



*The North Texas*

# Skeptic

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<http://www.ntskeptics.org>

## Ouch!

by John Blanton

Let me repeat: Ouch!

On 13 November PBS TV broadcast *Judgment Day: Intelligent Design on Trial*. For those of you recently escaped from Klingon captivity, the story is about the *Kitzmiller v. Dover Area School District* trial. You can watch the story on line. <sup>1</sup>

Three years ago members of the school board pushed to introduce Intelligent Design into the science curriculum, and eleven area residents sued. The trial came to a head on 20 December 2005 when a federal judge ruled the board's action was illegal because 1) Intelligent Design is not science, and 2) the action was religious in motivation and result, in violation of the United States Constitution.

*Judgment Day* rehearses details relating to early actions by board members, the history behind the Intelligent Design movement, and sworn testimony by board members and interested creationists.

Ouch!

Bill Buckingham was a board member, and a respondent on the program related that Buckingham exhibited first hand knowledge of the destruction of a 16-foot mural created by a student and displayed in a classroom. The mural depicted the evolution of the human species, and it was removed from the school and burned by persons unknown.

Bill Buckingham is shown early in the program:

Intelligent design, in my way of thinking, is, states that life is too complex to happened at random, that there had to be a designer—uh, something to shape how things went, so to speak. In the Book of Genesis, the designer would be God.

## EVENTS CALENDAR

### December Party

There will be no program or social meeting for December. In keeping with our usual tradition, we will have our annual Christmas get together/party.

For the party, bring snacks and drinks. No alcohol. Bring your latest on the Darwin awards, skeptical videos, games.

**Saturday, 8 December 2007  
2 PM**

Center for Nonprofit Management, 2900 Live Oak Street, in Dallas

Let us know if you are coming. These meeting dates are sometimes changed.

214-335-9248

### Future Meeting Dates

December 8, 2007  
January 12, 2008 (elections for Board of Directors))  
February 9, 2008  
March 8, 2008  
April 12, 2008  
May 17, 2008  
June 21, 2008

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 NTS functions at which admission is charged at no or  
 reduced cost. In addition, members will receive mailings  
 on topics of current interest or social events.

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Buckingham pushed to introduce the creationist book *Pandas and People* as a condition for adopting a biology text co-authored by noted evolution advocate Kenneth Miller. The school rejected the *Pandas* book, but a few weeks later an anonymous donor supplied 60 copies for use by students.

From the program transcript:

Citing what he called the “breathtaking inanity” of the school board’s decision, [federal judge John E. Jones] found that several members had lied “to cover their tracks and disguise the real purpose behind the intelligent design Policy.”

Testifying on the stand, creationist Michael Behe was forced to concede his definition of good science would include astrology.

Research by Nick Matzke of the National Center for Science Education demonstrated the evolution of the *Pandas* book, switching from the language of creationism early on, then substituting the term “intelligent design” after the Supreme Court ruled in 1987 that creationism was religious and could not be promoted by government schools.

Alan Bonsell was also a board member, and he, along with Cunningham, pretended no knowledge of the source of the *Pandas* books at the school in their pre-trial depositions. Following the trial, rather than showing contrition, they lashed out at the trial judge. Here is Buckingham:

To put it bluntly, I think he’s a jackass. I think he went to clown college instead of law school or else he went to law school and slept during the Constitution classes because, uh, his decision doesn’t jive with the law. Uh, I think he should be on a bench, but it ought to be in a centre ring of Ringling Brothers Circus. He, it, it, it’s disgusting.

Others were not so restrained. Judge Jones received Secret Service protection after death threats arrived.

The Intelligent Design proponents in the case said they sought to restore morality with the introduction creationism. Their actions illuminate their bizarre interpretation of morality.

Ouch!

### References

1 <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/id/program.html>



## Challenge activity

by John Blanton

**D**o we need to remind you? Several of us have for many years underwritten a prize, now \$12,000, to anybody who can provide a positive demonstration of the paranormal. Such a demonstration could include the ability to read minds, perform healing through prayer, or employ astrology to diagnose illness. A demonstration could be very simple. For proof of UFOs (from outer space) we want a ride in the space ship.

Most recently we investigated Rosemary Hunter's claim she could read my mind.<sup>1</sup> That may have signaled we were open for business. Here is what we have seen since then.

Francis Jones sent us an e-mail.

My claim is this: 1) There is an inherent sixth sense that usually lays dormant in human beings. 2) There co-exist an inseparable, invisible, intelligent reality that has an effect on the material world. 3) From that invisible realm exists a supreme being, namely the "God who created the world, the God of the judeo-christian religion. 4) Concluding there is" life after death".

Ellen Keller wrote:

I have been able to record Spirits at almost anytime. This has been used by a Detective for Crime Solving and by others for personal use.

I only use a small hand held recorder and wait. If I run it at night, many Spirits talk. This is no joke and no lie.

Thank You,

Ellen Keller

PS, attached is a small portion of a tape from the other night when I had asked them to speak a little louder for me..

I live in Tx.....

Shirley Potter phoned and followed up with an e-mail.

Mr. Blanton,

I spoke with you on the phone 10/9. This is the email you asked me to send.

I would like to be tested for paranormal abilities. I was poisoned with nuclear chemical waste while in the Army. As a result, I developed brain damage. In 2002 I began seeing energy. As time past, I noticed patterns in the energy. With the help of some local college students, I learned how to read and understand these patterns. It seems that I am now able to see and understand a person's personality, childhood and most recent experiences without looking at the person or talking to them. The only criteria that I know I need is a quiet comfortable room.

Thank you for your time.

Shirley Potter

9 Oct 2007

Prasad Golla is negotiating with Shirley Potter for a preliminary demonstration. We require an informal show and tell before we even begin to get serious and fill in the amount on the check. In the past this has saved everybody involved a lot of wasted time. Russell Shipp came from New Braunfels three times to show us he could move small objects with his mind. We had a look. Nothing moved. We kept our money in our pockets.

Stephen Lindsey wrote:

Interested in your challenge. I use the ouija board. Not sure what or whom I communicate with, but I'm able to establish communication with something. Most of the time that something claims to be the spirit of someone who has died.

[more deleted]

Also, I'd like to ask that you keep my identity confidential and not post my name on your website. I make a living from my own business that really doesn't mesh well with paranormal topics.

Sorry, Stephen. It's too late. The fine print says all correspondence related to the NTS Paranormal Challenge will be posted on our Web site and may be printed in our newsletter.<sup>2</sup>

We have had no further communication from Stephen Lindsey.

Tomas Camacho wrote from Arizona.

Greetings, my name is Tomas Camacho

I would like to enter my daughter in your paranormal contest. My daughter has many gifts. She can see and talk to the dead. She can see the color of your aura. She can see a wrecked car and she will know if someone passed away in that wrecked car. She can see and

communicate with peoples angels. She can communicate with a person in Acoma . She knows if a deceased person made it to the other side, if that person is good or bad. She can see in the dark as clear as day. The one that would stand out is that she can see in the dark. Can you enter my daughter in your contest, I don't know, put her in a dark room. She can walk in completely blind folded in that dark room, take off what's wrapped around her eyes and in the dark tell you what's in there. From a pencil on the floor to a hanging picture on the wall.

Please let me know what steps are needed to proceed. My daughter just turned 13 years old. Thank you!

Tomas Camacho

I reminded Mr. Camacho he would have to come to Dallas to give a demonstration, and he would almost certainly go home empty handed. He decided to take his business elsewhere.

Gary Greenwood also contacted us.

I have the ability to see and feel with psychic or paranormal power inside a cardboard box and and detect a mirror or aluminum box slightly smaller than the cardboard box.I have demonstrated this ability repeatedly, ( using four boxes and having someone put aluminum or mirror box in different box each time) with a high accuracy percentage.The only musts I follow are,I must be allowed to get within 6 inches of the box,I do not touch the box,and I can be standing or sitting.

Testing this ability would be quite simple,and I would like the test to be filmed with infrared ,as I believe my psychic or paranormal power would be filmable in that spectrum.I am not positive about this because I don't own infrared devices. A series of 20 to 25 actual tests ,(where I leave the room , one or more of your members place the aluminum/mirror box in one of the boxes,I reenter the room , detect which box holds the aluminum/mirror box should be enough to convince anyone of my ability.last but not least I don't claim to be perfect and I have just discovered this ability so please come up with a percentage that you all think is fair , for the correct or incorrect choice ratio of the test,I will practice,we can set a date,time,and location for the test and I will demonstrate it for you.

I would also ask that upon my winning the paranormal challenge that I get a copy of All agreements, protocols, correspondence, data, audio or video recordings, photographs or results made or obtained by either party during the challenge or negotiations leading up to the challenge may be used by either party in any way he or she may choose, including publication, and challengers and claimant both waive all exclusive rights to such information. For my own

personal records.I am willing to pay for copys of film,documentation,etc... thank you for your time

Gary Greenwood

We plan to meet with Gary Greenwood at our meeting in January. You should be there.<sup>3</sup>

Robert Tobolson called me on my cell phone from Long Island, New York, while I was on vacation in San Antonio. The nearest I could determine from our conversations, he can cure people through prayer. I finally got back to him by e-mail, and he responded.

In response to your email:,

I sent to you 28-32 mostly hand writtin terstomonials letters written from Nurses; doctor's; and people from all walks of life discribeing exactly what happened when I tried to help them through the "Power of Prayer".

I have had "hundreds" of these "MIRACLES" happen at times on a daily basis for the past 34 years.

[very much deleted]

P.S. Beleve it or not; I'm not "religious"

Just a heck of a lot of FAITH.

GOD bless you, Mike and everyone; and looking forward to seeing you.

Robert Tobolson

I explained our ground rules. For one thing, if doctors would be involved, he would be responsible for paying their fees. Also, I would not be interested in tests involving a large number of people. Besides, I wanted a demonstration involving a disease that does not ordinarily cure itself. I had in mind someone with an amputated limb. When I mentioned this on the phone, Robert quickly broke the connection.

For a reasonable test I might propose my own case. All my life I have suffered from myopia. Some true believers have accused me of shortsightedness, but I have in mind a real vision defect. My eyesight was 20/200 when last checked. I would pay \$12,000 for 20/20 vision.

We have received no further communication from Robert Tobolson.

All of this has come at us since September. Hey, Skeptics and others: The truth is out there. So is the money. Do you feel lucky?

#### References

- 1 <http://www.ntskeptics.org/2007/2007august/august2007.htm#challenge>
- 2 <http://www.ntskeptics.org/challenge/challenge.htm>
- 3 <http://www.ntskeptics.org/whatsnew.htm>

## Web News

by John Blanton

*The World Wide Web is a wonderful source of information and news. Some of it is true, and some of it is not.*

### **Not in Our Classrooms lauded in BioScience**

<http://www.ntskeptics.org/news/news2007-11-22.htm#classroom>

[http://www.ncseweb.org/resources/news/2007/ZZ/254\\_emnot\\_in\\_our\\_classroomsem\\_11\\_20\\_2007.asp](http://www.ncseweb.org/resources/news/2007/ZZ/254_emnot_in_our_classroomsem_11_20_2007.asp)

Randy Moore reviewed *Not in Our Classrooms: Why Intelligent Design is Wrong for Our Schools for BioScience* (November 2007; 57 [10]: 885-886), writing (PDF), “Not in Our Classrooms is a small, impressive book that will be a valuable resource for anyone interested in the various aspects of ‘intelligent design’ and the evolution-creationism debate.” He was especially enthusiastic about Scott’s contribution (“one of the best summaries available for the history of the modern controversy”) and Jay Wexler’s contribution on the legal issues surrounding the evolution/creationism (“should be required reading for all teachers, school administrators, and school-board members”). Moore concluded, “Not in Our Classrooms is a powerful, accessible introduction to the many facets of intelligent design. ... If you read just one book about this subject, read this one. Then give the book to others and urge them to do the same.” Moore is a professor of biology at the University of Minnesota.

You can order your copy. Follow the links above.



Hey, Skeptics, are you ready for another round of fun with the creationists? It would appear nothing was learned from Dover, Pennsylvania.

### **Science teaching getting a face-lift**

<http://www.ntskeptics.org/news/news2007-11-22.htm#creationism>

<http://www.tallahassee.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20071107/NEWS01/71107005/1010>

By TaMaryn Waters

DEMOCRAT STAFF WRITER

For the first time in more than 10 years, Florida is revamping the way science is taught in schools — and the public can have a say about how it’s done.

Another first is the possibility of evolution and creationism being an official part of those science standards.

...

The state Board of Education will finalize the standards early next year. Dec. 14 is the last day the public can comment.

The current standards do not include evolution or creationism, said Debra Thomas, science-development coordinator for the Leon County school district.

Thomas said science standards will be geared toward each grade.

Shannon Lynch, assistant superintendent of curriculum instruction, said the standards will give teachers a chance teach science more in-depth instead of rushing through a check-off list of things that need to be taught by the end of the school year.

She said the district is not tiptoeing in the potential debate that could trigger strong feelings on science verses religion.



Here’s more:

### **Majority opposes science proposal**

<http://www.ntskeptics.org/news/news2007-11-22.htm#polk>

<http://www.theledger.com/article/20071120/NEWS/711200414/1039>

### **Polk School Board Leans Toward Inclusion of Intelligent Design**

By John Chambliss *The Ledger*

LAKELAND | A majority of Polk County School Board members say they support teaching intelligent design in addition to evolution in public schools.

Board members Tim Harris, Margaret Lofton and Hazel Sellers said they oppose proposed science standards for Florida schools that lists evolution and

biological diversity as one of the “big ideas” that students need to know for a well-grounded science education.

Board member Kay Fields said last week she wants intelligent design, which is promoted by some Christian groups, taught in science classes in addition to evolution.

“If it ever comes to the board for a vote, I will vote against the teaching of evolution as part of the science curriculum,” Lofton said. “If (evolution) is taught, I would want to balance it with the fact that we may live in a universe created by a supreme being as well.”

The board’s majority opinion is at odds with many in Florida’s scientific community who strongly support the new, more rigorous science standards, and say intelligent design lacks scientific credibility.

Evolution, the theory that biological life developed and diversified through small changes over millions of years, is opposed by some evangelical Christians and Orthodox Jews who believe in a literal biblical interpretation of the Earth’s creation. Intelligent design holds that living organisms are so complex that they must have been created by some kind of higher force.

It’s unclear how the opposition by the School Board will pan out if the new standards are adopted by the state. Only Lofton has said she would vote against the evolution measure if it comes up for a vote. Others have said that it’s too early to comment before the new standards are in place.



We have our work cut out for us. Would you want it any other way? If it weren’t for people like Ken Ham and the people who flock to his message, we would have to shut down the NTS.

### Creation Museum surpasses year-long attendance goal in less than 6 months

<http://www.ntskeptics.org/news/news2007-11-22.htm#museum>

[http://www.christianpost.com/article/20071105/29958\\_Creation\\_Museum\\_Surpasses\\_Year-Long\\_Attendance\\_Goal\\_in\\_Less\\_Than\\_6\\_Months.htm](http://www.christianpost.com/article/20071105/29958_Creation_Museum_Surpasses_Year-Long_Attendance_Goal_in_Less_Than_6_Months.htm)

By Lawrence Jones *Christian Post* Reporter

A 60,000 square-foot museum that teaches about the literal six days of Creation has proven to be more popular than expected, surpassing its projected first-year attendance in less than six months since its opening.

The Creation Museum in Petersburg, Ky. welcomed its 250,000th visitor on Friday, reported Ken Ham, founder of Answers of Genesis, the evangelical group behind the \$27 million facility.

“We praise the Lord for this,” said Ham in his Nov. 3 blog entry on the organization’s website. “I still remember the mocking of certain people in the secular world that the Museum would fail as people would not be interested – and some in the Christian world who said it would be a white elephant!”

Officials now expect nearly 400,000 people to come to the Cincinnati-area museum by the year’s end, reported *The Courier-Journal*. The museum averages 1,500 to 4,000 visitors per day.



### Former pilots and officials call for new U.S. UFO probe

<http://www.ntskeptics.org/news/news2007-11-22.htm#ufo>

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUKN1248419720071112>

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Democratic U.S. presidential hopeful Dennis Kucinich may have been ridiculed for saying he had seen a UFO, but for some former military pilots and other observers, unidentified flying objects are no laughing matter.

An international panel of two dozen former pilots and government officials called on the U.S. government on Monday to reopen its generation-old UFO investigation as a matter of safety and security given continuing reports about flying discs, glowing spheres and other strange sightings.

“Especially after the attacks of 9/11, it is no longer satisfactory to ignore radar returns ... which cannot be associated with performances of existing aircraft and helicopters,” they said in a statement released at a news conference.

The [panelists] from seven countries, including former senior military officers, said they had each seen a UFO or conducted an official investigation into UFO phenomena.

The subject of UFOs grabbed the spotlight in the U.S. presidential race last month when Kucinich, a member of Congress from Ohio, said during a televised debate with other Democratic candidates that he had seen one.

Former presidents Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter are both reported to have claimed UFO sightings.



## Skeptic Ink

by Prasad Golla and John Blanton.  
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## We get letters

by John Blanton

**M**ail call: When you have your e-mail address posted on a popular skeptical Web site you will never be lonely.

Somebody impersonating an alternative medical practitioner dropped us a pleasant note. The note includes language some may not understand. Fortunately, in my youth I spent several months at sea on an aircraft carrier, so I know some of the words. For your convenience I will substitute appropriate words where necessary. My translations are in *italics*:

From: Trevor Savage ND  
To: skeptic75287@yahoo.com  
Subject: HALF WITS  
Date: Mon, 12 Nov 2007 16:43:42 +1000

Dear Skeptics

One thing about skeptics is that they only use half their brain, the left logic side. That means that the other half doesn't get a look in.

So what do we have now? a *Loving* halfwit who can't see anything unless it is DRUGS, DRUGS and MORE *LOVING* DRUGS.

No proof of any intelligence there my friends.

I wonder what you really do believe as you sprout that nothing works at all!

You poor *loving* lost souls!

"First, AK needs to be differentiated from kinesiology, which is the legitimate study of muscles and their movement. Dr. Stephen Barrett explains this

distinction and provides an excellent review of AK on the Quackwatch Web site.<sup>1</sup>"

Dr. Stephen Barrett is not even able to get a job! A "Real Medical Doctor?" Why does he cry in court that no one will come to him as a doctor? By the way if I used Applied Kinesiology on you, you would not ever be skeptical again! That I can assure you.

Maybe one day you will need real help and you will see the light with your other halfwit brain!

See ya all around ya here!

Readers should know that there exists a real Trevor Savage, who has a legitimate business employing Applied Kinesiology. Here is a link:

<http://www.naturaltherapypages.com.au/therapist/5069>

If you don't know, AK involves, in part, medical diagnosis and pharmacology prescription by measuring physical resistance. For example, the examiner may have the patient hold a medication in one hand with arm outstretched. The examiner will pull down on the arm, and if there is insufficient resistance he will decide the medication is needed (or not, I can't recall). We saw a demonstration a few years back when we attended a health fair at Texas Women's University in Denton. Here is a link:

<http://www.ntskeptics.org/2001/2001may/may2001.htm#twu>

For those interested, the \$12,000 prize is available to anybody, including Mr. Savage, who can pass our test of applied kinesiology. The prize is underwritten by a few of us who can ill afford to lose the money. We like the odds. Here is a link:

<http://www.ntskeptics.org/challenge/challenge.htm>



North Texas Skeptics  
P.O. Box 111794  
Carrollton, Texas 75011-1794

**FIRST CLASS**

Address Correction Requested

**Application for Membership**

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E-Mail address \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Occupation \_\_\_\_\_  
Special expertise and/or interests \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
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Membership agreement:

Yes, I agree with your purposes in exploring paranormal and pseudoscientific claims from a responsible and scientific point of view, and while I do not endorse the a priori rejection of paranormal phenomena and pseudoscientific claims, I believe that such claims must be subjected to the fair and systematic testing which rational enquiry demands.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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