

The REALL News

The official newsletter of the Rational Examination Association of Lincoln Land

"It's a very dangerous thing to believe in nonsense." — James Randi

Volume 8, Number 5

May 2000

Another Visit to a Holistic Health Fair

by David Bloomberg

Last June, I wrote about my visit to a holistic health fair here in Springfield. Last month I went to another one (April 2, Northfield Center). While many people and products were different, the phrase, "The more things change, the more they stay the same" is the best way to describe it.

I didn't stick out so obviously at this fair – there were a lot more men than I'd seen at the previous one, both selling and buying. And the set-up wasn't so obviously biased towards pulling in women. Perhaps they realized that they were missing out on 50% of the market.

I didn't have the time or energy to talk to all of these folks again, so I mostly just picked up flyers and "information" sheets. I did talk more in-depth to one guy, so I'll start with what he and his pamphlets had to say.

The first booth on the left as people entered the fair was selling "chi machines." I avoided the salesman the first time, but he caught me on my way out. He began with a damned good pitch – if true. He said the machine cures cancer. No hemming and hawing. No roundabout ways of implying it. He said it straight out. Frankly, I'm pretty sure making a claim like that is actionable if he hasn't proved it and I'm investigating the possibility. But for now, let's just have a look at what he said.

When he claimed the machine cured cancer, he said he had prostate cancer, and had gone to chiropractors and other folks but nothing could be done until he got this wonderful machine. How did he know he had cancer? His PSA level was high. Now, while that is an indication that you might have prostate cancer and should get a biopsy, it is not a definitive diagnosis. The salesman didn't say anything more than that he had a high PSA – I suspect he never had a biopsy and never actually had prostate cancer (there are other causes for a high PSA; for example, some types of exams actually cause PSA levels to elevate).

He and his flyer said the machine works by swaying the spine in a fish-like motion, thus adjusting the spine. It massages the blood vessels and oxygenates the body from the feet, up (I had no idea oxygen came in from the feet). So, in his case, the device oxygenated his prostate and got rid of the cancer. Hmmm.

Oh, and don't worry about exercising – this machine replaces that need. The machine "provides the answer to being healthy without energy loss, body stress or effort." Simply put, if you use this machine, you don't need to exercise.

His flyer indicates that he and the makers of this machine

hold to the original, unscientific chiropractic beliefs. The flyer screams, "80% OF CHRONIC DISEASE PROBLEMS ARE LINKED TO THE SPINE." (Emphasis in original.) An accompanying diagram shows that everything from sore back (reasonable) to asthma (unreasonable) can be improved by adjusting the spine. Among the other problems it can "improve" are low blood pressure, high blood pressure, stomach ulcers, heart disease, diabetes, hemorrhoids, poor stomach function, liver disease, swollen prostate, tonsilitis, cataracts, constipation, varicose veins, hardening of the arteries, etc. It scares me to think that somebody might see a chiropractor or use this machine to treat heart problems or diabetes!

One odd claim in the flyer is that "Lymph fluid in the body exceeds the quantity of blood and one of its functions is to cleanse the bodys [sic] waste." It then goes on to say that there is no "pump" system to move this fluid around the body, but it will be helped by the machine. Well, it's true that there is no "pump" system for lymph fluid – so what? The fluid moves due to muscle movements. And lymph fluid does not remove waste. If they can't get something this simple right, do we really want to trust them to cure cancer?

Oh, and in case you're thinking this is just so much nonsense, have no fear! They proved that it works by taking Kirlian photographs of a person's aura before using the machine and then after using it for 10, 15, and 20 minutes! If that isn't enough proof for anybody, I don't know what is.

Another booth was handing out flyers that could start a fight with the aforementioned seller. They claim "the colon is the largest perpetrator of disease of any organ in the body and is said to be the initiator of 80% of all critical illness." Dangit, I thought the *spine* was responsible for 80% of those problems! These folks seem to like that number, even if they can't agree on which part of the body it refers to.

So, since the colon is so dangerous to us, we need to clean it out regularly with colonic irrigation. I'll spare you the gory details provided in the pamphlet, but suffice it to say that unless

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Purpose

The Rational Examination Association of Lincoln Land is a non-profit educational and scientific organization. It is dedicated to the development of rational thinking and the application of the scientific method toward claims of the paranormal and fringe-science phenomena.

REALL shall conduct research, convene meetings, publish a newsletter, and disseminate information to its members and the general public. Its primary geographic region of coverage is central Illinois.

REALL subscribes to the premise that the scientific method is the most reliable and self-correcting system for obtaining knowledge about the world and universe. REALL does not reject paranormal claims on *a priori* grounds, but rather is committed to objective, though critical, inquiry.

The REALL News is its official newsletter.

Annual Membership Rates: Regular, \$20; student, \$15; family, \$30; patron, \$50 or more; subscription only, \$12.

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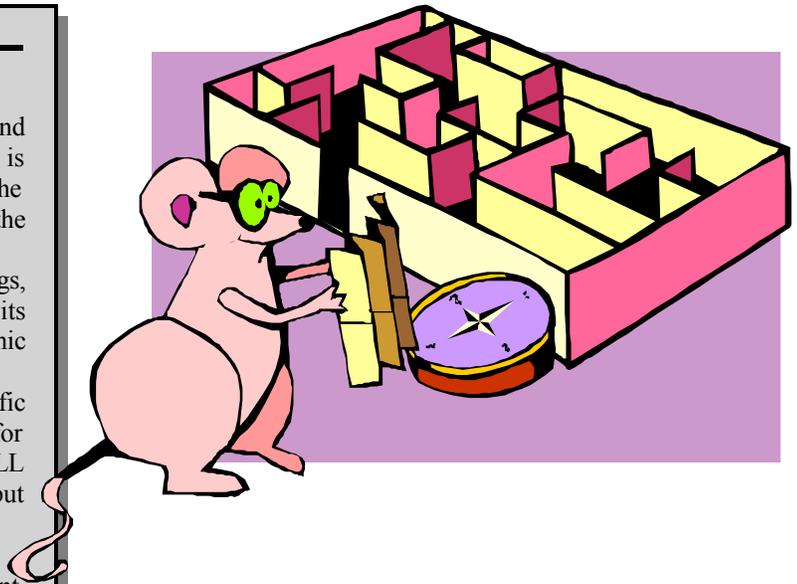
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Predictions

- More Weird Web Sites
- Book Reviews
- Skeptic Music



From the Chairman

David Bloomberg

I'd like to thank Professor Malcolm Levin for his April creation/evolution talk. Malcolm got to the heart of the matter – the difference between the way science and religion are taught and studied, and how well evolution fits into the science mold while creationism does not. Now we just need to get him to change his teaching schedule so he can speak to us more frequently!

May Meeting “Holocaust Revisionism on Trial in London” (Or: When Crackpots Sue Scholars, It Costs Lots of Dollars)

This month, we feature a return of David Gehrig discussing Holocaust deniers. Wait, I know what you're thinking – this must be déjà vu – didn't David just speak on this issue a few months ago? Yes, he did. But since then there was a libel trial in England that revolved around revisionist claims.

Specifically, historical writer David Irving has asserted that the common understanding of the Holocaust is not only wrong, but intentionally fraudulent. He claims there were no gas chambers at Auschwitz, no organized Nazi plans to exterminate Jews, no death order from Hitler, etc. He has either ignored or tried to explain away all the evidence to the contrary.

Deborah Lipstadt, a professor at Emory University in Atlanta, wrote a book on the subject, *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory*. In that book, she called Irving “one of the most dangerous spokesmen” for Holocaust denial. He sued her and her publisher in England for libel.

British libel laws put the burden of proof on the defense,

which means Lipstadt had to prove Irving's version of history was faulty. As ridiculous as his case was, there was always the possibility that Irving could win a technical victory under the peculiarities of British law.

The trial took place over six weeks from January to March 2000. The judge ruled against Irving in no uncertain terms. David Gehrig followed this dramatic trial in detail, and will present the case, its background, a little bit of Auschwitz history, and discuss the implications of the verdict.

I hope to see you there – Tuesday, May 2, at 7:00 in the Lincoln Library.

June Meeting

June brings us to our annual lunch meeting (in part because we can't get the Library due to their annual book sale, and in part just because it's fun!). We will again be playing Skeptic Jeopardy – so don't forget to study up before coming. Time, date, and location to be announced.

Elections

We will also be having our annual elections in June. If you are interested in helping us out as a Board member or in any other way, please let me know! While we of course want everybody to come to the meeting, you don't need to be present if you can't make it and still want to be an officer. Just let me know in advance! ♡

From the Editor

Wally Hartshorn

The month of May is here, and in recent years I have been using this month as an excuse to make resolutions and endeavor to improve myself. January 1 always struck me as a particularly bad time to begin attempting something new. It's the dead of winter, cold, gloomy, and generally not a month that encourages renewed energy and vigor in attempting once again to do things which we've failed to do in the past.

Well, there is an organization called the Society for Creative Anachronism (the SCA). The SCA, in which I've been involved on and off since 1981, is a group that attempts to recreate the better aspects of the Medieval period — feasting, dancing, jousting, etc. The first SCA event was held on the first day of May, so within the group May 1 is celebrated as the start of a new Society year. May 1 seems like a much more appropriate date on which to make resolutions, and so that is what I have been doing in recent years.

This year, I'm going to attempt to have my skeptic-related web sites active again not long after May 1. Of most interest to

REALL members is REALL's web site, www.reall.org. I've fallen far behind in getting issues of The REALL News posted there. Before the month of May is out, I should be caught up and plan to stay current. In addition, I plan on giving the site a make-over sometime this summer. (I know that people read the site, because we've received quite a few e-mails to the editor commenting on – and usually complaining about – articles in old issues of the newsletter.)

In addition, the Skeptic News (www.skepticnews.com) has been dormant since February 10, due to numerous activities in my personal life, as well as working on a significant upgrade to the features of the site. I'll be posting daily updates to that site soon, and am really looking forward to activating the new features!

So, if you avoided making resolutions for January 1 (or if you've already given up on the resolutions you made then), make May 1 your personal New Year's Day. Make some resolutions and give it a shot. If you fail to keep them, you can always point out that it wasn't **really** New Year's Day! ♡

REALLity Check

by David Bloomberg

It's catch-up time again. First, an item that got squeezed out of last month's issue, and then some stuff that I was clipping as that issue went to press, not to mention all the rest of the stuff that I found this past month, which will probably push into next issue!

Sue the Scientists!

"There's a sucker born every minute." That's how **Michio Kaku** of the City University of New York described investors (including some large utilities) in BlackLight Power, Inc. In fact, several scientists have criticized the company for their claims that they have discovered a new form of hydrogen that exists below their ground state as "hydrinos." The process supposedly generates more energy than put into it. Hmmmm....

Well, BlackLight isn't taking these criticisms sitting down. How are they striking back? By showing all of their scientific results and proving their critics wrong? By publishing lots of peer-reviewed papers? By having mainstream scientists replicate the results? Nope. By threatening to sue scientists who speak out against them, according to an article in *Nature* (3/16).

Kaku and several others were sent letters "requesting that they stop making defamatory comments in the press about the company and its president." Oh, but don't worry, the company lawyer says they don't want to stifle debate. Nope. They just want the other side of the debate to shut up, or else.

So far, the scientists who received the letters have not backed down. **Robert Park**, who has a book that mentions these claims, *Voodoo Science*, coming out soon says it is "pure boloney." He also noted, "The issue is whether anybody believes it, and whether people who don't believe it have a right to say they don't believe it."

Apparently, BlackLight doesn't want people to have this right. After all, they are considering a public stock offering this year and the president of the company has accused critics of "trying to destroy our business." Yes, I'm sure that's it. I'm sure these scientists are criticizing the validity of his claims just so they can destroy BlackLight. I'm sure it has nothing to do with them objectively reviewing the available information and coming to a conclusion that he doesn't like.

Not So Healthy, Part 3

This hit the papers just a couple days too late to make it into our last issue. Vitamin C, which I noted last month may clog the arteries when taken in megadoses, has also now been implicated as possibly making cancer worse!

While solid results aren't in yet, the *Chicago Tribune* reported that megadoses of vitamin C may protect tumors from radiation and chemotherapy (3/28). It has been found that cancer cells contain large amounts of the vitamin, which seems to protect those cells from damage.

Another strike against the "it can't hurt" philosophy...

And to further pile on, the *Chicago Tribune*, in a New York Times Wire Service article, noted that a report issued by the In-

stitute of Medicine said there is no evidence that large doses of vitamins C and E (and other antioxidants) prevent chronic diseases (4/11). Indeed, for the first they set upper limits on how much of these a person should take due to toxicity concerns (such as those I've been noting in these pages recently) and noted that most people get enough nutrients from the foods they eat and don't need to take vitamin supplements at all.

Maybe Healthy?

In an example of how these things *should* be done, but so often aren't, the National Institutes of Health is going to conduct a large-scale study on the possible effects of glucosamine and chondroitin supplements, according to a CNN Interactive/WebMD article (4/7). Both of these have been touted as miracle cures for arthritis, but, as usual, the evidence confirming anecdotal accounts has been less than stellar in quality. Indeed, an article in the March 15 *Journal of the American Medical Association* noted bias and exaggeration in past small foreign studies of these supplements.

So if the study shows that these supplements work, they can further look at why and in what dosages. If it doesn't, we can move on. This is the way claims like this should be addressed – with proper study, not anecdotes and whining about the horrible medical establishment, which seems to be the usual way they are handled.

Even with these, though, the article notes that there can be detrimental side effects. Chondroitin is molecularly similar to a blood-thinner, and so generally shouldn't be taken at the same time. Glucosamine is a sugar and may affect diabetics. Also, glucosamine is made from shellfish, and those with shellfish allergies should avoid the supplements.

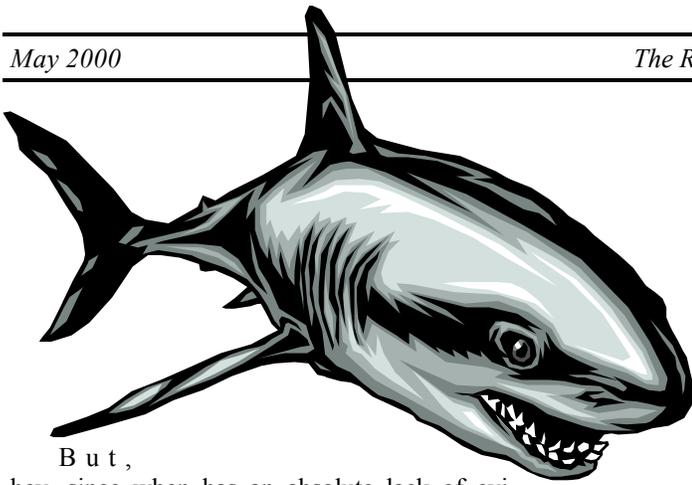
Biting Commentary

Scientists have known for a while that, contrary to popular opinion promoted by supplement hucksters, sharks do indeed get cancer. Those who sell shark cartilage pills as a way to prevent cancer, however, have done an admirable job of ignoring this fact. At least until now.

The AP and CBS HealthWatch (4/7) both reported on a paper presented at the American Association for Cancer Research meeting discussing 40 cases of tumors found in sharks and their cousins. The presenter also noted that most of these cases have been known to scientists for years.

One biologist noted, "I don't think there is any benefit to buying shark cartilage and eating it, any more than I think that eating a rabbit will make me run faster."

Of course, cartilage proponents acted like this was no big deal, claiming that cancer is less common in sharks than in other creatures – yet they don't have any actual evidence to back up this claim as no systematic study has ever been done. And, of course, there is no research supporting the claim that shark cartilage can prevent cancer. In fact, a 1998 study showed that it was ineffective in those who already have cancer (a larger study will begin this year on terminally ill cancer patients).



But, hey, since when has an absolute lack of evidence stopped folks like this from promoting their miracle cures?

Pulling Out All the Stops

In the “you’ve got to be kidding” department, we look at a story that has been dragged through the press for months, but with a special twist for us. **Elian Gonzalez**, the 6-year-old Cuban boy who has been the subject of so much debate, finally managed to make it into *The REALL News*.

CNN reported that his Miami relatives claimed there was an image of the **Virgin Mary** in a mirror in their home (3/28). This, they said, proves that he is blessed and should not be returned to Cuba. Well, I can’t imagine how the courts could possibly rule against them with this staggering piece of evidence on their side!

A spokesman for the family claimed Elian had seen the image since arriving in the U.S. His cousin, however, said she only began to see it recently. But there was another Mary sighting before – in the window of a nearby bank. She apparently popped up all over to show her support of Elian. Alas, while the family allowed a cameraman to videotape the image, all he got was a “blue reflection” in the mirror.

Good Thing Dead People Can’t Sue

Also in the “you’ve got to be kidding” department, there was an announcement by English Rose Press that “psychic medium” **Christine Toomey** has released a new book, *In Her Own Words – The After Death Journal of Princess Diana* (4/13). Yes, that’s right, she claims she was “contacted spiritually” by Diana herself just hours after her death. Diana, it seems, wanted Toomey to tell the world about heaven and her royal life.

But wait, there’s more. Toomey’s next book will be, *Wake Up! You’re Not Dead ... Yet! An After Death Dialogue with Chris Farley*.

Seems that Ms. Toomey has been a busy woman. I swear, if that had been released 12 days earlier, I’d have bet good money that it was a joke. Now, I wonder if Toomey will be laughing all the way to the bank.

Whatever

Ellen Goodman, a columnist for the *Boston Globe* whose articles also appear in the *State Journal-Register*, wrote about tolerance and pluralism when they cease to become values (3/17). In particular, she was discussing the results of a poll showing that while 83% of people think evolution should be

taught in schools, a majority also thought creationism should be there.

She calls this idea, “whateverism,” and says that it shows that people often don’t want to take a stand for the truth. “Creationism... evolution... whatever.”

Interestingly, she thinks that some of these feelings stem from skepticism – “about everything, including experts.” She says this attitude has “led some to accept chemotherapy or laetrile as either/or cures for cancer.” And it has “led some to accept those ‘historians’ who deny the Holocaust.”

She notes that it’s fine to tell kids about different cultures and their views on human origins, but evolution and creationism are not equal options. “One plus one equals two, not seven. The world is billions of years old, not thousands. And school boards facing a science curriculum must still choose between science and religion, evolution and creationism. ‘Whatever’ is not an option.”

Well said.

When Stories Replace Science

On the flip side, we have a *U.S. News & World Report* article about “creation safaris” for parents who would rather make up or pass along fanciful tales instead of teaching actual science (4/10). The story was written without any scientific information whatsoever, though it was at least properly placed in the “Religion” section. Still, it contained creationist claims that allege scientific evidence, and yet there was no mention of how wrong those claims are.

Instead, we see creationists quoted saying there are falsehoods in the media, gaps in evolutionary theory, etc. The caption of a photo says children are “taught the connection between fossils and the Bible.” It would have been awfully nice to see the proper rebuttal to these incorrect statements.

It really all comes down to the quote from one creationist, who said: “I would prefer to think I’m a divine creature, rather than the descendant of some ape.” Unfortunately, his preferences are not the issue – science is. And the science says creationism is just so much bunk. Believe in it as religion if you want, but teaching it as science does a disservice to children and scientists alike – and *U.S. News* shares in that disservice by passing along this puff piece without squeezing in even the slightest bit of scientific knowledge.

Better Butter or Bogus?

Last month I mentioned an article by **Tony Cappasso** about a local doctor who is skeptical of a “nutraceutical” bar. This month, *Kiplinger’s* had a broader article on that subject. In particular, the magazine noted that many products are making claims that they can fight common health problems and these are giving the FDA fits because they don’t fall into an easily-regulated category.

You may have seen the margarines Benecol and Take Control, both of which say they can lower cholesterol. These apparently have some evidence behind them (though I don’t know how much), but other “nutraceutical” foods don’t, especially if they make claims like, “helps maintain a healthy cholesterol

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level.” (This is how herbals and homeopathy get away with their claims as well.)

The magazine reports that Congress is considering requiring that nutraceuticals undergo actual research before they can make their health claims – not as stringent as for drugs, but better than what we have now. The American Nutraceutical Association even supports the legislation! But some companies have opposed it, saying it would be too costly and wouldn’t give them a lock on the product (one said, “You can’t patent oat bran”). Hopefully, such attitudes will be overcome by the sheer size of the business – \$15 billion – and science will win out.

A Legendary Article

The *Chicago Tribune’s* “Tempo” section, known in these pages for having spread misinformation more than a few times, took a shot at killing such falsehoods in an article on urban legends (4/18). The article covered much of the section’s front page plus another half page later, and did a good job discussing hoaxes, urban legends spread by e-mail, etc. The author talked to **David Mikkelson**, who some of you might know better as “snopes,” and other urban legend experts.

Much of the information is similar to that presented in my talk for REALL a little while ago, including discussion on how these “harmless” legends can have real effects on companies when they are the target of an untrue accusation that is passed on to hundreds of thousands of people. Also, the article listed several web sites, including a couple I didn’t know about:

- www.snopes.com (my personal favorite)
- www.urbanlegends.com
- urbanlegends.about.com
- www.netsquirrel.com/combatkit (contains “canned replies” to send to people who have e-mailed you urban legends)

And in this corner...

We’ve all seen the books, heard the “success stories,” and probably know a few people who tried them. They are the miracle diets that are being touted everywhere. But the problem is that they conflict with each other. One says eat no carbohydrates and load up on protein. Another says to avoid meat like the plague. Which (if any) is right?

Surprisingly, some of the authors promoting these diets have asked the government to decide just that!

An AP article (4/12) notes that several of these guys, along with other doctors and nutrition researchers, wrote a letter to the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Disorders (part of the National Institutes of Health) to request a study to test the competing diets and see if there is any scientific grounding for any of them.

So far, no response, but I’m in favor of anything that leads to greater scientific testing of these claims.

Fragments or Fraud?

In the January, 1999, “REALLity Check” (Vol. 7, #1), I reported on **Binjamin Wilkomorski**, who wrote a book about his supposed Holocaust experiences as a child (*Fragments: Memo-*

ries of a Wartime Childhood). I say “supposed” because it turned out that he “recovered” the memories in therapy, and there was a great deal of evidence that ran contrary to his claims.

Now it’s become a matter for the Swiss courts. An AP article noted (4/19) that a lawyer filed a complaint against Wilkomorski (whose real name is **Bruno Doessekker**), saying he defrauded thousands of people out of the cost of his book. Swiss investigators searched his house, apparently in a search for evidence.

Originally, his publishers were all standing by him, but more recently the publisher of the original version in Germany recalled the books.

I don’t know how Swiss fraud laws compare to American laws, but this could have interesting implications. I can think of a number of books on alternative medicine, repressed memories, UFOs, and many other related topics that I would say are fraudulent in their claims. I suspect, however, that unless the authorities can prove Doessekker/Wilkomorski *knew* his “recovered memories” were false when he wrote the book, he will win the case. As I noted in my previous mention, I have seen no reason to think that he didn’t believe his “memories” at the time, as many victims of false memory implantation truly do believe. Perhaps that’s what the Swiss investigators were looking for – evidence one way or the other

The Straight Dope on Alternative Medicine

As Homer Simpson would say, “D’oh!”

Here I am, a member of the “Science Advisory Board” for “The Straight Dope by Cecil Adams,” and I don’t even mention two of his columns in recent months that deal directly with alternative medicine! I just didn’t think about it at all, until I saw a column in the North Texas Skeptics’ newsletter mentioning one of them. Well, better late than never.

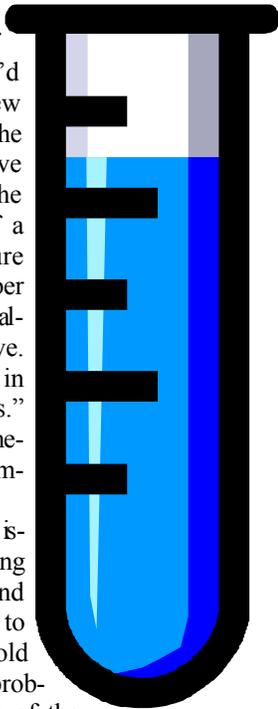
Cecil addressed homeopathy in one column (2/25) and then acupuncture in another (3/24). In the homeopathy one, he began: “Homeopathy! I can’t believe this has made a comeback. The last time homeopathy was big, Ulysses S. Grant was president. Now here it is, two months into the year 2000, and you walk into one of these pricey organic supermarkets and see aisles full of homeopathic nostrums, all of which have a proven effectiveness on a par with eye of newt. So, recognizing the complete futility of the effort, I feel obliged to state for the record: Come on, folks. This is nuts.”

From there, he went into some of the history and principles of homeopathy, showing how ridiculous the concepts are. You can read the full column at: www.straightdope.com/columns/000225.html There is also a message board at the site, and several homeopaths showed up to complain, but when they were called on their claims, only one stuck around long enough to have an actual discussion, and he mostly just attacked scientists and doctors without providing evidence to back his claims. Typical.

For acupuncture, Cecil began: “I’m tired of always pouring cold water on these things, so I’m not going to say acupuncture is silly. Who am I to make light of a therapy just because it uses the same technology as the voodoo doll?” Later he noted that acupuncture has had great success in the public relations area.

However, he pointed out that the PR was largely undeserved: “In July 1999 the *British Medical Journal* published an extensive review of Chinese research on ‘traditional Chinese medicine’ (which also includes herbal and other techniques) and found numerous problems, including poor controls, inadequate protection against bias, etc. The most revealing datum was a chart showing the results of 49 trials of acupuncture in the treatment of stroke. Normally in such a chart you’d see a bell-curve distribution, with a few data points at the far ends (indicating the treatment was either extremely effective or extremely ineffective) but most in the middle. In fact the chart shows half a bell—a few trials showed acupuncture was very effective, the largest number showed it was slightly effective, and almost none showed it was ineffective. Obvious conclusion: researchers in China only publish positive results.” This positive-only reporting is something that we skeptics have been complaining about for quite some time.

Cecil went on to note that there isn’t even any decent evidence showing that acupuncture can help treat pain, and that’s one of its most basic claims to fame! And, as usual, Cecil doesn’t hold back with his opinion: “Part of the problem with acupuncture is the dopiness of the underlying theory. Traditional Chinese medicine holds that disease is the result of imbalanced *qi*, or vital energy.” For further info, he also refers folks to the Quackwatch site. If you’d like to read the full column, you can find it here: www.straightdope.com/columns/000324.html. ♡



(“Health Fair” continued from page 1)

you have a perfect diet, you supposedly have all sorts of horrible stuff in your colon, and the only way to get rid of it is through regular colonics – two per week for eight weeks, to start with. This will, like the other miracle cures, help all sorts of things, from gas and irritability to cold feet and skin problems. Oh, and of course there are no harmful side effects.

The fair was sponsored by Bodytudes, a local “Alternative Life Center” that had several of its own booths. To give you an idea of just what they are, among the services they offer are past life regression, ear candling, chakra alignment, reiki, pranic healing, crystal healing, etc.

One of their flyers further advertises a class in “Crystal Enlightenment.” In case you didn’t know, “Crystals are tools for healing.” They have metaphysical properties and their vibrations can help you. Of course, each different type has different vibrations to help with different things. They can unblock your aura, affect your chakras, etc. Somehow I missed all of this in my various college crystallography classes.

You will have missed it by the time you read this newsletter, but you could have signed up for a hypnotherapy certification weekend at Bodytudes (though taught by somebody else). Yes, that’s right, in just one weekend (and for \$395) anybody can become a certified hypnotherapist! So if you ever decide to go have a past life regression, make sure to check for that certification – who knows what you’ll end up with if they haven’t had their two days of training!

As last year, there were four booths (out of 24) that were there because they probably knew the clientele of a holistic health fair would likely be interested in their work as well. Three were tarot card readers, one was a dream reader. This is in addition to several other booths that sold tarot cards, aura cleansing, crystals, etc.

There were several multi-level marketing booths, selling “non-toxic” household products and nutritional supplements that make all of the non-testable generic claims we’re used to seeing (helps this, maintains a balance of that, etc.).

And there were, of course, the usual assortment of other sellers you’d expect at a place like this. Reiki (which I described in detail last time), pranic healing (which appears to be similar to therapeutic touch), supplements that can do everything for you, aromatherapy, aura healing, etc. all had their hawkers.

So did I learn anything new this time? Only that the specific booths and types of miracle cures may change, but the claims stay remarkably similar. As before, the voice of rationality could not be found anywhere at this “health fair.” Maybe REALL should set up a booth next year.

David Bloomberg is the chairman of REALL. ♡



Our Next Meeting

Holocaust Revisionism on Trial in London
*Or: When Crackpots Sue Scholars,
It Costs Lots of Dollars*
By David Gehrig

Historical writer David Irving claims Hitler didn't order the mass murder of the Holocaust, there were no gas chambers at Auschwitz, etc. Professor Deborah Lipstadt called Irving "one of the most dangerous spokesmen" for Holocaust denial in her book. In response, Irving sued. Gehrig has followed the trial in detail and will present the case, its background, some Auschwitz history, and



www.reall.org

Springfield, Illinois
Lincoln Library (7th & Capitol)
Tuesday, May 2, 7:00 PM

Free and Open
to the Public

Rational Examination Association
of Lincoln Land (REALL)
P.O. Box 20302
Springfield IL 62708

