



## **Star in the East**

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The Christmas season brings the annual planetarium shows that offer astronomical explanations for the Star of Bethlehem -- the star that according to the Gospel of Matthew guided the Magi to the site of Jesus's birth in Bethlehem. Over the millenia a variety of astronomical phenomena have been offered as explanations of the Star of Bethlehem: meteors, comets, novae, planetary conjunctions and lunar occultations. This presentation will explore these explanations and evaluate how successfully each explains the behavior of the Star in the infancy narrative in the Gospel of Matthew. The presentation will also examine the extent to which the infancy narrative in Matthew may be regarded as ahistorical; it will attempt to set the infancy narrative of Matthew in the context of first Century BCE astrological lore.

**Saturday, December 20, 1997, 2:00pm -- 3:30pm**

**Bethesda Branch, Montgomery County Library**

**7400 Arlington Road**

**Bethesda, Maryland**

*Everyone Welcome -- Members and Non-members -- No admission charge*

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

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## **ITS ALL IN THE CARDS**

The January 17th meeting of NCAS will feature Eugene Ossa, who will speak on the development and role of tarot cards throughout history. Plan on attending this interesting discussion. (Arlington Road library location).

## **NCAS EMAIL**

If you have email and are not already on the NCAS distribution list, send mail to [ncas@ncas.org](mailto:ncas@ncas.org) and ask to be added. Periodic mail is sent giving members up to date announcements of items of interest. We are also planning to start an interactive discussion group covering topics of interest to NCAS members. Information on this will be shortly forthcoming.

## **BECOME AN NCAS CITIZEN SKEPTIC**

NCAS is again sponsoring a spring weekend for members. We will meet from Friday evening through Sunday morning March 13 to 15, 1998 at the Holiday Inn at Solomons in southern Maryland for a weekend of skeptical fun, learning, and other activities. The program is now being planned. Costs and preliminary details will be available in the next issue of the Shadow, but keep this weekend open. Hotel reservations must be made by mid-February. We hope to see you there.

## **ACADEMIC GUIDE TO THE INTERNET**

At the November meeting, an "Academic Guide to the Internet" was mentioned, but at the time its URL was unknown. It is provided by InterNIC with cooperation from the National Science Foundation and others. There is a frames version and a text only version at these addresses:

<http://www.internic.net/aldea/attframes2.html> (frames)

<http://www.internic.net/aldea/iagitext.html> (text)

## **CREATIONISM VS. EVOLUTION DEBATE TO AIR ON PBS**

On December 19, PBS's "Firing Line" will air a two-hour special on the creation/evolution controversy. The program will be a debate at Seton Hall University in South Orange, N.J., before a student audience.

## **CSICOP IN DC?**

CSICOP is considering a joint skeptic/humanist Center for Inquiry in Washington as well as in other cities. The NCAS Board discussed the issue, but concluded it didn't have the resources to be able to help in this activity at this time. If you have an opinion on this topic, contact NCAS and let us know your views.

## **CONDON REPORT**

NCAS, led by Board member Jim Giglio and Bob Keefer of Mt. St. Mary's College, has undertaken the task of putting the 1400 page out-of-print Condon Report on UFOs, onto our NCAS Web site. Additional help can still be used to help proofread the scanned-in text. Contact NCAS (by email or telephone) if you would like to help.

## **WANT TO JOIN**

If you want to receive a copy of the *Shadow of a Doubt* by US mail as well as other membership benefits, then join NCAS. Please send \$20 (for one person) or \$30 (for two-member households) to NCAS, 8006 Valley Street, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Your membership will help NCAS stay atuned to the pseudoscience problems facing us today.

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Last Change: December 29, 1997