



REPORT

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• **skeptic (n): a person who searches for truth through questioning and reasoning** •

North Port Family Claims Alien “Devil” Sightings

By Gary P. Posner

Media in southwest Florida, including WBBH-TV 2, the NBC affiliate in Fort Myers, have been covering the claims of Michael Rowley and his 16-year-old son Shane, regarding alien creatures that for several months have allegedly been lurking in the woods behind their home.

On August 3, WBBH reported that the Rowleys had moved to North Port in April. “I’m retired and I thought this was where you’re supposed to go,” Michael told them. “The only bad part is the aliens around here.” And he wasn’t referring to those of Mexican persuasion.

Rather, these red-eyed visitors, with the ability to fly (though no wings have yet been spotted), would seem to have emigrated from a bit further away. And the Rowleys have been rendered fearful of going outside at night, with most of their sightings taking place through windows.

A plaster cast of a footprint from one of the cloven-hoofed aliens, dubbed the “North Port Devil,” is the only significant physical evidence garnered thus far. No photographs of the creatures have been taken, though a videotape of the forested area is purported to show a reflection of an eye. “They kind of show up when they want,” Shane told WBBH. “You get used to them, but it is weird to see them walking around the woods with those big eyes.”

The case had already piqued the interest of the Mutual UFO Network, which by May 26 had published the findings of its Florida affiliate’s “Initial Field Investigation.” Authored by “Morgan A. Bell, MUFON Field Investigator,” the three-page report contains this additional detail:

Shane [the 16-year-old] is the primary witness. ... [He described] two [alien] entities outside his bedroom window. ... [One was] tall (approx. 9 feet) pale gray with large eyes ... having smooth skin with very long arms. ... The other entity was described as a scaly reptile-like humanoid with a rounded heart-shaped head. ... This event [on or around April 10] lasted approximately 5 minutes until the witness found himself staring at the window in the same position the next morning (missing time). ... [The father] attempted to tape these entities by setting up the

camera at the window of Shane’s bedroom. The video evidence provided did show a reflection of an eye about half-way through the 3-hour tape. The video will be submitted to an expert for further analysis.

The author of this initial MUFON report concluded that “the exact nature of these ... events is inconclusive,” and made the following “Recommendations”:

1. Have witnesses participate in a lie detection test
2. Have the footprint cast examined by professional experts
3. Have video evidence examined by a professional
4. Have Florida MUFON abduction specialist examine the case

The fourth item relates to the alleged “missing time,” a hallmark of UFO-abduction stories. The report added that “motion activation camera systems will be deployed randomly to help assess the case further.”

During its 11 p.m. newscast on August 21, WBBH began its update on the case with this announcement: “The North Point man who claims his home is being visited by aliens has been exposed as a fraud. The paranormal investigator looking into this case says the homeowner made the whole thing up to make a quick buck.” This “investigator” is not the one from MUFON, but someone named Eric Patterson, about whom I have been able to discover precious little, but in whose name the following August 27 comment was posted on the (Sarasota) HeraldTribune.com “De Void” blog: “I am here to make a public apology to Mr. Rowley relating to my previous comments.”

However, the same blog contains this August 14 post from “Florida MUFON”:

This case has been dropped by MUFON ... due to the actions and unstable behaviors of Mr. Rowley. Several times Mr. Rowley impeded ... MUFON from conducting a sound and scientific investigation. There are also indications the case may be a HOAX due to the motivations set forth in communications with Mr. Rowley. ... It is the opinion of Florida MUFON that this case be closed and deemed incomplete due to conflict of interest.

Regarding this “conflict of interest,” the August 21 WBBH story added, “Rowley is now selling \$22 alien T-shirts on his website [www.northportdevil.com] and he is also trying to sell the plaster cast he made of the supposed footprint to the highest bidder. He hopes to bring in \$1-million for it.”

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Tampa Bay Skeptics, Inc., a Special Interest Group of the Center For Inquiry/Tampa, is a nonprofit educational and scientific organization devoted to the critical examination of paranormal and fringe-science claims. TBS does not reject claims on a *priori* grounds, but rather is committed to objective and critical inquiry.

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 details.

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C h a i r m a n ' s

O r n e r

A World Without Darwin

By Terry A. Smiljanich

This year marks the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin, and the 150th anniversary of the publication of *The Origin of Species*. A more phenomenally successful scientific theory would be hard to imagine, with confirmations of the theory of evolution through natural selection occurring with regularity.

I visited Darwin's house in Downe, England, on a recent trip. Just a short train and bus ride from London's Victoria Station, his modest estate is open to the public and provides a self-guided audio tour of the house and grounds. Standing in his study, with his desk, writing materials and microscope, I truly felt I was in the presence of greatness. A stroll around his "sandwalk," a gravel-strewn path he walked daily while composing his thoughts, is the equivalent of touching the patent office desk upon which Einstein developed the Special Theory of Relativity (another highly recommended trip).

Imagine the world that Darwin was born into. There was only one reasonable answer to the question, "Where did our Creation come from?" What else would serve as an answer except "God did it"? And what better proof of His existence than a simple look around at the wonders of the natural world?

The first half of the 19th century, however, witnessed an explosion of world exploration. Vast sections of the globe, such as Interior Africa, the Amazon, the Southern Pacific, and the Malay Archipelago were examined by droves of naturalists. What these naturalists, all God-fearing men, consistently found was quite embarrassing. The plethora of new species of plants and animals was astounding in its number. There weren't hundreds of kinds of beetles, for example, there were hundreds of thousands. Did God make all of these species in millions of personal acts of special creation?

Why on Earth would He see fit to create so many different kinds of beetles, birds, primates, lizards, ferns and worms? Was He that bored?

It was surely becoming more and more difficult to believe that "God did it" could serve as an adequate answer for much longer. Darwin shattered that facile answer with one well-reasoned book.

But let's turn the clock back and imagine that Charles Darwin had remained a failed divinity student, and never had let his genius loose on the natural world. Since Alfred Russel Wallace was also writing about evolution through natural selection at the same time in 1859, let's further imagine that he had not survived his sailing accident of 1852, when he almost drowned and all of his specimens were lost. What if evolution through natural selection had never been postulated in 1859?

As new biological data would have continued pouring in, the unanswered questions would have likewise increased. Why are species arranged so oddly around the globe, with completely different kinds of plants and animals in the deserts of Chile than those of the Middle Eastern deserts? Why are species in isolated portions of the world most like, but not exactly like, those species in nearby continents? Why does Madagascar have 75 endemic species of lemurs, while the rest of the world has almost none?

Geological findings would have exacerbated the problem. When the known age of the Earth would have increased to over 4 billion years, how could we fill in that embarrassing length of time? Have there been hundreds of thousands of beetle species for billions of years? Fossil discoveries of extinct fauna and flora would have further complicated the question. Why is it a fact, we would wonder, that fossils show increasing complexity and seeming evolution as

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“Private” Tests of Psychic Phenomena

By Terry A. Smiljanich

Our Summer issue contained an essay, “Another View of Skepticism,” by the always interesting writer and ufologist James W. Moseley. His description of his own private tests of psychic abilities struck a very familiar chord with me. I too had once engaged in similar efforts, but I came away with a much different conclusion.

Moseley related some experiments he had done several times with Dom Lucchese, a self-acknowledged “hoaxer” (at times) and supposed psychic. Admitting that Lucchese often used simple parlor tricks in demonstrating his alleged “psychic ability” to identify playing cards held by the experimenter, Moseley goes on to claim that there were occasions where such simple tricks could not explain the seemingly eerie ability of Mr. Lucchese to successfully read minds.

Moseley writes that he himself once engaged in his own private version of “ESP” with cards, and after “warming up,” was able during a short run of his self-test to successfully identify playing cards in a deck before turning them over. “Unnerved” by this experience which he could not understand, he writes that soon the “spell” was broken and “the power disappeared forever.” His conclusion? ESP is “extremely fragile and unpredictable,” no one has “all the answers,” and we skeptics are “too rigid to even *consider* such heresy.”

His story reminded me of my own credulous moment when I was a young boy in the 1950s interested in science, UFOs and psychic phenomena. *Life* magazine at that time carried a large illustrated article about some studies at the Rhine Institute seemingly showing that some people possessed psychic abilities. I was fascinated and decided to do my own experiment in psychokinesis, the alleged ability to control physical objects with only the power of one’s mind. I took a numbered six-sided die and tried to see if I could make the die come up with a pre-specified number. I of course knew that the chance of any particular number randomly coming up was exactly one in six. I chose the number four and began rolling.

At first I detected no particular pattern and became discouraged. I decided that I wasn’t concentrating hard enough, so I redoubled my mental efforts. Suddenly the

number four started coming up with uncommon frequency. I remember that it seemed as though the die was trying to end up with a four in obedience to my mental commands. I remember getting goose bumps as I felt I was on the verge of a great personal discovery about the mysterious workings of the universe. When the die stopped “listening” to my mind, I concentrated harder and the power seemed to reappear.

As the junior scientist I imagined myself to be, I decided to keep proper track of my data so that I could prove to the world that psychokinesis was a real phenomenon. I began to record the results of each throw of the die. After doing this for about 100 throws I examined my results. To my chagrin, I saw that the number of “fours” that came up was about one in six. Sure there were occasions where a run of successive fours seemed to crop up, but not enough to throw the averages off. My psychokinesis disappeared into thin air.

This self-experiment was an important step in my development as a skeptic. In one fell swoop I learned the lessons of self-deception, improper data selection, and the need to rely on a scientific approach to such questions.

Each year, Professor Deborah Nolan of the University of California, Berkeley, asks her statistics students to divide into two groups. One group is asked to flip a coin 100 times and record the results. The other group is asked to do the same thing, but with an *imaginary* coin — in other words, to simply *invent* and write down *random* results. Later presented with each pair of results, but not being told which was from actual coin tosses vs. imaginary tosses, Professor Nolan has so far been able — *every time* — to determine which was which. How? Because humans are poor generators of random lists.

Imaginary coin tosses usually end up looking something like this: H-T-H-T-T-H-T-H-H-T-H-T, i.e., what we think of as a random series. *Actual* random coin tosses, however, contain many more successive results such as: T-T-H-H-H-H-T-H-H-T-T-T. Looking at the *actual* random result, one who had been concentrating on “heads” could easily convince himself that the string of heads showed the presence of “psychic” power, and that the string of tails evidenced a lack of concentration, or perhaps even so-called “negative psi” power.

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Snippets

If the following was intended as tongue-in-cheek, the *St. Petersburg Times* needs new comedy writers. Page 4A carried a 5 x 5-1/2" item, titled "Advice for world's leading Leo," which was introduced this way: "The president turns 48 today, and like everyone else, the stars have plenty of advice and observations. Here is what we dug up about people born on Aug. 4." It then divides its acquired astrological advice into five categories, including the following representative excerpts:

Overview: [Leos] prefer to do things their own way, even if this means hurting their chances for receiving accolades.

Embrace: Quiet times, progress, sensitivity.

Avoid: Rash decisions, idle promises, egotism.

Traits: Because of your involvement in career and humanitarian concerns, you may not be overly attentive to your own household.

Outlook: 2009 is likely to be a banner year for relationships and work with the public. ... Toward the end of the year, many of you will be getting serious about learning, studying hard, and changing your attitudes toward work.

(St. Pete. Times, August 4)

The following is no laughing matter, either. A few local chiropractors have begun treating patients suffering from severe allergies with the latest advancement in virtual medical science: the BAX-3000 laser. Dr. Micah T. Richeson, at Cypress Creek Chiropractic in Wesley Chapel, has recently spent \$40,000 to purchase the miracle machine from a company called Virtual Medical Solutions, which headlined its News Release with this claim: "Revolutionary laser technology drastically improves allergy symptoms in 80% of patients." Something resembling a penlight, connected by a cable to a contraption the size of a computer modem, is held by the practitioner and its pea-sized beam focused on the patient's forehead. Each "treatment" costs \$85 and lasts about a minute. From a Dunedin woman's testimonial about no longer needing allergy shots after 50 such treatments: "I saw immediate relief. The quality of my life has improved 100%." But Dr. Richard F. Lockey, professor of medicine, pediatrics and public health at the University of South Florida, where he also directs its allergy and immunology center, says, "I don't know of any scientific evidence that it's helpful."

(St. Pete. Times, May 15)

Florida State Senator Jim King passed away in July shortly after being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, which unfortunately is not yet amenable to chiropractic cure with the BAX-3000. In the months prior to his death, King had been pursuing the job of state university

Where's the Don Addis cartoon?

Due to a serious health issue, Don Addis is at this time unable to contribute a cartoon — the most valuable and entertaining part of the Snippets page since our very first year.

Don says, "Maybe next time." We certainly hope so, and all of us at TBS wish Don the best!

system chancellor. A few years ago — as a favor to friend and fellow state senator Dennis Jones, who is also a chiropractor and wanted to work at the school — King had been one of the staunchest advocates of creating a chiropractic college within Florida State University. Fortunately, the public backlash and ensuing protest by FSU faculty, concerned about the university's reputation, led the Board of Governors to torpedo the idea.

(St. Pete. Times, April 13)

This may be hard to believe, but it is now possible that your friendly neighborhood (if you live in St. Petersburg) soothsayer, fortune teller, palmist, astrologer, spirit medium, mental healer and the like may not necessarily be of "good moral character." One needn't have worried about this prior to June 4, but on that date — which will live in infamy — the City Council decided to remove, from a 1950s ordinance, the requirement of five such references for applicants seeking licenses to practice their otherworldly wares.

(St. Pete. Times, June 14)

Moving on from the sublime to cesspool: For the past two decades, scientists have been attempting to ascertain how the first nucleotides — the building blocks of RNA (and thus of pre-DNA-Earth's first life forms) — could have spontaneously assembled themselves under the planet's primitive conditions. Natural chemical mechanisms had already been found to account for how the ribose and phosphate molecules could have been created absent a creator, but not for how they in turn could have combined with each other to form RNA. But in the May 14 issue of the journal *Nature*, English chemist John D. Sutherland and his colleagues report that by causing the chemicals to react in a different order and in different combinations from previous experiments, the conundrum has now been solved.

(N.Y. Times via St. Pete. Times, May 14)

"Snippets" are derived from the referenced sources and then rewritten by *TBS Report's* editor. Please submit your clippings to TBS.

Sins of Omission

By Valerie Grey

Because illness unhappily prevents me from any longer attending TBS meetings, Gary Posner has been graciously loaning me old videos documenting 20+ years of TBS's interaction with and monitoring of the television media, so that I can have my skeptical fix. The result has been many hours of enjoyment and increasing disgust with mainstream-media "investigative" reporting of the allegedly paranormal. They don't often lie outright (sins of commission), but they seem to have no compunction about sins of omission, deleting the 95% of raw footage that would put their would-be psychics' performances into proper context and turn "miraculous, other-worldly insight" into commonplace, statistically predictable guessing.

Skeptics like Gary Posner and Michael Shermer are usually given only token airtime, and in general the skeptical viewpoint is downplayed. For example, after nearly an hour of mostly pro-paranormal hype in a 1999 A&E episode of *The Unexplained* about "Speaking With the Dead," they showed an uncannily and impressively precise bit of channeling by James van Praagh — and then admitted that it was his only hit out of 40 rapid-fire guesses. While this was a welcome piece of honesty, showing the one hit and merely telling the viewing audience about the 39 misses was not nearly as dissuasive as showing all 39 misses would have been. It's one thing to simply show Shermer dismissively claiming that van Praagh uses the hucksters' cold-reading techniques, without being allowed to witness his proof. It's quite another to indisputably show those techniques in action.

The video that inspired me to write this essay, however, concerned self-proclaimed psychic detective John Monti. It contained three Tampa TV broadcasts between 1991-92 concerning the ultimately unsuccessful efforts of Monti to locate missing Florida college student Tiffany Sessions, followed by a 2005 episode of Court TV's *Psychic Detectives* series offering a predominately favorable impression of Monti directing Massachusetts police officers to the location of a suspect in a brutal murder case. It was only after I'd watched the programs four times that I realized a phone caller to Kathy Fountain's show in 1992 (identifying himself as former Massachusetts police chief James Basile, who had worked unsuccessfully with Monti) was the same police chief who was shown being interviewed 13 years later in the 2005 TV reenactment of that case.

Listening to Chief Basile's 1992 phone comments, it

was evident that he was trying to give a very fair presentation of the facts, including that he and his fellow officers, in despair over their inability to solve the case, contributed *their own money* to hire Monti on a contingency-fee basis (expenses covered no matter what the outcome, but an additional \$800 if successful, which he was not; these details were omitted from the 2005 *Psychic Detectives* show). Basile's ultimate verdict was disparaging: some of Monti's guesses were good, but he had also provided a lot of completely worthless, incorrect information, and on the whole it had been a waste of time and money. Basile firmly agreed that Tiffany Sessions' mother (also on the 1992 program) had read Monti right when she finally concluded, in bitter disappointment, that it would be futile to work with him any further.

So, did Chief Basile change his mind over the intervening 13 years about the value of Monti's services? Were some of the other officers participating in the 2005 reenactment persuaded to revise their original assessments of Monti's contributions in a more favorable light? Or were more sinister forces at work, such as the duplicity of unethical television producers in the name of ratings and greed?

My guess is that Basile gave the documentary producers a complete and fair recital of the facts, just like he tried to do over the phone in 1992, but that they selectively included parts of his interviews that favored their deliberately distorted interpretation and eliminated parts that gave the chief's ultimate negative verdict of worthlessness. Although some of the other officers were captured making very flattering concluding comments about Monti's performance, I'm also guessing that Basile felt betrayed by the documentary producers and that he probably wouldn't have cooperated if he had known the deceptive spin that was going to be put on his and others' testimony.

When it comes to claims of the paranormal, which do *you* think *I* think is more likely true: the report of a human being that a "miracle" occurred, violating the laws of physics, or that a human being told a falsehood, which is about par for the course and in no way a violation of the laws of physics? (Is this a trick question?)

Tampa Bay Skeptics T-Shirts

TBS T-shirts (S, M, L, XXL and XXXL) are available from the CFI/Tampa office. 100% cotton, black, crew style, no pocket, with TBS name/logo in white across the chest.

The shirts are \$10 each (plus \$4 total per order if shipping is required). Make check payable to "Tampa Bay Skeptics."

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Michael Jackson Dies: Uri Geller Wrong Again

In his June 30 blog, *Skeptical Inquirer's* Benjamin Radford reminds us that back in 2005, in an interview with London's *Daily Telegraph*, "psychic" Uri Geller made this prediction about his pal Michael Jackson: "This comeback of his is going to be the most dramatic ever seen in showbiz. ... In fact, the only thing that could beat this would be for Elvis to come back from the dead." Now that Jackson has departed planet Earth, and Elvis is nowhere to be seen, it seems that Geller's precognitive ability is as poor as that of the rest of the world's psychics who also failed to predict The Gloved One's unexpected demise.

—Bill Hall

Posner also fielded an August 24 e-mail inquiry from producer/director Toby Dye with ITN in London, who is working on a documentary for Discovery's The Learning Channel "giving particular emphasis to the potential harm that can befall vulnerable individuals who turn to so-called psychics for advice and counseling, particularly if they become addicted to the hotlines or fall victim to 'gypsy curse' scams."

• • • • • "Private' Psi Tests" (from p. 3)

I'm anything but close-minded. And contrary to the claims of Mr. Moseley, there are no "heresies" in science, only reasonable conclusions based on actual data. If the day ever comes when the ability to control the roll of dice with mere thought is proven through carefully controlled experiments, psychokinesis will not be a heresy but rather will be accepted as a part of the natural world we live in, and natural explanations will be sought. Until that day comes, however, put me down as skeptical.

Can my experience be equated to Mr. Moseley's? Do I know with certainty that he was likewise the victim of self-delusion and selective memory? Of course not. But to conclude that such psychic phenomena are genuine though "fragile and unpredictable," or that known hoaxers are sometimes not engaged in trickery, are both poorly supported conclusions indeed. Sorry, Mr. Moseley. Neither of us has all of the answers, and neither of us is crazy, but we obviously don't approach such questions with the same full measure of appropriate skepticism. Trust the data, Mr. Moseley, not yourself.

Other Skeptical Sources on the Paranormal

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• Skeptic •

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• James Randi Educ. Foundation •

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And check out the TBS website's
full page of "Resource Links"

• • • • • TBS in the Media

Gary Posner was quoted in the June 6 *St. Petersburg Times* article, "A 'Medium Mom' Among the Mundane," about Massachusetts-based spirit-medium Maureen Hancock and her then-upcoming June 13 presentation in St. Petersburg titled "Postcards from Heaven." Identified in the article as "a former stand-up comic," Hancock is now deadly serious about her alleged ability to relay messages from the departed. She says, "I'm coming from a different place than a lot of psychics. I don't even like to associate myself with psychics." But Posner cautioned that "As enticing as it might be, and as much as you might want to believe it, there is no good scientific evidence that any of these psychics [including Hancock] are genuine."

Letters • Readers' Forum

Editor: I just stumbled upon your website and was truly impressed with your work to lift rationality over superstition and fakery. I am pleased that an organization like yours is in the Tampa Bay area, and I will do my best to attend some future meetings.

Paul Zalon
Trinity, FL

Sirs: I have for many years been interested in topics relating to critical thinking and medical quackery, and even gave a talk about nutrition at TBS's Summer 2007 meeting. But I strongly disagree with Gary Posner's doubts (Spring 2009 issue) about man-made global warming, though of course I respect his right to his doubts.

I make no claims to be an expert on this very complex question, but have tried to read well-informed experts on this subject, and some of the dissenters. Most importantly, one must recognize that the vast majority of scientists in this field feel very strongly that their data strongly indicate the existence of MMGW. Yes there are dissenters, and there are still people who strongly believe the earth is flat (I realize this is a poor analogy, as is comparing MMGW dissenters to Holocaust deniers). And I also recognize that all science is constantly changing because of new information, and am a strong supporter of Karl Popper's philosophy that a thesis in science can never be absolutely proven, only falsified.

Nevertheless, world governments need to act on the basis of the best available evidence, and the consequences to the existence of our planet appear to be dire if we do nothing ("Life is the art of drawing sufficient conclusions from insufficient premises." —*Samuel Butler*). One of the dangers of being a "Skeptic" is that of reaching epoché (a state of indefinite suspension of judgment) and even consequently ataraxia (indefinite freedom from worry).

Opposite Posner's article, I did very much like Terry Smiljanich's column expressing caution and concern about "confirmation bias," to which we are all subject at times. Nevertheless, let's not wait until the water reaches

our knees before we act on MMGW.

I hope you accept my criticisms as constructive. I do truly appreciate the work you and others have done in promoting skepticism and appealing to reason in combating much nonsense that pervades our society as to UFOs, psychics, medical quackery, etc.

Joel D. Fyvolent, M.D.
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"Chairman's Corner" (from page 2)

we work our way up through the rock layers?

And what about genes and molecular biology (unknown in Darwin's time)? Why do genes show evolutionary patterns completely consistent with natural selection and show no evidence of special creation? And the DNA molecule: Would we even have tried to figure out how gene duplication worked, or would we have taken the road consistently urged on us by creationists, i.e., "It's all too complicated to have been the result of natural causes, so God must have done it"?

No, I think it is clear that with or without Darwin and Wallace, evolutionary biology would still have developed into the mature science that it is. Someone, somewhere, would have hit upon the same answer: evolution through natural selection. Nothing else could have made sense out of the scientific evidence from so many different sources. What we owe Darwin (and Wallace, for having spurred Darwin to publish his theory) is the jump-start that he gave the world in learning about our past, present and future.

And aren't we all glad that creationists and intelligent designers weren't in charge of our scientific endeavors for the past 150 years? We would still be compiling catalogues of the natural world and scratching our heads. Would that our politicians could understand this simple fact.

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SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

11:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.

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(Next building westward from West Shore Plaza)

**Featured: Videos on the Gulf Breeze UFO case
 and other paranormal themes, Open Forum,
 and other fun stuff**

**James Randi Educational Foundation's
 "\$1,000,000 Challenge" to continue**

Our Summer 2008 issue carried an announcement from the James Randi Educational Foundation explaining its decision to discontinue its Million Dollar Challenge next year. But the JREF website has recently posted this news:

We have a fantastic announcement to make: The JREF's famous Million Dollar Challenge will continue!

Last year, we announced that the MDC would end in March 2010 due to the strains on time and effort of the JREF staff. However, after much discussion, we have decided not to terminate the Challenge. Instead, we are in the process of examining how it can be improved, streamlined, and made more efficient so that we can continue to use it to test claims of the paranormal. However, we haven't made any final decisions about it yet; we're taking our time and making sure we do this right. When next March comes around we will roll out the new and improved Million Dollar Challenge. So never fear! We will continue to test the claims and examine the evidence, and we will always strive to ensure that reality — as it usually tends to do — wins out.

Visit TBS's Website

www.tampabayskeptics.org

If for no other reasons, check out the web versions of our *TBS Report* articles for their related links and for the occasional graphics not present in our printed newsletters due to space constraints.

And send us your e-mail address if you would like to be added to our **TBS Update Service**.

TBS and James Randi "Psychic" Challenges

Tampa Bay Skeptics has a standing "**\$1,000 Challenge**" for scientific proof of any paranormal phenomenon.

The James Randi Educational Foundation will award its fully secured **\$1,000,000** jackpot to the first person able to successfully demonstrate paranormal power for Randi.

These monetary rewards, and a place in history, await the first successful candidates. All UFOlogists, psychics, astrologers, dowsers, and the like are encouraged to come forward and offer your proof. See the "\$\$\$ Challenges" page on the TBS website or contact us for more details.

Center For Inquiry / Tampa

As the opening paragraph of its website explains, Center for Inquiry/Tampa (of which Tampa Bay Skeptics is a Special Interest Group) offers an opportunity to put your principles into practice by joining other reasoning people in working for positive change in society. CFI/Tampa sponsors social events for freethinkers as well as intellectual programming, and assists with campus outreach.

One ongoing event, the lecture series on the third Saturday of each month at 11:00 a.m., often covers topics that may be of particular interest to TBS members.

For more information on upcoming CFI/Tampa events, visit their website (www.CenterForInquiry.net/Tampa) or contact them by mail (5201 W. Kennedy Blvd., Suite 124, Tampa, FL 33609), e-mail (Tampa@CenterForInquiry.net), phone (813-849-7571), or fax (813-849-7572).



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