



DANGER IN OUR SKIES: THE NEW UFO THREAT

A Workshop to discuss a recent TV show on a new danger lurking around us.

On April 6, from 8 until 9pm WDCA/UPN (Channel 20 in Washington) aired: "Danger in Our Skies: The New UFO Threat."

- Is there a new threat?
- Was the show reporting events responsibly?
- Were all sides being heard?

Come hear a critical analysis of that program and participate in a workshop on how to protest this and other such credulous mass media broadcasts and publications.

Saturday, April 18, 1998, 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.

NCAS ELECTIONS

It is again that time of year when NCAS needs a new Board of Directors. A new Board of 16 (8 elected each year for a 2 year term) takes over in June. Officers for next year are chosen from among the new Board members. Want to help set direction for NCAS next year? If interested send a short biography by April 20, 1998 to NCAS, 8006 Valley Street, Silver Spring, MD 20910 or send email to ncas@ncas.org.

STRANGE HOAXES THAT ENDURE

On April 1, CSICOP's Joe Nickell and Matt Nisbet released a list of 10 great hoaxes. The complete CSICOP press release is on the NCAS web site <http://www.ncas.org/ncas>.

1. Roswell Incident-- In 1947 a "flying disc" crashed near Roswell, New Mexico. Rancher Mac Brazel described the debris as foiled paper, sticks, string, and tape consistent with a radar reflector. Once thought part of a weather balloon, it is now identified as a Project Mogul spy balloon.
2. Spiritualism-- Modern spiritualism began in 1848 when Margaret and Katherine Fox apparently received messages from the ghost of a murdered peddler. Four decades later, however, the sisters revealed to a theater audience how they had tricked the world.
3. Psychic Networks-- Fortunetelling is an ancient deception now updated for popular mass consumption. Modern "psychics" use shrewd methods to appear clairvoyant. For example, many of their responses are phrased in question form, which may, if correct, be considered a "hit" but otherwise will seem an innocent query.
4. Shroud of Turin-- The world's most notorious religious hoax is the purported Holy Shroud of Jesus, now kept in a cathedral in Turin, Italy. It bears the imprints of an apparently crucified man, but modern forensic tests show the image was done in tempera paint, and radio carbon testing yielded a date between 1260 and 1390. [In April it goes back on display as "authentic."]
5. Cottingley Fairies-- In 1917 13-year-old Elsie Wright and her 10-year-old cousin Frances Griffiths launched a deception that fooled many people over the following years, including the creator of Sherlock Holmes, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. While playing in Cottingley Glen, the girls took close-up photographs of winged fairies dancing amid the foliage.
6. Crop Circles-- Since the late 1970's, mysterious swirled patterns have been appearing in southern English grain fields. However, in 1991 two elderly men, Doug Bower and Dave Chorley, demonstrated how they had made the first circles, which others copied and elaborated to produce the stylized "pictograms" that became known around the world.
7. Amityville Horror-- America's most famous haunted house in Amityville, NY, where in 1974 a man murdered his parents and siblings. A year later the house was bought by George and Kathy Lutz who soon claimed they were driven out by spooky events.

8. Piltdown "Missing Link"-- In December of 1912 the long-sought-after "missing link" between man and his prehistoric ancestors was recovered near Piltdown Common in England by an amateur fossil collector named Charles Dawson. In 1953, however, eoanthropus dawsoni ("Dawson's Dawn Man") turned out to be a combination of human cranial pieces and the jawbone of an orangutan, stained to appear ancient.

9. Psychic Surgery-- A practitioner appears to reach into a patient's body, without benefit of scalpel or anesthesia, to remove "tumors" and other diseased tissue.

10. King Tut's Curse-- The "boy king" Tutankhamen ruled Egypt from the age of nine until his death at eighteen, during the twelfth century B.C. His tomb was discovered in 1922 by Howard Carter, but a curse written over the entrance began to take its toll, resulting in the death over the years of many associated with the excavation.

NEWS FLASH -- NASA RELEASES NEW PICTURES OF MAN ON MARS



On April 6th, NASA released new pictures recently taken of the so-called "face on Mars." It reveals what most have suspected since the 1976 Viking photos -- a very mundane mesa on the surface of Mars, where the "eyes" and "nose" were just illusions due to sunlight and shadows.

Last Change: April 7, 1998