

# The Phoenix Skeptics News

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## Important Announcement!

Our April meeting will not be held on a Saturday as is normal. Instead, the meeting will be held on Friday, April 29, at 7 p.m., at the usual place. Please see "Upcoming Meetings" for more details.

## February Meeting

Jeff Jacobson (sorry about the wrong name in the previous issue) spoke about Scientology and its cult nature. Among other things, he told about the failures of several attempts to test its scientific claims.

## Philip Klass Lecture

Philip Klass, author of several books on UFOs, appeared at ASU's Neeb Hall during the evening of March 5. He spoke about several UFO cases that he has investigated, and explained to the audience how one should go about questioning events and looking for down-to-earth explanations.

## March Meeting

Mike Stackpole, author and game designer, spoke on the claims of the dangers of Dungeons and Dragons (D&D) and other role-playing games. One of the claims was that the game can cause suicide. Mr. Stackpole pointed out that suicides that are even remotely attributable to D&D are less than would be expected for that segment of the population.

## The Organization Explained!

One of our members expressed surprise at the organizational announcement that was made in the last newsletter. In particular, the lack of voting rights of members was questioned.

As was mentioned, we are organized along similar lines as CSICOP. An advantage is that a "hostile takeover" by those who would change the nature of the organization is highly unlikely.

A disadvantage is that not everyone has a vote on what the group does.

Anyone who is interested in becoming a Fellow (voting member) are welcome to petition the existing Fellows. It is expected that Fellows will put more time into the organization and its activities than other members.

## Frank Baranowski: Promoter of the Paranormal

By Jim Lippard

Frank Baranowski, Mesa hypnotist, spoke at the January 9 meeting of the Life Force Chapter of the American Society of Dowsers. Baranowski, a believer in reincarnation who performs past-life regressions, is widely known in the Valley as a lecturer on paranormal subjects. He had a talk show about the paranormal on KFYI for two years, ending just recently.

Baranowski began his talk by denigrating science with an old myth. Scientists have proved that bumblebees can't fly, he said. I have not come up with the source of this story, but there are at least two possibilities. One proposed origin is that a World War I German physicist proved that bumblebees with rigid wings could not fly. The physicist therefore concluded, correctly, that bumblebees have flexible wings. Another possible origin is reported by Al Seckel of the Southern California Skeptics. According to Seckel, a technical report by the Pacific Northwest section of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics attempted to track down the originator of the story, and found that "he apparently does not exist as a single individual, but rather is archetypal of several investigators (usually entomologists) who have attempted to work with concepts and tools outside their own field of specialization and—for a variety of reasons—blew it."

Baranowski went on to talk about other phenomena. One of his claims was that an Arizona State University journalism professor named Walter Abel had a near-death experience (NDE) in the late 1970's in which his soul traveled to visit his daughter, Dorothy, whom he had not seen for some time. His daughter felt the presence of her father, and immediately called home to find that he was in the hospital. In an attempt to verify this story, I checked with the ASU Archives and examined all ASU Catalogs from 1970 to present in an attempt to find Walter Abel. There is no mention of any such professor in the catalogs or the records of the ASU Archives, though there was a visiting professor of mass communication named

Clarence Wallace Abel in the 1975-76 school year. In a telephone conversation with Baranowski before I checked with ASU, he stated that the man's name was indeed Walter Abel and that he believed the story was published by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, though he wasn't sure where.

At one point in the talk, Baranowski claimed that a reputable source has managed to record the voices of spirits on tape. When asked by a member of the audience who this person was, he revealed that the man was Walter Uphoff. Far from being a reputable source, Uphoff is the psi researcher who continued to believe that magicians Mike Edwards and Steve Shaw were genuine psychics even after their roles in James Randi's "Project Alpha" hoax were revealed. (The "spirit voices", by the way, were investigated by CSICOP and found to be motor noise from the tape recorder.)

In further comments on ghosts, Baranowski stated that Elizabeth Rauscher, whom he described as "one of the top twenty physicists in the world" believes in ghosts and has an organization doing research into the subject. Dr. Rauscher, who received a Ph.D. in nuclear science from UC Berkeley in 1979, said in a telephone interview that she does research and development for an electronics company, not ghost research. She said she does have a layman's interest in "what people might perceive as ghost-like phenomena, such as hallucinations," but that she is not researching it. She would not go so far as to say that she is one of the top twenty physicists in the world, but she did note that she is listed in six "Who's Who" books and has an international reputation. She appears in the 14th edition (1979) of *American Men and Women of Science: Physical and Biological Sciences*, the 15th edition contains only a single line referring the reader back to the entry in the previous edition, and she does not appear in the current (16th) edition.

Baranowski had favorable things to say about the book *The Monuments of Mars: A City on the Edge of Forever* by Richard Hoagland. This book claims that there are structures on Mars which were built by alien intelligences (focusing especially on a "face"). Baranowski promoted Hoagland as a genius and prodigy who graduated *cum laude* from Harvard at age 17 and was an advisor to NASA. I examined a copy of *The Monuments*

*of Mars* to read the "Publisher's Foreword" which contains a biography of Hoagland. While he did indeed do some impressive things at a young age (the earliest mentioned was his being curator of a Museum of Science at age 19), I saw no mention of Harvard University. There was also no mention of his being an advisor to NASA. According to Jon Muller's review of another book on the Mars face, Hoagland is a "self-educated science advisor and writer." According to another review of this other book in *Fate* magazine, Hoagland is a "science writer and former adviser to CBS News and Walter Cronkite during the Apollo moon landing program."

Baranowski also stated that, unlike the U.S., the Soviet Union is taking Hoagland's claims seriously. According to Baranowski, the upcoming U.S.S.R. Mars mission is specifically "to look for a lost civilization."

Baranowski's entire lecture was filled with similar comments. He stated that Origen, an early third-century Christian writer, lived "480 years after Jesus." He said that according to Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, he and she were both priests during the Inquisition in past lives. (This is quite a plausible claim, as Kübler-Ross stated in an interview in the May 1981 *Playboy* that she and California cult leader Jay Barham worked together in Jerusalem 2,000 years ago with Jesus.) Baranowski claimed that while searching for the Lost Dutchman's Gold Mine in the Superstition Mountains with the aid of a local clairvoyant and someone who claimed to have found a giant statue of a bird in the mountains, he passed through some sort of "time warp" or into "another dimension" in which everything looked blue. He stated that Thelma Moss, who was a researcher of Kirlian photography at UCLA, was forced to resign her post after the dean was pressured by pharmaceutical companies—because she published studies which showed that 68% of mental patients were incarcerated for conditions brought about by the use of Valium and Darvon.

Baranowski concluded his talk by playing a videotape of a television program called "The Psychic Connection." The program was about Baranowski's hypnotic regression of a woman named Devone Stephenson. Devone's mother, Phyllis, had a sister named Arduce who died at a young age of a brain tumor. Phyllis became convinced that her daughter was the reincarnation of her sister, primarily because

her daughter complained of headaches when she was at the same age as Arduce was when she died. In addition to this, the show stated that Devone was found to have scar tissue on her brain in the same place where Arduce had her tumor. When hypnotically regressed, Devone claimed to be Arduce.

The show carefully avoided any scientific explanations for such phenomena as the regression itself and Devone's apparent recognition of objects which had belonged to Arduce. The possibility of suggestions or cueing of Devone by her mother and Baranowski was never brought up, for example.

Baranowski also handed out photocopies of news clippings about some of his past-life regression cases. In one of them the story was told of a Mesa man named Gene Sutherland who began speaking in his sleep. His wife recorded some of it, which seemed to be Russian. Mrs. Sutherland played the tape for ASU Russian professor Lee Croft, who said he thought there was some Russian in it. Croft suspected that Sutherland subconsciously picked up some Russian phrases some time in the past. But according to Baranowski, this is evidence of Sutherland's being a Russian in a past life. The article goes on to note that Sutherland had met up with Russian troops in Germany during World War II and spent about a week with them.

Another article described a Mesa woman named Mary Pelzer who had a lifelong fear of water. Baranowski hypnotically regressed her to a past life in which she was an 18th century Russian peasant who drowned. As a result of Baranowski's treatment, she today no longer fears water and loves to swim. In Baranowski's lecture, though, he stated that under hypnosis Mrs. Pelzer spoke Russian fluently. According to the newspaper article, Mrs. Pelzer said she listened to a tape of herself under hypnosis and she "was speaking English with a European accent."

Frank Baranowski makes a great number of extraordinary claims. It is certainly not evident, however, that he can provide the extraordinary proof required to support them.

### Acknowledgements

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### Book Review

#### The New Inquisition: Irrational Rationalism and the Citadel of Science

by Robert Anton Wilson

1987, Falcon Press, 240pp.

Reviewed by Jim Lippard

In *The New Inquisition*, Robert Anton Wilson rails against what he calls "Fundamentalist Materialism," a dogmatic skepticism that rejects paranormal claims a priori. In its place, he recommends a "liberal materialism" based on a principle of agnosticism which "refuses total belief or total denial and regards models as tools to be used only and always where appropriate and replaced (by other models) only and always where not appropriate."

Wilson's primary target is the "Citadel of Science," those members of the scientific

community who have "increasing intolerance and inquisitorial attitude toward all old or new paradigms which conflict with its own favorite reality-tunnel." CSICOP is repeatedly attacked. The nature of Wilson's attacks is to criticize various actions and statements of members of the "Citadel" as being dogmatic or repressive. At the same time, he presents reports of many scientific anomalies—rains of unusual objects, spontaneous combustion, sighting of unusual creatures, and so on.

Unfortunately, Wilson's work is marred by incredibly shoddy research. Throughout the book, he refers to a *Skeptical Inquirer* article by Mario Bunge of McGill University. In every single reference, he calls Bunge "Professor Munge." He also repeatedly refers to Gary Zukav, author of *The Dancing Wu-Li Masters* as "Gary Zarov." (The book is also riddled with typographical errors.)

Beginning on page 45, Wilson reports the story of Dennis Rawlins. Rawlins was a former member of the CSICOP executive council who published an article in the October 1981 issue of *Fate* magazine attacking CSICOP for "covering up" findings regarding a test of Michel Gauquelin's "Mars Effect." Wilson's account is apparently based solely on this article, and is full of distortions. Gauquelin's study of European sports champions showed that 22% were born in the two "Mars sectors" rather than the expected 17%. Marvin Zelen suggested a test (the Zelen test) on a subsample of Gauquelin's data to see if perhaps 22% of all individuals were born in the Mars sectors (possibly due to seasonal factors). The Zelen test was conducted by Gauquelin (comparing a subsample of 303 sports champions with 16,756 non-sports champions), who found that only 17% of non-sports champions were born at those times. Rawlins had criticized the Zelen test on the grounds that Gauquelin's European data was no good, and that the Zelen test would therefore seem to support Gauquelin. CSICOP then conducted a test of U.S. sports champions, which did not show a "Mars Effect." This latter test was done primarily by Dennis Rawlins. Rawlins was later ejected from CSICOP for other reasons (see "Statement by CSICOP Executive Council in Response to Rawlins," *Skeptical Inquirer*, Winter 1981-82 and the introduction to Rawlins' rant "Remus Extremus" in the same issue).

In Wilson's account, he fails to distinguish the Zelen test from the U.S. test, and gives the impression that CSICOP "juggled the figures" on the Zelen test—which was really conducted by Gauquelin (and published in *The Humanist*). He says (p. 46) that CSICOP "obtained this result by juggling figures—especially by reducing the total number of sports champions from 2088 to 303." In fact, it was Gauquelin who selected 303 sports champions in order to conduct the Zelen test.

On pp. 52-53, Wilson talks about the Columbus, Ohio poltergeist case. His description of James Randi's involvement is to say that "Then Mr. Randi of CSICOP arrived and, without entering the house, announced that it was all a fraud. The Resch family, offended, refused to let Mr. Randi into the house, whereupon he left, presumably still knowing it was all fraud." In fact, the CSICOP team of James Randi and professors Steven Shore and Nicholas Sanduleak of Case Western Reserve University were refused admittance upon identifying themselves as representatives of CSICOP. Parapsychologist William Roll, on the other hand, was admitted. The CSICOP team questioned most of the participants—the parents of Tina Resch (the girl around whom the poltergeist activity occurred), the reporters, photographers, TV cameramen, and others who were at the house. CSICOP also obtained a contact sheet of photographs from Fred Shannon of the *Columbus Dispatch* which showed evidence of fakery. Wilson fails to note these photographs, a videotape filmed by WTVN-TV of Cincinnati which shows Tina Resch knocking over a lamp, or testimony from several reporters who observed Tina cheating (see "The Columbus Poltergeist Case: Part I" by James Randi in the Spring 1985 *Skeptical Inquirer*).

It's not just CSICOP actions and articles that Wilson misrepresents. On p. 71 he says that "Velikovsky predicted in the 1950's that Jupiter would be found to produce radio emissions. Such emissions have recently been found." It is not surprising that Velikovsky made a correct prediction. Wilson makes no mention of the hundreds of incorrect predictions made by Velikovsky (see, for example, Stephen Jay Gould's "Velikovsky in Collision" in his book *Ever Since Darwin* or the three articles on Velikovsky in the Fall 1980 *Skeptical Inquirer*).

Wilson cites a wide variety of accounts of fish falls, eel falls, coin falls, unexplained aerial explosions, and so on. I decided to check out some of his references. What I found was quite interesting.

On page 82, Wilson cites the 10 September 1910 *Scientific American* as saying that "a worked stone fell from the sky into the Yaqui Valley of Mexico. The author, Charles Holder, and a Major Burnham, examined it and agreed it had two concentric circles inscribed on it and some characters that Holder thought were Mayan. The stone was eight feet long."

The article in question is "The Esperanza Stone" on page 196 of that issue. The article begins: "Many years ago a strange stone resembling a meteorite fell into the valley of the Yaqui, Mexico, and the sensational story went from one end to the other of the country that a stone bearing human inscriptions had descended to the earth. Hundreds visited the place, natives made a pilgrimage to it from all over Sonora, and the stone, called the Esperanza, became famous in its way, and many of the inhabitants believe that it is a message from heaven, and demand that it be translated." Later in the article, it becomes clear that this first paragraph is an old legend, and that the discovery of the stone by Major Burnham was recent. As Holder states, "The stone was found by Major Frederick Burnham, ... and not long after he invited the writer to visit it, and endeavor, if possible, to decipher its story. We left Los Angeles in April ..." Holder makes no further comment about the stone having fallen from the sky, and in fact states that "I assumed the hypothesis that as there had been a high civilization in the Yucatan and Guatemala in the past, shown by the writings and antiquities of the Mayans and later Mexicans, such a people must have been dominated by the spirit of exploration to the north; and as the stone is on a natural line or march from the south to the north, I assume that this is a record or report of some ancient people, probably Mayas, telling to the world and those who might come after, that they had reached the big river which to-day bears a similar name, the Maya and the Yaqui." Holder concludes that "What it actually does mean, remains for the scientific men of the world to decide, but Major Burnham and myself are committed to the romantic hypothesis that this is the message of a forebear of the Mayas, some ancient warrior of

long ago, some knight who fought his way to the land of the Yaquis, who brought a great rock down from the mountains and placed upon it the seal of Mayan conquest."

On page 88, Wilson cites the 23 February 1922 *Nature* in his claim that "another unexplained explosion 'of startling intensity' over London. Again, no conventional explanation in terms of airplanes crashing or exploding." Wilson is correct that no conventional explanation is offered in terms of anything relating to airplanes, but wrong that the explosion is "unexplained." On page 249 of "Our Astronomical Column" in that issue, under the headline "Detonating Fireball in Sunshine," is the following report: "Mr. W.F. Denning writes that this object observed by him on February 7 at 3.55 p.m. appears to have been seen by comparatively few observers, although the loud detonations which followed it were heard by large numbers of people, chiefly in Warwickshire, over which county the fireball passed. It seems to have caused the loudest reports near the middle section of its flight, in the region of Quinton, Feckenham, Mere Hall, and Droitwich. At some places there was only one sound heard, at others two, but all observers agree that the concussion and vibration were of startling intensity. The detonations were heard along a line directed from S.E. to N.W. The radiant point of the meteor was at 60°-11°, and the height from 56 to 32 miles; the length of luminous flight was 82 miles, and the velocity about 10 miles per second. The position of the object was from over Oxfordshire to Shropshire."

On page 156, Wilson cites the 21 December 1923 *Science* in support of a "fish fall in Siberia; natives claim it happens regularly." On page 516 of that issue is a letter from Waldemar Jochelson under the heading "Fishes Fallen from the Sky," in response to (an excellent) article "Rains of Fishes" by E.W. Gudger, an Associate in Ichthyology at the American Museum, in the November-December 1921 issue of *Natural History*. Jochelson's letter is not a report of a fish fall at all. Instead, he states that "The Yukaghir, living on the Siberian tundra between the Kolyma and Alaseya rivers, told me that the sky, regarded by them as a beneficent deity, to supply men with food flings fishes to the earth." He goes on to describe that "While spending the winter of 1909-1910 on Umnak

Island of the Aleutian Chain I experienced volcanic shocks several times. ... In the morning the shore was covered with a layer of stunned fish, sea-urchins and shell-fish about two feet high and two feet wide, but in neighboring days these were carried to the neighboring hills and eaten by gulls and ravens. The presence of shells of *echini* and *mollusca* on the hills may lead some traveler to the deceptive idea that the hills were formerly the sea bottom."

On page 195, Wilson cites the December 1932 *Popular Science Monthly* as describing "a shower of eels on 4 August that year in Hendon, Sunderland, England." I was unable to find any such article in that issue.

On page 209, Wilson cites the 22 April 1949 *Science* regarding "a fall of fish in Biloxi, Miss. ... Dr. A.D. Bajkov, a well-known ichthyologist, was in Biloxi that day and was personally bombarded." On page 402 of that issue, under the heading "Do Fish Fall from the Sky?" is a letter from A.D. Bajkov of the Oyster Laboratory, Biloxi, Mississippi. He does not describe a fish fall in Biloxi, but rather reports that "a rainfall of fish occurred on October 23, 1947 in Marksville, Louisiana, while I was conducting biological investigations for the Department of Wild Life and Fisheries. They were freshwater fish native to local waters... The area in which they fell was approximately 1,000 feet long and about 75 or 80 feet wide, extending in a north-southerly direction, and was covered unevenly by fish. The actual falling of the fish occurred in somewhat short intervals, during foggy and comparatively calm weather. The velocity of the wind on the ground did not exceed eight miles per hour. The New Orleans weather bureau had no report of any large tornado, or updrift, in the vicinity of Marksville at that time. However, James Nelson Gowanlach, chief biologist for the Louisiana Department of Wild Life and Fisheries, and I had noted the presence of numerous small tornadoes, or 'devil dusters' the day before the 'rain of fish' in Marksville. Fish rains have nearly always been described as being accompanied by violent thunderstorms and heavy rains. This, however, was not the case in Marksville." Bajkov goes on to say that "Certainly occurrences of this nature are rare, and are not always reported, but nevertheless they are well known. The first mention of the phenomenon

was made by Athanaseus in his *De pluvia piscium* nearly two thousand years ago, and E.W. Gudger, in his four collective articles, reports 78 cases of falling fish from the sky. There is no reason for anyone to devaluate the scientific evidence. Many people have never seen tornadoes, but they do not doubt them, and they accept the fact that the wind can lift and carry heavy objects. Why can't fish be lifted with water and carried by the whirlwind?"

Not all of Wilson's references are so badly misrepresented. I did find one source which supported the case he made: The 6 January 1881 issue of *Nature*, page 233, quotes a letter from Colonel Foster Ward in the October 1880 *Symon's Monthly Meteorological Magazine* about "remarkable hailstones that fell during a slight thunderstorm at Partenkirchen, Bavaria, at 6 p.m. on August 21." Most of the hailstones were described as being "of 'tadpole' shape" and "clear as glass, perfectly round" with "five knobs ... at equal distance from one another." Wilson's description of this article, on page 156, is accurate.

Despite Wilson's abysmal scholarship, I think the book's message about avoiding dogmatism is worthwhile. It is also fairly entertaining reading. One should be wary, however, of taking seriously any of Wilson's explanations for the phenomena he describes—and this is quite consistent with the "principle of agnosticism" Wilson puts forth.

## Robert Anton Wilson and the H.E.A.D. Revolution

by Zak Woodruff

Robert Anton Wilson, author, futurist, philosopher and self-proclaimed public nuisance, presented a lecture and a seminar at the First Unitarian Universalist Church on March 4th and 5th. The lecture ("The H.E.A.D. Revolution") cost \$6, and admission to the following day's seminar (appropriately entitled "Everything You Know is Wrong!") was \$25. I decided to attend the lecture to get a glimpse of what Robert Anton Wilson is all about.

Actually, it might be more accurate to refer to Friday night's performance as an 'entertainment.' This is not only because, as Wilson states, "'lecture' sounds too dull and academic," but also because the scientific, clinical content of his speeches is quite low in comparison to the anecdotes, commentaries



and witty quips abundant in his orations. The audience, an extremely varied group of people, seemed to enjoy the latter content most, bringing to question Wilson's purpose: education, entertainment, or just a warm-up for the next day's seminar? All of the above?

H.E.A.D. stands for Hedonic Engineering And Development, which, according to one flyer advertising this event, means "using YOUR BRAIN for fun and profit. Efficiently, Ecstatically, Creatively. Contacting the HIGHER INTELLIGENCE within." Wilson's main message is that expansion of our perspectives and views of reality is the key to ultimate happiness. "We were given these magnificent computers that can out-perform anything on the planet that has evolved electronically so far, and then, just to prove God has a sense of humor, we weren't given an instruction manual on how to use them." Wilson doesn't give an instruction manual either (at least not during the lecture), but does give some tips on writing one's own. The problem is, says Wilson, that though the brain is versatile, it gets programmed to one static "reality tunnel" during youth; "Try to make the world fit into that, and then you wonder why the world is in a mess?" Therefore one must work on accepting many approaches to reality: scientific, non-scientific, theistic, atheistic, right-wing, left-wing, etc. This philosophy might be summed up in the statement, "The only truth is that there are many truths." If this sounds familiar, it may be because many philosophers, from Nietzsche to Jacques Derrida, have expressed similar ideas. Wilson just happens to have a more entertaining approach, hence his popularity. (Those unable to attend the full-day seminar were encouraged to dig deeper into this philosophy through Wilson's books.)

A potential problem with Wilson, from the skeptical perspective at least, is his tendency to use non-scientific sources to prove points. UFO messages, reports of personal clairvoyance, and synchronicities are abundant in both his fiction and non-fiction books. Even facts from his scientific sources are questionable: See Jim Lippard's book review in this newsletter. Many of Wilson's fans concede this fact, claiming that he is simply using his artistic license to get the reader to explore other possibilities, and if you take him too seriously, you're in trouble. Case in point: during the lecture, Wilson was describing the

parapsychological aspects of rabbits. He noted the synchronicity between the two men in history that have both seen a UFO and been attacked by a killer rabbit: (1) King Arthur (in Monty Python's *The Search for the Holy Grail*) and (2) Jimmy Carter (although the UFO he saw was actually Venus, he was attacked by a rabbit in 1979, while fishing in a canoe.) Clearly in this case Wilson has his tongue planted firmly in his cheek. However, there are other cases in Wilson's works where this is less obvious. As one disgruntled audience member asked during the Question&Answer period, "Mr. Wilson, do you really believe in half of what you write?" Wilson's reply: "I'm always kidding, never serious. Of course, as Bernard Shaw said, I am most serious when I'm joking. I hope that clarifies the point." Those searching for scientific value in Wilson's books are probably going to come up empty-handed.

Aside from Wilson's central philosophical message, he had quite a few amusing stories and opinions in the areas of religion and politics. One of the first things he did during the lecture was pontify the audience: "Spectacles, testicles, brandy, cigars! You're all popes!" Membership in the Discordian Church gives him the right to do this. Wilson was also kind enough to let us in on his opinion of L. Ron Hubbard's "secret of power," which goes something like this: "You know how dumb the average guy is? Everybody knows that, right? Well mathematically, by definition, half of them are even dumber than that." Wilson evoked chants of "Praise Bob!" from the audience when telling stories about the SubGenius Church.

As for politics, Wilson did not hesitate to make his position of apathy known. A few examples: "After seven years of Reagan, most people are beginning to think stupidity has its limitations." ... "I really like this fellow—Mecham? He looks like White House material to me." ... "I think Jesse Jackson should be president because you can tell him apart from the other candidates." Wilson is not bashful when it comes to poking fun at religion and politics.

Wilson was pretty quiet about his future plans, but did indicate the probability of working on a movie—certainly something to watch for.

Overall, the presentation was enjoyable. The tendency to wander from subject to subject

and go on extraneous tangents served to dull the impact of the lecture's message. But on the other hand, it offered the opportunity to experience the very entertaining and insightful Robert Anton Wilson in raw form.

### Editor's Ramblings

I feel that I must apologize for the exceeding lateness of the past two newsletters. I hope to do better at getting the next issue out earlier in the two-month period.

Ted Karren has started a "phone tree" with names collected from our March meeting. It will be used to inform members of events that may be interesting for some of us to know about, such as lectures, seminars, radio or tv shows. It was tested during the week of the 18th of April by announcing the appearance in town of a man who claims to channel dead artists. If you wish to be informed of timely events by means of the phone tree, please contact Ted Karren at 993-2600.

Many of you already know the *Skeptical Inquirer* to be an interesting skeptical publication. You may also be interested in the *Zetetic Scholar*, P.O. Box 1052, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Subscription price is \$15/yr (2 issues). 1987 is a double, numbers 12/13 (over 200pp). #14 is expected out this May.

Everyone is encouraged to contribute to the newsletter. Large or small contributions are welcome—a few paragraphs about one of our meetings or an event that you attended, a book review, or an article about some topic.

### Upcoming Meetings

Our meetings are normally held on a Saturday near the end of the month. Meetings start at 12:30 p.m. and are held at the Jerry's restaurant at 1750 N. Scottsdale Rd. in Tempe (south of McKellips).

**April 29.** Special meeting time! This is a Friday night meeting, 7 p.m., at Jerry's. Meeting will start right away, so you should plan to eat before or after the meeting. Our speaker will be James Lowell, speaking about Mexican cancer clinics. Mr. Lowell has done much investigation in this area, and on health fraud in general.

**May 21.** Normal meeting time and place. Speaker and topic unknown at press time. (The 28th is during Memorial Day weekend.)

If you have a suggestion for a meeting topic or a guest speaker, contact Ted Karren at our address or 993-2600.

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Address Correction Requested

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