



# REPORT

VOLUME 5 NO. 1 SUMMER 1992

## A Skeptic's Odyssey: In search of a "real" psychic

*[Editor's note: The names of the author (a local resident whose medical history is well known to me) and the "psychics" are being withheld to protect the innocent and the guilty.]*

Recently, due to circumstances beyond my control, I've become a very "special" lady. Not that I haven't been special all along — now it's just documented.

Armed with this new-found uniqueness (health-related), I've set out in search of a "real" psychic. It seems to me that if a so-called "psychic" is sitting in front of me holding my hands, gazing into my eyes, or doing whatever it takes to get the job done, my problem should be obvious.

Being a fairly perceptive person myself, and knowing that a lot can be learned just by observing the way a person dresses, acts, reacts, etc., I decided that my first few ventures into the psychic world would be made wearing a "plain brown wrapper" (no make-up, no jewelry, no perfume — nothing). I was as "generic" as I know how to be — blue jeans, T-shirt (no important social messages such as "Save the Whales" or "Tampa Bay Skeptics") and sneakers. I also tried to remain ever conscious of all my actions and reactions.

The adventure begins...

Psychic #1 February 16 — Showboat Flea Market  
\$25 for approx. 30 minutes

Reading regular playing cards, this lady, I must admit, had my attention. I didn't ask any questions and she made no mention of my health, so I assume it must be good.

Psychic #2 February 22 — Psychic Fair, Portuguese-American Hall  
\$8 for approx. 15 minutes

I wish this guy *was* psychic — life is great! He wanted to know why I was there. My health is good. So are my kids (I only have one).

Psychic #3 February 22 — Psychic Saturday, Temple of the Living God  
\$8 for approx. 15 minutes

This psychic used nothing — saw symbols. She told me that I need not be a "sheep" by following what the medical profession hands down to me. I can be "exemplary" and have them look up to me. If I were to believe in this woman (which unfortunately some people do), by the time all you nice people read this article, you'd

also be able to catch my obituary! SORRY, but I don't think so!

None of the "psychics" that I've visited so far knew that I am married, until they were told. As a matter of fact, one of them told me I wasn't (maybe he knows something I should), and they all agreed that I'm healthy.

Psychics #4,5,6 April 11 — Psychic Showcase, Temple of the Living God  
\$8 apiece, or 3 for \$25

The doors opened at 8:00 A.M. I arrived at about 8:45 and was given a number — 72. Obviously, things were moving right along. My first reading wasn't until 10:00, so I had time to sit back and watch. I was amazed at the number and variety of the people I saw — from what appeared to be "street people" (bags included) all the way up to the professional, well-to-do types, and from the really young to the very, very old.

While I was patiently waiting and watching I realized that I was hearing the sounds of someone beating a drum. It turned out to be a young native American psychic getting ready to start his readings. According to my information sheet, he is also a "Starperson" who channels

*(continued on page 5)*

## Noreen Renier on 48 Hours, settles lawsuits with Merrell

During the May 13 edition of CBS-TV's weekly newsmagazine *48 Hours*, in a credulous eight minute segment entitled "Hard Evidence," Orlando "psychic" Noreen Renier was featured as she offered assistance to two south Florida detectives working on a 1 1/2-year-old unsolved murder. With CBS video crews taping simultaneously in Renier's home and in the office of detectives Ralph Pauldine and Henry Mackey, reporter Doug Tunnell explains how Renier "transports herself back to the crime scene and enters the victim's body." She then accurately describes the murder scene (a portly, shirtless, middle-aged man, mortally wounded in the neck). The police, Tunnell reports, are convinced that she had no advanced knowledge of the case. However, given the choreography required to put this TV spectacle together, a skeptic might suspect that a person with police contacts (such as a professional "psychic detective"), or a national

*(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), though TBS is an autonomous local group and is not formally affiliated with CSICOP.

TBS's "\$1,000 Challenge" is open to anyone claiming verifiable scientific proof of the reality of ESP, UFOs, dowsing, astrology, or any paranormal phenomenon. Please contact us for complete details.

*TBS Report* is published quarterly. We welcome news clippings, and articles and letters for publication (subject to editing for length, clarity, and taste), including opposing points of view. As our budget is very limited, 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**

Founded in 1988

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\$10/yr. (4 issues)

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## CHAIRMAN'S

### ORDER

## A skeptic and a theist

by Terry A. Smiljanich

On April 23, scientists announced the new findings from NASA's Cosmic Background Explorer (COBE) satellite — the cosmic background radiation evidenced variations within it amounting to 30 millionths of a degree Kelvin. Although that doesn't sound like much, what it implies is that the data reveal the "seeds" of present-day galaxies existing approximately fifteen billion years ago. Cosmology had gone far in creating coherent theories concerning the "creation" and evolution of our universe, but before this detected variance in the background radiation (which represents the "glow" created by the Big Bang), it could not explain the origin of structure in the universe. The new COBE findings have been heralded as the discovery of the "Holy Grail" of cosmology. One scientist, quoted widely in the press, stated that we are now looking at the "face of God."

Although the cosmic background variations are indeed exciting in the world of astronomy, this mixing of scientific and religious metaphors was unfortunate. It reinforced the idea in people's minds that science and religion are at war and that science is slowly undermining the viability of religion. Conversely, it confirmed among some the atheistic nature of science.

This general subject came up again when Gary Posner and I were on WFLA's *Lionel* talk show in May. Several callers responded to my assertion that I was both a skeptic and a theist with bewilderment at how one could be both. If I was truly a skeptic, how could I accept "God" on faith? A very good question, actually, and one that cannot be answered in a column. Philosophers have struggled for centuries with the relationship between science and religion.

By "science," I am not referring to any particular field, but rather to the general scientific approach to evidence about the material world. By "religion," I am not referring to any particular organization, be it Baptist or Buddhist, but rather to the general theological questions of God, absolutes, morals and values.

I personally do not believe in "revealed truth," i.e. a body of knowledge somehow given to us by an acting, omnipresent being of some sort. I do believe in an intrinsic absolute truth to which mankind cannot have complete access. I have "faith" that the universe is knowable and rational, and not mysterious and irrational.

How can I have faith and yet propound skepticism as a proper basis for scientific inquiry? Science is not a revealed or discoverable body of absolute truth. It is our attempt to organize and understand the manifestations of the reality that we encounter, and is forever subject to revision. It is proper to be skeptical about extraordinary claims that are outside the generally accepted beliefs and theories of science. That is the only way to maintain progress in scientific knowledge and not end up wandering around endless dead ends.

In speculating on deeper, unknowable questions such as "meaning," "moral values" and the like, one cannot rely on evidence. Even to assert that life contains no "meaning" is to take an unprovable Nietzschean philosophical position. On these questions, "proof" has no utility.

Thus I am both a skeptic and a theist. I believe that moral truths transcend any culture, but if you claim that invoking the name of Jesus will cure blindness, I want proof.

Creationists are among the best examples of people who confuse religion and science. They attack evolution by calling it a belief or a "mere theory." And if this is so, why should schools teach one belief (evolution) and not another (Christian creationism)? The difference is that scientific theories are revisable; religious beliefs are not. Evidence can disprove evolution, but creationism is not susceptible to proof.

Science and religion are not at war. As Stephen Jay Gould (a wiser man than any 100 preachers) once said, "The enemy of knowledge is irrationalism, not religion."

## Sparks (and cards) fly at March Tampa Bay Skeptics meeting

The Spring meeting of TBS (March 21) was enlivened by the presence of Richard Bell, a new *TBS Report* subscriber who believes in the existence of psychic power. Bell said that he wished to attend the meeting with the purpose of evaluating the potential receptiveness of TBS, as a group, to his teaching program which shows others how they can recognize and develop psychic abilities within themselves. Although Bell had tentatively planned (at Gary Posner's invitation) to present his program at the next (Summer) quarterly meeting, he was encouraged to give a preview to the Spring group.

Bell briefly explained the approach that he uses when he presents his program to various groups. He stated that it would be unlikely that he would be able to demonstrate any psychic abilities upon demand, and stressed that he was not making an official bid for TBS's "\$1,000 Challenge." But he was prompted by Dr. Posner, and one or two other members, to demonstrate one example of the type of psychic power that he teaches about. When he said that he wished that he had brought a deck of cards, Jacques Musy, an amateur magician who happened to have a deck handy, offered it for the demonstration.

After repeated urgings by Musy, Bell attempted his demonstration with the cards. But before it was even clear as to exactly what was supposed to happen, confusion became evident. Accusations of "changing the rules in mid-stream" were hurled, and several aggressive attempts by the two participants (Musy and Bell) to maintain control of the cards resulted in several incidents of cards "spilling" onto the floor. Statements by Bell such as, "I'm not trying to deceive you," and "I merely want to show you how you can do this yourself," left this writer doubtful as to any validity of such a demonstration where chaotic, "free-for-all" rather than scientifically controlled conditions reign.

In the end, despite Bell's comment that "at least it was red," the skeptics concluded that Bell seemed unable to correctly call the position in the deck of the named red card. Again, Bell emphasized that he had been placed in a position to defend something that he did not ask to defend. The impasse was recognized, and further pursuit of any psychic dialogue was discontinued.

—Harold Blake

[Editor's note: As he left the room at the meeting's conclusion, Bell commented negatively to me about our group's "bad vibrations." I thus promptly mailed back his undeposited check, but was surprised to soon receive from him a 6-page mailing, including the returned check. Writes Bell, "I enjoyed attending the TBS meeting, and thank you for the invitation. . . . In all

## Isaac Asimov — 1920-1992

On April 6, one of the great chapters in human accomplishment came to a close when author, scientist and humanist Isaac Asimov died of heart and kidney failure. His nearly 500 books range from science fiction to biochemistry, from children's books to works on Shakespeare.

Carl Sagan called him "one of the master explainers of the age. . . . I think millions of people owe their knowledge of science, their familiarity with some scientific fact, to reading either the fact or fiction of Isaac Asimov."

probability, I would agree with most of your members' conclusions if I had only their inputs in the area of psychic happenings. Contrarywise, I suspect that if they had the same inputs as I, we would have little difference of opinion . . . ]

## Breast hypnotist sued, applies for police post

Remember Largo's Michael Stivers, who claimed a 75% success rate in enlarging women's breasts by hypnosis (*TBS Report*, Fall '91)? And his money-back guarantee if not delighted? As reported by *St. Petersburg Times* medical writer Carol Gentry on Feb. 24, a 23-year-old college student had to sue Stivers to recover her wasted \$1,000, and even then didn't receive the first installment that was due on Feb. 1. Diana (last name withheld in the article) told Gentry that she had been referred to Stivers by St. Pete. osteopath Mark Varidin, and expressed her anger that two local TV programs [*Eye on Tampa Bay* and *Murphy in the Morning*] had given Stivers so much free publicity for his inflated claims. She also described how Stivers' wife Marlo had used a tape measure, pulling it far less tightly than pre-treatment, in an effort to convince Diana that she had gained a quarter-inch. "I laughed (and said), 'You guys are really trying, aren't you? Nope, it hasn't happened.'" Stivers reportedly had by then encountered a sag in business, and had to close his St. Petersburg branch office.

And as reported in the May 8 *St. Petersburg Times*, Stivers, fresh from a *Maury Povich Show* appearance that week to tout his technique, is applying for an open position with the Indian Rocks Beach police force. Known in a previous incarnation as pro-wrestler "Pretty Boy Behning," Stivers was also formerly a police officer in Indian Shores and Reddington Beach.

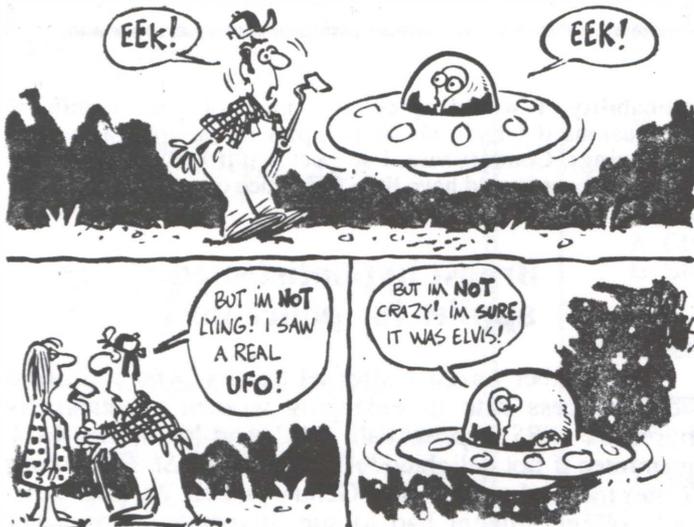
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## SNIPPETS

The May television "ratings sweeps" are, according to a tongue-in-cheek column by Howard Rosenberg, among the "only occasions when television provides in-depth information on the topics that really matter: Elvis, Manson and UFOs. . . . [But] there is so much more that could be done with sweeps topics: Geraldo Rivera opens Al Capone's secret vault and finds Amelia Earhart; All this week—outside Ford's Theater—live updates on President Lincoln's assassination. . . ."

(Los Angeles Times via St. Pete. Times, May 1)



Don Addis (from St. Petersburg Times)

In jump-the-gun fashion reminiscent of the "cold fusion" fiasco, St. Petersburg gynecologists Edward Zbella and Samuel Tarantino held a press conference last September to announce that a woman previously infertile for 11 years had become pregnant as a result of their newly devised insemination technique. The woman (present at the announcement) has since miscarried, and the physicians have only now prepared a scientific article for publication, which reveals that only two cases in fifty have been successful. Though Zbella recently gave his justification for that press conference (e.g. articles take up to a year to get published, and it would have otherwise taken much longer to get those 50 patients to study), Dr. John Ruckdeschel, new chief executive of the H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center, says, "Medical [or basic science] researchers . . . who hold press conferences about their data before [the information] has been reviewed by their scientific peers and presented in an appropriate scientific forum are doing a disservice to science. . . ."

(St. Pete. Times, April 10)

The Rev. James Bruse, an associate pastor at a Catholic church near Washington, DC (St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, Lake Ridge, MD) claims to have spontaneously developed what are called stigmata of the wounds of Christ. Pulling up his sleeves, Bruse revealed pink marks about an inch in diameter on his wrists and the

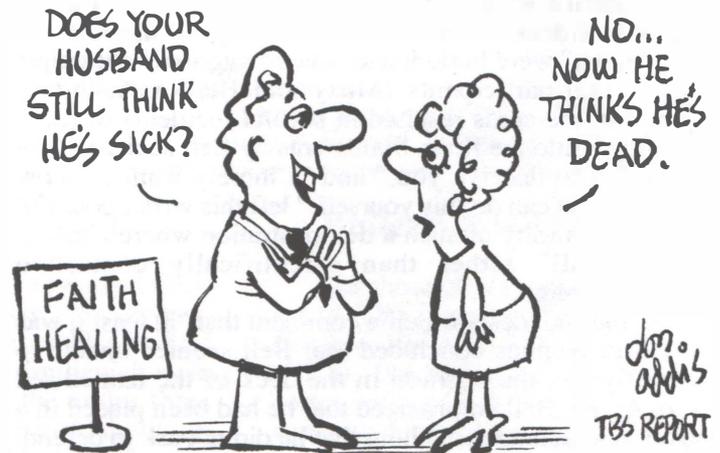
back of his hands, and said that he has similar marks on the tops of his feet and on the right side of his abdomen. "The bleeding has slowed," said Bruse, "but there is still pain. I think it's a phenomenon. I feel like it's from Christ." Statues at the church have reportedly begun to weep since the stigmata appeared, as have statues at nearby St. Columbia Church following Bruse's visit there. When asked about the possibility of a hoax, Bruse replied, "I would be just as cynical. I would be questioning this."

(Washington Post via St. Pete. Times, Mar. 14; USA Today, Mar. 23; Baltimore Sun, April 5)

Texas televangelist Robert Tilton, whose solicitation practices have already made him a target of investigation by that state's Attorney General (see Spring '92 Snippets), has now been sued for \$40-million by an Oklahoma woman. Seems Tilton has been tiltin' at windmills with regard to her late husband, who continues to receive solicitation letters promising that God will restore his health.

(St. Pete. Times, Mar. 18)

### CLASSIC JOKES REVISITED



The Princeton Dental Resource Center has sent a newsletter to dentists, claiming that chocolate may be effective in fighting decay-causing plaque! But before you run to the store in a vain search for Milky Way Toothpaste, be advised that the Center is in no way affiliated with Princeton University, and is 90% funded by the M&M-Mars candy company (even though this tidbit of information is nowhere to be found in the publication). Although the report was based in part on published research about cocoa, the UCLA researcher, Dr. Lawrence Wolinsky, says that "it just isn't the case" that processed candy fights plaque. Oh, well. Back to apples and Crest.

(St. Pete. Times, April 17)

["Snippets" are derived and rewritten from the referenced sources. Please send your clippings to the editor.]

*"In search of a 'real' psychic" (continued from page 1)*

the cosmic consciousness of Knowledge from the God of Energy. Somehow I just knew that I wasn't quite ready to talk to him or "them," whichever the case might be.

So I passed on the "Starguy" and decided to stay with the more "normal" readers. I selected tarot cards, runes, and astrology. All three readings were basically the same — extremely intuitive. Good times, bad times, money's tight, etc., etc., etc. Pretty much blanket statements that would fit about 95% of the population. The woman who read the runes told me that as far as my health was concerned, she saw a long, slow healing process. We're getting warm, but wait . . . my 15 minutes are up! If I had been inclined to believe in this grandmotherly woman's abilities (as many of her clients must) and were looking for another way out of my medical situation, I might have jumped at the chance. So far, I'm not impressed, but I am becoming a little concerned.

On the way home, my friend told me about her reading (she had chosen a "plain" psychic): Doctors are killing her with their chemicals, and she needs to take herbs. By the way, this psychic will be getting her "herbology" license soon — give her a call. And she also was thoughtful enough to mention that she has a chiropractor friend who can fix my friend's shoulder. I don't know about you, but the way I see it, something is very wrong with this picture.

My search continues, but I'm now losing my sense of humor and replacing it with real concern. Between my reading from Psychic #3, and my friend's reading, the possibilities of what a psychic could do to a "true believer's" life are scary!

Psychics #7&8 April 26 — Psychic Fair at Mystic Goddess  
\$8 apiece, or 3 for \$21

Number 7 is a Tarot reader/clairvoyant. She says I'm OK (in general). My health is fine, except she could see that I'm "stressed to the max" (I didn't know it showed!). She "recommended" a massage. That's the best idea I've heard in weeks!

Number 8 reads Tarot cards with the assistance of a computer. Somehow this "loses" something in the translation. I sure do hate to think that my "higher consciousness" is going to turn out to be a machine. But the reading was pretty much the same story.

None of the "psychics" who has had the honor of taking my money in exchange for an expert reading has even come close to figuring out the medical secret that makes me such a documentedly "special" person. Oh, well. Better luck next time???

. . . . .

*"Noreen Renier" (continued from page 1)*

television news department, could have made prior inquiries about the nature of the case to be televised.

Renier then opens a package of evidence (a bloody towel and beer can believed to have been handled by the killer). Says Tunnell, "Noreen now enters the body of the

killer. . . [and] describes the killer's appearance," as she offers enough of a description (face only) to allow a police artist to make a sketch that may or may not bear any resemblance to the real killer. But when Renier "became" the murderer, she was curiously unable to discern *her own name*, though she was able to finger "Wanda," allegedly a prostitute accomplice with a tattoo of a butterfly on her shoulder. Within a week, says Tunnell, police had already picked up for questioning five women fitting that description.

To further bolster the credibility of Renier and of his uncritical journalistic effort, Tunnell also interviewed detective Ray Krolak about a 1986 upstate New York murder case. Says Tunnell, "One of the people Noreen led police to was a new suspect. . . the grandson." The viewer must assume that this was told to Tunnell by Krolak. Geraldo Rivera had made the same claim on his May 30, 1991 show. But the daughter, sitting next to Krolak in Geraldo's studio audience, had responded unequivocally, "[Renier] did not do that. She did not finger my son. She did finger the other two." (They were already suspects.)

A source had given me considerable advanced notice of Renier's upcoming *48 Hours* appearance, and so on March 26 I called CBS News. I was referred to *48 Hours* segment producer Mitch Weitzner who, while declining my offer to provide him with skeptical input about Renier, assured me that the segment, already completed, would be "balanced." Curious description.

And . . . to confirm what we had tentatively reported upon last issue, Renier has now reached a settlement with skeptic John Merrell regarding their longstanding legal battles (as chronicled in previous issues of *TBS Report*). All we know is that the agreement was signed in March, and that a stipulation of the settlement precludes discussion of the final terms by Renier or Merrell.

—Gary Posner

. . . . .

**In brief . . .**

Tammy Sue Bakker Chapman, daughter of Jim and Tammy Faye, is now heading the family's New Covenant Ministries, which has recently relocated from Orlando to Largo.

No sooner had Ch. 10 news director Mel Martin left for Fort Myers than his former station's news department aired a 3-part "Psychic Quest" series (imported from sister station WJZ-TV, Baltimore) during its noon newscasts (March 2-4).

Ch. 13 ran a 3-part series of live reports from Gulf Breeze, now seemingly a tourist trap, during its 11 PM newscasts (May 18-20), and included video of its crew's "UFO" sighting (which appears consistent with a balloon-borne road flare). The video will be shown at our upcoming meeting.

After reading the report in our last issue about the use of psychics by the mother of Tiffany Sessions, *Miami Herald* staff writer John Donnelly called TBS, and wrote a front-page *Herald* story on this theme (March 29).



### TAMPA BAY SKEPTICS CONSULTANTS

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#### Other skeptical sources on the paranormal:

• **The Skeptical Inquirer** •  
Flagship journal of  
CSICOP / Box 703 / Buffalo, NY 14226

• **Free Inquiry** •  
A secular humanist journal  
Box 664 / Buffalo, NY 14226

• **Prometheus Books** •  
50-page catalogue  
700 E. Amherst St. / Buffalo, NY 14215

• **CompuServe Skeptics  
Teleconference** •  
A monthly computer forum  
3550 Watermelon Rd. #29-A  
Northport, AL 35476

### TBS Statement of Income and Expenditures for fiscal year 1991 (6/1/91 - 5/31/92)

I. Beginning balance from previous year	\$ 363.58
II. Income	
A. New memberships/subscriptions	\$ 150.00
B. Renewals	730.00
C. Donations	348.60
D. Sales of back issues	15.00
E. Sales of T-shirts (incl. P&H received)	33.00
TOTAL	\$ 1,276.60
III. Expenditures	
A. Newsletters	\$ 731.81
B. Postage, fax, shipping	230.73
C. Telephone calls	57.96
D. Stationery (letterheads, labels, mailers, etc.)	41.27
E. Blank videotapes	45.88
F. Florida Corporation 1992 Annual Report fee	61.25
TOTAL	\$ 1,168.90
IV. Current financial assets	
A. Checking account	\$ 427.12
B. Stamps, post cards	44.16
TOTAL	\$ 471.28
V. Current liabilities	\$ 0.00
VI. Net balance (I + II - III; IV - V) as of 5/31/92	\$ 471.28
VII. Est. cost of printing/mailling V.5, No.1 in 6/92	\$ 225.00

All financial records are available for inspection  
by anyone with a legitimate need or concern.

Faithfully submitted,  
Gary P. Posner, Treasurer

### TBS in the Media

Tom Zucco interviewed Gary Posner for his May 5 *St. Petersburg Times* article on UFOs. And Posner and Terry Smiljanich were studio guests for the entire three hours of the *Lionel* show on WFLA radio on May 12. The duo had also been on Lionel's show last year.

### Upcoming CSICOP Conferences

CSICOP's 1992 conference, "Fairness, Fraud and Feminism: Culture Confronts Science," will be held in Dallas on Oct. 16-18. A "Skeptic's Toolbox" seminar will be held Aug. 20-24 at the University of Oregon, Eugene.

Contact CSICOP or TBS for full details.

### Bulletin Board Info

For those of you who have not heard, TBS is now on the Electro-Skeptic Bulletin Board system (BBS). The following is a list of some, but not all, of the things you can now do using the BBS:

- Leave messages for people both local and around the world
- Send and receive messages in the Fidonet Skeptics echo
- Upload and download files
- Read (and soon send) messages in the Bitnet Skeptics echo

Glossary:

FIDONET—a world-wide computer network run by volunteers.  
BITNET (Because It's Time NETWORK)—a world-wide network run on professional computer systems (mostly academic institutions).

(continued on page 8)

## LETTERS • READERS' FORUM

Dear Dr. Posner: It is my pleasure to inform you that the Executive Council of the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP) has voted to invite you to become a Scientific and Technical Consultant of the Committee.

Members of the Committee have long been impressed with your commitment to science and public education.

We hope very much that you will accept this invitation.

Barry Karr, CSICOP Executive Director  
Buffalo, NY

*I am pleased to accept this invitation, with much appreciation. —G.P.*

Editor: I have enjoyed working with you over the last three years, and I hope you felt our [WTSP-TV 10's] coverage was fair. Now the public is going crazy over "JFK," and the misinformation from the media is truly astounding. Please feel free to contact me at my new station at any time. I appreciate the fine work that you do, and thank you again for the best SPJ [Society of Professional Journalists] program in many years [see our Summer '91 issue for details —G.P.].

Mel Martin, Station Manager  
WINK-TV, Fort Myers  
(Formerly News Director, WTSP-TV, St. Pete./Tampa)

Editor: Robert Hazen and James Trefel have recently and jointly published a rather brief work entitled *Science Matters*. The objective sought is the elimination of illiteracy in matters scientific. The book does not hope to create engineers or researchers. The burden it assumes is the bringing up to speed of those who missed out on earlier training in — and consequently lack a present appreciation of — the technological ramifications of today's world.

There seem to be 18 natural laws, and each is discussed. Of particular interest to skeptics is the treatment given to the concept of entropy, and the resulting view that creationism must look to other validations.

While being read the book will generate an attention approaching awe. I recommend it without reservation. A copy may be had by contacting Science News Books, 1719 "N" St, N.W., Wash., DC 20036. If you wish to order by credit card, call (800) 544-4565.

William Q. Parker, Temple Terrace

Editor: According to the Bible, when Moses and the Hebrews were pursued by the Egyptians and came to the Red Sea, Moses called on God to part the waters. From a skeptic's/logical point of view, NO WAY! Recently some pseudoscientists claimed that the wind blowing a certain way could have caused the waters to part. Sure???

The secret, from my point of view, is that Moses made use of what is called "The Big Lie." Which goes to show that although Moses did not have any superhuman powers or a direct line to God, he did have a great knowledge of human nature, and was quite a con artist!

So the refugees were taken across the Red Sea, in the dark of night, by some local fishermen in their boats. Now, to protect the friendly fishermen from being killed for helping them, the "Big Lie" was invented. Would the Egyptians believe it? Hey! Many people today still believe it! No matter: the ruse worked. When the Egyptian soldiers got there and heard the story, they even added a little more to it to protect themselves from the wrath of their superiors! And our friends were safe, and the story gave Moses even more greatness (or chutzpah?)!

Lou Allsopp, Hudson

Editor: I enjoy your 'zine, even though you are *wrong* about everything (well, *almost* everything).

Jim Moseley (code name OISEAU)  
Editor and Supreme Commander, *Saucer Smear*  
P.O. Box 1709, Key West, FL 33041

*Readers not already familiar with Moseley's (er, OISEAU's) unique UF● newsletter (originally called Saucer News) may request a free non-subscription. —G.P.*

### 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) [Some 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.*

V5N1



**Announcing...**

Public  
Welcome

## Tampa Bay Skeptics Quarterly Meeting

**Scheduled:** Noreen Renier on *48 Hours*  
Space Shuttle UFO tape as seen on *Hard Copy*  
Tape of Ch. 13's Gulf Breeze "UFO" sighting  
Demonstration of TBS Bulletin Board  
Also, the annual Executive Council elections

**SATURDAY, JULY 11 — 11:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.**  
\* AUDITORIUM (GROUND FLOOR) \*  
PUBLIC LIBRARY, 900 N. ASHLEY DR., TAMPA

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### "Bulletin Board Info" (continued from page 6)

**ECHO**—a message area that is shared by other computers. Some echoes are received all over the world. When you leave a message on an echo, it not only goes to the person you are corresponding with, but to all the computers that receive that echo (for all to read).

**UPLOAD**—to send data (program or file) TO the BBS.

**DOWNLOAD**—to receive data FROM the BBS.

**MODEM**—an electronic device that connects your computer to the telephone line, enable you to call other computers and transfer data. Prices range from \$12 to around \$800 (for extremely high speed).

If you have access to a computer and modem, I urge you to get ON-LINE! If you have any questions or problems connecting to the BBS, give me a call:

BBS (813) 831-5706 Home 831-6861 Beeper 963-9437

We are planning a demonstration of the Bulletin Board at the upcoming TBS meeting.

—Michael Kleineschay

### TBS "\$1,000 Challenge"

Tampa Bay Skeptics is offering \$1,000 and a place in history to anyone able to provide TBS with verifiable scientific proof of any paranormal phenomenon. This notice represents an open invitation to any and all Florida UFOlogists, psychics, astrologers, dowzers, and the like. Please contact TBS for complete details.

**The James Randi Fund**  
P.O. Box 659  
El Cerrito, CA 94530

and

**The CSICOP Legal Defense Foundation**  
P.O. Box 703  
Buffalo, NY 14226

...have been formed to assist in defending against lawsuits brought by proponents of the paranormal. Both funds hope also to be able to provide assistance to other skeptics in need.

Consult your tax advisor about deductibility.

### Electro-Skeptic Bulletin Board

Join the world-wide skeptics' computer network any time via modem, up to 2400 baud, at (813) 831-5706 (Tampa). Michael Kleineschay, Sysop. For more info, page Mike during office hours at 963-9437 (Tampa) (punch in your phone # after the beeps). [Fidonet 1:377/33]



6219 Palma Boulevard #210  
St. Petersburg, Florida 33715

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