,
Bethesda, Maryland**

Free Admission; All Welcome - Members and Nonmembers

Call the NCAS Skeptic Line at 301-587-3827 for further info.

JAMES RANDI EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

The James Randi Educational Foundation has been created as a non-profit, tax-exempt, educational foundation under Section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code, incorporated in the State of Delaware. The Foundation is generously funded by a sponsor in Washington D.C. who wishes, at this point in time, to remain anonymous.

The Foundation will have its home office in Florida, where a 7,000-square-foot facility will house an extensive book and video library facility with reference and lending capacity, a sophisticated computer setup with a World Wide Web server, and very high-speed 24-hour Internet access for researchers, students, and the media. State-of-the-art technology will supply copies of photographic, video, audio, and printed materials to persons who request those materials, at very little or no cost, via fax, telephone, Internet, mail or personal contact.

The Foundation will be prepared to conduct and/or finance original basic research in subjects of interest, ranging through many aspects of paranormal, occult, and supernatural claims. The Foundation will conduct classes and seminars for students, teachers, the media, and the public. These meetings will deal with the goals of the Foundation. In addition, the Foundation will be offering scholarships to students in the USA and abroad who are invited to compete by creating projects or writing essays dealing with subjects or claims generally classified as paranormal. This work will be evaluated by referees outside the Foundation on the quality of the preparation, implementation, and reporting of the results -- but not on the conclusions arrived at by the students.

The Foundation hopes to interest competent academics in various fields, in joining in the work of the Foundation. In particular, the Foundation is looking for persons involved in parapsychology to cooperate with. Several persons have already been approached and have expressed interest.

Within two years, the Foundation should become self-supporting. It will depend upon grants and other such funding to a large extent, since the purpose is to act as an information source available to all, at absolutely minimal cost to the client.

The Foundation World Wide Web page is being prepared and should be available within two months.

CSICOP FIRST WORLD SKEPTICS CONGRESS

CSICOP (Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal) is sponsoring its 20th anniversary meeting at SUNY -- Buffalo in Amherst, NY from 1:45pm Thursday, June 20, 1996 until noon on Sunday, June 23. Some of the featured speakers include: Leon Lederman (Nobel Laureate and Emeritus Director of Fermilab), James Randi (see article above), Stephen Jay Gould (Harvard University), Dr. Dean Edell (Radio commentator), and many others. Sessions are planned during this entire four day period covering many of the topics of interest to skeptics including UFOlogy, Astrology, Homeopathy, Therapeutic touch, Creationism, Parapsychology, Alternative health cures, Spiritualism, Critical thinking in education, and others.

Registration fees are \$149 for the conference, \$35 for awards banquet on Saturday, and \$22 each for the luncheons on Friday and Saturday.

For further information call 716-636-1425. To charge registration call 800-634-1610.

NCAS ELECTIONS

You should shortly be receiving a ballot for a new NCAS Board of Directors. Each year 8 of the 16 members are elected to two year terms. Please return your ballot. Let us also know if you have any special requests for programs that you feel we have not been addressing recently.

Last Change: April 15, 1996