



Shadow of a Doubt

THE MONTHLY CALENDAR OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA SKEPTICS

September, 1999

Inquiry Or Inquisition?

The Religious Right's War on American Values, Intellectual Freedom and Common Sense

Rob Boston, Assistant Director of Communications, Americans United for Separation of Church and State

In this speech, Robert Boston of Americans United for Separation of Church and State will expose the threat to intellectual freedom and open inquiry posed by the Religious Right. He will explain how the Religious Right is working to introduce creationism into public schools, how these organizations rely on faulty logic to promote their positions, explain what groups like the Christian Coalition are doing in the political arena and outline strategies skeptics can use to defend reason and keep public education and government free from sectarian control.

Saturday, September 11, 2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

**Bethesda Library
7400 Arlington Road
Bethesda, Maryland**

Free Admission

All Welcome - Members and Nonmembers

1999-2000 Meeting Schedule

Welcome back from summer. As you get back into the groove of working, school, and preparing for winter, don't forget about NCAS. We have a full schedule this year, including two events in September and a workshop in October. Avoid the embarrassment of forgetting to renew your membership and renew today. The schedule for this year is as follows:

September 11, 1999	September 25, 1999*	October 16, 1999*	November 13, 1999
December 11, 1999	January 8, 2000	February 12, 2000	March 11, 2000
April 8, 2000	May 20, 2000	June 10, 2000	

*-Meetings NOT at Bethesda Library. All others at Bethesda Library, Arlington Road, Bethesda

Mathemagics

Dr. Arthur Benjamin, Professor of mathematics at Harvey Mudd College and professional magician, is faster than a speeding calculator! This special meeting of NCAS on September 25 at 4pm will be in Skinner 0200 at the University of Maryland. See separate flyer describing this meeting.

Ghostbusting 101

Be ready for Halloween this year by attending NCAS' October 16 workshop on Ghost hunting at the Best Western Leesburg Dulles. See separate flyer describing this meeting. The advance registration fee is only \$25 and advance registration closes September 25.

Skeptical Fox

Given the Fox network's love of paranormal schlock TV, the following message from Michael Shermer of the Skeptics Society seems truly amazing. When he returned from vacation, a message from Fox Family Channel said they had decided to pick up the skeptic television series. They liked the idea and set up a meeting with the production company that produced 200 episodes of the paranormal program, SIGHTINGS. That meeting went well (these guys are real pros and, after 200 paranormal shows they are also hard-core skeptics), so they contracted for a pilot, which was made. They liked the pilot and just contracted to produce 6 more hours of programs to begin airing in October.

The Stand Up Skeptic

I consulted a Herbal Acupuncturist. He's like a regular acupuncturist, except he uses pine needles.

My wife can bend metal with her thoughts. She thinks the car is about three feet narrower than it is.

The Origins of the Specious - The roots of Creationism

Gullibles Travels - Journeys through the world of parapsychology.

Across The World in 80-Days - A flat earthers adventure.

Much Ado About Nothing - The Homeopathy Story

File under *Urban Legends* the story of the man who got a Viagra pill stuck in his throat and ended up with a stiff neck!

-- If you like any of these, more can be found at <http://www.pathcom.com/~drewh/> by Drew Henderson



NCAS - The National Capital Area Skeptics Presents

GHOSTBUSTING 101

The 1999 Fall Workshop

October 16, 1999

Best Western Leesburg Dulles, Leesburg, VA

When things go bump in the night, what's a scientist to do?

Just in time for Hallowe'en, the National Capital Area Skeptics presents a full-day program that examines investigations of the spirit realm, from the 19th century to present day. The sessions offer diverse viewpoints on attempts to apply science and technology in the assessment of age-old traditions and beliefs.

Session highlights include:

- "If the spirits are willing..." Chip Denman will give a brief history of seances and mediums and those who investigated them during the heyday of the Spiritualist movement. He is a statistician at the University of Maryland where he teaches "Science/Pseudoscience" for the University Honors Program, and past-president of NCAS.
- "Ghosts and electromagnetic anomalies" Joe Holbert conducts "ghost tours" in Leesburg, Virginia, and investigates the possibility that ghosts are associated with very low-level electromagnetic fields. He will describe his personal research.
- "Modern mediums and psychic readings" Spiritualism lives on today in such mediums as James Van Praagh, best-selling author of Talking to Heaven, and thousands of lesser known "psychic readers." Kari Coleman will discuss her personal experiences and methods used in giving readings. She is an actress whose skeptical writings have been published by the James Randi Educational Foundation.
- "High tech communications with the hereafter: Ghost photos, ghost detectors, electronic-voice phenomena, and phone calls from the dead." Dr. Michael Epstein will present an overview of technological efforts to record evidence of spirits. He is a chemist at NIST, a former vice president of NCAS, a recent recipient of an award for excellence in education, which promotes skeptical thinking.

Registration

\$25 if postmarked by September 25, 1999

\$30 after September 25, 1999

Send registration to:

Ghostbusting 101

NCAS

Workshop

• 9am - 5pm, Saturday, October 16, 1999

• Best Western Leesburg Dulles

726 East Market Street

Leesburg VA 20176

(703) 777-9400

PO Box 8428

Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

- Registration includes am and pm breaks plus handouts. (Note, lunch is not included with the workshop registration. Several restaurants are near hotel.)

All Welcome - Members and Nonmembers

For additional information call NCAS at 301-587-3827 or send email to ncas@ncas.org.



The National Capital Area Skeptics, the University of Maryland Honors Program and Computer Science Department presents



Mathemagics: The Art of Mental Calculating

Dr. Arthur Benjamin, Professor of mathematics at Harvey Mudd College and professional magician, is faster than a speeding calculator!

Saturday, September 25, 1999, 4-5 pm

0200 Skinner Hall, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland

Dr. Benjamin, the world's foremost lightning calculator can perform his amazing mental feats faster than it can be done on a calculator! A mathematics professor at Harvey Mudd College, he has performed his special brand of magic live all over the country and on numerous TV talk shows. He has been the subject of investigation by a cognitive psychologist at Carnegie Mellon University and is featured in a book called "The Great Mental Calculators: The Psychology, Methods, and Lives of Calculating Prodigies."

In his highly entertaining and interactive show, Dr. Benjamin will perform such feats as:

- Squaring 2-digit, 3-digit and 4-digit numbers.
- Memorizing long strings of numbers.
- Multiplying two different 2-digit, 3-digit, 4-digit and even 5-digit numbers.
- Magic squares and other mathematical oddities
- Calculating square and cube roots.
- A host of mathematical tricks that will entertain and amaze.
- Adding long columns of numbers.

