

Understanding Creationism

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Why do so many people embrace creationism and reject evolution? What are their arguments? How does creationism promote community and address concerns about education, the rearing of good children, and the perceived dangerous consequences of evolutionary thinking?

Mary McCutcheon, Ph.D. (University of Arizona) taught in the Anthropology Department at George Mason University from 1988 to 2004. Prior to that she worked at the Smithsonian Institution in the Directorate of International Affairs. Earlier she taught at the University of Guam. She does research on land and marine resource ownership in the Palau Islands of Micronesia. Over the years, while teaching at GMU, and in retirement,

she has refined this popular lecture, and related talks, to develop better understanding about the surge of religiosity in our society.

Saturday, Dec 13, 2008
1:30 pm

National Science Foundation
4201 Wilson Blvd, Room 110
Arlington, VA 22230
(Ballston Metro stop)

Enter NSF from the corner of 9th N & N Stuart Streets,
<http://www.nsf.gov/about/visit/>

FREE admission – Everyone welcome,
members and non-members

For more information, call the 24-hour NCAS
Skeptic Line recording at 301-587-3827.
E-mail: ncas@ncas.org
www.ncas.org



National Capital Area Skeptics Public Lecture Series
20/20 SINCE 1987



Shadow of a Doubt

December
2008

The Monthly Calendar of the National Capital Area Skeptics

UFO Activist Heads Obama's Transition Team

John Podesta, co-chair of President-elect Obama's transition team (and former Clinton White House chief of staff), is also well-known for calling on the U.S. government to reveal all it knows about UFOs. A 1998 *Washington Post* profile of Podesta quoted White House press secretary Mike McCurry: "John can get totally maniacal and phobic on certain subjects. He's been known to pick up the phone to call the Air Force and ask them what's going on in Area 51 [a Nevada military base, prominent in UFO folklore]." Podesta has never flatly stated that he believes UFOs are ETs, but apparently thinks the government has something to hide. "I think it's time to open the books on questions that have remained in the dark on the question of government investigations of UFOs," Podesta said at a 2002 press conference that announced the founding of the Sci-Fi Channel's Coalition for Freedom of Information, consisting of very pro-ETH (extraterrestrial hypothesis) UFO advocates. "It's time to find out what the truth really is that's out there...the American people quite frankly can...handle the truth." ☞

Torn From Today's Headlines

Actress Claims Diet Cures Autism

Us Weekly's October 26 cover featured model/actress Jenny McCarthy, her young son, and the headline, "Beating Autism: How I Saved My Son." The article presented McCarthy's claim that a "strict no-wheat-and-dairy-free diet has changed her son from a quiet little boy who used to flail his arms around to a loving six-year-old." McCarthy believes vaccines caused her son's autism.

Dr. Steven Salzberg, NCAS's November 2008 lecturer on "Autism & Vaccines: How Bad Science Confuses the Press & Harms the Public," comments: "This is an unfortunate example of the kind of reporting that the press does on this topic. They repeat McCarthy's claim that the MMR vaccine caused her son's autism, with no word at all on the multiple scientific studies refuting this claim. They describe her as 'courting controversy' as if this makes her a hero. In fact, she has done great damage by spreading unfounded claims about vaccines. It is ridiculous—and sad—that Jenny McCarthy gets so much more publicity with her claims about autism's causes and treatments than any of the actual scientists who work on autism." Dr. Salzberg's NCAS lecture will soon be available on YouTube! Details will be posted on the ncas.org site. ☞

December's Drinking Sceptically Event!

On Wednesday, December 10, come to Jackie's Restaurant at 8081 Georgia Ave in Silver Spring at 7:00 p.m. to join fellow NCASers for the next DC-area Drinking Sceptically event. Drinking Sceptically is an informal social event designed to promote fellowship and networking among skeptics, critical-thinkers, and like-minded individuals. Don't drink? Don't let that stop you from joining us! Some of the world's most famous skeptics are teetotalers, and we are happy to have you!

www.jackiesrestaurant.com

www.drinkingsceptically.org

Remember that drinking sceptically means drinking responsibly. If there's one thing science has taught us, it's the effects of alcohol on the human body. ☞

