

# **Pseudoscience and the U.S. Patent Process**

**Mark Banash, Ph.D.**

Did you know that an invention doesn't have to be described in a scientifically accurate way to be granted a U.S. Patent? Learn why respected companies will invest millions in a startup that cannot explain its processes and products rationally. And hear how companies can sell such products without understanding how they work.

Mark Banash has a Ph.D. in Chemistry from Princeton and a B. A. with a major in Chemistry and minors in Math and English from the University of PA. He is currently employed as a research scientist at Millennium Inorganic Chemicals in Baltimore as well as at Howard Community College as adjunct faculty. He also writes science fiction and serves as the producer of the audio series "The Funnt File" which often deals with skeptical themes.

The Funnt File: <http://members.aol.com/tharsispro/series1.html>

**Saturday, October 14, 2000, 2 pm - 3:30 pm  
Bethesda Branch of the Montgomery County Library  
7400 Arlington Road, Bethesda, Maryland  
(a short walk from the Bethesda Metro station)**



## **National Capital Area Skeptics Public Lecture Series**

FREE admission - Everyone welcome - members and non-members

For more information call the 24-hour NCAS Skeptic Line recording at (301) 587-3827

e-mail: [ncas@ncas.org](mailto:ncas@ncas.org)

[www.ncas.org](http://www.ncas.org)



# Shadow of a Doubt

THE MONTHLY CALENDAR OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA SKEPTICS

OCTOBER 2000

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## PENN AND TELLER RETURN

For those who missed Penn and Teller when they were here in Washington last year (and for those who didn't miss them), they will return to the Warner Theater in DC from December 26 to 31. Tickets can be bought by calling 800-669-STAGE.

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## FESTSCHRIFT 2000

This Saturday, October 7, the Skeptics Society will be holding its annual conference at the Beckman Auditorium on the Caltech campus in Pasadena, California. The theme of this year's meeting will be science in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with a special tribute to Stephen J. Gould who will be completing his 300<sup>th</sup> essay for *Natural History*. Speakers include David Baltimore, Michael Shermer, Donald Prothero, Carol Tavis, James Randi, Frank Sulloway, Paul MacCready, Louis Friedman, James Powell, Richard Milner and a keynote talk by Stephen J. Gould. For registration information call the Skeptics Society at 626-794-3119 or email to [skepticmag@aol.com](mailto:skepticmag@aol.com).

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## EVOLUTION IS STILL IN THE NEWS

A report evaluating the teaching of evolution in public schools gave six states scores of 100 for their science education standards.

California, Connecticut, Indiana, New Jersey, North Carolina and Rhode Island all received scores of 100 and grades of A. States that scored in the 90s and received A's were South Carolina, Delaware, Hawaii, and Pennsylvania.

Grades of B went to: Colorado, Minnesota, Vermont, Washington, Michigan, Arizona, Idaho, Massachusetts, Missouri, Montana, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah and the **District of Columbia**.

Grades of C went to: **Maryland**, New Mexico, Nevada, New York, Nebraska, Louisiana and Texas.

Unsatisfactory grades of D went to: Arkansas, Kentucky, Wisconsin, **Virginia**, Alaska and Illinois.

Failing grades of F went to: Wyoming, Maine, Ohio, Oklahoma, New Hampshire, Florida, Alabama, North Dakota, Georgia, Mississippi, West Virginia and Tennessee. Kansas's grade was F-minus.

Iowa was not included because it does not have statewide standards. Each district creates its own standard.

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## FUTURE NCAS MEETINGS

On November 11, Howard Fishman, former director of continuing medical education at Massachusetts Mental Health Center and the Menninger Clinic, will speak on "Junk Science and the Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy (MSBP) Epidemic." See the NCAS web site or next month's *Shadow* for more information.

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## 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.

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