



REPORT

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

Not smoke and mirrors, but perhaps scissors and paste A Noreen Renier court exhibit arouses suspicion of doctoring

By Gary P. Posner

With the ink barely dry on Judge William E. Anderson's controversial June 21, 2010, bankruptcy ruling, which allowed "psychic detective" Noreen Renier to escape most of her \$40,000-plus obligation to skeptic John Merrell (see our Fall 2010 issue), Renier charged Merrell with violating its terms, an offense that carries a \$30,000 penalty to be paid to the aggrieved party.

The Renier/Merrell legal saga, which has spanned more than a quarter century, has been amply covered in these pages through the years. Judge Anderson, like others before him, had hoped that last June's edict would be the final word. But Renier's new charges, and Merrell's counter-charges, necessitated what turned into a two-day hearing, spiced with a piece of evidence alleged by Merrell to be as dubious as "psychic power" itself.

Court convened on December 20 in Charlottesville, Virginia. A full discussion of those proceedings would exceed our allotted space, so this report will concentrate on only the most intriguing tidbits, as recounted to *TBS Report* by Merrell's sister Roxie Cuellar, a former practicing attorney who attended the sessions (Anderson's last order prohibits Merrell himself from providing such information to us for publication).

In a nutshell, Renier alleged that Merrell had: a) not quickly enough purged from his Websites the material that Anderson's order required be removed, b) left some objectionable material even after the purging, and c) too tardily turned over to her the rights to the *amindformurder.com* domain as ordered in February 2010, which Merrell had named after her 2005 memoir and which had

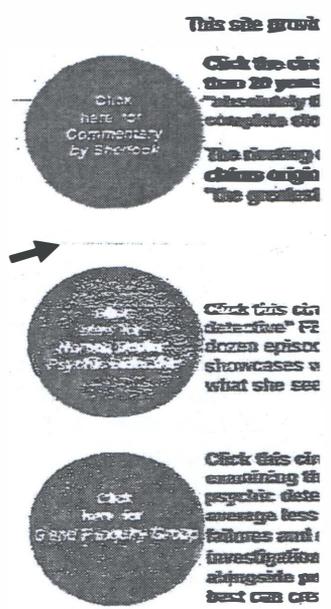
housed the bulk of his anti-Renier material. Merrell was permitted to continue to post a secondary Website (*commentarybysherlock.com*) referencing Renier, but its allowable content was restricted to topics that had been covered in the anti-Merrell chapters 17 and 18 of the first edition of *A Mind for Murder*. Both of those chapters had to be removed from the second edition because they violated a 1992 settlement agreement forbidding Renier and Merrell from further publicly disparaging each other.

Regarding his alleged procrastination in transferring the *amindformurder.com* domain to Renier, Merrell told the Court that he had done all he could within a few weeks of last year's February hearing, but that Renier had neglected to follow through and make payment to the company until three months later. He further testified that he had taken down the entire site within several days of that hearing, except for a single transitional page (pending Renier's takeover) containing three links in this order and named as follows: 1) "Click here for Noreen Renier, Psychic Detective" (a courtesy link to her *noreenrenier.com* site), 2) "Click here for G and P Inquiry Group" (his *gpinquirygroup.com* site, named after Gargantua and Pantagruel [not me], containing information critical of psychic claims but with no mention of Renier), and 3) "Click here for Commentary by Sherlock" (discussed above). Adjacent to each oval/link was supplemental descriptive text.

But Renier claimed to the Court that after several weeks, the link to *her* site actually began directing viewers to a Website *critical* of her (though she didn't indicate which). Further, she alleged that the original supplemental text for her link was soon replaced with disparaging language, which would vary somewhat from time to time, and she offered several exhibits as corroborating evidence. The above inset shows a portion of her Exhibit 6 (with an arrow added by us for another reason to be discussed shortly).

In stark contrast to Merrell, who had created high-quality printouts illustrating the various Web and book

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

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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.

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Our own backyard cult

By Terry A. Smiljanich

One issue not previously tackled in this column is the presence right here in the Tampa Bay area of a major and controversial cult, the Church of Scientology.

The Church of Scientology was created in 1954 by the science fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard, who had previously written the best-selling book *Dianetics*. He claimed to have found the secret to a fulfilling life through elimination of "engrams," traumatic memories that are the source of insecurities, fears, and many psychiatric illnesses. By using an "E-meter," a sort of lie detector, a person could "go clear" and become spiritually aware and complete.

Scientology attempts to discredit many tenets of modern psychiatry and medicine, claiming that its own teachings are better suited to cure people of anxieties and mental illnesses.

The Church has since grown (according to its own figures, which cannot be verified) to over 8-million adherents, thanks in large part to the involvement of such famous celebrities as Tom Cruise and John Travolta. Clearwater houses its "spiritual headquarters."

Hubbard claimed that through using his techniques, he had healed himself of blindness and serious physical injuries received during service in World War II. Despite his seemingly incredible self-healing abilities, he died of a stroke in 1986. His successor, a charismatic young man named David Miscavige, carries on as leader to this day.

The Church has been the subject of many controversies and lawsuits over the years — claims by former adherents of physical and mental abuse, investigations by newspapers (primarily the *St. Petersburg Times*) and the F.B.I., and international re-

strictions in some foreign countries.

TBS does not take a stand on religious claims. Whether Scientology as a church can bring spiritual salvation or peace is neither here nor there as far as we are concerned. What we can, however, criticize are some of its more extravagant claims about the physical world.

According to secret internal Scientology documents previously revealed, adherents are taught that the Earth, then called Teegeeack, was inhabited 75-million years ago by an advanced civilization and part of a confederation of planets under the leadership of a despotic ruler named Xenu. To reduce overpopulation, people were sent into volcanoes, where huge H-bombs were dropped on them. Although they were killed, their spirits, called thetans, survived and currently implant themselves inside humans as seeds of aberrant behavior.

Based on evolutionary science and the fossil evidence, such claims are laughable. H-bomb civilizations on Earth during the Cretaceous, where presumably humans coexisted with dinosaurs? Even the Flintstones didn't have nuclear weapons!

And curing blindness and serious injuries almost overnight, using the release of "engrams"? Hubbard seemed to believe he had the miracle curing power of a preacher at a tent-show revival.

Interestingly, it is this last claim that may be the most easily discredited. A recent lengthy article by Lawrence Wright in the *New Yorker* shows that Hubbard's official government medical records do not support his claims of such serious wartime injuries. The Church responds that Hubbard was secretly

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One's Conclusions Are Only As Reliable As One's Data

By Valerie Grey

Family and friends enjoy razzing me about being a techno-dinosaur: no TV or high-speed internet; I don't even use air conditioning. "At least get broadband," my sister urges. "Why? So I can get a lot more misinformation a lot faster?" "It only takes a little guesswork and a little crosschecking to verify what you read on the Internet," she counters. (Mind you, this is someone who has claimed for years that she's going to live to be 240; my retort: "Darlin', don't confuse your weight with your life expectancy.")

I receive thousands of chicanerous emails from strangers every month, often from official-sounding addresses, e.g., "your [nonexistent] account overdrawn," "work at home & make big \$\$\$." Even trusted friends often unwittingly forward bogus info; mea culpa: I've done it myself. Astrophysics professor Philip Plait, in his 2002 book *Bad Astronomy: Misconceptions and Misuses Revealed, from Astrology to the Moon Landing "Hoax,"* noted that an Internet search for "Apollo moon hoax" netted almost 700 websites, and that there were also several books and videos available, all adamantly claiming that no man has ever set foot on the moon; polls show 25+ million Americans have doubts about a genuine moon landing. No wonder Plait called the Internet the "web of a million lies." My sentiments exactly. Not that there aren't plenty of excellent, reliable sites, but it's not always quite as easy to sort wheat from chaff as my sister's "guesswork and crosschecking" would suggest.

Say, for instance, someone who inclines towards conspiracy theories, distrusts government, and has only average science literacy (i.e., not much) sees the Fox Television pro-moon-hoax documentary described in *Bad Astronomy* and buys into it. Our hero subsequently finds hundreds of tantalizing pro-hoax websites. Since he believes NASA is *the source of the fraud*, he isn't going to trust its official website, or much on any other site that supports it, because they're all obviously in on the conspiracy together.

In recent months, enkindled by TBS founder Gary Posner's articles expressing his skepticism about manmade global warming, I felt I owed it to myself to investigate

both sides of the debate in depth. It simply hadn't occurred to me before that it was necessary. I can understand creationists, whose religion requires them to believe the Earth is only a few thousand years old, considering the claims of 400,000+-year-old Vostok ice cores to be an obvious deceit. But having no cherished religious, political, or economics theories whose validity is threatened by the concept of manmade climate change, I saw no reason to question the consensus opinion of the vast majority of reputable climate scientists.

Nobody in his right mind *wants* the devastating consequences of runaway global warming, manmade or otherwise, but, to quote British Royal Astronomer Sir Fred Hoyle, "I don't like the situation any better than you do, but I see no possible advantage to deceiving myself" (and to quote Mario Puzo in *The Godfather*: "Mr. Corleone is a man who insists on hearing bad news at once" — my kinda guy, at least epistemologically speaking). However, I admire Gary Posner tremendously and know him to be a man of great intelligence, integrity, and scientific acumen. That, coupled with numerous meteorologists and a smattering of respectable scientists who dispute warming, obliged me to take a sabbatical from my math kick and pursue some serious climate research.

What I'm finding in the fascinating 100+-year-old history and science of climatology is an overwhelming case for manmade global warming with dire consequences; if anything, those sounding the alarm are proving way too conservative in their predictions. This has me totally perplexed. Forget the political, financial, and religious implications, and focus strictly on the scientific facts. How could Gary and I be coming up with such diametrically opposed data about average annual global temperatures, atmospheric-gas concentrations, polar-ice and permafrost melting, etc.? Granted neither one of us is personally measuring CO₂ levels or sampling temperatures in thousands of places all over the world. But how could the raw facts we obtain from those who are, let alone the scientific inferences drawn from them, be so divergent?

Then it dawned on me that, being a techno-dinosaur, my idea of research is to physically go to my local library and check out a bunch of DVDs by the likes of National Geographic and PBS and books by internationally renowned journalists and scientists with Ph.D.s in physics,

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Snippets

From Jonathan Leaf of the American Council on Science and Health (ACSH):

Yesterday the world learned that Dr. Andrew Wakefield is a fraud. *British Medical Journal* released the results of its investigation documenting the premeditation of Wakefield and his lawyer as co-conspirators who were attempting to extort compensation from vaccine makers. The investigators found that Dr. Wakefield concocted his findings to aid his attorney-partner's lawsuits. He was paid \$675,000 for this.

The exposure of Dr. Wakefield's fakery is good news for the cause of public health, and ACSH is gratified that accounts of his deceptions are being prominently featured in mainstream media outlets like the *Today Show* and *Good Morning America*.

Back in 1998, a paper by Dr. Wakefield appeared in *The Lancet* claiming that autism had been caused by childhood vaccination with the MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine. Dr. Wakefield's research soon attracted the support of thousands of people, including a number of Hollywood celebrities and quite a few science reporters. The hysteria about the alleged dangers of vaccines took hold, and many parents refused to have their children vaccinated, especially in the UK.

In the ensuing years, researchers intent on reproducing his study found that they could not come up with the same results. Then last year, *The Lancet* formally disavowed his article, and Dr. Wakefield's medical license was revoked by British authorities.

Yet the damage has been done. In the United Kingdom, four children died because of a needless outbreak of measles that followed directly on plummeting rates of vaccination, notes ACSH trustee, vaccine researcher and leading pediatrician Dr. Paul Offit.

ACSH's Dr. Gilbert Ross observes: "No matter what Dr. Wakefield's motives were, the significance from the point of view of public health is the same: there never was any link between vaccines and autism. I hold *The Lancet* and its editor-in-chief, Robert Horton, responsible to some degree for his ill-considered decision to publish Wakefield's bogus study."

Last February ACSH's Dr. Elizabeth Whelan made this same point in the pages of the *New York Post*, commenting, "[M]ore than 1,000 children have died from H1N1 flu over the last year — numbers that would surely be smaller had not so many parents been frightened away from getting flu shots by the general Wakefield-induced paranoia over vaccines. In other words, a medical journal triggered a chain of events that led to preventable disease — and some child deaths."

Still, correcting the record is important. As Dr. Ross points out, even now Wakefield's website has thousands of devoted adherents.

(ACSH's *HealthFactsAndFears.com*, January 6)

Note: Though not actively involved with its work, TBS's Gary Posner has been a Science Advisor to ACSH since 1997.

You may still see those miraculous bracelets and pendants advertised, perhaps with celebrity endorsements. But in response to pressure from law enforcement, the Power Balance company has publicly written, "We admit that there is no credible scientific evidence that supports our claims," and has agreed to give refunds to any customers who feel they were cheated.

(A.P. via *Tampa Tribune*, Jan. 5)

Skeptics have long pointed out that the astrological calendar is now way out of whack due to the earth's wobbly axis of rotation (precession). But per this article, the Internet was recently set "afire" by comments to this effect from Parke Kunkle, an astronomy instructor at Minneapolis Community and Technical College. In creating his new calendar, "I defined the zodiac by the constellations that are [now] in the background when you look at where the sun, moon and stars are." And he even needed to create a new zodiac sign. So someone who thinks he or she was born under one sign, and is therefore "compassionate and imaginative," may — horror of horrors — actually instead be "witty and clever"!

(McClatchy-Tribune via *Tampa Tribune*, Jan. 11)

Another constituency was recently set aflame, so to speak: the witches in Romania. Beginning this year, they now have to pay income tax, prompting a dozen of them to congregate at the Danube River to cast spells on government officials so that, in the words of one, "evil will befall them." Queen witch Brataru Buzea, once imprisoned during Nicolae Ceausescu's repressive reign, said she planned to cast a spell using what this article describes as "a particularly effective concoction of cat excrement and a dead dog." Buzea confidently cackled, "My curses always work!"

(A.P. via *Venice Herald-Tribune*, Jan. 6)



"This spell isn't for a Pisces. He's that new sign — I think it's Feces."

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

“Reliability of Data and Conclusions” (from page 3)

chemistry, and biology, all with lengthy endnotes and bibliographies; augmented with the daily newspaper, print versions of *Time* and *National Geographic* magazines, and NPR news radio. Whereas Gary is a very tech-savvy computer expert, with all the latest gadgetry, cable TV, and super-fast Internet connectivity, and most likely gets the bulk of his climate-change info directly from Internet news and science sites, the blogosphere, cable TV news (he’s recommended Fox News to me so it’s presumably a favorite whereas I’m guessing he eschews NPR), and political talk-show commentary. (Of course, if, like the moon-landing “hoax,” one chooses to believe in a climate-change “hoax” and that NASA is *the source of the fraud*, then one won’t be inclined to believe NASA’s climate scientists or any of the other thousands of scientists the world over who support their data and conclusions, will one? Whereas I don’t respect or trust the manmade-global-warming contrarianism of politicians, preachers, and pundits who teach defenseless children that the Earth is no more than 6,000 years old and that magical, paranormal thinking/wishing can overcome the laws of physics and, indeed, of logic itself.)

My county library system has a fair amount of global-warming-denial literature. I guess that because I don’t listen to fundamentalist-Christian radio or cable-TV political shows whose hosts openly bash evolution and a geologically old Earth, I’m shocked by the sophomoric level of scientific “reasoning” (doubtless dumbed down to appeal to a virulently anti-science creationist political base), ad-hominem vitriol, and near-*a-priori* assumption that global-warming proponents are pursuing an “anti-energy, anti-capitalist, pro-government agenda” and comprise “unscrupulous scientists who see this scare as their gravy train to federal grants and foundation money, and resort to dirty tricks, smear campaigns, and outright lies,”* whereas, of course, creationists, old-Earth deniers, and fossil-fuel-industry lobbyists would never do any of these nefarious things (you trust everything BP says, don’t you?). (**Red Hot Lies: How Global Warming Alarmists Use Threats, Fraud, and Deception to Keep You Misinformed*, by Christopher C. Horner, 2008; as an indicator of its level of scientific rigor, “carbon dioxide” isn’t even an entry in the index.)

Who’s right? On our way to another Milankovitch-cycle ice age or another Cretaceous? I would hope civilized debate between two adults relentlessly dedicated to truth (no matter how unpleasant that truth might be or how violently it collides with what we have previously thought and would still prefer to think) that targets just the reliability of the data, for starters, would help settle the dispute. But, failing that, I suspect we’ll find out sooner or

later from Nature itself. I would love for Gary to be right and me wrong. We humans have more than enough problems without adding rapid climate change to them.

Editor’s note: When asserting facts in my writings about manmade global warming (MMGW), I have cited my references — bloggers, TV political commentators and Fox News have not been among them. As for whether or not I am “right,” I have acknowledged that MMGW may be absolutely true. My position is simply that subjecting MMGW claims to critical analysis does not warrant “Holocaust denier” epithets from Ellen Goodman, Al Gore and the rest.

Speaking to Valerie’s point in the third sentence of her concluding paragraph, the edited letter below is from someone who had petitioned his scientific organization for just such a debate. (Let me make clear that I have never called MMGW a “scam” or “fraud.”) The writer is one of the following (answer on page 6):

- a) A “blogosphere” blowhard
- b) A pompous cable news “talking head”
- c) An unfair and unbalanced Fox News Channel reporter
- d) None of the above

When I first joined the American Physical Society sixty-seven years ago it was much smaller ... and as yet uncorrupted by the money flood (a threat against which Dwight Eisenhower warned a half-century ago). Indeed, the choice of physics as a profession was then a guarantor of a life of poverty. ... As recently as thirty-five years ago, when I chaired the first APS study of a contentious social/scientific issue, The Reactor Safety Study, though there were zealots aplenty on the outside there was no hint of inordinate pressure on us as physicists. We were therefore able to produce what I believe was and is an honest appraisal of the situation at that time.

How different it is now ... and the money flood has become the *raison d’être* of much physics research, the vital sustenance of much more, and it provides the support for untold numbers of professional jobs.

It is of course, the global warming scam, with the (literally) trillions of dollars driving it, that has corrupted so many scientists, and has carried APS before it like a rogue wave. It is the greatest and most successful pseudoscientific fraud I have seen in my long life as a physicist.

About a year ago a few of us sent an e-mail on the subject to a fraction of the membership. APS ignored the issues, but the then President immediately launched a hostile investigation of where we got the e-mail addresses. In its better days, APS used to encourage discussion of important issues, and indeed the Constitution cites that as its principal purpose. No more. Everything that has been done in the last year has been designed to silence debate.

The appallingly tendentious APS statement on Climate Change was apparently written in a hurry by a few people over lunch, and is certainly not representative of the

(continued on page 6)

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

"Reliability of Data" (from p. 5)

talents of APS members as I have long known them. So a few of us petitioned the Council to reconsider it. One of the outstanding marks of (in)distinction in the Statement was the poison word "incontrovertible," which describes few items in physics, certainly not this one. In response APS appointed a secret committee that never met, never troubled to speak to any skeptics, yet endorsed the Statement in its entirety. ... The original Statement, which still stands as the APS position, also contains what I consider pompous and asinine advice to all world governments, as if the APS were master of the universe. ... [T]hese are serious matters involving vast fractions of our national substance, and the reputation of the Society as a scientific society is at stake.

[A few of us] collected the necessary 200+ signatures to bring to the Council a proposal for a Topical Group on Climate Science, thinking that open discussion of the scientific issues, in the best tradition of physics, would be beneficial to all, and also a contribution to the nation. I might note that it was not easy to collect the signatures, since you denied us the use of the APS membership list.

To our amazement, Constitution be damned, you declined to accept our petition. ... The entire purpose of [your action in response] was to avoid your constitutional responsibility to take our petition to the Council.

As of now you have formed still another secret and stacked committee to organize your own TG [on this issue], simply ignoring our lawful petition.

I do feel the need to add one note, and this is conjecture, since it is always risky to discuss other people's motives. This scheming at APS HQ is so bizarre that there cannot be a simple explanation for it. ... I think it is the money, exactly what Eisenhower warned about a half-century ago. There are indeed trillions of dollars involved, to say nothing of the fame and glory (and frequent trips to exotic islands) that go with being a member of the club. ... [The "ClimateGate" e-mail scandal is] a fraud on a scale I have never seen, and I lack the words to describe its enormity ... When Penn State absolved Mike Mann of wrongdoing ... and the University of East Anglia did the same for Phil Jones, they cannot have been unaware of the financial penalty for doing otherwise. ... Since I am no philosopher, I'm not going to explore at just which point enlightened self-interest crosses the line into corruption, but a careful reading of the ClimateGate releases makes it clear that this is not an academic question.

I want no part of it, so please accept my resignation.

The answer is: D.

That was from Harold Lewis' October 6, 2010, letter of resignation to APS President Curtis G. Callan, Jr., of Princeton University, which can be found on the London Telegraph's Website (and elsewhere on the Internet). Lewis is emeritus professor of physics and former chairman of the physics department at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He was chairman of APS's study on Nuclear Reactor Safety, a former member of the Defense Science Board, and former chairman of DSB's Technology Panel and of its study on Nuclear Winter.

Tampa Bay Skeptics T-Shirts

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."



“Not smoke and mirrors . . .” (from page 1)

pages under discussion (including his transitional page), Renier — whose attorney mockingly referred to Merrell’s sharp, full-color exhibits as “cotton candy” — provided barely legible black-and-white photocopies. In Exhibit 6 (page 1 inset), the “Sherlock” oval/link appears first, Renier’s second (followed by words she found objectionable), and “G and P” third. In Merrell’s counter-testimony, he maintained that Renier’s oval/link *always* displayed first, *always* properly linked to her own home page, and *never* contained unflattering language. He said that Renier obtained her exhibit’s language from his *old* amindformurder.com site, but that on this *new* transitional page he had been careful to use *Renier’s own description of herself*, which he had appropriated from her Website’s own source code.

Merrell also pointed out several other differences between Exhibit 6 and what he alleged had been the true appearance of that transitional page, including excessive space between the first and second ovals and striking variations in the lightness/darkness of the ovals and the blocks of text. Merrell, whose professional expertise includes digital imagery, told the judge — and Renier offered no rebuttal — that this exhibit appears to be the result of a cut-and-paste “scissors” job, followed by several generations of photocopying in a possible attempt to obscure the evidence of such.

Each of Renier’s exhibits contains a horizontal line about two inches from the top of the page (apparently a photocopier artifact). In Exhibit 6, this line is visible across the upper third of the top oval. However, unnoticed by Merrell or Cuellar (or Merrell’s wife and other sister, who had also made the cross-country trip to Virginia), until days after Court adjourned, is another line (see arrow). If everything below the first oval were to be raised on the page such that the top of the second oval touched that line, the spacing between the three ovals would then be precisely equal, as Merrell testified it was on the actual Web page. Also unappreciated until later is the flattening of the bottom of the first oval, which has aroused further suspicion in his and his sister’s minds

(though not proof) of deliberate doctoring.

Merrell also asserted that it was Renier, not himself, who had continued to post prohibited material on the Web. He provided exhibits showing six pages, containing critical references to him, that were still accessible on her site to anyone who either knew their direct Web address (URL) or did a search-engine query for “John Merrell” (Renier had merely removed the visible links to those pages).

And though in 2009 he had eventually let this slide, Merrell presented a page, which had appeared on Renier’s site from 2007 until the summer of 2010, that he now told the judge “clearly shows Ms. Renier lied to this Court.” It contained a passage describing Merrell as “a particularly vicious, vindictive, and vexing professional skeptic.” In her 2009 response to Merrell’s first raising of this matter, Renier had written to the Court, “This is untrue. I have never put anything like that on my website. Although I do agree that most of those words fit John Merrell, I would have probably left out the word ‘professional.’”

As for his commentarybysherlock.com site, Renier complained that it remains loaded with material about her FBI-related missing-airplane case (see last issue and Spring 2010), which occupies chapter 16 of her book. She testified that because this case was *not* covered in chapters 17 and 18, Merrell’s site was prohibited (as explained on page 1) from discussing it. However, during a hiatus in the proceedings, Merrell and his wife photocopied those two chapters, highlighted their several references to the missing-plane case, and later presented those pages to the Court.

At press time, the judge, after nearly three months, has yet to render a decision. “I would like to think that this long delay means that he is reevaluating his previous bankruptcy ruling, which was so unjust,” Roxie Cuellar tells *TBS Report*. “But it is so hard to know what may be going on.” What we do know is that Noreen Renier has a way of prevailing in court, though, this time, that would seem to require paranormal intervention. Stay tuned here, and via our Website, for the climactic outcome.

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Make TBS-only checks payable to “Tampa Bay Skeptics” and CFI checks payable to “Center For Inquiry Tampa Bay” and mail to:

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, MARCH 26
11:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.
ROOM 108

JAN KAMANIS PLATT REGIONAL LIBRARY
3910 S. MANHATTAN AVENUE, TAMPA
 (between Dale Mabry Hwy. and West Shore Blvd.,
 ½ block south of W. Euclid Ave.)

Featured: Retired physicist David Oliver on "Global
 Warming," Open Forum, and other fun stuff

Followed by optional lunch at a local restaurant

"Chairman's Corner" (from p. 2)

working for Naval Intelligence and that his records
 have been altered. When one engages in "special
 pleading" such as this, nothing can be disproved: No
 dinosaur bones with humans? That's easy! God
 destroyed the evidence to fool us!

Scientologists are free to believe whatever they
 want. Christians believe that a human walked on water
 and changed the physical chemistry of water into wine
 for the benefit of a bridegroom. Mormons believe
 Joseph Smith discovered golden tablets setting forth a
 heretofore unknown history of Jesus in America. What
 happened to the tablets? Oops, I seem to have mis-
 placed them. Muslims, Hindus and Jews also believe
 in some aspect of the paranormal based on faith alone.

But when Scientology makes specific assertions
 about the physical world, they demand the same
 degree of scrutiny as do any other religion's claims.



at CFI Tampa Bay (c/o R. O'Keefe)
 4011 S. Manhattan Ave. #139
 Tampa, Florida 33611-1277



A Special Interest Group of the



Visit TBS's Website

www.tampabayskeptics.org



If for no other reason, check out the
 Web versions of our *TBS Report* articles
 for their related links and for the occa-
 sional graphics not present in our printed
 newsletters due to space constraints.

And if you have downloaded a QR
 Code reader app for your smartphone,
 you can access our Website by scanning the above code.

Also, 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 suc-
 cessfully produce proof of paranormal powers for an indepen-
 dent authority, in accordance with the rules at 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

Center for Inquiry Tampa Bay (of which Tampa Bay
 Skeptics is a Special Interest Group) offers an opportunity
 to join other reasoning people in working for positive change
 in society. CFI Tampa Bay sponsors social events for free-
 thinkers as well as intellectual programming, and assists
 with campus outreach.

For more information on upcoming CFI Tampa Bay
 events, visit their website (www.CenterForInquiry.net/Tampa) or contact them by U.S. mail (c/o Rick O'Keefe,
 4011 S. Manhattan Ave. #139, Tampa, FL 33611) or e-mail
 (Tampa@CenterForInquiry.net).

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Autism/Vaccination Link
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 (see page 4)