



# *The North Texas*

# Skeptic

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## Healthy Skepticism

By Tim Gorski, M.D.

### “CAM” NONSENSE TAKES KOMEN FUNDS

The Susan G. Komen Foundation (SGKF) is well-known locally as well as nationally as an important source of support and funding for breast cancer education and research. The Foundation has, over the years, raised well over \$400 million in support of breast cancer research, education, screening and treatment programs.

Regrettably, a very small amount of these efforts has found its way into the hands of “Complementary and Alternative Medicine” hucksters and “mind-body” mystics. For example, in 2002 a small “pilot study” of acupuncture for the treatment of nausea, vomiting and fatigue associated with chemotherapy lasting 6 weeks and involving no more than 15 patients was funded at a New Jersey hospital. Considering the work that has already been done in this area, such a study makes no sense. The same hospital received additional funding for unspecified “complementary medicine options.”

Last year, Colorado Springs Memorial Hospital received funding for a program offering “therapeutic touch, massage, guided imagery, relaxation, exercise, nutrition, and acupuncture.” Therapeutic Touch, of course, is the descendant of 18<sup>th</sup> Century mesmerism which was famously debunked at the time, in part through the efforts of Benjamin Franklin. SGKF also gave monies in 2002 to a Boston facility to spend on “adjunct therapies such as massage, acupuncture or Reiki.”

Perhaps the most troubling association with which the SGKF has become saddled is Larry Dossey MD. Dossey is a proponent of the idea that medicine should be transformed into a form of spiritualism. He believes and preaches that “nonlocal effects” – what amounts to “psychic powers” – are of overwhelming and critical importance in the doctor-patient relationship and cites defective and discredited evidence to back up his claim.

Dossey, who once practiced internal medicine in Dallas, now lives in Santa Fe<sup>1</sup> and has been assisted in the promotion of his mystical views there by the Central New Mexico affiliate of the Komen Foundation.<sup>2</sup> The SGKF’s Greater Evansville (IL) affiliate also supported him as recently as last November when he took part in its Lynn Lecture Series.<sup>3</sup> According to Dossey:

## EVENTS CALENDAR

### April Program

**Saturday, April 12, 2:00 p.m.** Center for Community Cooperation 2900 Live Oak Street in Dallas (corner of Live Oak Street and Liberty Street)

Nostradamus fan Robert Tippett will tell of his predictions based on his readings of Nostradamus’ quatrains. Tippett has already given us a heads up on a level 9 earthquake due for Turkey on April 27. There may be more. Come out to the meeting and be the first to learn

### Social Dinner and Board Meeting

NTS social dinner and board meeting  
**Saturday, April 26, 7:30 p.m.**  
Black-eyed Pea Restaurant on Forest Lane in Dallas – about one block west of Central Expressway, south side of Forest Lane

Call the NTS Hotline at (214) **335-9248** for more information or if you plan to attend. We sometimes reschedule these events.

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“An abundance of scientific evidence now points to an infinite, nonlocal quality of human consciousness. ... scientific evidence increasingly affirms the reality of distant healing and the efficacy of intercessory prayer; how nonlocal perception can be used in medical diagnosis; how dreams inform healthcare; and how we can change our approach to death by replacing our morbid views of dying with what Dr. Dossey calls Eternity Medicine. There is a revolution in medicine being inaugurated in hospitals, clinics, and our nation’s medical schools.”<sup>4</sup>

Although this passage may meet with some approval from those who see value in the practice of prayer, Dossey’s ideas about what is going on are at odds with history, scientific evidence and theologies of mainstream forms of Christianity. In fact, it corresponds with the classical religion of “Spiritualism,” now a prominent feature of the modern “New Age” religion.

Another “CAM” proponent who obtained funding from the SGKF is Carole O’Toole, herself a breast cancer survivor.<sup>5</sup> O’Toole is associated with the National Foundation for Alternative Medicine (NFAM) set up by former Iowa Congressman Berkley Bedell who became convinced that a Minnesota farmer’s special cow colostrum cured his Lyme disease. NFAM promotes all manner of unproven, disproven and irrational methods and claims. Recently, for example, it has featured the Hufeland Clinic in Bad Mergentheim, Germany, a facility that offers:

“detoxification and regeneration by stimulating detoxifying functions of liver, kidneys and intestines with the unique healing springs of the Spa of Bad Mergentheim, by homeopathic medicines, vitamins, minerals, enzymes, multistep-oxygen-therapy and ozone therapy. ... fever therapy, thymus extract, biological response modifiers, hyperthermia (local and whole body). Psycho-Spiritual therapies ... [and] Examination of teeth with suggested corrective measures, as it is believed that the most important and dangerous foci (an inflammatory process which can exert remote negative effects on other organs or systems) for cancer patients can be in the teeth and/or tonsils.”<sup>6</sup>

Among NFAM’s “scientific advisors” is actress Diane Ladd as well as notorious “CAM” proponents/mystics Deepak Chopra, James Gordon, Woodson Merrell, Wayne Jonas and Andrew Weil.

O’Toole recommends chiropractic, ayurveda and “energy healing”<sup>7</sup> to cancer victims on her website and promotes dubious books by authors such as Wayne Jonas.<sup>8</sup> In addition, she recommends and links to the website of Ralph Moss, a well-known promoter of cancer quackery including laetrile and the “anti-neoplastons” administered by Texas physician Stanislaw Burzynski.<sup>9</sup> Moss sells “Moss Reports” on various cancers for \$297 each on his website where he also promotes his belief that the American Cancer Society has been engaged in “brainwashing” and that cancer research and treatment is “not supported by the facts” but is an industry that exists only to make money.<sup>10</sup>

Although the level of financial support of unproven, disproven and irrational claims and methods by SGKF appears to be very small, any funding of such irresponsible people and their projects is a waste of money, especially when it could be spent in so many more productive ways. The association of the SGKF name also lends credence where it should not. Ralph Moss, for example, proudly claims on his website to have advised the SGKF on cancer treatments. Most importantly, this kind of funding

support and association with “CAM” proponents ultimately undermines the vital work of the SGKF in the fight against breast cancer.

A query to the SGKF concerning this was responded to by SGKF Health Educator Susan Brown with the assurance that the grants in question “were subjected to [a] rigorous peer-review process and were deemed worthy of funding.”

## SUPPLEMENT PROMOTER AND ASSOCIATES INDICTED

A. Glenn Braswell and two of his business associates were indicted on multiple charges of income tax evasion late last year. The indictments, handed down late last year by a grand jury in Los Angeles, were unsealed January 14<sup>th</sup> when Braswell was arrested at his Miami Beach, Florida home.

Braswell is the owner of G.B. Data Systems, Inc. and Gero Vita International, Inc., companies through which he peddled anti-aging and other quack products. The complex scheme involved a sham entity in Canada as revealed in testimony before a US Senate committee in September of 2001.

Braswell has been in jail before for mail fraud, income tax evasion and perjury, all in connection with his decades-long activities in selling fraudulent baldness cures, breast enlarging nostrums, weight loss remedies and anti-aging products. He was among those pardoned by former President Clinton in the hours before the inauguration of President George W. Bush.

The January indictments also charged attorney William E. Frantz of Marietta, Georgia with conspiracy in connection with Braswell’s underpayment of taxes estimated at \$9 million from 1994-1997. The third individual, California accountant Robert B. Miller, is charged with helping to carry out a false expense scheme with Braswell that resulted in an estimated \$4.4 million in unpaid taxes during two years in the 1990s. If convicted of the 13 counts against him, Braswell will face up to 51 years in federal prison, while Frantz could get up to 23 years and Miller up to 13.<sup>11</sup>

## FTC PICKS OFF “DR. CLARK” PROMOTERS

The Federal Trade Commission filed charges on January 27<sup>th</sup> against San Diego-based Dr. Clark Research Associates and its Swiss counterpart, as well as their owner, Scientologist David P. Amrein, for making numerous fraudulent claims for “dietary supplements” and devices they sell over the Internet.

The products in question are related to “naturopathic doctor” Hulda Clark’s claims that cancers and all other diseases are caused by toxins and parasites (such as liver flukes), can be diagnosed by her “Syncrometer,” and cured by her herbal remedies and an electric “Zapper” device. According to the FTC complaint, the defendants advertise and sell their wares at [www.drclark.com](http://www.drclark.com) where it is claimed that “cancer can now be cured” and that “miraculous” results can be expected.<sup>12</sup>

Clark is a “naturopathic doctor” on the basis of having purchased a “degree” from a nonaccredited correspondence school. She operates the New Century Clinic in Tijuana, Mexico where a

two week course of treatment costs \$4500, not including housing, meals, tests, “nutritional supplements” and other charges that can run to a similar amount. Mexican authorities briefly shut the facility in 2001, levied a fine, and said thereafter that the clinic could only offer standard medical care, though it seems doubtful that this is now the case.

The FTC had previously obtained an injunction in June 2001 against another company marketing Clark’s herbs and devices, Western Dietary Products based in Blaine, Washington, as well as its owners Marvin and Miguelina Beckwith. The defendants in that complaint were prohibited from asserting that standard treatments for cancer, diabetes, arthritis and other serious illnesses were unnecessary or that the herbal and “Zapper” products were effective in preventing or treating disease.

## FTC SUES “SLIM DOWN SOLUTION”

Also in January, the FTC filed charges against Slim Down Solution, LLC and several other companies and individuals involved in the promotion of this weight loss fraud. Advertising on various cable channels including Bravo, Comedy Central and PAX, as well as on Internet websites claimed that the product’s ingredient D-glucosamine was a “fat magnet and trapper” that offered “effortless” weight loss. Two companies and their principal, Steven Pierce, based in Conroe, Texas, manufactured and sold D-glucosamine to others who sold them under additional names such as “Fight the Fat,” “Everslim” and “Mini Max.” □

## References and Notes

- 1 <http://www.denmansantafe.com/estates.htm> – accessed 1/14/2002 (see bottom of page). Dossey does not disdain the material world when it comes to his \$3.5 million custom-built mansion!
- 2 <http://www.nmcure.com/health/local.html> – accessed 1/14/2003
- 3 <http://www.komenevansville.org/UserArea/StaticPages/AbouttheSeries.asp> – accessed 1/14/2003
- 4 [http://health1.usi.edu/cont\\_ed/prayer\\_issues.htm](http://health1.usi.edu/cont_ed/prayer_issues.htm) – accessed 1/14/2003
- 5 <http://www.nfam.org/new/contact.html> – accessed 1/14/2003
- 6 <http://www.nfam.org/new/clinichufeland.html> – accessed 1/14/2003; this may be the German clinic that Congressman Tom Burton’s wife (R-IA) recently visited. Congressman Burton used the opportunity to charge the taxpayers for an alleged investigation of the German postal system!
- 7 <http://www.healingoutsidethemargins.com/PractitionersMain.htm> – accessed 1/14/2003
- 8 <http://www.healingoutsidethemargins.com/ComplementaryCareResources.htm> – accessed 1/14/2003
- 9 <http://www.ralphmoss.com> – accessed 1/14/2003
- 10 <http://www.whale.to/c/moss.html> – accessed 1/14/2003

11 <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/cac/pr2003/006.html> – accessed 2/3/2003

12 <http://www.ftc.gov/opa/2003/01/drclark.htm> – accessed 2/2/2003

## The Third Eye

### NEWS AND COMMENTARY FROM THE WEIRD WORLD OF THE MEDIA

By Pat Reeder

Well, folks, I'm probably as surprised to be here as you are to see *The Third Eye* return to the pages of *The North Texas Skeptic*. The truth is that Laura Ainsworth and I are swamped with other commitments to (among other things) the Comedy Wire subscription service, our book *Nine Hallmarks of Highly Incompetent Losers* hitting stores this month, and the care of 12 different parrots. Despite this, NTS President Danny Barnett called me at home a few nights ago and bribe...er, persuaded me to resurrect the column, even if only on a sporadic basis.

I do want to start with some relatively old news, however, since I have some personal experience with this subject. Back in November of 2002, the National Academy of Sciences said their 19-month study found that while polygraph machines may sometimes work on specific questions, they are worthless for general use, such as government job screening. The researchers said lie detectors can not only brand honest people as liars, they can also be fooled by people who know how to stump the machines, and those are exactly the type of people who'd be applying for top security government jobs. (And they're *exactly* the people the government needs!)

Personally, I'm happy to see the NAS agree that lie detector tests are unreliable. Right after college, I had to take one for a job. I was a super clean-cut kid from Central Texas who had never taken any drugs of any kind. So I calmly answered "no" when asked if I'd ever used pot, heroin, cocaine, and so on. But then he asked, "Have you ever shot up peanut butter?" Well, I'd never heard of such a ridiculous thing, so I cracked up laughing. I felt like William Shatner: "Too...many...jokes!" ("If you shot up with crunchy instead of smooth, would it clog the needle?" "Do you let your dog lick your syringe?") I got the job, but I later found out the tester recommended not hiring me because of a violent jump on the "shooting up Skippy" question. That's why, to this day, I don't trust lie detectors, and why I can't eat peanut butter without giggling.

With that out of the way, let's dive head first into the current crop of wacky news! On second thought, let's just wade in with biohazard suits, since our first item deals with "urine therapy," the belief that drinking your own urine can cure various health prob-

lems, including cancer and infertility. Drinking urine has been proven, however, to drive away friends and neighbors. Nevertheless, urine therapy has become so popular in the western African nation of Cameroon, the government has banned urine consumption and is threatening to jail persistent offenders. They'll have to build more jails, but at least the cells won't need toilets. And if you think that's scary, Cameroon is one of the U.N. Security Council nations that had to approve American foreign policy in Iraq.

Speaking of the current war with Iraq, if you're going to oppose the war, I believe there's a right way and a wrong way to do it. The wrong way was demonstrated by the International Congress of White Witches, which recently held a month-long session in the Romanian capital of Bucharest. Twenty-five Romanian witches and 75 assorted sorcerers and warlocks from around the world came together to cast spells, including incantations designed to prevent a war with Iraq. Obviously, it didn't work. Maybe they should have tried sticking pins in a voodoo doll of Saddam Hussein.

While some occultists tried to head off war, others tried to predict when war would actually start. The National Astrological Association of Thailand, which boasts some 6,000 members, set April 8 as the latest possible date for the launch of a US-led war on Iraq. According to four astrologers within the Association, Mars is closer to Earth than it has been for 76,000 years, making war more likely. They also claimed that Slytherin would beat Gryffindor by 50 points in the Quidditch final in the next *Harry Potter* book, but I'll refrain from e-mailing my bookie. On the other hand, Association president Pinyo Phongcharoen did comment that war could start as soon as the end of March due to the fact that Uranus is in Aquarius. Obviously, the Siamese star-sages had their heads up Uranus because March 19 does not count as the end of March, no matter how much leeway you're willing to cut them. Not to worry, though; according to Phongcharoen, the war will be followed by a long stretch of peace with Jupiter entering the orbit of Uranus. So take *that*, Carl Sagan!

A few years ago, I discussed the existence of "Skeptic Buts" in *The Third Eye*. These are people who claim to be "*skeptics, but*" this one guy who claims to produce gold coins out of thin air *must* be real! Someone apparently thought they could do something similar by broadcasting a pay-per-view séance on March 9 where British psychics tried to contact Princess Diana. Executive producer Paul Sharratt defended the program on ABC's *Good Morning America* program, stating: "For me, I started as a total skeptic. I still am a skeptic. I must say that things happened both in Paris and in London, things were said that has given me a lot of food for thought." Sharratt also admitted that he was impressed by the psychics who supposedly channeled Diana, partially because they knew which lollipops she liked.

Sharratt reaches me as a tiny skeptic with a big "but." Considering Diana consulted with all these people when she was alive, seeing some of them on a daily basis, and that reporters have exhaustively chronicled every minute detail of her life, I'm not surprised that these mediums knew her favorite lollipop fla-

vor. What would have really impressed me is if just one of them had ever reminded Diana to buckle her seatbelt.

On a lighter note, however, its relaxing to know that our elected officials are helping keep me in business by dabbling in weird science themselves. Take New Mexico, for example. On March 21, state lawmakers, prompted by Representative Daniel R. Foley (R-Roswell), approved the celebration of an “Extraterrestrial Culture Day,” which will now be celebrated every second Tuesday in February. Foley remarked that ETs, if they exist at all, “have some sort of culture, whether it’s something we understand or not” (much like New Mexico itself), and he proposed the memorial to “enhance relationships among all the citizens of the cosmos, known and unknown.” In his proposal to the House, he stated that extraterrestrials have enhanced New Mexico’s worldwide recognition through, among other things, “many and ongoing visitations, sightings, unexplained mysteries, attributed technological advances,” and even “provision of story lines for Hollywood epics.” Hollywood epics, huh? But what about this recent crop of goofy reality TV programs? Can we blame *Joe Millionaire* or *Temptation Island* on some “idea man” from Betelgeuse?

Here’s another thought to ponder. The first annual Extraterrestrial Culture Day will be celebrated on February 10 next year, but on the year 2006, it will fall on February 14 – better known as St. Valentine’s Day. Will the hot romantic gift that year be a Whitman’s Sampler box filled with chocolate UFOs and alien heads? Or will it be neon green panties that glow in the dark and say “PROPERTY OF AREA 51” across the seat? You’ll notice that I’m refraining from any jokes about anal probes. Still, Foley insists that “If we can capitalize on something that did or did not happen in 1947 then it can help the entire state.” Just like the grassy knoll in downtown Dallas and its contribution to the JFK myth, I guess.

An ET celebration is harmless fun, but what’s going on in Lithuania is a bit more complicated. Rolandas Paksas, the new President, is under fire for proclaiming his belief in psychic Lena Lolishvili, a native of Georgia (the former Soviet republic, not the Peach State). Most Lithuanians were blissfully unaware of Lolishvili’s existence until she was seen embracing Paksas at his inauguration ceremony, but she reportedly told Paksas as far back as 1996 that he would eventually be elected. The majority of Lithuanians are devout Catholics and are thus in an uproar over Lolishvili’s apparent influence over their new president; Cardinal Audrys Backis even referred to her activities as “the work of the Devil.”

Lolishvili not only claims that God tells her the future, but she also claims that she can cure disease by “energizing” toilet paper and wrapping it around a person. I don’t think I want to know how she “energizes” it in the first place. The local media has dubbed her “The Toilet Paper Rasputin,” a reference to the mystic who influenced Czar Nicholas II and his family in the last days of the Russian Empire. Prime Minister Algirdas Brazauskas complained that Lolishvili was trying to persuade him to drop plans to join the European Union. Since Lithuania has been invited to join both the EU and NATO in 2004, many Lithuanians fear the Lolishvili incident will make their nation a laughing stock. If

they’re a laughing stock, it’s probably because they’re joining the EU.

For her part, Lolishvili insists that her presence in government circles (if not crop circles) is vital to Lithuania’s well being. Responding to critics who want her to board the midnight train to Georgia, she said: “It would be very bad for Lithuania and people would cry.” Trust me, I’m crying already – from *laughter!*

If you don’t think I can top that last item, brace yourselves. I don’t mean to carp, but even I found this hard to believe. The New York town of New Square, which lies 30 miles north of Manhattan, has reportedly been visited by a talking fish that some Hasidic Jews claim was none other than God himself. It all started when the New Square Fish Market obtained a 20-pound carp which was to be slaughtered and made into gefilte fish. Luis Niveló, a Gentile employee at the fish market, reportedly started hearing the carp shout in Hebrew as he was about to bonk the fish on the head. Convinced that the fish was demon-possessed, Niveló told co-worker Zalmen Rosen about the chatty carp. Rosen, a 57-year-old member of the relatively obscure Skver sect of Hasidic Jews, dismissed Niveló as a *meshugenah* until he heard the fish utter the phrases *tzaruch shemirah* and *hasof bah*, which, according to Rosen, means that “everyone needs to account for themselves because the end is nigh.” The fish then instructed Rosen to pray and study the Torah. Rosen attempted to kill the fish with a knife, but cut his own thumb and had to be taken to the hospital in an ambulance. Niveló finally butchered the fish and sold it along with the rest of their stock. I guess this follows the old adage of “kill the messenger.” Besides, if the carp survived, its inevitable book deal would probably threaten sales of Michael Drosnin’s *The Bible Code II*.

According to Rosen, the fish identified itself as the soul of a local Hasidic man who died childless last year; the man frequently purchased carp so that poorer New Square residents could enjoy it during Sabbath meals. Others in the community think the fish might have actually been God. In either case, the Skver Hasidim have reeled in a lot of attention because of the fish tale – not all of it flattering. One gefilte fish company is even thinking of adopting the slogan: “Our fish speaks for itself.” (In Hebrew, I suppose, so you know it’s kosher.) Rosen started to tire of all the inquiries into the carp: “I wish I never said anything about it. I’m getting so many calls every day, I’ve stopped answering. Israel, London, Miami, Brooklyn. They all want to hear about the talking fish.”

Here’s the grabber: this fish was shouting prophecies in Hebrew...and they went ahead and killed it and cleaned it anyway! How hungry *were* they?! Did they do that from force of habit, or because it just wouldn’t shut up? Why couldn’t Rosen be happy with another “I caught a fish *this big*” story? Is the voice of God like Gilbert Gottfried’s, so they just *had* to shut it up? And are the Skver Hasidim sure that carp wasn’t just an old Big Mouth Billy Bass singing “Hava Nagila?”

I tell you, I can’t go on! Too...many...jokes!



(Special thanks to Laura Ainsworth, Virginia Barnett, and Daniel Barnett for additional material.)

## Letters to the Editor

We welcome letters from our readers. Please make your comments brief and related to topics of interest to NTS members. Letters must be signed, and are subject to editing for space considerations.

### Letters:

I had to laugh outloud at Pat Reeder's whine about people using the word "skeptics" in a way that displeased him. He moans "skeptics are people who demand hard evidence before believing outrageous claims. They are NOT people who refuse to accept hard evidence because it might undermine their irrational beliefs in outrageous claims..."

I've got news for ya, most skeptics only believe those things that fit their belief systems DESPITE what evidence anyone tries to present. That's how far skepticism has been bastardized over the years. Look up the word and no where in the definition will you find the words "outrageous" or "irrational". Those are sure indicators of someone that is afraid of things that would challenge his belief system for sure, such as the ridiculous idea that the world could be round, the Earth not the center of the universe or that man could ever fly.

I have encountered so-called skeptics how have lied, faked evidence, or spun stories so tight and fast that they formed a impenetrable cocoon of misinformation. The skeptical acceptance of the Air Force's story about test crash dummies being mistaken for alien bodies at Roswell is a classic. Even the Air Force spokesman was embarrassed

when asked about how witnesses could possibly have been confused about the two entities when the crash test dummies weren't used until years after the Roswell event took place. But this argument was hailed by official skeptic organizations as an actual \*explanation\*. Of course, for such a thing to be true, they witnesses would have had to have seen a future event (which implies clairvoyance) or have time traveled, both I'm sure equally distasteful to any skeptic if only they would be confronted with such an obvious conclusion.

Nevermind whether Roswell was an alien event or not, I'm not arguing that, I'm arguing this complete fallacy that skeptics give a damn about evidence at all, let alone have any regard for finding out the truth of a matter. I have my own personal experience to draw on as well as an investigator of the so-called **Philadelphia Experiment**. Cut out all the crap about aliens and time travel, and sticking with just the idea that it was supposed to be an early attempt at EMF produced stealth and I have seen nothing but denials and outright idiocy from the skeptical community, even in the face of mounting evidence. Never mind that not a single skeptical argument against it holds up, never mind that not one skeptic has had it in him to get off his fat backside to investigate the story at all.

Don't believe me? I challenge anyone here to pose one reason why the story, as a pure military experiment, was impossible. I'll shoot the argument down, easily.

— Marshall Barnes

## The Philadelphia experiment

by John Blanton

In case you missed the TV movie I will bring you up to speed on the plot:

In 1943 an experiment in radar invisibility at the Philadelphia Navy Yard goes horribly wrong. There are bizarre results with sailors transported in time and space so that some wind up partially embedded in their ship's deck plates—making for some great visual effects for the entertainment of the viewing audience. Two

sailors are sent 40 years into the future where they face a far different world.

That's the movie. The International Movie Database provides the following description: "Based on an actual event that took place in 1943, about a naval battleship that disappeared from Philadelphia Naval Shipyard..."<sup>1</sup>

Well, not exactly. The real story behind the *Philadelphia Experiment* is one of the classic legends of all time. The US Navy Historical Center Web site provides a little better insight into the story:<sup>2</sup>

"Allegedly, in the fall of 1943 a U.S. Navy destroyer was made invisible and teleported from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Norfolk, Virginia, in an incident

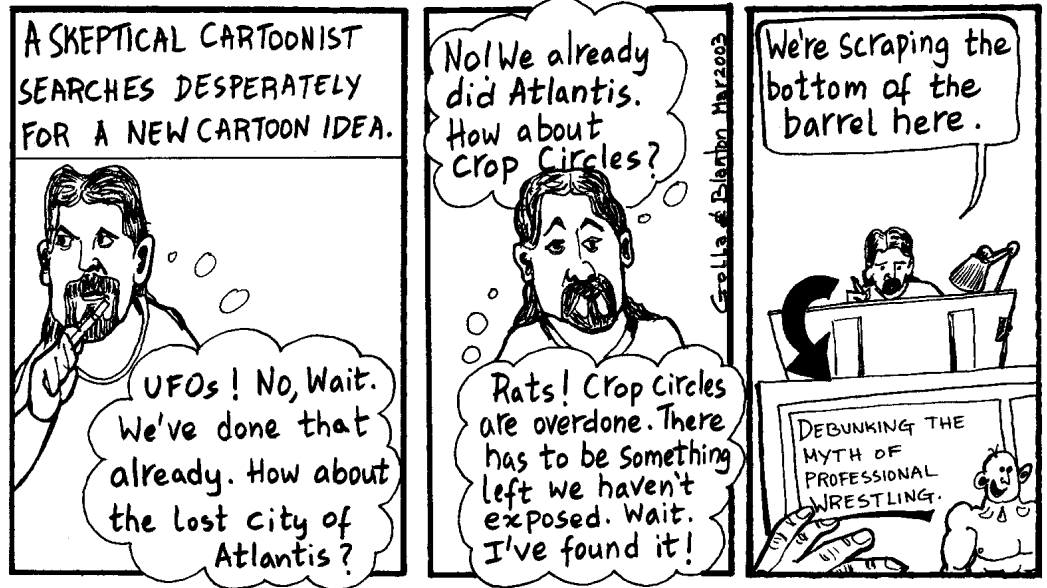
known as the Philadelphia Experiment. Records in the Operational Archives Branch of the Naval Historical Center have been repeatedly searched, but no documents have been located which confirm the event, or any interest by the Navy in attempting such an achievement."

The Historical Center gives the name of the ship involved as the USS Eldridge (DE 173)—a destroyer, not a battleship. The ship was commissioned in August 1943 in New York, and it remained there until September. During the remainder of 1943 the Eldridge made several voyages, but was never in Philadelphia during 1943.

## Skeptic Ink

by Prasad Golla and John Blanton.

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At any rate, the teleportation of the Eldridge into the Norfolk, Virginia, area was supposedly observed by crewmembers of the SS Andrew Furusest, a civilian merchant ship. A minor problem is that the Andrew Furusest was not in the port at Norfolk at the time the sighting was supposed to have happened, and a letter from LT (JG) William S. Dodge, USNR, who was master of the Andrew Furusest during 1943, states that no such sighting occurred from his ship.

Further, the Office of Naval Research has stated that using “force fields to make a ship and her crew invisible” is contrary to known physics. Albert Einstein consulted for the Navy Bureau of Ordnance, and his unified field theory apparently forms part of the basis for the Philadelphia Experiment legend. However, Dr. Einstein never completed a successful formulation for a unified field theory, and it was certainly not working during 1943. There is no record that Einstein ever worked on a teleportation project. In fact, his long-running dispute with Niels Bohr concerning “spooky action at a distance” puts him firmly at odds with any such notion.<sup>3</sup>

“Project Rainbow” is another name attached to the legend, but the only code

name “Rainbow” used during this time referred to the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis (the enemy).

At least two NTS members served duty at the Philadelphia Navy Yard. Author and engineer L. Sprague de Camp actually served there during the War, along with fellow writers Isaac Asimov and Robert Heinlein. Of course, this gave rise to great speculation that the three of them were in on the conspiracy. Unfortunately for the world, Sprague de Camp is now deceased, but in a conversation on the subject he dismissed any idea of a conspiracy or any knowledge of such an experiment.

I served aboard a ship at the Philadelphia Navy Yard when I participated in the commissioning of the USS Kitty Hawk (CVA 63). I can assure readers that nothing supernatural occurred while I was in Philadelphia. However, that was many years after the supposed event, because I had already been teleported into the future.

Prior to the Kitty Hawk I was aboard the USS Randolph (CVS 15) when it finished its refitting at the Portsmouth, Virginia, Navy Yard. Once they refloated that ship they moved it around to a special station and activated a number

of coils of wire around the ship’s hull. My guess is the station was used to determine what current was necessary to neutralize the magnetic field of the ship’s hull. These degaussing coils help make the ship “invisible” to magnetic mines when the need arises.

It is possible some have misinterpreted the degaussing process and concluded something like this could also make the ship invisible to radar—hence the origin of the Philadelphia Experiment legend.

Finally, lest readers become concerned and wonder whatever happened to the Eldridge, I have been assured it is alive and well after these nearly sixty years. When last observed a few years ago, the Eldridge was in the service of the Greek Navy under the name Leon.<sup>4</sup> Presumably it got there by steaming across the Atlantic Ocean under its own power. □

### References

- 1 <http://us.imdb.com/>
- 2 <http://www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq21-1.htm>
- 3 See notes on the EPR paradox. <http://www.blanton-neuser.com/physics/epr.htm>
- 4 <http://www.v-j-enterprises.com/geldrige.html>

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