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Health Freedom Expo: A Skeptic's Field Report (Part I)

The Highway to Holistic Health – Or Bazaar of the Bizarre?

By Daniel Barnett

“Defending Your Right to Know and Your Freedom to Choose.” This is the motto of Health Freedom Expo, a traveling convention produced by the HealthKeepers Alliance. The Expo showcases the latest in alternative medical products and strategies at various stops throughout America, and on the first weekend in November, the Expo pitched its tent (so to speak) at the Dallas Convention Center. But seriously, what would an alternative medicine expo be without at least one gate-crashing skeptic?

When I paid my ten bucks and got my admission badge, I noticed that attendance seemed a little sparse throughout my stay at the Expo. All I had to do to find the other attendees, however, was step into a crowded lecture room to hear one of the main attractions at the event – Hulda Clark, ND, queen of the alternative cancer cures. At least 250 had gathered in the room to hear this woman, who authored the books *The Cure For All Cancers* and *The Cure For HIV/AIDS*.

Clark can no longer practice her controversial therapies in America because of legal troubles; she operates a clinic in Tijuana, Mexico, called Century Nutrition where she sees patients. Back in 1993, when Clark was pitching her questionable cancer cures in Indiana, one of her former patients reported her to state law enforcement officials. Clark got wind of the mounting investigation and left the state within days, only to be arrested in 1999 by San Diego police acting on a fugitive warrant from Indiana. The charges were eventually dismissed, but Clark headed south of the border, soon to be followed by those who believed her claims about cancer. As you can imagine, none of this information made it into Clark's lecture.

At one point, Clark held up a small device known as a mini-field generator, or “Mini-FG” for short. The Mini-FG can tune in to frequencies that, according to Clark, are produced by the body's own organs:

EVENTS CALENDAR

December Program

Saturday, Dec 10, at 2 p.m.
Center for Community
Cooperation,
2900 Live Oak Street, Dallas

Program topic will be announced later...

Check the NTS Hotline or our Web site for more information.

December Board of Directors/Social Meeting

Time and place to be announced later...

Send e-mail to mselfby@ntskeptics.org, or phone 214-335-9248 for time and location.

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 NTS functions at which admission is charged at no or
 reduced cost. In addition, members will receive mailings
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You can put the frequency on a frequency power and if you know the frequency of that station, you can identify that station. So that's what was happening with this little oscillator that you attach to your skin. I thought, "What a wonderful way that would be to identify which organ is doing the transmitting." So, again, I thought that because I *could* identify the liver, the kidneys, and anything in them, and anything material – doesn't have to be some biological thing – in other words, it's a detection device. You can detect anything. And it's inexpensive. It's something that anybody can learn, and it gives you a chance to analyze objects and, of course, yourself... So, I thought that that would give a great opportunity for anybody off the street, without any de-grees, but somebody with an attitude of wanting to *prevent* disease, namely, keep your health. And that would be the way that an ordinary person could keep their health.

Clark then went on to discuss how all of her cancer patients at her Mexico clinic – and we'll discuss why she practices in Mexico shortly – all presented with one common characteristic: the patients' blood work apparently showed, without exception, a certain amount of polonium in their blood that Clark proclaimed was the result of improper water treatment procedures. Long story short, Clark explained that many municipal water treatment plants used laundry-grade bleach instead of food-grade bleach, and the polonium was present in the bleach used to purify drinking water, and thus stayed in the water. I leave this claim for others to investigate in greater detail.

I overheard some of the other attendees talking with each other in the men's restroom after Clark's lecture. As we all stood at the urinal stalls, one of the attendees told his companion, "It's in the water." The work of a skeptic is often anything but glamorous. But the attendee voiced his conviction with the same soft-spoken yet satisfied tones one might expect from a deacon at a fundamentalist church revival. And speaking of revivals, there was another unusual event that happened at the end of Clark's lecture. Expo organizers announced that they were taking an "offering" on behalf of Clark and the other lecturers, claiming that none of the speakers were being paid by the Expo to attend, but did so merely out of the goodness of their hearts. Envelopes for the "offerings" were handed out generously to the attendees.

When I stepped into the exhibit room at Health Freedom Expo, I expected to find many staples of the alternative medicine paradigm such as herbal compounds, homeopathic remedies, magnetic shoe inserts and mattress pads, etc. There was a certain amount of "mainstream" alternative medicine represented at the Expo, but there were some novel attractions in the exhibit area I thought you should be aware of.

Dolphin Breath

One booth was staffed by Earth Angel Oils of Porter, Texas. The woman staffing that booth was administering Earth Angel's products – essential oils – to another woman attending the Health Freedom Expo, and was even using a crystal dowsing pendulum by holding it over certain oils to see if the pendulum chose a particular oil to attend to that woman's needs. I left them alone with the magic charm and browsed the display shelves.

There was one blend of essential oils at the Earth Angel booth labeled “Dolphin Breath” which, according to their website, “represents playful, loving Dolphin energy – the delicate blue blend with many ancient Holy oils, exotic white flowers, sensual uplifting hormonally supportive oils & action elements for release, positive change & integration, healing the dna. Energetically the blend helps the flow of ethereal fluid along the CNS & throughout the meridians.” Yes, you read that right. Supposedly, this “Dolphin Breath” is able to repair damaged DNA. Who wouldn’t want this stuff?

Intrigued, I read the blurb sheet at the booth as the Earth Angel staffer gave the Expo attendee’s husband some doses of an essential oil that “opens up the arteries and veins,” according to what she told the guy. It turns out that Dolphin Breath is part of a larger “Breath of Light” package available from Earth Angel Oils for the introductory price of \$155:

This selection of blends was chosen to accompany the BREATH OF LIGHT breathing activation and healing process, as taught by Mary Meadows, N.D. Through the practice of the BREATH OF LIGHT, we connect the circuitry of the body, allowing our own body energy to flow along with the new frequencies of Light that are available to us for healing & change. The Breath of Light affects the physical body by changing the PH balance from acid to alkaline, oxygenates all the cells of the body, accesses Theta brainwaves for expanded consciousness and allows us entry into our cellular memory bank. Accelerated healing and spiritual awakening is the result of this work.

Well, shucky-darn, I’m sold! I’ve always wanted to alter my body’s pH levels with a process that’s more ethereal and spiritual than drinking large amounts of cranberry juice. New light frequencies? Let me place a call to our local quantum physicists; they’ll think this is *so cool*. That “cellular memory



An Expo attendee gets the essential oil treatment at the Earth Angel Oils booth

Photo by Danny Barnett



“They call him Flipper, Flipper...”

Photo by Danny Barnett

bank” business sounds intriguing, too. Maybe I can even reprogram my cells to grow me some gills so I’ll never drown while swimming in the Gulf of Mexico. But I kid. Maybe I should read what Dolphin Breath contains in the first place:

DOLPHIN BREATH Integration: A **Vibrational healing** formula that **transmutes negative energy**, healing all levels, systems, organs and cells to help us integrate our growth lessons. The blend **represents Dolphin energy — Playful, Pure of heart, bringing Love and demonstrating conscious living**. The blend is a combination of our **classic blue healing blends**, with **Ancient Holy oils** Frankincense, Myrrh, Cistus, Chamomile, Elemi, Ginger, Spikenard, Balsam, Yarrow, Cardamom, Helichrysum, Hyssop and St. John’s Wort; & further amplified by the essential oils of **high vibration white flowers** Jasmine, Ylang Ylang, Plumeria & Linden Blossom. **Hormonal, sensual and uplifting** ingredients include Clary Sage, Juniper, Sandalwood, Angelica, Bay Laurel, Holy Basil, Coriander, Carrot, Caraway, Celery Seeds, Cypress, Cedarwood, Fir, Patchouli, Rosemary verbenone, Litsea cubeba, Melissa, Bergamot, Mandarin, Lemon, Lime, Neroli, Orange, Cinnamon, Clove, Nutmeg and Peppermint — and a touch of Black Pepper to help **shift existing structures** and **encourage positive change**. *Energetically* the blend works on the Central Nervous System, helping the flow of ethereal fluid along the CNS and throughout the meridians — good for the whole body!

So we’ve got frankincense and myrrh, cinnamon and clove, ylang-ylang and jasmine – but no actual dolphin ingredients? Is “Dolphin Breath” dolphin-safe? Or did someone just take the brew to Sea World and let the local dolphins cackle at it during the petting exhibit? Who knows? This is beginning to smell

like creative marketing that's heavily dependent on positive imagery that no New Ager can possibly resist. But, as always, I could be wrong...

A Most Unusual Foot Bath

When I hear the term "foot-washing," I tend to think of people in the time of Christ traveling through the deserts of the Middle East, often barefoot. But even today, with our cushioned hiking boots, fuzzy lounge slippers, high heels, and Birkenstocks, sometimes we're just in the mood for a good old-fashioned foot-soaking.



A visitor to the Health Freedom Expo gets introduced to IonCleanse. That's supposed to be her body's toxins floating in the tub

Photo by Danny Barnett

And then there's IonCleanse, presented at the Health Freedom Expo by Nature's Alternative of Elkhart, Indiana. At their booth, I saw one woman resting in a chair, her feet submerged in a tub filled with some sort of liquid. This was the IonCleanse regimen, as described by this excerpt from a Nature's Alternative brochure:

You will start by sitting in a chair with your feet in a container of warm water for 20-30 minutes. As the process begins, the water will turn colors as the body works to remove waste and by-products. In some cases you may feel light sensations such as itching, drawing, and/or tingling. At the end of your session, your feet will be washed and your water examined.

IonCleanse, Inc. believes the colors in the water to represent the following:

Yellow-Green: Detoxifying from the Kidney, bladder, urinary tract, and female/prostate area

Orange: Detoxifying from the joints

Brown: Detoxifying from the liver, tobacco, cellular debris

Black: Detoxifying from the liver

Dark Green: Detoxifying from the Gall Bladder

White Foam: Lymphatic system

White Cheese-like particles: Most likely Yeast

Black Flecks: Heavy Metals

Red Flecks: Blood Clot material

Put simply, IonCleanse is reputedly a detoxification process that works with negatively charged ions that attach themselves to waste in the human body "and removing it from the body through osmosis." Through the feet, of course.

The possible benefits from using IonCleanse include increased strength and energy, decreased pain and stiffness, and "Feeling awesome." During the process, though, someone who is very toxic may experience symptoms such as headaches "as your body pulls stored poisons from your head and more oxygen is received to the brain." There is also a possibility of nausea, fatigue, and loose stools. You have been warned.

Next month in Part II: More products and exhibitors at the Health Freedom Expo, plus proposed legislation that may affect all Texans. Stay tuned!

Science and Pseudoscience in the classroom

by Bret Cantwell

It seems like science in America is being attacked on many fronts these days. Quacks purvey a myriad of snake oil products meant to separate us from our hard earned money. Politicians in bed with industry deny climate change in order to maximize profits. Christian conservatives want to turn the biology lectern into a pulpit. Unfortunately many of these assaults are proving successful, at least in the realm of public opinion.

Those of us concerned about the state of science education and scientific literacy in America can take heart in the periodic ray of hope such as the Dover, PA school board elections on Nov. 8, and a class being offered at a prestigious private school in Dallas. Hockaday School physics instructor Richard Taylor, concerned over some misconceptions he encountered while co-teaching a class on Science Fiction, developed a one semester course covering "Science and Pseudoscience." In an e-mail Mr. Taylor wrote, "I have often thought that we need a 'How do we know it's true' type of course and thought that this might have some success. Our science department has been very encouraging."

At its core, “Science and Pseudoscience” uses the latter to teach the former. Paranormal and pseudoscientific claims are investigated via the scientific method in order to teach concepts like observation, experimentation and what constitutes a scientific theory. The class was first offered during the 2004-5 academic year and is not available for 05-6 due to Mr. Taylor’s taking a leave of absence to teach in London, but will be in the future after he returns.

The topics covered in class run the gamut of issues near, but not so dear to the hearts of skeptics. Ufology, alternative medicine, psi, even the Cottingly Fairies and many other subjects were discussed and investigated by students, all through the prism of science. Two books were used as official textbooks – *Why people believe weird things* by Michael Shermer and *The Bermuda Triangle Mystery Solved* by Larry Kusche – and students were encouraged to study further in books, magazines and on the Internet. When ABC fortuitously ran its *Primetime Live* special on UFOs during the semester, watching it became homework for that night.

“Science and Pseudoscience” emphasized research and experimentation with lab work and presentations. Investigation into ESP claims was an opportunity to give them a fuller understanding of statistics in addition to repeatable and falsifiable testing methods. Skeptics should be especially glad to know that this sort of hands on work is included since most of the paranormal claims that try for the North Texas Skeptics or James Randi Educational Foundation challenges can be reduced to testable repeatable criteria not much different than what happens in high school physics or chemistry class. It’s only when someone claims to have captured a Yeti or been given an alloy unknown on Earth by aliens that we need to raise the sophistication level of the testing.

At the end of the semester all of the students gave a presentation on a topic they had selected for individual study. Last year’s class chose subjects like Tarot cards, dowsing and Kinotakara. The presentations are available on the Hockaday physics department link below. The content for future offerings of the class, while guided by Mr. Taylor will be open to suggestion by those taking the class because the best way to get a student interested is to have them investigate something they find interesting.

I don’t think we’ll be seeing many of the kids who signed up “Science and Pseudoscience” showing up at NTS meetings any time soon, but in an America where the Kansas School Board incorporates non-science into its science standards, it should gladden all of us that a course like it is being offered at all.

<http://home.hockaday.org/HockadayNet/academic/physics/>



What’s new

By Robert Park

[Robert Park publishes the What’s New column at <http://www.bobpark.org/>. Following are some clippings of interest.]

Evolution: Bush asks for \$7b to fight evolving bird-flu virus.

This is the final week of the Kitzmiller v. Dover Area School Board trial in a Harrisburg, PA federal court. Back in August, before the trial was underway, President Bush came down on the side of intelligent design, much to the delight of the religious- right (WN 5 Aug 05) . On Tuesday, however, he announced that he would ask Congress for \$7.1 billion to prepare the nation for a worldwide outbreak of flu. It’s a hedge against evolution. Although a virulent strain of bird flu has killed at least 62 people in Asia, there have been no confirmed cases of human-to-human transmission. The fear is that the H5N1 virus will mutate (evolve) making that possible. Does this mean that Mr. Bush has changed his mind on evolution?

Supreme question: what are the nominee’s views on science?

According to the news, Samuel Alito, the President’s new choice for the Court, told Senators in both parties that the Court may have gone too far in separating church and state. How can they be too separate? That’s particularly scary now when it seems possible that the decision in Kitzmiller v. Dover Area School Board will be appealed to the Supreme Court, no matter how it turns out. We’ll go back to questions submitted by readers next week, but in light of Alito’s nomination, WN will exercise its editorial prerogative, posing its own question this week: “Does the intelligent designer who designs people, also design viruses? If so, is this conflict-of-interest?”

Fundamentalism: the position of the Catholic Church evolves.

In the summer heat, a powerful Cardinal, writing in the NY Times, flatly rejected Darwinian evolution, outraging most scientists. However, WN wrote that, “the Church’s position is evolving,” (WN 8 Jul 05) , and so it has. In an Associated Press story today, Cardinal Poupard, head of the Pontifical Council for Culture, said, “we know the dangers of a religion that severs its links with reason and becomes prey to fundamentalism. The faithful have the obligation to listen to that which secular modern science has to offer.” Amen.

Intelligent Design: you know who's running for school board?

In Tuesday's election, voters soundly defeated eight members of the Dover Area School Board. The ninth member was not up for reelection. For now, Dover children will learn biology untainted by religious fable, but events in Kansas should be a warning. Six years ago, the Kansas School Board simply eliminated any mention of biological evolution, or the big bang, from the curriculum (WN 13 Aug 99). Kansans woke up to laughter and voted them out. Unfortunately, school board elections don't get much notice until there's a problem. As soon as the voters relaxed, religious zealots were back on the ballot. The religious right again controls the Kansas School Board.

Evolution: the Kansas school board redefines "intelligent."

As expected, the Kansas Board of Education adopted new teaching standards on Tuesday that go beyond merely letting in intelligent design. The board went straight to the heart of the matter and redefined "science." WN noted earlier that by the Oxford English Dictionary definition, "intelligent design" isn't "science" (WN 5 Aug 05). No problem. If ID doesn't fit the definition, change the definition. In Kansas schools, "science" is now a search for "more adequate explanations of natural phenomena." Who needs physics? Divine intervention can explain everything without all that math.

OK, teach the controversy: religion has all the disagreements.

Last week, WN quoted Cardinal Poupard, head of the Pontifical Council for Culture: "we know the dangers of a religion that severs its links with reason and becomes prey to fundamentalism. The faithful have the obligation to listen to that which secular modern science has to offer." To which WN said "amen." We were still trying to find out if atheists could now become Catholics, when the Pope made it clear that he is the guy in charge. The Pope described the natural world as an "intelligent project," to the delight of the Discovery Institute. Meanwhile, televangelist Pat Robertson warned the people of Dover that if disaster strikes them "don't turn to God, you just ejected him from your city."

Patent nonsense: another perpetual motion machine is patented.

It happens every few years. U.S. pat. 6,960,975, was issued on November 1, 2005 to Boris Volfson for a "Space vehicle propelled by the pressure of inflationary vacuum." It uses a Podkletnov rotating superconducting gravity shield to "change the curvature of space-time." Of course, he does not mention

the forbidden words "perpetual motion." The patent office rejects patent applications that use those words under the 1985 ruling in *Newman v Quigg*. These days you have to call it "zero-point energy." Ironically, the patent was issued shortly after arbitration required the Patent Office to reinstate Tom Valone, who lost his job in the fallout from the 1999 Conference on Free Energy (WN 2 Aug 02).

Intelligent Design: Pat Robertson should have been a witness.

Last week WN commented on the spectacle of televangelist Robertson calling down the wrath of God on a bucolic village in Pennsylvania. *Kitzmiller v. Dover School District*, which wound up testimony two weeks ago, turns on the issue of whether Intelligent Design is a scientific theory, as its proponents insist, or religion in drag. Several WN readers noted that this influential Christian evangelist has demonstrated that ID is religion. If *Kitzmiller* is appealed, as seems likely, WN urges that Robertson be called to testify.

Academic decline: growing influence of evangelical Christianity?

A front page story in Monday's *Wall Street Journal* describes the spread of college courses questioning evolution. The driving force is the Templeton Foundation, which provides start-up funding for guest speakers, library materials, research and conferences. Between 1994 and 2002 Templeton funded nearly 800 courses. Over a 3-year period Guillermo Gonzalez at Iowa State collected \$58,000 (WN 3 Jun 05). ID should be taught in college, but it should not be confused with science.

Vatican defines: the chief astronomer says ID is not science.

Earlier today, the Rev. George Coyne, the director of the Vatican Observatory said that "intelligent design" is not science and does not belong in science classrooms. This seemed to put the chief astronomer firmly on the side of Cardinal Poupard, head of the Pontifical Council for Culture and orthogonal to Austrian Cardinal Schoenborn (WN 8 Jul 05), and perhaps to Pope Benedict XVI, as we saw last week.

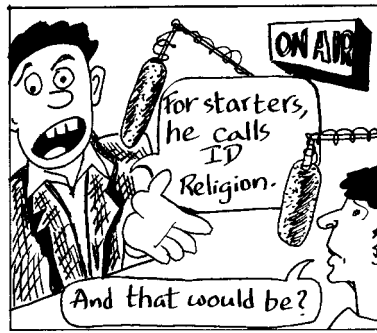
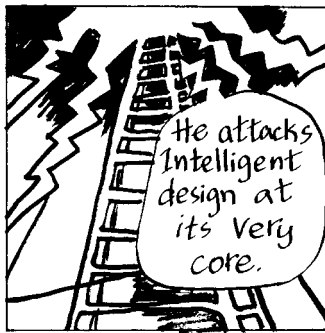
Weight loss: NIH study confirms that "the physics plan" works.

A one year study, backed by NIH, found that the weight-loss drug Merida is more than twice as effective if accompanied by a program of diet and exercise. Why am I not surprised? This is, after all the Physics Plan, first proposed in WN six years ago: "Burn more calories than you consume and we guarantee you will lose weight," (WN 25 Feb 00). It is the only weight-loss plan endorsed by the First Law of Thermodynamics.

Bob Park can be reached via email at opa@aps.org

Skeptic Ink

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Discovery Institute's Position on Dover, PA, "Intelligent Design" Case

By: John G. West — Discovery Institute
September 21, 2005

We often reference the Discovery Institute as the leading force behind Intelligent Design. To enlighten our readers, we present here a view from their side. Readers are encouraged to visit the DI Web site and get the low down from the ultimate source. It is necessary to understand your opposition on any issue, and your opponents' own words are often your best tool in a debate. For example, John West's statements in the following are informative of DI's masterful use of polemic, something their opponents will need to deal with. Please note how he translates maintaining a scientifically rigorous school curriculum into censorship. This is from the DI site at <http://www.discovery.org>.

John Blanton

It's about Free Speech, Not Church and State

In *Kitzmiller v. Dover Area School District*, the ACLU is suing the school board of Dover, Pennsylvania for adopting a policy that requires students to be informed about the theory of intelligent design. The ACLU claims that the Dover policy violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment by promoting a religious doctrine. While Discovery Institute does not support efforts to require the teaching of intelligent design in public schools, it also strongly opposes the ACLU's attempt to censor classroom discussion of intelligent design. Dr. John West, Associate Director of Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture, has released the following statement explaining the Institute's position:

"Eighty years ago the ACLU went to court in Tennessee to defend the right of John Scopes to teach his students about evolution. Today, the ACLU is betraying the principle of academic freedom by seeking a govern-

ment-imposed gag-order on teachers and students that would prevent even voluntary discussions of intelligent design in the science classroom. All Americans who cherish free speech should reject the ACLU's effort to decide the debate over evolution through court orders rather than the free marketplace of ideas."

"Apparently the ACLU has come to believe that some ideas are just too dangerous for students and teachers to discuss. On the one hand, it insists that the First Amendment protects a teacher's right to teach evidence supporting Darwin's theory. On the other hand, it claims that the same First Amendment forbids teachers from discussing dissenting scientific theories. It looks like the ACLU believes that free speech only applies to one side of the evolution debate. This is a blatant double-standard."

"Discovery Institute strongly opposes the ACLU's effort to make discussions of intelligent design illegal. At the same time, we disagree with efforts to get the government to require the teaching of intelligent design. Misguided policies like the one adopted by the Dover School District are likely to be politically divisive and hinder a fair and open discussion of the merits of intelligent design among scholars and within the scientific community, points we have made repeatedly since we first learned about the Dover policy in 2004. Furthermore, most teachers currently do not know enough about intelligent design or have sufficient curriculum materials to teach about it accurately and objectively."

"Rather than require students to learn about intelligent design, what we recommend is that teachers and students study more about Darwinian evolution, not only the evidence that supports the theory, but also scientific criticisms of the theory."

Discovery Institute News — 1511 3rd Ave Suite 808 — Seattle, WA 98101 — (206) 292-0401 x107

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