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Nua Blather: Orbiting Fur-Balls

From: Dave Walsh <dave@nua.ie>
Date: Fri, 27 Mar 1998 17:42:47 +0000
Fwd Date: Fri, 27 Mar 1998 18:23:11 -0500
Subject: Nua Blather: Orbiting Fur-Balls

NUA BLATHER NUA BLATHER NUA BLATHER
Weekly free email of Dogma Destruction,
Fortean and High Weirdness

By Daev Walsh Email: blather@nua.ie
Web: <http://www.nua.ie/blather/>

March 27th 1998 Published By: Nua Limited Vol 1. No. 46

A NEW LIFE AWAITS YOU IN THE OFF-WORLD COLONIES

On Saturday 14th March, this Blatherskite was conversing with the Church of Subgenius's Rev. Nickie Deathchick (<http://www.subgenius.com>) whilst attending an open-house reception in the Fringeware Store (Austin, Texas <http://www.fringeware.com>). Suddenly, a representative of a company calling themselves 'Celestis' (<http://www.celestis.com>) was thrust upon us. In case you don't know, Houston based Celestis were responsible for last year launching into space the ashes of Star Trek creator Gene Roddenberry (<http://www.philosophysphere.com>), and philosopher and scientist Timothy Leary (<http://www.leary.com>). This Celestis representative (who I shall refrain from naming) filled us in on the basic idea of their latest project - but asked us to keep mum until he contacted us with further details, as this information was not yet public knowledge. We agreed (wondering why he had told us at all). . . but on the following Tuesday, March 17th, the Daily Telegraph (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk>) ran a story concerning this 'secret' information. As this story quotes David Goldstein of Encounter 2001, the consortium of which Celestis is a part, I can only assume that it involved an officially endorsed press release, and that I am at liberty to Blather away to my heart's content.

Encounter 2001 has booked space upon an Ariane rocket (<http://www.esrin.esa.it/>) to be launched from French Guiana in 2001 (not on their own craft as hinted by the Telegraph) and plan to launch the DNA of some 4.5 million people, in the form of hair, into space for about \$50 a head (pun intended). The Telegraph records Goldstein saying 'in theory at least, an alien race could work out what we are made of from the hair samples on the spaceship, and possibly recreate human life'.

This is pretty much the the party line conveyed to Rev. Deathchick and myself. Being given to idle wonder about such matters, I immediately recalled a lecture which I had the good fortune to attend at last year's Fortean Times UnConvention, given by Dr. Mark Biddiss on 'The Voyager Tapes' (<http://www.fringeware.com/hell/barry/unconv97/97voyage.html>).

Biddiss argued the foolishness of bunging off data concerning our existence into the cosmos, under the assumption that the space brothers and sisters (if they exist) are benevolent souls who won't use the information in any way harmful to our existence. In essence, he likened the voyager mission to leaving the house keys swinging on the garden gate. I told the Celestis fellow this, and informed him that I could happily liken his behaviour to signing over the deeds to the property to the first passer-by who takes a fancy to our two-bit planet. Nonchalant was he, and made the only too reasonable point that *people will buy it*. And, you know, he's only too right.

Still, I saw fit to interrogate him on how Celestis intend to explain the practical use of shoving our DNA into the big empty yonder, to which there was no useful reply. . . other than 'well, why not?'. Why not, indeed?

The prospect of orbiting fur-balls has me rather concerned, I must admit. . .

WHY ARE WE WAITING?

Is disillusionment rife amongst the congregation of God's Salvation Church, in Garland, Texas? The 150-member Taiwanese sect had predicted that 'God' would make an appearance on television Channel 18 at 12:01 on Wednesday 25th to announce his imminent arrival on earth (chalked down for 10am on March 31st). And contrary to media excitement about the affair, there were no suicides, and their leader, Hon-Ming Chen, was quite happy to say everyone could now discount his predictions, has he was wrong.

Reuters quoted Chen as saying, 'Since God's appearance on television has not been realised, you can take what we have preached as nonsense, I would rather you don't believe what I say any more'. I would propose that his followers are *less* than impressed, despite Chen claiming that he still maintains a hotline to 'God', and that the aforementioned deity will be back next year to save hundreds of millions of humans from the holocaust. I can hardly wait. But, at least they didn't all do a 'Heaven's Gate' on us (a year ago now!) (http://dailynews.yahoo.com/headlines/human_interest/oddly_enough/story.html?s=z/reuters/980326/odd/stories/sect_1.html)

Remember to keep an eye out for God next Tuesday.

CANS OF RED HERRINGS, KETTLES OF RAGWORMS

In last week's Blather (<http://www.nua.ie/blather/archives/issue1no45.html>), I slung in a story gleaned from the The (London) Times of November 2nd 1945, concerning a kangaroo making off with a farmers waistcoat and a five pound note. I threw in this tale from sheer whimsy and devilment, and I'm glad to admit that I elicited several passionate responses from Blather's readers.

His Highness, Duke of Mendoza (a.k.a. Pilaurice D. Murghphall):

'O yeah. Highly suspect. Whale tumour, one of a whole bunch of animal-revenge folk stories. See Jan Harold Brunvand, "The Mexican Pet" (Penguin 1986), pp. 24-5. Summary:

The Sydney Herald of 22 May 1983 had a version of this story (based on accounts from three readers) that had a passport, not an old white fiver, being stolen from a 'roo that tourists had run down & propped up with a jacket on, for a photie. A US version has the Kingston Trio losing their passports in this way to a reviving 'roo that was hit by their vehicle. There is a US native variant involving a placid bear in Yellowstone National Park. Mother puts babe in arms of bear for snapshot, bear walks off into woods with babby. Oop-a. And then there's the shot but undead deer with the hunter's rifle in its antlers.'

Martin Herbaty relates that 'this one's an old urban legend, reported from various places and times, coming up again every tourist season, usually involving a kangaroo - or, in Africa, an antelope, ostrich or even a lion - mistaken for roadkill, dressed up for a family photo and fleeing with money, passports and tickets of the unfortunate tourists'.

As Pat O'Halloran asks, why would an Australian have a 5 pound note? Pat, bear in mind that the newspaper report, however disputable, was printed in 1945. As far as I am aware, Australia didn't change to Dollars until 1966.

(<http://www.vision.net.au/~pwood/feb97.html>)

Dave (daev) Walsh
27th March 1998

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NUA : Internet Consultancy & Developer <http://www.nua.ie/>
Dave Walsh <daev@nua.ie> Tel: +353-1-676-8996 Fax: +353-1-661-3932
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