

The REALL News

The official newsletter of the Rational Examination Association of Lincoln Land

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

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Witch Burning and Human Sacrifice in India

by Richard Petraitis

Fifty years after being granted independence by Britain, superstition is still exacting a high price in life within the borders of India. Witch burnings are commonplace in remote areas and tantrics, India's version of shamans, are behind a spate of child sacrifice committed, on their advice, by their followers. India has the dubious honor of being an atom-bomb-wielding nation inhabited by citizenry still swept up in witch-hunts and bouts of black magic hysteria. Modern India has an exploding human population and is home to several hundred million citizens who can't read or write, but who often seek refuge from life's realities through astrology or the magical arts of shamans. Not since the Thuggee terror of the nineteenth century has there been so much havoc caused by the magical thinking of the subcontinent's inhabitants. (The Thug sect caused societal chaos over a three-century span with the ritual strangling of some two million victims.¹) However, with the end of British colonial rule, and the last Western efforts to stamp out magical belief in India, there has been an almost anti-Western backlash at this Twentieth Century's end, manifesting itself in the renewal of ancient superstitions for many Southern Asians.

Devastatingly, magical thinking cultures seem to often focus their horrific attention on society's weaker members – i.e., women and children. India's women and children are the latest victims of these beliefs, such as appeasement of spirits through human sacrifice or lynching of one's neighbors for the accusation of witchcraft. From 1990 to 1997, in India's southern state of Bihar, 407 alleged witches were killed by rural mobs. Many of the killings were conducted at the instigation of local shamans called "ojhas." The true total number of dead in the state of Bihar alone may be as high as one thousand victims.² India's shamans carry great societal clout in the areas of India dominated by ancient worldviews, particularly those encompassing the practice of magic. One particularly influential group of magic men are the "tantric priests." They generally charge a hefty fee for summoning other worldly agents to do the bidding of paying clients. This occult game doesn't just carry great hazards for the shamans' customers, but it also can pose great hazards for the shamans

themselves. Like any business, magic can have its dissatisfied customers. In India, the reputed magic man can find himself at the receiving end of a severe thrashing by angry citizens, who have been known to rip out the teeth of alleged sorcerers. (The removal of teeth is believed to prevent the sorcerer from using incantations to summon evil spirits.³)

According to the police reports of 1998, nine children under the age of ten were offered as human sacrifices. Worshipers have attempted to gain occult power by mutilating young innocents – gouging out eyes, cutting off tongues, noses, or even private parts, as a part of magic-based rituals.⁴ In some states, police are suspected of under-reporting these incidents or, more sadly, of taking bribes from local tantrics to report the human sacrifices as murder, thereby making accurate

figures for these occult crimes more difficult to compile for any investigating agencies. Earlier this year, six people were sentenced to die by a Delhi court for the sacrifice of a young boy in a fertility rite. (A local tantric had advised a childless couple, with the aid of some friends, to perform a gruesome magic ritual on the eighteen-month-old during a festival for chasing away evil spirits, in order to help the couple conceive.⁵)

Tragically, child sacrifice is still conducted in remote parts of India for obtaining magical aid for the conception of children, or in finding treasure. To the consternation of thousands, last year saw three child-murderers escape the death penalty when their sentences were overturned by India's Supreme Court. These men had kidnapped four children between 1992 and 1995, and ritually murdered three of them to obtain supernatural assistance in a treasure hunt, collecting the victims' blood over the spot where a treasure trove was believed hidden

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Purpose

The Rational Examination Association of Lincoln Land is a non-profit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) educational and scientific organization. It is dedicated to the development of rational thinking and the application of the scientific method toward claims of the paranormal and fringe-science phenomena.

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

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

The REALL News is its official newsletter.

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REALL Contacts

REALL Hotline	217-726-5354
Chairman, David Bloomberg	chairman@reall.org
Editor, Wally Hartshorn.....	editor@reall.org
Web Site.....	www.reall.org

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From the Chairman

David Bloomberg

Since we meet on the first Tuesday of each month, every couple years we end up with a meeting on November's election day. This is one of those years. Unlike past election days, this one is actually running pretty close. As I write this, it's unclear who will be the winner. But that doesn't mean you should stay home and watch the minute-by-minute results on the night of November 7. No! Instead, you should join us as we have a roundtable discussion on issues related to REALL and pretty much whatever anybody wants to talk about. And we'll even have refreshments! If you feel that you must discuss Bush or Gore (or Nader or Buchanan or Browne or Hagelin or whoever), we can talk about subliminal messages or creationism in schools or levitation.

We've had a couple of these types of meetings in the past, and they've gotten good responses. In fact, I've heard several times that we shouldn't necessarily focus on getting speakers or videotapes for every meeting, but just get together for meetings like this one. So if you like the idea, please join us at 7:00 in the Lincoln Library's Carnegie Room South.

But, speaking of speakers, we'd like to hear from you about some ideas. Or, better yet, we'd like you to volunteer! I bet that almost everybody reading this newsletter knows something related to skepticism that most of the rest of us don't. I further bet that we'd be interested in hearing about it. So don't be shy! Give me a call or an e-mail and we'll set something up.

The same is true for articles, since I'm on the subject. Even if you don't want to get up in front of us, you could write it up and send it in! If you want to see your name in print and become world-famous, give it a shot!

Since I have some space here still, also let me remind people about the REALL e-mail list. If you're a member and want to be added, send me an e-mail (chairman@reall.org) and you can start reading about news of interest to you. It's a pretty low-traffic list, so don't worry about being overwhelmed by messages. But it provides a great method of feedback and discussion of timely issues. Come join us. ♡

From the Editor

Wally Hartshorn

No room for me to write much this month, but I did want to make a quick "thank you" to Bob & Jean Ladendorf and David & Sharri Bloomberg for making a donation to REALL in honor of my recent marriage to Dawn. Thanks, all of you! ♡

Book Recommendations

By David Bloomberg

Time once again for some short book reviews. As a reminder, the scale goes from 0 to 5 stars.

The Mysteries Within: A Surgeon Reflects on Medical Myths, by Sherwin B. Nuland (Simon & Schuster, \$24): Nuland looks back in time to see how superstition and medicine evolved together. He frequently points out how doctors in previous centuries simply made up things to fill the gaps in their understanding, but how we now understand more about science and are willing to accept “we don’t know” as an answer when we are confronted with gaps in our knowledge. This, I believe, is the most important point, and Nuland brings it home again and again. He also points out how much of alternative medicine is still based on the magical practices of the superstitions that medical science has overturned. Plus, it’s well-written. ★★★★★

Here Be Dragons: The Scientific Quest for Extraterrestrial Life, by David Koerner and Simon LeVay (Oxford University Press, 27.50): The authors examine the state of science in its pursuit of alien life. They looked into a wide range of fields, looking at how life began, how it evolved, how it would likely do the same on other worlds, how we might detect life elsewhere, etc. In doing so, they talked to everybody from creationists and Stephen Jay Gould to UFO nuts and Philip Klass to scientists working on the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI) and those who think it’s a waste. This is not really a book of groundbreaking news, but rather an overview of many fields. As such, it’s good reading for somebody who may not have been following this area closely. ★★★★★ ☹



**THE ESSENCE OF KNOWLEDGE IS,
HAVING IT, TO APPLY IT; NOT
HAVING IT, TO CONFESS YOUR
IGNORANCE.**

Local Skeptics Can Make a Difference

By Ben Radford

Ifrequently come across members of the Committee for Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP) and other individual skeptics who would like to help the cause but feel a little left out of the fight against bogus paranormal claims and pseudoscience. Although we at CSICOP can get a lot done through our organization, it’s still in many ways the individuals who really make a difference in grassroots skepticism.

One way you can help is by spending a few minutes online. Books are the main source of pro-paranormal literature. There is an incredible number of pro-paranormal books out there, on topics ranging from UFOs to alternative medicine and contacting the dead.

Skeptics can have a voice by giving their book reviews to the online booksellers. Amazon.com, for example, provides a feedback forum for people to review and comment on the books they sell. Readers rank the books from one to five stars. The entire reviews are posted, and the rating is added to provide an overall average appearing onscreen next to the title.

Most pro-paranormal books have excellent ratings – usually because one or two people read and loved the book. But such ratings are misleading, because those who hated the book are less likely to take the trouble to register their disappointment. The reviews also impress readers who come across the title for the first time; they may not be aware that there’s another side to the story – a skeptical point of view.

And that’s where skeptics can make a difference. If skeptics want to express their opinions (good or bad) about books such as *The Bible Code* or *Talking to Heaven*, that would help book buyers all over the world make more informed decisions. You might want to say why a book is good or bad and guide readers to other, more skeptical sources of information. If you’d like, simply go to Amazon.com, type in a title (or browse a category), and just click on the “write a review” button. [Note: You may have to register if you haven’t already.] It’s fast, easy, and can make a real difference. For a list of books that might be good candidates, you can contact CSICOP’s Council for Media Integrity at SIKevinC@aol.com.

[Ben Radford is the Managing Editor of *Skeptical Inquirer* magazine.] ☹

– CONFUCIUS

REALLity Check

by David Bloomberg

Not So Healthy, the Continuing Saga

So much news has been coming out about the downside of herbs and supplements that it's getting hard to keep up. Let's take a look at what's been going on in the past few months.

An August 22 Reuters Health article at the HealthCentral website noted that vitamin C may combine with the ingredients of cigarette smoke to actually become a "harmful oxidizing substance" rather than the anti-oxidant that people assume it to be. As such, it may accelerate the effects of aging and degenerative diseases rather than fight them in smokers.

A September 18 article from the same source talked about the negative effects that some herbs and supplements can have on cancer patients going through chemotherapy – especially if they don't mention that they're taking these things to their doctors. One case is mentioned in which a young girl got a rash after chemotherapy, causing the doctors to stop the therapy while they tried to figure it out. It turned out that her grandmother had given her a megadose of niacin, and that was causing the problem. Meanwhile, though, it caused a delay in her treatment. St. John's wort is mentioned again as a drug that may reduce the concentrations of chemotherapy drugs in the body. As a double-whammy, it also may cause some tumors to be more resistant to certain chemo drugs.

An October 16 HealthCentral article also noted that St. John's wort caused rejection problems in two kidney transplant cases. In one of these, the patient was forced to undergo yet another transplant because of the problems caused by the herb.

A September 20 article from that site discussed how alternative medicines may interfere with heart surgery. For example, fish oils dissolve clots, St. John's wort (again) and Ginkgo biloba interfere with blood thinners, and ginseng affects the way the body deals with digoxin, a heart medication.

A September 5 Reuters Health article at the OnHealth website discussed a case of a five-year-old boy getting lead poisoning from his "Tibetan herbal vitamin" given to him by his mother. His mother thought they would boost his brain function, and had gotten them from relatives in India. Unfortunately, lead poisoning does exactly the opposite to the brain.

In another ironic twist, Dr. Dean Edell reported in his HealthCentral column that ispaghula husk, a form of fiber supplement taken by people who believe it reduces the risk of colon cancer, may actually *increase* that risk. He cited a study that linked the supplement to precancerous polyps. The risk appears to be even higher when taken along with megadoses of calcium, which is also supposed to prevent colon cancer. Yikes!

Even some people who normally promote herbs have gotten into the act. The "People's Pharmacy" column on the HealthCentral website featured an article discussing the dangers of herb/drug interaction (7/31). They relate the story of a person who accidentally took the "anti-stress" herb kava at the

same time as the anti-anxiety drug Xanax, and ended up in a coma-like condition. They repeat information about St. John's wort interfering with drugs such as those used to treat HIV and fight off organ transplant rejection, and also note that it seems to lower levels of the asthma drug theophylline and probably affects medicines for blood pressure, seizures, and even cancer. They also list some other herb/drug problems, such as ginkgo biloba interfering with anti-clotting medications and causing a risk of excessive bleeding, other herbs that may interact in the opposite way to fight the anti-clotting effects when doctors don't want them fought, etc. I was particularly glad to see this column tackle these issues, because it's more likely that users of these herbs will see it here than in a medical journal or even a popular press article.

Perhaps the only good news here is that a September 7 Reuters Health article on the OnHealth site said that the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (formerly the Office of Alternative Medicine) at the National Institutes of Health, will be funding research to study the types of interactions I've discussed here. Frankly, it's nice to see that Center doing something useful with our tax dollars, rather than funding another study on homeopathy or some other quack method.

Illinois Below C Level on Evolution

Nature had an article (9/21) about a study done by the Fordham Foundation on the teaching of evolution in each state of the U.S. It notes that "science teaching worldwide treats evolution as routine. The United States is the exception."

The study looked at the state science standards to see how evolution is treated; each state was then ranked with a letter grade. 10 states received an A, 14 a B, 7 a C, 6 a D, 12 an F, and 1 – Kansas – got an F- (this was done before the new elections).

The article goes into further detail, explaining something that we already know: this is all about religion and politics, not science.

While this article didn't list specific states, the original report did, and the *Chicago Tribune* picked up on it (9/27), finding out that Illinois received a **D**! The article explains that how a conservative Christian group pressured the previous superintendent into avoiding the use of the word "evolution" in the standards back when they were written a few years ago. As longtime readers may recall, I and several other REALL members spoke out and tried to get the word put back in, but they chickened out. The standards were supposed to be reviewed this year, but they've been slow to move on it. When I wrote to the new superintendent, I got back a letter that said essentially nothing. However, I've heard from various sources that they are indeed planning to put the word in. The *Tribune* story backs this up, because Kim Knauer, a spokeswoman for the Board, is quoted as saying: "If they want to buzz us for not us-

ing the word, no problem. In order to clear things up, we'll use the word next time." She makes it sound so easy, and I hope she's right.

The Tribune article made some of the same points that we made to the board several years ago:

"Conservative groups such as the Illinois Christian Coalition have taken credit for removing evolution from the state's learning standards when they were approved in 1997. In its place, students are required to "describe processes by which organisms change over time."

"In his report, Lerner said such language amounts to a meaningless euphemism for 'the E-word.'"

"Unfortunately, the result of such dodging is more damaging in science, where terms have precise and well-defined meanings," Lerner wrote. "Some of these states substitute the phrase "change over time," but that does not mean the same thing. "Evolution" has a different and broader meaning than the euphemisms used to replace it."

Will They Ever Learn?

In Darien (a Chicago suburb), it seems the police decided that they needed to use a psychic to find a missing woman. So they called in Carol Pate, who one of them had seen on a TV show (I know that's where I go for my crime-solving tips). The story made news in the *Chicago Tribune* (8/28 and 8/31), the *Chicago Sun-Times* (8/29), the *Aurora Beacon-News* (8/29), and probably others.

The Sun-Times article says that, according to the deputy police chief, Pate revealed facts about the case that had not been disclosed to the public. Personally, having dealt with these cases time and time again, I would bet that the "facts" she gave them were little more than some good cold reading, but the deputy chief didn't give any details (surprise, surprise) so I can't be sure.

The psychic did tell them it was a homicide. Well, that's certainly brilliant, since her car was found without her in it and she left her kids without a mother. A skeptic might even suggest that you don't need to be psychic to figure that one out. But that seems to be about all the detail she provided, which is odd considering how the cops there are talking her up. She couldn't even say in which direction the cops should look, just some vague generalities (I'm shocked).

Of course, the story made sure to note that Pate is working for free. Sure – free publicity. The reporter didn't even bother to use an "allegedly" when he said she is "a psychic who has helped police in their investigations." I guess that would be expecting too much.

On a happy note, the deputy chief did note: "The use of the psychic has made the department the target of some ridicule among their police peers, who are by nature skeptical." Good! Maybe he'll learn something from it.

The *Aurora Beacon-News* story at least didn't just say flat-out that the psychic has helped. The writer qualified things by stating that she "said she has helped with hundreds of murder cases, [and] said she is about 85 percent accurate with her information." (Emphasis mine.) I doubt most people noticed the

difference, though.

One interesting statement in the article immediately followed the above: "However, she usually isn't called on until five or 10 years after the incident, which makes it difficult to help find the evidence to put criminals away." Sounds like a ready-made excuse to me. Kind of like saying, "Oh, yes, my information was accurate, but the police couldn't nail the guy because there was no evidence."

The first *Tribune* article isn't any better than the first two already mentioned. In fact, the author even goes into more details about how wonderful the "psychic" is, including that Pate claimed to have helped the police since she was 12, when she gave them information about a classmate who'd been murdered.

But at least Eric Zorn, a *Tribune* columnist, tackled it skeptically in the later article. His column's title made it clear where he stands: "Psychic's guess is as good as no guess at all." Zorn is very straightforward about his feelings on this matter, saying things like, "And I, who claim there is no such thing as psychic powers, say she's guessing." He discusses past instances of "psychics" trying to help police, with no success. He notes, "Since opening in 1984, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children has solved 53,581 missing-child cases, officials said, but so-called psychics haven't proved helpful even once." He further goes into detail about James Randi's million-dollar prize for proof of psychic power and talks about Joe Nickell's books on the subject.

As I mentioned previously, the "psychic" is doing this for free. She normally charges \$100 per hour, according to Zorn. Gosh, you don't suppose she might get a few new customers out of this wonderful charity work, do you? And she apparently already has another excuse lined up, having told Zorn that the body might have been moved since she only "saw" the original burial.

Zorn also addresses the "what can it hurt" line of thinking. He said that in this case, it won't hurt much (I disagree – I think the use of police time and money is a complete waste, which hurts the community), but discusses other cases "in which police have dredged ponds, dug up yards, hassled innocent suspects and otherwise chased wild geese on the word of these phonies with their cracked crystal balls."

I e-mailed Mr. Zorn to thank him for his article and mention that there is an Illinois skeptics group. Unfortunately, I haven't heard anything back.

But nor have I heard anything more on this story since the beginning of September – two months ago. Funny, you'd think with the help of this great psychic, they'd have found the woman's body by now....

Thanks to Bob Ladendorf for alerting me to this story.

First Evolution, Now What?

The Onion, a satirical newspaper and website, featured a hysterical article about the Religious Right expanding their fight against science (9/6). With the dateline showing Kansas as the alleged origin of the story, they begin: "The second law

(Witch Burning continued from page 1)

from view.⁶ In an ugly backlash to these continued reports of child sacrifice, more than sixty women have been killed by local vigilantes as suspects connected to child kidnappings, because they were believed to be involved in cultic child sacrifice. Over the past eighteen months, these killings occurred in northern Bengal, and the Jalpaiguri district.⁷ The desperate speech made by India's President, K.R. Narayan, during India's celebration of its 53rd anniversary of independence from Britain, is certainly understandable in light of this information; he targeted superstition and ignorance as major impediments to curbing India's spiraling crime wave.⁸

Can we truly believe that India's battle against irrationality will be brought to a victorious conclusion in a relatively short time? News reports continue to remind the world community that it will probably take India generations to win this particular war. During this summer alone, a crowd of villagers burned to death five suspected witches, four women and one man, in the state of Andhra Pradesh.⁹ While nearby in the Raipur district, a woman suspected of witchcraft was paraded naked through the town square, with her hapless husband's calls for intervention ignored by local authorities.¹⁰ Also this year, the district of Kokrajhar was plagued by occult mayhem – nearly twenty people were murdered as suspected practitioners of magic, generally tortured first and then later hacked to death.¹¹ Other parts of India have been the scene of mass hysteria caused by rumors of an invisible killer who chops off children's heads in the middle of the night. As a result of the belief in a murderer with such magic powers, several people have been misidentified as the alleged killer, and were severely beaten within an inch of their lives by frenzied mobs. However, some citizens believed that the hysteria was simply created to increase the sale of torches for nighttime use.¹²

In the face of such irrational beliefs, what measures should be adopted by the Indian government to combat the excesses of a magically thinking citizenry?

In India's fight against superstition, one ray of hope lies with the rationalist minority in that land. Over the past two decades, a valiant effort has been made to curb superstitious belief by the Indian Rationalist Association and similar groups. In 1983, rioting in the district of Medak had caused the deaths of four people accused of practicing black magic. Police had to fire on rioting mobs to save the lives of other alleged sorcerers, finally forcing the Superintendent of Police for Medak to seek outside aid. That outside help came in the form of an eleven member team from a rationalist group.¹³ Thousands of alleged victims of sorcery were examined by the medical doctors and scientists belonging to that rationalist team. Team doctors found that of the 7,000 alleged victims of witchcraft they examined, the majority seemed to be suffering from physical and psychological ailments, not witchcraft. Later, a rationalist team magician demonstrated his professional craft to large crowds, helping to dispel the myth of supernatural powers for many gathered at his exhibition. It was truly a sad day for tantrics and shamans. As India moves into the twenty-first century, more of the same efforts to curb superstition will be needed,

with strong governmental support, to roll back the superstitious beliefs of millions.

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Subliminal Ads in the News

by David Bloomberg

Except for those who have been spending time in a cave to avoid the presidential campaign, readers will recall that, a little while ago, there was a minor uproar about an alleged subliminal message in a Republican anti-Gore TV commercial, which flashed the word “RATS” quickly while discussing some of his policies. There are two issues here: First, was it meant to be a subliminal ad; second, do subliminal ads work?

The first issue does not deal directly with REALL, and may bring us to areas of politics where we are not supposed to tread. So let us just recount the facts.

The word “BUREAUCRATS” appeared in the ad, and this was supposed to be an enlargement of that word, showing the “RATS” part at the point in contention here. Maybe it was intentional, maybe coincidence. In cases like these, I tend to subscribe to the saying: Don’t attribute to conspiracy that which can be easily explained by incompetence.

But, intentional or not, is this something we should be concerned about? The Gore campaign sure seemed upset. The Bush campaign seemed concerned as well in defending against the accusation. A couple of senators even asked the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to investigate. Unfortunately, neither campaign had anybody speak out about the fact that **subliminal advertising doesn’t work**.

Oh, sure, there were a couple of short articles in the general media about this after the main hullabaloo died down, but the first few articles didn’t do much to mention it. Even before this, you could count on the media occasionally bringing up the infamous 1957 “Eat Popcorn, Drink Coca-Cola” subliminal movie ad that supposedly showed how well such ads work. What you could also generally count on was that the same writers would neglect to mention the 1962 *Advertising Age* interview with James Vicary, the advertising expert who made the original claim about increasing sales through those subliminal ads during movies. Vicary admitted that the original

“study” was a fabrication (see also *Skeptical Inquirer*, Spring 1992), intended only to increase customers for his marketing business.

It is appropriate to quote the Skeptic’s Dictionary on this issue: “The fact that there is almost no empirical support for the usefulness of subliminal messaging has not prevented numerous industries from producing and marketing tapes which allegedly communicate directly with the unconscious mind, encouraging the ‘listener’ not to steal, or coaching the ‘listener’ to have courage or believe in his or her power to accomplish great things.”

Maybe I shouldn’t be so hard on the media alone, though. After all, the FCC banned subliminal ads in 1974, even though there is no evidence that they do anything. Better to give in to public misunderstanding than to try to correct the situation, I guess.

Thankfully, at least a few media outlets reported the important part of this brouhaha – the lack of evidence for the effectiveness of subliminal ads.

An article from the Associated Press, written by Dave Carpenter, mentioned the “Eat Popcorn, Drink Coca-Cola” legend and explained that it was untrue. Carpenter talked to people in the advertising industry, whose main reaction was “Oh man, not again – will this charade never die?”

Carpenter also interviewed to Bob Garfield, who works for *Advertising Age* magazine as an industry critic. The article noted: “Garfield says the myth of subliminal ads endures despite decades’ worth of non-evidence because people enjoy it and want it to be true. ‘They like to believe there’s a Sasquatch and a Loch Ness Monster and aliens in an Air Force hangar in Roswell, New Mexico,’ he said. ‘But there aren’t.’”

The fact of the matter is that there is no scientific evidence that subliminal advertisements work. I would have liked to see somebody – anybody – in the political realm stand up and say this. Is that really too much to expect?

I guess so.... ☹

(REALLity Check continued from page 5)

of thermodynamics, a fundamental scientific principle stating that entropy increases over time as organized forms decay into greater states of randomness, has come under fire from conservative Christian groups, who are demanding that the law be repealed.”

Accompanying the article are altered photos of Christian Coalition President Ralph Reed complaining about a physics book he is holding and, even better, a protester with a sign that says, “I Don’t Accept Fundamental Tenets of Science **AND I VOTE.**”

Reed is “quoted” as saying: “We don’t like the implications of this law, and we will not rest until it has been reversed in the courts.”

Another excerpt says: “‘Why can’t disorder decrease over

time instead of everything decaying?’ asked Jim Muldoon of Emporia, KS. ‘Is that too much to ask? This is our children’s future we’re talking about.’

It goes on from there, including a Kansas state senator who says he is spearheading a national campaign to remove the law from physics textbooks. You can tell that the authors of this story have seen plenty of news stories on creationists, as they use the same methods to tell the story here. For example, they make it sound like a “he said/she said” issue, as if there are two sides to the story (which writers frequently do with creation/evolution articles).

If I remember, I’ll bring the article to the November 7 meeting as part of the roundtable discussion. ☹

Our Next Meeting

Roundtable Discussion

Our next meeting will be held on Election Day!

Join us for a round-table discussion on any items of interest to our members!

Door Prizes!

Three issues of the newest *Skeptical Inquirer* (which includes a book review by REALL's very own David Bloomberg), will be given away at this meeting. You wouldn't want to miss that, would you?

www.reall.org

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

Free and Open
to the Public

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

