



# REPORT

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## Human Space Exploration: Our History or Our Future?

By Terry A. Smiljanich

It has been almost 50 years since man first ventured into space (Yuri Gagarin, 1961). Forty years ago, the world was glued to TV sets watching the Apollo 13 crisis play out. Thirty-eight years ago, Gene Cernan became the last man on the moon. The entire history of manned spaceflight beyond low-earth orbit spanned three-and-a-half years.

Since then, we have seen lots of big space exploration plans. The current Space Shuttle and International Space Station owe much to Ronald Reagan's desire to see humans maintain a presence in space. George H.W. Bush announced the "Mission to Planet Earth," and put Vice President Quayle in charge of a panel to explore a mission to Mars. When the price tag came in, \$500-billion spread out over two decades, the administration and Congress quickly lost interest.

President Clinton put the nail in the coffin of American manned space exploration when he opted for "faster, better, cheaper" as the way to go, hoping that the Shuttle program could become as ubiquitous as milk runs. In his turn at the helm, President Bush heralded a broad plan for a Mars mission by 2020. The Constellation program, announced in 2005, envisioned the development of new booster rockets to replace the Shuttle and get us to the moon, and new spacecraft (Orion and Altair) to take humans to the moon and Mars.

After five years of lackluster progress, hampered in large part by a combination of inadequate funding and cost overruns, President Obama recently announced that the Constellation program would be canceled and that

America would rely on private industry rather than the federal government to keep the Space Station accessible to astronauts and to get us beyond low-earth orbit and on to the planets and stars.

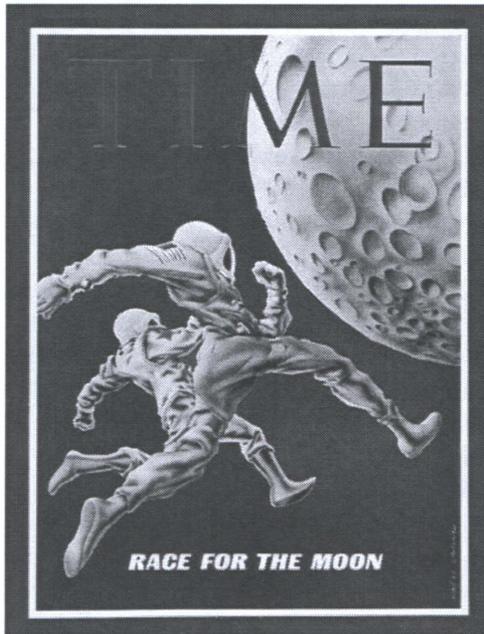
There has been an outcry of protest since this was announced. The Senators from Florida and Texas (the two states most affected by lost federal jobs and money) have promised opposition to this plan (nothing like federal pork to get politicians from opposite parties together). Former astronauts have bemoaned the abandonment of space exploration. Gene Cernan called the plan "a blueprint for a mission to nowhere."

Not all have been opposed to the new plan, however. The commercial space industry is obviously delighted at the influx of funding that is soon coming its way. Planetary scientists at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory are hoping that some of the unspent human exploration funds will be diverted to their robotic missions. And the American taxpayers will not be asked to foot yet another spending bill in a heavily indebted economy.

In response to such opposition, however, President Obama has indicated that there might be some compromises, allowing development of some additional booster capabilities and a very long-range plan to go to Mars, maybe by 2030.

This history of space flight points to one obvious fact. Our willingness to support a full space program must rely on something beyond its economics. Forget all the talk about how the space program pays for itself in innovations that filter down into society. That is absolutely true, but taxpayers want something for their money right now, not down the road. "Why should I pay for a bunch of people to bounce around the moon when we have problems enough of our own right here on earth?"

*(continued on page 2)*



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

Tampa Bay Skeptics, Inc., a Special Interest Group of the Center For Inquiry Tampa Bay, 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.

*Tampa Bay Skeptics Report* is published quarterly. We welcome news clippings, and articles and letters for publication (subject to editing for length, clarity, and taste), and solicit opposing points of view.

Views expressed in articles and letters are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of Tampa Bay Skeptics or Center For Inquiry Tampa Bay.

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### "Human Space Exploration" (from page 1)

The only reason we were able to move so quickly from the first man in space to the first man on the moon had to do with their respective nationalities, Russian and American. As has been so well documented elsewhere, the sole impetus for the "Space Race" was the Cold War, not a love of science nor a "desire to explore." Lacking the military and international pressures to succeed in space, we are destined to a future of low-earth orbit.

There is one hope, however — the Chinese. While we are winding down our ability to transport humans into space, the Chinese are embarked on their own visions of space exploration. Current Chinese plans call for a manned moon landing by 2020, followed by a mission to Mars. With the GDP of China growing at an aggressive rate, fueled in large part by America's desire to buy Chinese goods and borrow money from China to support our burgeoning federal debt, China is currently a better bet at beating us back to the moon. Once that reality starts to sink in, politicians will wring their hands at the "loss of American prestige," and voters will likely be more willing to support expensive and inefficient crash programs to try and catch up. There's nothing like a good international rivalry, a "death match to the finish," to stoke the fires.

Very little of this debate has to do with actual science. Oh sure, we all know that a human exploring the surface of Mars is much better than little can-do robots like the Spirit and Opportunity rovers. It goes without saying, however, that you can deploy an entire battalion of robots to cover the surface of Mars a lot more cheaply than sending fragile humans there. A broken robot can set back a program hardly at all. A dead human can set back a manned program by years.

But, alas, even our unmanned missions are suffering. In May, a

review panel of scientists and engineers concluded that NASA is experiencing a decline in basic research, jeopardizing its ability to explore our solar system. NASA's ten research centers were found by the panel to be "marginally adequate." Most of the research centers are more than 40 years old and have been deferring needed maintenance for several years due to lack of funding. At the current rate of funding, said one panel member, "In five years the research community would not be able to support NASA's long-term goals."

And it is not only space research that is suffering. Aeronautics research has seen a 50% decrease since 2005. America may soon lose its edge in basic research. The impact of such a tendency is much like eating the "seed corn" necessary for next year's crop.

There will always be a vigorous debate over the relative advantages and disadvantages of manned versus unmanned space missions. What would be unforgivable would be an abandonment of both. Other nations, like China or India, will take up the slack.

We will undoubtedly maintain our unbeatable lead in armaments, with America currently responsible for over 40% of the world's expenditures on defense (China is a distant second with 6%). In the last ten years, Pentagon spending, unrelated to the "War on Terror" or the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, has increased by 39%. Few there are complaining about a lack of funding.

We all "support the troops," but surely there's enough spare change somewhere to fund the space program. Until we voters demand more — and it is unlikely we soon will — Gene Cernan will be the last American on the moon. The next human on the moon will likely be carrying a Chinese flag.

## Goodbye Ufology, Hello Truth

By James Carrion

*Editor's note: Carrion was the International Director of the Mutual UFO Network (MUFON) for the past three years. The following was the April 5 entry in his "Follow the Magic Thread" personal blog (tinyurl.com/y9gy65h), reproduced here verbatim except for the occasional corrective copyedit. Readers may be aware that in my youth I was a UFO believer/activist before the "truth" dawned on me.*

There comes a defining moment in everyone's life when you must choose to lead or be led, to accept life for what it is or strive for change, however small, in favor of the common good. As I write this on Easter weekend, I contemplate the man whose life we celebrate and his impact on the world. He led by example, was not afraid to challenge the status quo, and his message was pure. What he had to offer was simple, words based on the truth, and as a person that I admire and respect, if I can be one millionth of what he was, I feel that I am on the right path.

There was a time many years ago when I was considering leaving Ufology because I couldn't make sense of it all. Here was a subject that was still being pursued passionately by intelligent and sober folks, many with advanced academic degrees, yet the solution was always out of reach. Surely there must be something to the subject with so many people working on it, I thought. The problem gnawed at me and I decided that I must discover the truth for myself, even if it meant sacrificing other things in my life. In a field where wild claims are rampant, I latched onto the only organization that I felt had some reservoir of common sense and reason in its *modus operandi* — MUFON.

Fortunately, MUFON moved its headquarters to Denver in the year 2000 and I contacted John Schuessler, International Director at the time, and offered to volunteer my services. I remember sitting in a café across from the MUFON storefront and pointedly asking John, "What do you think is really going on?" His answer surprised me. "I don't know." Surely, after all of these years of searching and digging, there must be some answers, I thought to myself, and so I became even more intrigued.

As I stared at the rows and rows of file cabinets at MUFON headquarters, I began to wonder if the answers I

sought lay inside. I proposed to the MUFON Board to digitize the paper files under what I called the "Pandora Project" and they gave me their blessing and financial backing. I spent hundreds of hours tediously cataloging the files and getting them in order for scanning, and the project was completed within the span of a couple of years. I also joined the MUFON Board and helped define MUFON's new mission statement of the scientific investigation of UFOs for the benefit of humanity.

When John was searching for a successor, I was reluctant to apply, but then I thought about the unique position this would put me in to dedicate my time to the pursuit of the truth. I took on the challenge, and the next three years became a rollercoaster of insight and discoveries that would change my view forever on why the truth behind UFOs is so elusive.

I also decided to take a unique approach. Poke at the phenomenon and see what pokes back. Not only look for a signal but the absence of one as well, because it is just as telling. In addition, I made the conscious decision to forsake the "inside source." Coupling all of this with an investigative ethic that was thorough and unrelenting, a clear picture began to emerge.

What I discovered was that the phenomenon is based in deception — of the human kind — and that there is no way *anyone* will understand the real truth unless they are willing to first accept that. No, I am not talking about some grandiose cover-up of alien visitation, but instead the documented manipulation of people and information for purposes that I can only speculate on. How do I unequivocally know this to be true? Well let me lay it out for you in layman's terms.

People are easily manipulated because we are all subject to the psychological pressures of ego, biased beliefs and tunnel vision. For example, those who *know* that the earth is being visited by aliens have blinders on, and no amount of alternative explanation will convince them otherwise. They are the dyed-in-the-wool believers for whom Ufology serves as a religion to confirm their beliefs that they take on faith. On the other end of the spectrum are the debunkers who must counter every claim with a reason why it can't be so, without bothering to examine the data or lift a finger in conducting original research of their own.

Whoa! Wait a minute, what about those who don't take things on faith and actually collect data and conduct

*(continued on page 5)*

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## Snippets

Though Stephen Hawking says that “the numbers alone [of stars in the universe] make thinking about aliens perfectly rational,” maybe it’s a good thing that UFOs don’t seem to be genuine interplanetary craft. Further, maybe it’s a *bad* thing that our SETI program, were it to ultimately succeed in discovering a distant civilization, would reciprocally alert the beings to the location of our own pale blue dot. “If aliens ever visit us,” opines Hawking, “I think the outcome would be much as when Christopher Columbus first landed in America, which didn’t turn out very well for the native Americans. ... We only have to look at ourselves to see how intelligent life might develop into something we wouldn’t want to meet.” Perhaps he has Ozzie Osbourne in mind.

(*St. Pete. Times, April 27*)

Or maybe they really *are* visiting us already! Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, governor of the Russian republic of Kalmykia, has belatedly announced that he was abducted by space aliens in 1997. Without calling ahead, or even knocking, the creatures entered his Moscow apartment and took him aboard their craft for a telepathic interrogation (no mention of anal probing). Horrified at what happened to his fellow politician, and what may happen to his beloved motherland as a result, a Russian parliamentarian wants President Medvedev to have Ilyumzhinov debriefed to find out if he gave up any state secrets.

(*St. Pete. Times, May 6*)

Did that abduction perhaps occur on *April 1, 1997*? If so, it may be related to an incident that took place this year, when the Jordanian newspaper *Al Ghad* reported on April 1 that a UFO had landed in the desert and that 10-foot-tall aliens were seen in the area. The Orson Wellsian story created a panic, and the mayor of Jafr, a city of 13,000, considered evacuating the entire populace. “We meant to entertain, not scare people,” the managing editor later explained. Good thing that Jafr, unlike New York, isn’t replete with skyscrapers from which to jump.

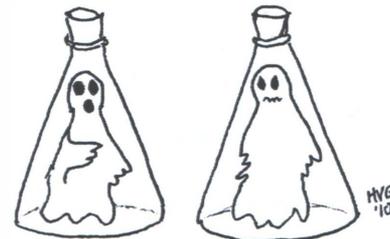
(*St. Pete. Times, April 6*)

Now to something *really* real — the burial shroud of Jesus. For the first time in a decade, the Shroud of Turin has gone on public display. To his credit, Turin Cardinal Severino Poletto explained during the opening ceremonies that the matter of the shroud’s authenticity is “not up to the church but for science to decide.” And as scientific carbon dating has determined, the linen cloth was created in the 13th or 14th century.

(*A.P. via St. Pete. Times, April 11*)

Okay, okay — now to something *really, really* real. This really, really nice lady, Avie Woodbury of Christchurch, New Zealand, can’t be just making this up. If she says she caught the two ghosts that were haunting her house, and that they are now safely secured in glass vials, you can take that to the bank! Okay, okay, maybe not the bank, but at least an online auction Website, where they fetched a cool \$2,000. This nice, nice lady says that she is donating the proceeds to an animal-welfare group.

(*St. Pete. Times, March 11*)



“Idiot! You said *ghost welfare!*”

Back in 1978, 10 years before founding TBS, I played a major role in exposing “psychic” stock broker Mark Stone in Baltimore (where I then lived) when he took his act to a local TV station’s sportscasts to predict the outcomes of the World Series and Super Bowl. But although he had also tried (unsuccessfully) to perform “psychic” feats for Johnny Carson on the *Tonight Show*, he didn’t have the audacity to refer to himself as “America’s Prophet.” That moniker was assumed by Sean David Morton, whose Delphi Associates Investment Group raked in over \$6-million from more than 100 investors in 2006 and 2007. According to George Canellos, director of the SEC’s New York Regional Office, “Morton’s self-proclaimed psychic powers were nothing more than a scam to attract investors and steal their money.”

(*ABC News Website, March 4*)

This just in: Reading in *Bild*, his country’s national newspaper, that Voyager 2’s signals from beyond the solar system have been garbled since April, German academic Hartwig Hausdorf says, “It seems almost as if someone has reprogrammed or hijacked the probe.” NASA claims it’s probably just a prosaic software glitch, but if not, Stephen Hawking (see first Snippet) may soon be proven right or wrong.

(*St. Pete. Times, May 15*)

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

### “Goodbye Ufology, Hello Truth” (from page 3)

investigations? Good question. I decided to examine the data collection and investigative practices in Ufology, and after poring over thousands of historical case files from MUFON, NICAP and APRO investigators in the MUFON archives, what I found was inconsistent investigation with a total lack of evidentiary standards. I also found a paper trail of disinformation and misinformation that has kept Ufology in check through infighting and red herrings, rabbit holes and elaborate deception operations.

The other thing I found documented in the MUFON archives was the sad history of those UFO investigators who thought they could successfully play the “cover-up game” by cultivating their inside sources, only to be discredited, manipulated or ego-driven to delusion. But it was after conducting six personal investigations that I began to question whether or not *any* of the data sitting in any UFO archive can be relied on.

2006: The report by a bogus dive company of finding the 1953 Kinross UFO — perpetrators unknown and still at large.

2007: Michael Nelson’s bogus claims of recovering physical evidence related to the 1966 Portage County UFO Chase. Read Nelson’s paper in the 2007 *MUFON Symposium Proceedings*, then tear it out, as none of it is based in fact.

2007: The California Drones story for which not a single, verifiable-beyond-reproach, real witness can be found.

2008: The Stan Romanek claims, which are not only unverified by science (despite what he says) but involve the shameful practice of investigators ignoring professional standards by fraternizing and becoming emotionally involved with the subject of their investigation.

2009: Unsettling information I discovered with Dr. Frank Salisbury about the Skinwalker Ranch that calls into question the validity of experiences described in the book *Hunt for the Skinwalker*.

All of these cases have a common thread: they are based on half-truths and outright manipulation that predictably draw in the believer but have also drawn a number of Ufologists into their web of deception. And they all would have gotten away with it, too, had it not been for those meddling kids, but more about the *Scooby Doo* analogy later.

As the picture became clearer, I began to be more vocal about what I had uncovered, much to the displeasure of those perpetrating the deception. At first, I limited myself to publishing my investigations in the *MUFON Journal*, but eventually carried it over to my blog because of the increased reluctance of the MUFON Board to expose some of these perpetrators over concerns of legal liability or funding. But I could not stay silent and let yet more UFO myths be created in an already

endless sea of nebulous data.

I decided to dig deeper, and rather than focus on the sideshows that would pop up and distract Ufologists by leading us down yet another rabbit hole, I did original research into the early days of the phenomenon. What I found was amazing and is documented in my paper at [scilib.ucsd.edu/sio/hist/Carrion\\_New%20Avenues.pdf](http://scilib.ucsd.edu/sio/hist/Carrion_New%20Avenues.pdf). Realizing that to uncover more information and to prove my theory would require laser-like focus and time that I did not have to spare, I made the decision to leave the MUFON International Director position, and informed the MUFON Board.

Interestingly I also observed how my original research fell on deaf ears in the UFO community. When I suggested that the holy grail of Ufology, Roswell, could be part of an elaborate intelligence deception operation, not only did I encounter a wave of hostility from the “believers” but a backlash of silence, debunking and dismissal by even those “unbiased” researchers who claim to not stoop to such tactics. Rather than inspire an army of fellow investigators to dig deeper in this unexplored area, I felt like Copernicus telling a room full of colleagues how the earth revolved around the sun despite everyone else believing the earth to be the center of the universe. Blasphemy! Heresy!

All of this has led me to where I am at today — squarely outside of Ufology — away from the polarized beliefs, the three-ring circus of sideshows and illusion acts that has created nothing but a hall of mirrors and dead ends, and which has produced no definite answers despite 60 years of accumulated investigation. I feel free and alive with possibilities, being able to pursue the truth through original research and verifiable original documentation, without the constant distractions and noise.

In 1969, Project Blue Book was history and MUFON was founded. The same year, a soon-to-be-popular TV show was started — *Scooby Doo*, that featured a gang of amateur sleuths solving mysteries and exposing con artists and charlatans who were then apprehended by the authorities. As the perpetrators were being led away in handcuffs, they predictably stated, “And I would have gotten away with it, too, if it hadn’t been for those meddling kids.” I began to wonder if the gang would have solved any mysteries if the perpetrator and authorities were one and the same. The perpetrator may get caught and exposed, but once free to go, could practice his con somewhere else.

That in a nutshell is the sad state of Ufology today — humans deceiving humans. If there *is* a real phenomenon, I have yet to see any evidence of it that would stand up under scientific scrutiny. Outside of Ufology, I will pursue peeling away these layers of human deception and exposing them for what they are. Whether a real phenomenon lies at its core remains to be seen.

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## Locals Reveals the Truth About "Area 51"

Thanks to the *Tampa Tribune's* May 2 article, "Local men kept Area 51 secrets," the truth is now out there. The front-page story quotes three Tampa-area residents who spent time working in the super-secret Groom Lake area within Nevada's Nellis Air Force Base.

Reporter Howard Altman paints a picture quite different from what director Robert Altman might have portrayed in a movie about Area 51. In the portion of the article beneath the heading "Agent Mulder was wrong," comments from all three men make clear that none ever saw "a little green man, a flying saucer or anything from another planet."

Lewis Nelson, who lives in Hudson, was a welder working on classified aircraft at MacDill Air Force Base when, in 1957, he was reassigned to Area 51. He described what he saw there as "so top secret you didn't talk about it. This outfit ... had more security than the Manhattan Project." But what he was referring to was not ET — it was U-2, the uniquely designed high-altitude spy aircraft whose pilots wore astronaut-like suits. "The UFOs started to come to light from this U-2 outfit," says Nelson. "In my opinion, that's what these [witnesses] saw."

As Altman reports, in 1967, Largo resident James Janowski was "a young hotshot engineer with Honeywell" who "jumped at the chance" to work at Area 51. But, like Nelson, his UFOs, while looking other-worldly, were of this Earth. "When it would take off at night, it was the most awe-inspiring

sight that humans had ever seen," he said of the A-12 Archangel, which replaced the U-2 after pilot Francis Gary Powers was shot down by the Russians in 1960. "To see this aircraft take off and fly was just unreal," he added. "It was something out of the future."

Alva McMillion of Bradenton agrees that civilians who saw U-2s and A-12s in flight back then would have mistaken them for flying saucers. On daily base security patrol with his dog, he never once encountered an alien at Area 51, though the suits worn by U-2 and A-12 pilots were, as he recalls, "similar to the ones that travelers into space wore."

The article ends with Nelson urging Area 51 conspiracy theorists to "leave it alone. Let Uncle Sam do his thing under secrecy stuff because that's what keeps us out of trouble."

—Gary Posner

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## Psi and Slots

In the May issue of his *Saucer Smear* newsletter, ufologist James W. Moseley, who writes an occasional column in *TBS Report* titled "Another View of Skepticism," tells of how years ago a "psychic" and "UFO abductee" named Rick Butler told him, "In the [Atlantic City] hotel where you [will be] staying, go to [a particular row of 50-cent slots] and play the last machine on the right." After watching a woman lose consistently at that machine, Moseley almost immediately hit its second-highest jackpot, and then quit. The day he checked out, an almost identical instant replay! Mere coincidence? Or psi?

## Other Skeptical Sources on the Paranormal

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(716) 636-1425  
[www.csicop.org](http://www.csicop.org)

### • *Skeptic* •

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[www.skeptic.com](http://www.skeptic.com)

### • *James Randi Educ. Foundation* •

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Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33316-1815  
(954) 467-1112  
[www.randi.org](http://www.randi.org)

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

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TBS T-shirts (S, M, L, XXL and XXXL) are available for purchase from the TBS/CFI office.

The shirts are 100% cotton, black, crew style, no pocket, with TBS name/logo emblazoned in white across the chest.

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

## Letters • Readers' Forum

Editor: I just had to write to thank you for posting your Summer 2006 article, "Close Encounter of the 2nd-Hand Kind," about a reading by supposed "psychic medium" George Anderson. I found it only this morning as I was perusing the Internet looking for *anything* to reaffirm my own gut reaction to hearing a tape of his, last evening, given to the parents of a 21-year-old boy who died accidentally in a swimming accident six months prior. It was "offered" to me to hear, like a sacred text of God himself, as "proof" from the Great Beyond of where we go after death (though nothing at all was said about what or where that is).

Losing a child has to be about the worst pain there is, granted — I have two children myself — but I was so shocked at how flimsy the information was, and in reading your piece, I saw (honest to God) the same verbiage as was on the tape I heard last night. There were in fact at least four or five parts of it that were *exact*. The rest was filled with anecdotal references and a whole lot of guesses (many of which were complete misses).

What particularly bothers me is that Anderson has provided these folks a false reality, causing them not only to *avoid* accepting their son's death and eventually moving on — which is bad enough — but to top it off, the parents are so convinced now of this rosy "hereafter" that they cannot wait to get there! They speak about looking forward to death, "being together" again, etc. This is such a tragedy, as it ultimately robs them of their lives here and now! And their 21-year-old daughter is being dragged down along with them.

I feel genuine anger at Anderson, preying on such vulnerability, and gullibility, in people's times of lowest resistance and sensibility. Experience, education, and just plain simple logic all flew right out the window in preference for the nonsense content of this tape. It blew me away to watch and listen.

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### Center for Inquiry Board Statement: Board to accept Paul Kurtz resignation

Amherst, N.Y. (May 18, 2010) — The Board of Directors of the Center for Inquiry, the world's leading and largest organization promoting humanism and skepticism, issued the following statement today:

The Board will accept Dr. Paul Kurtz's resignation as chairman emeritus and as a member of the Board.

The Board sincerely thanks Paul Kurtz for his decades of service to the Center for Inquiry and its affiliates. The Board deeply respects Dr. Kurtz and his work and knows that this organization will always be associated with his efforts on its behalf. Dr. Kurtz founded and led our organization and helped it thrive. Much of CFI's success is due to Paul Kurtz's inspiration and leadership.

Our success is also due in no small part to the efforts of CFI's dedicated staff, its many skilled volunteers, and its generous financial supporters. CFI has never been a one-person operation.

At Paul Kurtz's behest, CFI began years ago to organize a leadership transition. Moreover, in recent years the Board had concerns about Dr. Kurtz's day-to-day management of the organization. In June 2008, the Board appointed Dr. Ronald A. Lindsay president and CEO; in June 2009, the board elected Richard Schroeder chairman, with Dr. Kurtz moving to chairman emeritus. During this two-year transition, CFI continued to hold a rigorous schedule of more than 110 national and international events, to develop its grassroots network, and to advocate effectively for humanism and skepticism.

As a result of this transition, CFI is well-prepared to move forward into the next phase of its institutional life, confident that the organization will remain at the forefront of secular humanism and skepticism.

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 This is a renewal.  Donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ enclosed. \*For 1st-time TBS membership only

Other options:  \$15 for *Tampa Bay Skeptics Report* subscription only (not TBS or CFI membership)  This is a renewal.  
 \$60 for Center For Inquiry Tampa Bay membership only (not including TBS)  This is a renewal.

The following back issues of *TBS Report* are requested (\$1 each): \_\_\_\_\_.

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Center For Inquiry Tampa Bay  
13014 N. Dale Mabry Hwy., Box 363  
Tampa, FL 33618-2808



## Announcing . . . Tampa Bay Skeptics Quarterly Meetings

Press and  
Public  
Welcome

Last Saturday of every March, June, September,  
and December (barring special circumstances)

Our next meeting will be:

**SATURDAY, JUNE 26**  
11:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.  
STORYTIME ROOM  
JAN KAMANIS PLATT REGIONAL LIBRARY  
3910 S. MANHATTAN AVENUE, TAMPA  
(two blocks south of W. Euclid Ave.)

**Featured: Video on Intelligent Design, followed by  
a discussion of its evidence and logic**

**Followed by optional lunch at a local restaurant**

### FLASH — Kurtz Quits CFI

Prof. Paul Kurtz, founder of the international Center For Inquiry movement, including its subsidiary Committee for Skeptical Inquiry (formerly CSICOP) and *Skeptical Inquirer* magazine, has severed his formal ties to CFI (see page 7).

### Renier/Merrell Update

A final U.S. Bankruptcy Court hearing re: "psychic detective" Noreen Renier's 2007 Chapter 7 filing took place on June 3. Renier, who owed skeptic John Merrell more than \$40,000, persuaded the trustee that she possessed no available assets beyond the \$12,000 already collected. The trustee and Dept. of Justice refused to pursue Merrell's submitted evidence of what he alleged were additional undeclared financial assets, including a check issued for royalties that Renier and the trustee had previously denied existed. And, bizarrely, the judge's draft order prohibits TBS's Gary Posner from publishing a book (already largely written) containing "any mention of Merrell's name" (not a misprint)! More details next issue . . .

### Visit TBS's Website

[www.tampabayskeptics.org](http://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 JREF "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 prize to the first person able to successfully produce proof of paranormal powers for an independent authority, in accordance with the rules at [www.randi.org](http://www.randi.org).

All UFOlogists, psychics, astrologers, dowsers, and the like are encouraged to come forward, offer your proof, and make history. See the "\$\$\$ Challenges" page on the TBS website or contact us for more details.

### Center For Inquiry Tampa Bay

As the opening paragraph of its website explains, Center for Inquiry Tampa Bay (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 Bay 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 Bay events, visit their website ([www.CenterForInquiry.net/Tampa](http://www.CenterForInquiry.net/Tampa)) or contact them by mail (13014 N. Dale Mabry Hwy., Box 363, Tampa, FL 33618), e-mail ([Tampa@CenterForInquiry.net](mailto:Tampa@CenterForInquiry.net)), phone (813-849-7571), or fax (813-849-7572).



c/o Center For Inquiry Tampa Bay  
13014 N. Dale Mabry Hwy., Box 363  
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