



Tampa Bay Skeptics

REPORT

VOLUME 2 NO. 3 WINTER 1989-90

Skeptic charges Orlando "psychic" with fraud and perjury

Exclusive to *TBS REPORT*

A motion filed on January 9 in federal bankruptcy court in Knoxville, Tennessee charges Noreen Renier, an Orlando "psychic" of national renown, with "fraud, misrepresentation and other misconduct", including "perjury" during proceedings in that court earlier this year. The motion was filed on behalf of John Merrell, a former Oregon resident and co-founder of the Northwest Skeptics (a group with aims similar to TBS), who is seeking dismissal of Renier's \$25,000 judgement against him from a 1986 libel case in Oregon.

In an exclusive interview with *TBS REPORT*, Merrell states that during his recent bankruptcy hearing, Renier testified under oath that she had not known of Merrell's investigation of her until she was shown a copy of his unpublished October 10, 1985 letter to the *Ashland (Oregon) Daily Tidings* accusing her of various "fraudulent" claims (the letter reached her through an acquaintance at the paper). Those accusations had prompted Renier's libel action against him.

However, Merrell's court motion charges that Renier, in handwritten letters using the alias "Nancy Uzdavinis", had in actuality prompted Merrell's investigation of herself. The motion quotes a forensic handwriting expert as concluding that "there is no doubt that Noreen Renier did execute all of the questioned handwriting, including the signatures of Nancy Uzdavinis...". Merrell reports that he has also discovered that the *real* Nancy Uzdavinis is Renier's sister-in-law, with whom Renier had stayed during her "psychic" swing through Oregon, and whose true signature does *not* match those in the letters.

In her June 26, 1985 letter to Merrell, "Uzdavinis" purports that "...I'm confused about her (Renier's) abilities and need to know if she's real or not. She's planning a workshop in July and I need to make a decision." Merrell states that he had never heard of Renier prior to receiving the letters from "Uzdavinis", and that he began his comprehensive investigation of Renier as a result of them. He further contends that his subsequent correspondence with "Uzdavinis" (in writing as well as

in telephone conversations) prior to October, 1985, demonstrates that Renier not only was aware of his investigation of her, but by means of "fraud and misrepresentation" had "entrapped" him, only to later commit "perjury" in federal court. Merrell's court motion thus demands that the \$25,000 judgement against him be dismissed on these grounds.

Merrell has been involved in litigation with Renier since the 1986 Oregon trial, in which she claimed that Merrell's 1985 accusations had caused damage to her career, such as the loss of a teaching opportunity with the Oregon State Police Academy. Following a three-day trial, the jury awarded Renier "general damages" in the

(continued on page 5)

TBS Executive Council and Consultants elected James Randi joins Consultant ranks

The annual election of Executive Council members and Consultants took place on October 20, as per the announcement in the prior issue. Citing time constraints due to his teaching duties, a new business venture, and his November marriage (congratulations!), **Pat Strong** relinquished his role as Chairman, choosing instead to remain active with TBS as a Consultant. Elected as new Chairman was **Terry Smiljanich**, a prominent St. Petersburg trial attorney, and member of the corporate Board of Directors (along with Strong and Gary Posner). **Miles Hardy** was re-elected as Vice-Chairman, and TBS Founder **Gary Posner**, who had been serving not only as Treasurer but as de facto Secretary, was elected Secretary/Treasurer.

Jim Lett was re-elected as an at large member of the Council, and newly elected to that position was **Vincent Parr**, a clinical psychologist in Temple Terrace. Resigning

(continued on page 5)

TAMPA BAY SKEPTICS
Statement of Purpose
and "\$1,000 Challenge"

Tampa Bay Skeptics, Inc. is a non-profit educational and scientific organization devoted to the critical examination of paranormal and fringe-science claims, and the dissemination of factual information about such claims to interested parties throughout the Tampa Bay area and environs. TBS does not reject claims on a *priori* grounds, but rather is committed to objective and critical inquiry. We share the philosophy of the international Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP), although we are an autonomous group with no formal ties to CSICOP.

TBS is presently sponsoring a "\$1,000 Challenge" for anyone able to provide TBS with verifiable evidence of the existence of any paranormal phenomenon. Details are available upon request.

TBS REPORT is published quarterly. We welcome news clippings, and articles and letters for publication (subject to editing), including opposing points of view. As we are non-profit, **stamped, self-addressed return envelopes would be appreciated with all correspondence.**

Views expressed in articles and letters are those of the author, and not necessarily those of the Tampa Bay Skeptics.

TAMPA BAY SKEPTICS
REPORT

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CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Terry A. Smiljanich

One hundred years ago witnessed a dramatic rise in belief in the paranormal, including seances, fairies and phrenology. The twentieth century has seen the birth of UFOs, ESP and remote viewing. What all of these pseudosciences have in common is a strong conviction that we are about to experience the final proof - the unambiguous result - that will show once and for all the reality of these phenomena. We are forever at the dawning of a new age of alien visitation and crystal power.

Having followed the predictions for several years, I am impressed by the staying power of these beliefs. No matter how many failed predictions, debunked psychics and absent aliens, people go on believing and waiting for the final proof. Any day now, aliens are going to land in front of the White House in broad daylight. The next Uri Geller will be able to bend spoons to James Randi's satisfaction. Any day now.

I used to think that after enough years had passed without these "final proofs", people would eventually turn away from the failures. Modern science, with all of its successes - its beauty, amazement and mystery - would capture our imagination.

This is obviously not to be. People will always seek the simple answers provided by the Shirley MacLaines of the world. In spite of decades of failing to "put up", pseudoscience will never "shut up", and people will go on waiting for the New Age to come to them. One hundred years from now, UFOs will be reported to have landed near the moon base, and the President will be consulting tarot cards to determine auspicious days for summit meetings.

The battle against unreason continues. The Tampa Bay Skeptics can play its small part in this battle. The media will always broadcast and print what sells, and pseudoscience sells well. We thus have to maintain our presence, so that the next time an icon is reported to be "weeping tears" (truly a phenomenon which, if real, would stand as one of the great discoveries of the centuries right here in our own back yard), we can also strive to be heard in the press with our nagging questions and doubts.

The Tampa Bay Skeptics needs, however, to better define itself. Since the first successful meetings and a roster of over 130 members, the meetings have dwindled in size and the membership has declined slightly. The last meeting featured well-known skeptic, author and magician Henry Gordon from Toronto, yet few members attended. By way of contrast, I have no doubt that if an announcement were made that free readings were to be given by an astrologer, hundreds of Tampa Bay residents would show up. That is the reality we have to face.

We know our mission, but how should we go about it? Should we exist as a quarterly newsletter only, or do we have a more active role to play? What do you, the members, want? Fewer meetings? More meetings? How can we generate the membership, which generates funds, which allow more active involvement in the community?

The New Age of cosmic convergence may never come, but the Age of Reason is just as far away. We cannot just sit idly back and watch the battle.

Faith-healer investigated by Ch. 10

Leroy Jenkins, a former Tampa evangelist whose dubious career was spotlighted in James Randi's The Faith Healers, was the subject of a tough three-part series by WTSP-TV's investigative reporter on Nov. 13-15.

Kevin Kalwary and his team had carried a concealed videocamera into eight of Jenkins' September Tampa tent revivals. Kalwary commenced his report, entitled "Profit of God", by saying, "(Jenkins) claimed in one breath to be a man of God, yet in the other encouraged followers to defraud their insurance companies and to ask God to punish his personal enemies". Kalwary stated that "...so far, none of the people we've talked to are healed." Also noted was that Jenkins, "a convicted felon", is presently "the target of a federal criminal investigation by the IRS".

Although TBS was not contacted about the series, Kalwary had interviewed James Randi, and interspersed clips of Randi's commentary throughout the reports.

James Randi visits Tampa Bay, plugs TBS

As part of his national tour promoting his wonderful and wonderous new book, The Magic World of the Amazing Randi, James Randi was the guest on Kathy Fountain's live "Eye on Tampa Bay" program on WTVT-13 on December 11. Following lunch, a second show, on the paranormal, was taped for airing at a later date. About a dozen TBS members (most of whom were aware of Randi's appearance through our "Update Service") were present in the studio audience.

During the second show, most likely to be aired in January or February (stay in touch with our "Update Service"), Randi discussed some of his investigations of psychics and faith-healers, and noted the important role being played by CSICOP and local skeptics groups such as TBS (a graphic with our address was also shown at the end of the show).

TBS members escort Steve Allen during recent promotional visit

Steve Allen has coined the term "dumbth" (the title of his new book) to describe the ignorance, stupidity, muddleheadedness, inefficiency and incompetence that have become the norms in American society since the

early 1960s. Perhaps not content to place Allen's fate in the hands of limousines (see p. 71 of his book), Allen's publisher, Paul Kurtz of Prometheus Books (who is also the Chairman of CSICOP), invited TBS to escort Allen to and from his several book promotion functions during his recent trip to Tampa Bay.

On Monday, October 30, Allen charmed the audience of "Eye on Tampa Bay" (WTVT-13) with his wit and music, while interspersing his cogent dumbth-related commentaries. The following day, his appearance on WTSP's "Murphy in the Morning" was pre-empted by a presidential news conference (the vidoetape was broadcast on January 1). Allen was then taken browsing at Haslam's Books, to lunch, and lastly to Waldenbooks/Tyrone Square for a book-signing engagement.

Steve Allen thanks Jacques Musy, Terry Smiljanich, Gary Posner and Tina Murders for having provided not only transportation, but delightful, un-dumbthy conversation. [Note: See excerpts from Steve Allen's letter to "psychic dentist" Willard Fuller on page 7]

TBS media requests

TBS continues to receive requests for assistance from the media in preparing articles/programs dealing with the paranormal.

Bill Richards from the Wall Street Journal's Chicago bureau called on October 16 (having been referred by CSICOP), requesting information on "haunted houses" for a Halloween article. After perusing back issues of the "Skeptical Inquirer" and newsletters of other local skeptics groups, we were able to provide him with a half-dozen leads to follow.

TBS founder Gary Posner was a guest (by telephone) on the Sandy Payton Show (WNWS-AM 790, Miami) on October 17. Sharing the forum at the studio was Sebastian Sinclair from the British Psychic Research Foundation.

Walking off the show at its onset was Jeffrey Brock, Director of the Astrological and Metaphysical Research Center, who protested that he had not been advised that a skeptic with ties to CSICOP would be included. Both Payton and Sinclair expressed their astonishment and dismay at such an attitude.

A subject of particular interest to Payton is the claim by Dr. Brian Weiss, Chief of Psychiatry at Miami's Mount

(continued on page 5)

TAMPA BAY SKEPTICS EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CHAIRMAN: Terry A. Smiljanich, J.D., St. Petersburg (Blasingame, Forizs & Smiljanich, P.A.)

VICE-CHAIR: Miles W. Hardy, Ph.D. (Professor of Psychology, University of South Florida, Tampa)

SEC/TREAS: Gary P. Posner, M.D., St. Petersburg (*Free Inquiry* Faith-healing Investigation Project; CSICOP UFO Subcommittee)

AT LARGE: James W. Lett, Ph.D. (Associate Professor of Anthropology, Indian River Community College, Fort Pierce)

AT LARGE: Vincent E. Parr, Ph.D. (Clinical psychologist, Temple Terrace)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Gary P. Posner, Terry A. Smiljanich, Paschal N. Strong (USF Dept. of Psychology, Tampa)

SNIPPETS

The Santa Rosa, California Christian Scientist couple found guilty in the 1984 meningitis death of their daughter (see SNIPPETS last issue) was sentenced to five years of probation, a \$5,000 fine, 300 hours of community service, and was ordered to report to authorities any significant illnesses of their five remaining children.

(*St. Pete. Times, November 3*)

And the Seventh-day Adventist parents who allowed their son to starve to death (see SNIPPETS Vol.1, No.4) have been found guilty of third-degree murder, reckless endangerment, and endangering the welfare of children. Their surviving daughter is in foster care, and the couple faces up to 28 years in prison.

(*A.P. / St. Pete. Times, September 9*)

A retired NASA engineer, after making \$200,000 in profits for the World Bible Society, Nashville (publisher of his 1988 book, 88 Reasons Why the Rapture Will be in 1988), has decided to retire from the prophesy business. Having obviously miscalculated in his initial prediction, his 1989 sequel was not a big seller, and his recalculated date for the Rapture (September 1, 1989) proved as flawed as his first. "The end is near, and...like Paul Revere...I had to get the message out....there's evidence all around, but ol' Ed Whisenant just can't name it. My job is done."

(*Religious News Service / St. Pete. Times, September 9*)

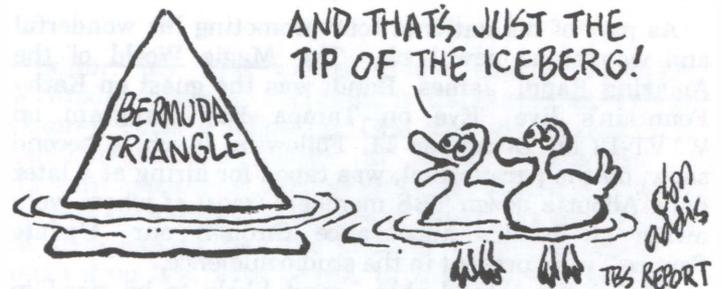
Despite their claims to the contrary, Christian Scientists have a significantly higher death rate than the general public, according to a study by William Simpson of Emporia State University in Kansas. The health of more than 5,500 graduates of a C.S. college was compared to a control sample of graduates from another school during the same era.

(*St. Pete. Times, September 22*)

Q: I attend Safety Harbor Middle School. I would like to know: if a hurricane hits the Bermuda Triangle, would it get lost?

A: ...ghost stories, upon examination, usually turn out to be manufactured mysteries, and (the Bermuda Triangle) is no exception. I encourage you to read The Bermuda Triangle Mystery - Solved, by L. Kusche...it offers rational explanations for most of the disappearances.

(*Judy Garnatz's "Action" column, St. Pete. Times, Oct. 13*)



An hysterical Haitian-American mother in Lake Worth recently placed her 23-day-old infant in police custody before fleeing her home, fearful that a voodoo curse was about to kill them both.

(*St. Pete. Times, November 29*)

Broward County officials are cracking down again on unlicensed fortune tellers, after having arrested four and driven 10 out of town in 1987 and 1988. One of those arrested was a 21-year-old woman who took \$26,000 from a client, claiming that she would drive away evil spirits by burying the money in the Egyptian sands. There are presently only four licensed practitioners in the county.

(*A.P. / St. Pete. Times, December 4*)

At a hands-on meeting, the famous "Happy Hunters" faith-healing couple (Charles and Frances) attempted in late 1987 to heal the mayors of Pittsburg and Erie, Pa. (Richard Caliguiri and Louis Tullio), both of whom were suffering from potentially fatal cases of amyloidosis. Although Tullio has since required hospitalization, "(he) is still alive and I think (the Hunters' service) has something to do with it", says Caliguiri's widow.

(*A.P. / Tallahassee Democrat, May 7*)



Wilbur Tracy of Canyon Country, California, claimed that the Church of the Most High Goddess, which he revived in 1984, is a religion dating back 5,000 years to ancient Egypt. Apparently his wife's sex acts with more than 2,000 men (who paid money for the holy honor of being absolved of their sins by so engaging) were not perceived by the jury as legitimate duties of a high priestess. Convicted of prostitution charges, the couple is now counter-suing in federal court, contending abridgement of their religious liberty.

(*L.A. Times / St. Pete. Times, September 10 & 23*)

[Please send your Snippets to the editor at TBS REPORT]

("Skeptic charges 'psychic'" continued from page 1)

amount of \$25,000 (9% of the \$275,000 requested by her). Merrell's subsequent appeal was unsuccessful.

Merrell states that, confident in the accuracy of his information, he guaranteed payment to all his other creditors, and then elected to declare bankruptcy rather than pay Renier the \$25,000 award. By law, such a financial obligation may not be excused in this manner if it resulted from an act of malice. Proceedings were thus commenced this April in U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Knoxville, where Merrell now resides, to review the question of malice in Merrell's 1985 accusations.

On October 19, Judge Richard Stair, Jr., following three days of testimony, ruled that the \$25,000 award to Renier would stand. He found in Merrell's favor on six of the ten specific charges of malice advanced by Renier, but, in order for Merrell's obligation to be excused, a favorable ruling in all ten instances was required.

However, during November 28 arguments regarding possible grounds for appeal, Merrell's attorney, Philip Lomonaco, notified Judge Stair of possible perjured testimony by Renier, and noted that the original Oregon judgement was possibly based in part on fraud and misrepresentation. Merrell then asserted his intention to appeal Stair's decision. This week's filing of the formal motion for dismissal of the debt followed an unsuccessful attempt to negotiate a settlement with Renier.

Renier, age 53, has been an object of national media attention in recent years as a result of the verdict in the Oregon trial, which was construed by many as validation of her "psychic" abilities. She has appeared on such nationally-televised programs as "Hour Magazine" (11/7/88) and "Incredible Sunday" (5/14/89), and was featured in the *U.S. News & World Report* article of 12/5/88 entitled, "The Twilight Zone in Washington: There are some important people in government who have enlisted psychics' help".

Many of Renier's claims involve working relationships with law enforcement agencies, including the F.B.I. She brought to the "Hour Magazine" program a pile of "police evidence", and performed impromptu "psychometry" on a belt and bloody shirt allegedly from an unsolved murder case, curiously claiming that "I haven't done this one before." But when later asked by host Gary Collins whether or not law enforcement agencies "let that evidence go around the country, police evidence, the kind of stuff that you brought today", she stammered in response, "Uh, no, I don't think so, really. I,I,I, they don't know I have it here. And I haven't worked on it either."

And according to Merrell, although some individuals within the F.B.I. have on occasion invited her to address their agents, Renier has exaggerated her association with the F.B.I., and has been reproached for this by Robert Ressler, head of the F.B.I.'s National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime at the F.B.I. Academy. In our exclusive interview, Merrell quoted from Ressler's May 16, 1989 testimony, a copy of which was also provided to *TBS REPORT*.

Regarding Renier's claim that Merrell's actions had resulted in her loss of a teaching opportunity with the

Oregon State Police Academy, Merrell reports that in his capacity as co-founder of the Northwest Skeptics, he did write to the Oregon State Police on March 28, 1985, before he had ever heard of Renier, and that his letter therefore made no mention of her. Renier does, however, teach a non-credit course on the premises of Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida, although Dr. Joan Straumanis, Dean of Faculty at Rollins, has informed *TBS REPORT* that Renier is not a member of the school's faculty.

TBS REPORT will continue to follow this story for further developments.

Gary P. Posner

("TBS elections" continued from page 1)

from that post was **Charles Mathews**, who recently left his position as Medical Director at Sarasota Memorial Hospital for one as Assistant Secretary for Health Services for the Florida Dept. of Corrections in Tallahassee. Like Pat Strong, Charles has chosen to remain active with TBS as a Consultant, as will physics teacher **Jerry Touchton**, formerly listed as Secretary. And during his recent visit to Tampa Bay, magician and MacArthur Foundation Fellow **James Randi** accepted our invitation to become a Consultant to TBS.

Additional Consultants for the coming year include: **Melanie Banks, Ph.D.** (Univ. of Florida Food Science and Human Nutrition Dept., Gainesville)
The Rev. W. Thomas Leckrone (Episcopal priest, Hudson)
Richard Manny, Pharm.D., R.Ph. (H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center, Tampa; U. of F. College of Pharmacy, Gainesville)
Jack Robinson, Ed.D. (Univ. of South Florida Astronomy Program, Tampa)
Joseph L. Simon, Ph.D. (U.S.F. Biology Dept., Tampa)
Wilse B. Webb, Ph.D. (Univ. of Florida Psychology Dept., Gainesville)

("Media requests" continued from page 3)

Sinai Medical Center, that through hypnosis he has regressed scores of his patients to past lives, as reported in his recent book, Many Lives, Many Masters. Posner pointed out that despite Payton's personal assurance that Weiss *must* be sincere, Weiss may nevertheless be mistaken in his conclusions. Posner noted that fantasy-prone persons may weave fascinating tales under hypnosis, but that such do not necessarily constitute proof of past lives. He further cited Weiss' June 29 appearance (with James Randi) on "Larry King Live" on CNN, noting that Weiss refused Randi's repeated requests for a *single* specific case that he could investigate, with his \$10,000 prize on the line. And as this program had actually been taped *prior* to Randi's June 7 live TV special, Randi noted that if Weiss could produce an appropriate test subject for that program, \$100,000 would be awarded to Weiss should the subject exhibit proof of a past life. Again, Weiss elected not to cooperate with Randi in his endeavor to document Weiss' supernatural claims.

TBS dues remain \$10/yr. - for now

Although 2 of our charter members have failed to renew, and membership has declined from a peak of 133 to the current 113, finances have allowed us to maintain our low annual subscription rate of \$10. Your donations, and a \$100 honorarium from Eckerd College, have made this possible. However, if the TBS Executive Council decides to broaden our activities, a \$5 increase in dues can be anticipated.

Orlando-area members urged to contribute

Hoping to broaden our geographical coverage of events, as we are the only skeptics group of its kind in Florida, TBS requests that our central Florida members become more involved in our activities. Please send "SNIPPETS" from your local newspapers, and consider holding local meetings of your own, and perhaps even contributing a regular column to this newsletter. Interested central Florida members may write to TBS for a print-out of our members in your area (members in north and south Florida are hereby extended the same invitation).

2nd Randi TV special on hold

James Randi informs *TBS REPORT* that the second in his proposed series of live TV specials, in which \$100,000 is offered to anyone able to perform a paranormal feat, has run into production problems and has been placed on hold for the time being. Originally planned for November, Randi hopes to reprise the series in the new year.

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Other skeptical sources on the paranormal:

- 1) *The Skeptical Inquirer* - critically-acclaimed flagship journal of CSICOP.
Box 229 / Buffalo, NY 14215
- 2) *Free Inquiry* - leading secular humanist journal.
Box 5 / Buffalo, NY 14215
- 3) *Prometheus Books* - leading publisher of skeptical works. 35-page catalogue.
700 East Amherst Street / Buffalo, NY 14215
- 4) *CompuServe Skeptics Teleconference* - computer forum for anyone with a CompuServe ID, on the last Tuesday of each month, at 9:30 PM. Type "GO SCIENCE", then after entering the forum, type "CO 2" to enter the conference room. 5000 Arlington Centre Blvd. - P.O. Box 20212 Columbus, OH 43220

("READERS' FORUM" continued from page 7)

Editor: Great T-shirts! Thanks for ordering them. TBS is doing a fine job. Here's an extra \$10 donation.

John Baird, Clearwater

Many thanks to John and the others who included donations with their renewals. This will help to offset the 27 charter members/subscribers who did not renew, even after receiving a special notice and an extra issue of TBS REPORT. At press time our paid membership stands at 113. --Ed.

Editor: Inasmuch as there seems to be such controversy about evolution vs. "unScientific Creationism", I would like to submit my "Great Truth", which is based completely on LOGIC!:

In an Infinite Universe, with Infinite Conditions, and Time also being Infinite, Everything that is Possible to occur MUST occur at least ONCE! Life IS Possible - We are proof of that! WE are a PRODUCT of "INFINITY"!

Lou Allsopp, Hudson

Editor: My first mother-in-law was a successful spiritualist reader --- successful in the sense that she had acquired quite a following. One day she showed us a head-and-shoulder picture of herself, made by an itinerant spiritualist photographer for \$10. In the photo she was surrounded by images of small men and women, the men looking like the pictures on the Smith Bros. cough drop box, with beards in the style of the 1890s. These, she said, were spirit images of her ancestors.

Her faith in this hustler remained unshaken even after I pointed out that I could do the same trickery in two or three different ways. She further reported that he had sold similar photos to a large number of people in her congregation.

Ray A. Blett, St. Petersburg

Editor: For years it has annoyed me that the Sarasota County Vocational-Technical Center, paid for by the taxpayers, has always offered courses in unscience such as astrology. Enclosed is their current listing of courses, including "Acrophonology" ("...Understanding this energy [in the letters of your name] can aid one in understanding self and loved ones.") and "Numerology" ("...combines the ancient knowledge of Astrology and Acrophonology...").

However, I personally don't feel like doing anything, so maybe you could get some other Sarasota resident or residents to object.

Name withheld

Since our inception, the efforts of TBS have been hampered by the apathy of not only the press and general public, but of our own membership as well. While we appreciate matters like this being brought to our attention, and plan to respond with an appropriate letter, we encourage our citizen-members to make their own voices heard within their own communities. --Ed.

READERS' FORUM

Dear Gary: Thank you for your Sept. 20 presentation with our students and Sigma Xi members. Since our average attendance is about 35 or 40, the 106 that came says a lot about interest in the work of the Tampa Bay Skeptics.

As per your request, your \$100 honorarium is being donated to TBS.

Reggie L. Hudson, Associate Professor of Chemistry
President, Eckerd College Sigma Xi Club
St. Petersburg

FROM: Steve Allen, Burbank, CA

TO: Willard Fuller, Palatka, FL (Florida's "psychic dentist" -- see p. 1 of *TBS REPORT*, Vol. 1 No. 1)

DATE: November 8, 1989

[excerpted/edited] Re: your pamphlet "Can God Fill Teeth?". During my recent visit to the Tampa Bay area I met and was provided transportation by Dr. Gary Posner, who is editor and publisher of the "Tampa Bay Skeptics Report". People like Dr. Posner make it their business to approach, in a scientific manner, claims of paranormal powers, miracles, etc. It strikes me that there is now a golden opportunity for both you and the Tampa-area skeptics to settle, once and for all, a question that has perplexed honest people on both sides of the issue for thousands of years, i.e. whether certain events unexplainable by scientifically established natural law do nevertheless somehow occur. Because of the testimony of those who report having witnessed the growth of both teeth and metal fillings following attendance of one of your conferences, this could easily result, if your reports are indeed reliable, in the unprecedented authentication by skeptics of miraculous occurrences.

Since I assume that you are sincere and honest, if I were in your shoes I would not only invite Dr. Posner and his associates to attend one of your services, but would implore them on my knees to do so....I hope very much that you will take advantage of that opportunity.

Editor: Thanks for keeping us on the mailings. I thought I had renewed earlier (sorry). We enjoy the *TBS REPORT*, and the April CSICOP banquet was excellent. Keep up the good work.

Tim Weldon, Seminole

Editor: Please renew my annual membership to TBS. I understand I am already one *TBS REPORT* over the limit and appreciate your sending it to me. It is an excellent publication - I only wish you could include more.

Charles Staniek, Lakeland

Editor: Excellent newsletter! Why haven't the newspapers followed-up on the Icon story? Why leave the public with the original (wrong) impression?

Richard Preto-Rodas, Tampa

I don't subscribe to the Tampa Tribune, but I am aware of eight articles on this story in the St. Pete. Times, the most recent on Oct. 26. In response to my letter as to why their reporters never "reported" on the true (or false) nature of the so-called "tear tracks", Paul C. Tash, the Times' Metropolitan Editor, writes to TBS on Nov. 14 that "...we gave our readers sufficient information so that they could draw their own conclusions about whether a miracle had occurred. I think some of the fun of reading a newspaper involves making one's own discoveries about what really happened." Thus it was left to TBS to "discover" the facts about the "tear tracks". --Ed.

Editor: Your article on the Shrine in Tarpon Springs was absolutely perfect. Excellent documented write-up!

Ken Poulsen, Palm Harbor

(continued on page 6)

TAMPA BAY SKEPTICS MEMBERSHIP / SUBSCRIPTION / DONATION / BACK ORDER FORM

- YES, I wish to support the Tampa Bay Skeptics in its efforts to examine and report upon paranormal and fringe-science claims. Enclosed is my check for \$10. Please enroll me as a member of TBS, and begin my annual subscription to *TBS REPORT* with issue _____ . Renewal Please accept this donation of \$ _____ .
- Please list me as a subscriber only, beginning with issue _____ . Enclosed is my check for \$10. Renewal
- Please send back issues of _____ (@ \$2.50 per) (Vol. 1 No. 1 gratis) [May be available as photocopies only]

Please make check payable to Tampa Bay Skeptics, and mail to:

Tampa Bay Skeptics
6219 Palma Blvd. #210
St. Petersburg, FL 33715

Note: Memberships, subscriptions
and donations are tax-deductible.

V2N3



Tampa Bay Skeptics Quarterly Membership Meeting

Scheduled: "Open forum" - including video of
TV appearances by "psychic" Noreen Renier

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5 --- 7:00 P.M.
CARMEN MANIS ROOM (2ND FLOOR)
CENTRAL LIBRARY, 900 N. ASHLEY DR., TAMPA

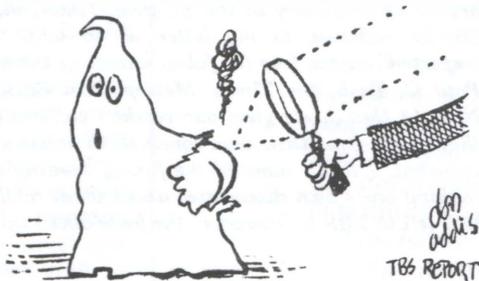
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Report on November USF/TBS presentation

Magician, author, lecturer and all-around ghostbuster Henry Gordon of Toronto, who is also Chairman of the Ontario Skeptics, addressed an audience of USF students and TBS

members on
Nov. 13 at
USF/Tampa.
Gordon's latest
two books are
entitled
ExtraSensory
Deception
and
Channeling
into the New

Age: The "Teachings" of Shirley MacLaine and Other
Such Gurus. Gordon's wide-ranging presentation was of particular educational value to the students, judging by the volume and quality of their questions.



TBS "\$1,000 Challenge"

The Tampa Bay Skeptics is offering \$1,000 and a place in history to anyone able to provide TBS with verifiable evidence of any paranormal phenomenon. We hereby extend an open invitation to Noreen Renier, and any and all Florida psychics, astrologers, and the like, to contact TBS for further details.

TBS logo T-shirts now available - for only \$10.00

TBS logo T-shirts, made from Fruit of the Loom's top-of-the-line all-cotton Ts, are now in stock and available for purchase.

While the limited supply lasts, they are available in either light blue or white, with logo in navy, in sizes S to XL. And they look great!

Please specify first and alternate choices, and enclose a check for \$10 each (plus \$3.00 P&H). TBS needs to sell 20 of the 25 shirts in order to break even at this low price, so please order your shirts **today!**

TBS Telephone Update Service

TBS has a telephone service for information about any late-breaking TBS events, possible last-minute changes in meeting plans, news of upcoming media coverage of the paranormal, etc.

You may reach the Update Service on weekdays between 9 AM and 5 PM at (813) 867-3533, and you may leave a message after the "beep". Those who prefer may continue to send a stamped return envelope for the mail Update Service.



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