



# REPORT

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

## Hiccups and Poltergeists

By Gary P. Posner, M.D.

As chronicled in his occasional travelogues, Terry Smiljanich spends his precious time galloping across the globe visiting the world's wonders — the largest telescope (see page 2), Charles Darwin's Galapagos "laboratory," etc. — while I sit home watching TV. But *my* preferred pastime sometimes actually results in an interesting (at least to me) thought crossing my mind.

For example, in 2007, when programs such as *Today* and *Good Morning America* were fighting over which would be the first to snare St. Petersburg's "Hiccup Girl," I found myself seemingly alone in wondering if perhaps her one-per-second hiccups might be a publicity prank, especially since she was able to talk hiccup-free.

I had no compelling reason to doubt the genuineness of the 17-year-old's situation, for which she had sought the help of multiple physicians, and which resolved spontaneously after five weeks. Yet I recall it reminding me of a Robin Williams skit on *Saturday Night Live* from years earlier, in which his trance-channeling impression appeared more authentic than J.Z. Knight's corny-looking channelings, which were all the rage at the time, of the ancient warrior Ramtha.

The same question occurred to me while watching "Hiccup Girl" as when watching Williams or Knight or, for that matter, Noreen Renier during any of her "psychic" trances: How can one discern the difference between the "real" phenomenon (if it exists) and play-acting? In Renier's case, most of her genuine-appearing

"psychic" trances that I have observed have been reenactments of her *past* cases for TV programs like *Psychic Detectives*, so we know that she does play-act at times — at least on those shows.

"Hiccup Girl" Jennifer Mee, now three years older, has recently reemerged as a celebrity, this time for suffering a grave hiccup in judgment. She reportedly has confessed to luring a man to a vacant home on a dark alley so that her boyfriend and another male accomplice could rob him. The victim, shot four times in the struggle, died, and Mee is facing first-degree murder charges.

This news broke on the very day that a Sarasota reporter called hours later to interview me about house-hauntings (see page 6). During the course of our



conversation, I came up with a speculative hypothesis that I suggested he might wish to pursue — under the condition, of course, that he share the ensuing Pulitzer Prize with me. He was more than agreeable to my caveat, but fearing that his editor wouldn't appreciate him straying from the Sarasota beat,

though encouraging me onward, he passed.

I had told him about the 1984 Columbus, Ohio, "poltergeist" case, which had made national news. Like probably all the other newspapers, that year's March 4 *St. Petersburg Times* article had included the above photograph (© *Columbus Dispatch*) of a telephone flying across the room with no apparent cause. The girl in the photo, 14-year-old Tina Resch, one of six siblings, had become the center of attention in a household described by a *Columbus Dispatch* reporter as "rock-solid." The nationally circulated Associated Press article quoted Tina as saying, "I just want it to stop."

(continued on page 5)

### 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.

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## Chairman's Corner

### At the World's Largest Telescope

By Terry A. Smiljanich

In early September, I had the opportunity to take the trip of a lifetime, a working visit to the world's largest telescope. Atop the Roque de los Muchachos observatory site in the Canary Islands, the 10.4-meter Gran Telescopio Canarias (GTC) is perched at 7,500 feet. By about 15 inches, it beats out the second-largest telescope, the Keck 10-meter in Hawaii.

Inaugurated in 2009, the GTC was built by the Spanish government and is composed of 36 hexagonal mirrors joined together, each independently adjustable to achieve maximum performance.

The University of Florida is a 5% partner in the telescope, giving it access for 20 nights a year.

I am a member of the UF Astronomy Department's Advisory Council. Professor Charles Telesco, a friend, asked me if I wanted to accompany his team to the Canary Islands to help in installing and commissioning a mid-infrared camera built by the Department under his supervision. My succinct four-word response was, "Are you kidding me?"

I traveled with the UF team to La Palma, one of the Canary Islands off the coast of Africa. My unofficial title was "Historian," as I wrote a daily blog of our activities on the Astronomy Department's website (at [ufastro.blogspot.com](http://ufastro.blogspot.com)). We immediately rode to the top of the extinct volcano where the GTC, along with several other large telescopes and

instruments, sits on the edge of a huge caldera. A dormitory for the astronomers, with a cafeteria and conference rooms, became my home for a week.

The team made final adjustments on the camera, called CanariCam, including getting the temperature of the huge instrument's interior down to 8° Kelvin (that's -445° Fahrenheit), which is necessary in order to eliminate extraneous heat sources when trying to register the 10-nanometer wavelengths of the mid-infrared range. The camera unit was then wheeled to the observatory floor

and lifted up by crane to the focus of the GTC telescope, where it was attached and continually kept cooled to almost absolute zero.

Unfortunately, neither

the weather nor the telescope cooperated during that week. An unusual storm assaulted the normally clear and dry mountaintop with wind and rain for days, and when the weather cleared, the telescope had difficulty undergoing some of the fine-tuning necessary to obtain infrared images. Enough was accomplished to make sure the camera itself worked as it should, able to resolve targets at the theoretical diffraction-limited resolution.

Over the past few months since our team's trip to La Palma, the observatory staff has been tweaking operations so that soon, infrared images at resolutions not obtainable

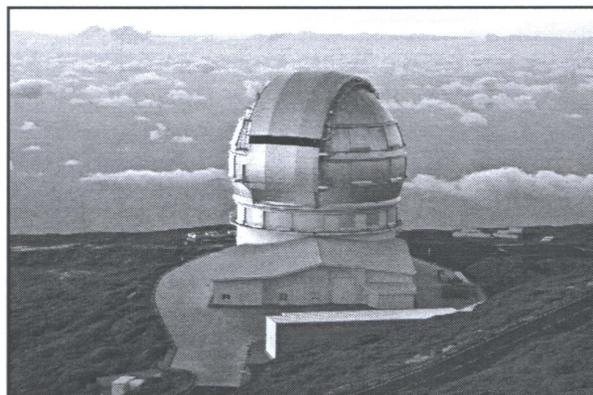


Photo by Terry Smiljanich

(continued on page 5)

## Pi in the Sky

By Valerie Grey

Here's what may seem like a silly question: Does  $1+1$  have to equal 2? I'm not talking bunny rabbits, as in 1 male rabbit + 1 female rabbit = 2 big and 15 little rabbits, but about pure, conceptual, base-10 numbers on an imaginary number line, with conventional definitions of "plus" and "equal." So, must  $1+1=2$ ?

Before answering, let me provide a little background. I'm not a natural at mathematics by any means. But in my old age, I'm now able to see an aesthetic beauty in its structure and rigorous proofs that I couldn't begin to appreciate when I was younger. However, I have to work hard even at elementary math and continually review what I've learned.

I was doing some fun rate-of-change problems (this is what you end up doing on a Friday night when you don't have cable TV), when I was stopped by a parenthetical reminder of a simple geometry formula needed to solve a problem, the volume of a cone:  $\pi r^2 h/3$ . Suddenly, my skeptic gene kicked in big-time. How the heck do they know that? These formulas for the volumes and surface areas of spheres, cones, and pyramids, for the area and circumference of a circle — exactly  $1/3$  of this,  $4/3$  of that. They're all so suspiciously simple and neat and precise.

It never occurred to me to question those formulas back in junior high, but now all my incredulity was aroused. How did they figure these things out so precisely? How did they know for sure? For that matter, how did the ancient Babylonians and Greeks come up with their fabulously accurate approximations of  $\pi$ ? I had no idea. I confess I had some vague notion of gray-haired old guys in togas with long ropes and stakes, drawing huge circles in the sand and laboriously measuring and comparing them.

Fortunately for me, it turned out I was in exactly the right place to have my questions answered, because these volumes, areas, and arc lengths are all pure integral calculus. The derivations are fully as beautiful as the loveliest Chopin nocturne, and they all proceed inexorably, step by step, with airtight logical rigor, from  $1+1=2$ .

It turns out there are no measurements whatsoever involved in  $\pi$ . It's all pure calculation that produces an irrational constant (not "irrational" as in "unreasonable," but "non-ratio-able," as in a non-repeating, non-terminating

decimal that cannot be expressed as the ratio of two integers). Unlike most constants in physics, such as Coulomb's, Planck's, and the universal gravitational constant, which are determined by messy empirical measurement, both  $\pi$  and  $e$  (another extremely vital irrational number, the base of "natural" logarithms, with mind-boggling, near-magical mathematical properties) are simple "limits," produced from easy formulas derived step by step from  $1+1=2$ , containing an "x" which approaches infinity.

Though  $\pi$  and  $e$  have tremendous application to empirical science (for starters, they underlie all of calculus, which rules the physical world), as constructs of pure logic, their values are exactly the same here as they are on the other side of the galaxy; indeed, across the entire universe. That is, of course, unless you don't happen to subscribe to the notion that  $1+1$  has to equal 2. As skeptics of the paranormal, we're used to all manner of fraudulent claims of blithely abrogating the laws of physics, but the laws of logic? That's a whole order of magnitude greater when it comes to shameless, if not criminal, mendacity.

So, must  $1+1=2$ ? Not according to the Indiana House of Representatives. On February 5, 1897, this august body unanimously passed a bill, 67 to 0, establishing a "new and correct value for  $\pi$ ."\* Since the only way there can be a new value for  $\pi$  (other than what it actually is in reality) would be for  $1+1$  to equal something other than what it actually does in reality, the Indiana House was essentially ruling that  $1+1$  does not have to equal 2. (Maybe I should have titled this piece "Hubris, the 3-D Sequel.")

Perhaps Bernie Madoff, Arthur Nadel, and Beau Diamond can use the Indiana House argument to appeal their Ponzi-scheme felony convictions. Failing that, there are lots of other utilitarian applications. For example, if  $\pi$  can be anything you care to legislate (or, alternatively, the Earth's diameter can be expanded as needed through the "power of positive thinking"), then it no longer matters that the Earth is technically round with finite surface area; for all practical purposes, the Earth is flat, just like the Catholic Church maintained for a millennium. For economics theories that rely on unlimited mineral and energy resources and real estate for unceasing market growth, and for religions that grant license to "be fruitful and multiply," the mercantile horizons and *lebensraum* of an essentially flat Earth are limitless (let "x" approach infinity). For

(continued on page 6)

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## Snippets

Paul, the psychic octopus and star of our last Snippets column, has, from natural causes, met his maker. A newspaper's sad announcement included: "Paul shot to fame after correctly predicting eight World Cup results from his tank. The eight-legged oracle was subsequently offered movie and book deals and acquired a talent agent. The tentacled teller also experienced the downside of fame, receiving death threats from German soccer fans angry that he anointed Spain as winners over his home team and even being slammed by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as an agent of 'Western propaganda and superstition.' He recently retired from his clairvoyant career, shortly after predicting that England would host the 2018 World Cup."

(*London Daily Telegraph, October 27*)



(With psychic apologies & thanks to Don Addis) HVG'10

Five years ago, our Winter issue contained an article titled "Pseudoscientific therapies at Tampa General Hospital" (available on our website). Nothing much seems to have changed in that regard, and our attention was recently attracted to a newspaper ad for a TGH Community Health Education Program on "Aromatherapy: The Balance and Harmony of Mind & Body." The presenter was Sheela Chokshi, M.D., identified in the ad as "Physician Leader, TGH Integrative Healthcare Program & Staff." Our earlier article had noted that Chokshi is "an internist from India who trained at the Harvard School of Medicine's Mind-Body Institute, which was founded by cardiologist Herbert Benson. Dr. Benson may be best known to the public for having popularized the 'Relaxation Response,' claiming that stress-reducing measures can help alleviate not only conditions like high blood pressure and anxiety, but 'infertility' as well." The recent ad asserts that aromatherapy's "essential" oils [can] travel through the bloodstream and are believed to promote whole-body healing." Believed by *whom* exactly?

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

"By reporting bad science as fact, biased media help create panics." Such is the title of a "Perspective" essay, by Henry I. Miller, focusing on the "media feeding

frenzy" created by a July 2010 report, on the presence of the chemical BPA on store receipts, by "the notoriously unscientific and ideological Environmental Working Group." Added Miller, "Although EWG's 'study' involved a wipe test of [only] 36 store receipts and was able to draw no conclusions about whether [BPA] is absorbed into the body or [has any] health effects, it was reported in papers such as the *New York Daily News* and the *Los Angeles Times*. ABC and CBS, and even NPR's Science Friday produced features on the report." He concluded with a comment about how the media "thrive on sensationalism and controversy, real or imagined," and too often "stoke public fears while failing to provide a complete and balanced picture of how the science is evolving and how it shapes regulatory decisions."

(*Investor's Business Daily, October 19*)

On September 26, news broke out of England that a "space ambassador" was being appointed by the United Nations as the contact person for aliens trying to communicate with Earth. As the article then explained, the plan would codify that "Aliens who landed on Earth and asked 'Take me to your leader' would be directed to [Mazlan] Othman," who was further identified as "head of the UN's little known Office for Outer Space Affairs." That office does exist, but Ms. Othman announced days later that there had been a big misunderstanding — although she, a NASA representative, and others had indeed been in the U.K. for a panel discussion about how the UN might respond to such events "affecting humanity as a whole," no "space ambassador" was being appointed. How disappointing!

(*London Telegraph online, Sept. 26 and Oct. 15*)



"I wish I could take you to our leader, I really do! But it was all just a big misunderstanding, so you might as well head back to your home planet now."

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

### “At the World’s Largest Telescope” (from page 2)

before in science can be made. The main issues involve “chopping” and “nodding,” the minute movements, several times a second, of the secondary mirror, to eliminate extraneous photons, thus making the main target more visible. The GTC is now close to achieving its design specifications..

Why mid-infrared? Stars shine mainly at wavelengths of visible light and ultraviolet. Cold dust, such as the debris around planet-forming regions around stars, or the dust that obscures our view of galactic centers and star-forming regions, can only be seen at infrared wavelengths. Our atmosphere prevents most of the photons at these wavelengths from reaching the Earth’s surface, but there are a few “atmospheric windows” at mid-infrared where the photons from these cool regions of space can shine through.

Using CanariCam, astronomers hope to observe the process by which planets form around young stars, observe asteroid belts around alien planetary systems, and peer closer to stars and objects hidden in dust clouds.

During my week there, I met astronomers from around the world, including Spain, the Netherlands, Britain, France and Italy. All were multilingual and more than willing to describe for me the various projects they were working on with the many telescopes available at the site. And all bemoaned the fact that funding for science projects appears to be on the wane in most countries, especially Great Britain, making it difficult for them to finish their investigations.

When they found out I was active with the skeptical movement in America, they were thrilled. Although most European countries are becoming more secular, the scientists wondered why most Americans still cling to beliefs in creationism, angels, and the like, and why so many U.S. politicians trumpet their religion. I had no easy answers.

Every astronomer I talked to believed that life is prevalent throughout the universe. Discovering new planetary systems is becoming almost routine, and no one believed that somehow life on Earth was the only time organic molecules had evolved. UFOs? Another matter entirely. The astronomers had taken too much physics, and understood too well the vast distances between stars, to believe that ETs were dropping in for a quick visit!

We skeptics have a healthy appreciation for the wonders of science, which are infinitely more interesting and productive than the pseudoscientific nonsense that permeates our culture. Being a part of a scientific endeavor, actually looking for new data to learn more about our universe, was the chance of a lifetime for a non-scientist like me.

### “Hiccups and Poltergeists” (from page 1)

Despite roadblocks erected by the parents, the *Columbus Dispatch*, and parapsychologist William Roll — who per James Randi “had by then taken up residence at the Resch home” to continue to study Tina — Randi conducted an investigation and discovered photographic evidence in the possession of the *Dispatch* (which the paper must have known about) proving that the entire affair had been a hoax perpetrated by Tina. Fascinatingly, when there is sufficient evidence with which to determine the cause, almost every “poltergeist” case turns out to be the doings of a troubled teen, and nearly always female.

But rather than getting the psychological help she needed, Tina’s cry for attention merely garnered celebrity. A decade later, as we reported in our Winter 1994-95 issue, Tina Boyer (her married name), by then twice-divorced, was sentenced to life in prison for the murder of her three-year-old daughter.

So here’s the bug that I had planted in the reporter’s ear: Might Jennifer Mee have found herself unable, like Tina, to seek in a conventional manner the psychological help she desperately needed? And might the hiccups have been either faked or psychosomatic in origin — serving a red-flag function comparable to a poltergeist charade?

According to news reports, Jennifer has long been a deeply disturbed soul. A November 6 *St. Petersburg Times* article describes her as “an emotionally stunted high-school dropout, a chronic runaway who was nearly homeless before her arrest.” And her MySpace page both reflects and foreshadows turmoil. From the October 26 *Tampa Tribune*:

Mee’s MySpace page wallpaper shows stacks of pink money, and she writes that she lives in “St. Pistol,” Florida. She calls herself “Diva” and writes that she is the “female version of a hustla.”

“Maken so much money idk what 2 do wit it,” reads her status, and she describes a life of struggle.

And though an October 25 Associated Press story, citing information obtained from police spokesman Mike Puetz, confirmed that “Mee is no longer suffering from the hiccups,” she has been seen hiccupping in court. Mee’s attorney, John Trevena, is claiming in her defense that she suffers from Tourette syndrome, and that “Hiccups are a symptom of Tourette’s.” Perhaps a sporadic hiccup, like the many known stereotypical “tics” of Tourette’s (none of which has been evident to me during my observances of her on TV). But daylong and nonstop at a rate of one per second?

And there’s at least a second person who has opined about the possibility of Mee’s aberrant hiccups being

(continued on page 8)

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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 Allison Arteaga's October 16 *Gainesville Sun* article, "Paranormal investigators help North Florida." The group, called Northeast Florida Paranormal Investigations, was founded in 2008 and is based in Jacksonville. Members of their team, carrying digital cameras, audio recorders and EMF meters, attempt to capture scientific evidence of the sights, sounds and electromagnetic disturbances manifested by ghosts, at places such as the Old Hamilton County Jail, where hangings took place in Victorian times. But they also spend time "helping concerned home and business owners throughout Southern Georgia and Northeast Florida to find a cause for the things that go bump in the night."

At least their helpful services are rendered "free of charge." And Posner's comments merited three brief paragraphs toward the end, including this one: "As a reformed UFO buff, Posner can relate to those who feel drawn in by the lure of the paranormal, but he also warns that such beliefs have never been able to stand up to critical examination."

Posner was also quoted in a Page A1 story in the October 31 *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*. Occupying space where vital information about the war in Afghanistan might seem more appropriate, Billy Cox's article addressed an almost-as-concerning issue, with the title being, "When selling a house, what about the ghosts?" It turns out that although only five states require owners to advise prospective buyers about any criminal activity that may have taken place on the premises, 45 states and D.C. have "stigmatized property laws" requiring spilling the beans about anything potentially negative, and

Minnesota even "has [psychological stigma] laws alluding to ghosts."

When Posner was asked to comment about that, he is quoted as having opined approvingly, "If a buyer finds out from a neighbor after he's moved in that there were rumors that the place was haunted, he could actually start to believe it. Every little creak and bump becomes a ghost, and he could wind up dumping the place for no reason and lose thousands of dollars."

• • • • •

### "Pi in the Sky" (from p. 3)

creationists who claim the Earth is only a few thousand years old (and want to believe science has not affirmed the Medieval origin of the Shroud of Turin), a conveniently changeable value of  $e$  invalidates the differential equation that governs the radioactive decay carbon dating is based on.

I once tried to write an essay for *TBS Report* that explained the frighteningly short formal symbolic proof of "If you are allowed even a single contradiction — such as  $1+1$  both does and does not equal 2 — you can prove anything," but I couldn't do it in the limited space available. I'll settle for closing with a favorite math joke.

A farm lad went to college, the first to do so from his small town. When he came home for Christmas, his father asked what he had learned. The boy proudly replied with the formula for the area of a circle: " $\pi r^2$ ." The farmer shook his head sadly. "No, son, pie are round. *Cornbread* are square."

What do you want to bet that this farmer didn't think  $1+1$  had to equal 2 either?

\**College Trigonometry*, Stanley Grossman, p. 7

## Letters • Readers' Forum

Editor: Based upon my session experiences with psychic medium George Anderson, I would disagree with you regarding his abilities. (See our Summer 2006 article and Summer 2010 letter.)

I have had several readings from George, and each one was very accurate. At Hofstra University, in a group of about 2000 people, he did a reading (for free) and named my mother "Mickie," spoke of my mother's problems with my dad, and spoke of legal issues I was having at that time, among other things.

More to the point, at a later date, after my wife died, I decided to have a reading. George clearly called out her name, and spoke of her health condition, a complex cancer that she had for a number of years. He stated that it was a cancer that started in the private area that spread.

What is telling about that issue is a major cancer center in NYC had stated my wife had lung cancer. It was only after I had sent pathology slides to the Army Institute of Pathology that they confirmed her condition was in fact cervical cancer that had spread to her lung. This information was known only to me.

Anderson knew I was a photographer, stating, "You are involved in a creative area — all things involving cameras." He mentioned my mom's and dad's names — no guessing.

I could go on citing examples, but I don't think I will convince you or your organization. It is true that George is not always as direct/clear as we might wish, and on some occasions he may be challenged, but in my view, on balance, he is a very gifted psychic.

I consider myself a skeptic and feel that I am open to anyone who has contrary views. That said, this is not a science as you might like it to be, but involves a certain amount of faith that the hereafter is a possibility.

Lou Fiorentino  
Potomac, MD  
loufiorentino@hotmail.com

Editor: I am reading a book by Barbara Hagerty called *Fingerprints of God*. She referenced an article in Chapter 3 that really intrigued me. There has to be an explanation, the simplest one being that it's a scam, but my trust in the reputation of the *British Medical Journal* (now named simply *BMJ*) keeps me from casting it aside.

In the 22 December 2001 issue of *BMJ*, Prof. Leonard Leibovici from the Rabin Medical Center in Israel published an article (see [www.bmj.com/content/323/7327/1450.abstract](http://www.bmj.com/content/323/7327/1450.abstract)) with the following Abstract:

Objective: To determine whether remote, retroactive intercessory prayer, said for a group of patients with a bloodstream infection, has an effect on outcomes.

Design: Double blind, parallel group, randomised controlled trial of a retroactive intervention.

Setting: University hospital.

Subjects: All 3393 adult patients whose bloodstream infection was detected at the hospital in 1990-96.

Intervention: In July 2000 patients were randomised to a control group and an intervention group. A remote, retroactive intercessory prayer was said for the well being and full recovery of the intervention group [hospitalized years earlier].

Main outcome measures: Mortality in hospital, length of stay in hospital, and duration of fever.

Results: Mortality was 28.1% (475/1691) in the intervention group and 30.2% (514/1702) in the control group (P for difference=0.4). Length of stay in hospital and duration of fever were significantly shorter in the intervention group than in the control group (P=0.01 and P=0.04, respectively).

Conclusions: Remote, retroactive intercessory prayer said for a group is associated with a shorter stay in hospital and shorter duration of fever in patients with a bloodstream infection and should be considered for use in clinical practice.

I am truly looking forward to hearing your take on the subject.

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*Apparently this study was written with tongue at least partially in cheek (see the "Retroactive intercessory prayer" paragraph at [tinyurl.com/2fw3qmy](http://tinyurl.com/2fw3qmy) and the first three "Included trials" paragraphs at [tinyurl.com/27n6prb](http://tinyurl.com/27n6prb)). —G.P.*

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Public  
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Our next meeting will be:

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

ROOM 108

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**Featured:** Terry Smiljanich on his recent sojourn to  
the world's largest telescope, YouTube video of  
"Hiccup Girl," Open Forum, and other fun stuff

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

### "Hiccups and Poltergeists" (from page 5)

self-induced. From Sue Carlton's Nov. 12 *St. Pete. Times* column: "A normally routine bail hearing was crowded, and afterward, a TV reporter wanted to know if Mee had been faking those courtroom hiccups. (For the record, [attorney] Trevena says her condition has jail officials treating her with Thorazine and other medication.)"

Thorazine or no, and Tourette's or no, the skeptic in me remains suspicious that Jennifer Mee's 2007 hyper-hiccups, like Tina Resch's poltergeist shenanigans, may have been a cry — either consciously or subconsciously — for psychological help. But rather than even entertain such an obvious possibility, the news media opted to exploit both for commercial entertainment purposes. If my admittedly speculative hypothesis is correct, there is blood on their hands.



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[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, dowzers, 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 U.S. mail (13014 N. Dale Mabry Hwy., Box 363, Tampa, FL 33618), e-mail ([Tampa@CenterForInquiry.net](mailto:Tampa@CenterForInquiry.net)), or phone/fax (813-443-2729).

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