



Shadow of a Doubt

THE MONTHLY CALENDAR OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA SKEPTICS

January, 2000

Who decides what science to teach?

William McDonald

National Science Foundation Elementary School Science Project Coordinator

William McDonald will talk on standards in public school science education at the end of the century. The talk will begin with the 1980's call for national science education Standards and the resulting nationally developed products: Benchmarks for Science Literacy and the National Science Education Standards. He will then discuss standards setting at the state level, focusing on the Maryland Science Content Standards and the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program that helps to monitor those standards. He will provide an example of how the state assessment is different from the pencil and paper tests traditionally used to assess science learning. Finally, he'll look at how a local school system sets up its own curriculum to address the state and national standards, as well as its own needs.

Mr. McDonald is classroom science teacher in the Montgomery County Public Schools, and also a science specialist, a computer specialist, National Science Foundation Project Specialist, and coordinator of the elementary science program. He serves on the executive board of the Maryland Association of Science Teachers as the chair of the Spring Colloquium and as a content coordinator in the development of the statewide assessments in science. He has made numerous state and national level presentations on science education and consults with several other school systems and science education organizations.

Saturday, January 8, 2000, 2pm-3:30pm

Bethesda Public Library

7400 Arlington Road

Bethesda, Maryland

Everyone welcome - members and non-members

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

MYSTERIOUS SCIENCE

The Smithsonian is planning a weekly lecture series with topics of interest to NCAS members. Registration information can be obtained at: <http://www.si.edu/tsa/com/mysterious.htm> or 202-357-3030. Cost is \$72 for Smithsonian Associates, \$96 everyone else.

The schedule is:

January 20, 2000 - "Think Like a Scientist": Chip Denman, Statistics Laboratory, University of Maryland

Jan 27, 2000 - "Alien Life": Michael Meyer, PhD, Astrobiology Discipline Scientist, NASA

Feb 3, 2000 - "A Reality Check on Cryptic Animals" George Zug, PhD, Curator, Department of Vertebrate Zoology, Smithsonian Institution.

Feb 10, 2000 - "Communicating with the Afterlife" Michael Epstein, Mount Saint Mary's College

Feb 17, 2000 - "Science vs. Pseudoscience: The Scorecard" Robert Parks, American Physical Society

Feb 24, 2000 - "Magic and Fooling the Senses" Jamy Ian Swiss, Magician

THE LEARNING CHANNEL: "UNEXPLAINED MYSTERIES"

"Unexplained Mysteries" on the Learning Channel: Jan. 2, 2000 at 10pm and Jan 8 at 7pm

Several consultants, fellows, and staff of CSICOP provide on-camera commentary in an upcoming Learning Channel special on history's top ten paranormal claims. CSICOP Chair Paul Kurtz, Senior Research Fellow Joe Nickell, Public Relations Director Matt Nisbet, Skeptical Inquirer Managing Editor Ben Radford, Scientific Review of Alternative Medicine (SRAM) editor Lewis Vaughn, and University of Toronto astronomer Michael DeRobertis provide evaluations of various claims including spiritualism, psychic surgery, alien abductions, the Shroud of Turin, UFO sightings, and alternative medicine.

THE SAVE OUR SCHOOLS (SOS) CAMPAIGN FOR SCIENCE EDUCATION

The Save Our Schools (SOS) Campaign is an Internet-based petition drive urging state boards of education to uphold the teaching of evolution, and other sciences threatened by the recent attacks from creationists. The Campus Freethought Alliance (CFA), a network of college student groups across the U.S. and Canada, is the chief sponsor of the campaign. Numerous other national organizations have signed the petition or assisted the campaign, including Americans United for Separation of Church and State, The American Geophysical Union, Freedom to Read Foundation, Freedom From Religion Foundation, Kansas Citizens for Science, Americans for Religious Liberty, and CSICOP.

In addition to a massive online petition drive, electronic and print resources have been distributed to CFA campus groups and individual student members, urging them to engage in pro-evolution activities in their communities. A number of campus groups are hosting lectures by Massimo Pigliucci, professor of evolutionary biology at the University of Tennessee.

Just before Charles Darwin's birthday on February 12, 2000, collected petition signatures will be submitted to all 50 U.S. State boards and departments of education.

To sign the petition or get involved in the campaign, visit <http://www.campusfreethought.org/sos> or contact CFA Coordinator Amanda Chesworth at 1-800-446-6198 ext. 223.

TIME TO RENEW?

Check your mailing label. If the renewal date has passed, please send \$20 (for 1 person) or \$30 (for 2-member households) for a one-year renewal to the NCAS address at the top of this page or you will be dropped as a member.