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Inside This Issue

- 1** November 28 SORT Meeting
THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER
- 2** VOICES FROM THE DEAD
- 2** DON'T KEEP YOUR
THOUGHTS TO YOURSELF!
- 3** DIRECTIONS
- 4** THE RATIONAL
COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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For past issues, links to other skeptics, and more, check out the SORT Website: <http://home.surewest.net/kitray>
 For more about the co-founders of SORT, see www.spangenburgandmoser.com

November
SORT Meeting
Tuesday, November 28, 2006
7:30 P.M.
 La Sierra Community Center
 Room 800, 5325 Engle Road
 Carmichael, CA
 (See driving directions, p. 3)

The *SORTified* NEWS

“Doubt is the beginning of wisdom.”
 —Clarence Darrow

November 28 Meeting
THE EYE OF THE
BEHOLDER:
PORNOGRAPHY

Shortly after John Ashcroft took office as United States Attorney General, he immediately had a cover placed over a partially nude statue behind the lectern where he would be conducting most of his press interviews. While for many the act was faintly ridiculous, there were many others who either privately or publicly applauded it. Fortunately or unfortunately, larger political matters of the day drowned out the issue, but in many ways it's an issue that is imbedded deeply in the American character.

Ironically, while most people feel uncomfortable talking about sex, just about everyone has an instant opinion about pornography and the same people (of many different backgrounds and walks of life) say they “know it when they see it.” We've heard complaints about Michelangelo's statue of David and the swimsuit issue of *Sports Illustrated*. Millions condemn Madonna videos, while millions of others roam the Internet highways looking for the hot

REMINDER:

**NO SORT MEETING
 IN DECEMBER!**

Next SORT Meeting:
January 30, 2007

**SORT Meetings
 are at 7:30 p.m.
 on the last TUESDAY
 of the month**

spots along the way. This month at SORT we will be taking a look (non-graphic of course) at pornography, what it is, who decides what it is, and why it is so disturbing to many. Does it exploit women, corrupt minds, lead to aggressive acts? Is it inherently “unhealthy” or a “good outlet for repressed desires”? Should there be tighter laws against it or no laws at all?

There are some tricky and perhaps charged questions here that should make an engrossing and enlightening evening of conversation around our (square) round table. As usual, free coffee (decaf and regular), cookies, soft drinks and other treats will be on hand throughout the meeting.

Remember we will be taking a break for the holidays in Decem-

ber so this will be the last meeting of 2006. We will be back up and running in January, same time, same place.

VOICES FROM THE DEAD

Not many people have heard of Leslie Flint except for his followers and maybe a small handful of masochistic skeptics like the editors of this newsletter. Leslie was a medium, and not one of those “play it safe” mediums of television fame like James Van Praagh and John Edward. Flint was an old fashioned medium, and although he never engaged in “materializations,” at least not to our knowledge, he communicated with the dead, and like any good medium from the “golden age of spiritualism”—the late 1800s and early 20th century—his communications allowed his sitters to hear the actual voices of the spirits they conversed with. It was a pretty gutsy thing to do in the late 20th century when supposedly people were more sophisticated than in the “golden age.” Perhaps more dangerously for Flint, technology allowed absent believers to hear and keep permanent records of the séances that Flint conducted. Yes, Leslie had the chutzpah to record some of his séances and you can hear the results at <http://www.leslieflint.com/leslieflint.html>. How much can a true believer believe? See for yourself and listen in as Flint communicates with some historic celebrities such as Amenhotep, Lionel

Barrymore, Sir Thomas Beecham, Charlotte Bronte, and Bimbo the Clown.

DON'T KEEP YOUR THOUGHTS TO YOURSELF!

As regular attendants of the monthly SORT meetings can attest, “SORTers” are not the kind of people to sit quietly on the sidelines when controversial issues come up. They are also outspoken and active advocates for rational thinking and tough-minded questioners of claims of the paranormal and pseudoscience. The editors of the *SORTified News*, the monthly newsletter of the Sacramento Organization for Rational Thinking, invite you to submit short articles or essays for *The SORTified Review* on the SORT Website: <http://home.surewest.net/kitray>.

We can't offer any payment, but we can give you a spot to elucidate your ideas and opinions in longer form than the *Sortified News*. We would like to see stand-alone articles or essays. Believing in civility among equals, we won't be accepting letters or permit drawn out “flaming” of articles or ideas.

Publication will be left to the editors' discretion. Please send submissions via e-mail to kitray@quiknet.com.

The Sacramento Organization for Rational Thinking (SORT). . .

- Is dedicated to the promotion of rational thinking in all areas of life.
- Upholds the superiority of science over the mystical.
- Promotes and supports all efforts of intelligent communication that provide a counterpoint to the strong waves of anti-rationalism, irrationalism, and mysticism sweeping the world today.

Toward these ends we . . .

- Host a monthly discussion group.
- Publish a monthly newsletter.
- Host special events, talks, and presentations.
- Host a web page.

While SORT began with and still continues to be concerned with the promotion of critical thinking in areas dealing with the pseudoscientific, the paranormal, the mystical, and the fraudulent, we strongly promote critical thinking in *all* areas of human thought and endeavor.

The core of SORT activities is our discussion group. The art of intelligent conversation is not dead. We at SORT believe that rational conversation--the meeting of minds, the free exchange of ideas and the provocative stimulation of critical questions--is one of the most civilized and enlightening of all human activities.

SORT discussion topics have ranged from UFOs to the Holocaust, from “alternative medicine” to the problems in communicating science to the public, from classic and recent cons and scams to the teaching of critical thinking. Our discussions are hosted by one of the SORT founders, and participants are by no means limited to experts (although they may include experts) but are made up of intelligent and questioning people concerned with the topic of the evening.

BOARD OF ADVISERS

Terry Sandbek
Psychologist

Robert Sheaffer
UFO Specialist, Author

Bob Steiner
Magician, Author,
Bunco Expert

Lauress Wise
Mathematical Psychologist

About the Founders

Ray Spangenburg and Kit Moser are a husband-and-wife writing team specializing in science and technology. They are coauthors of more than 50 books and over 100 articles, including publication in the *Skeptical Inquirer*, and they are former coeditors of the *Bay Area Skeptics Information Sheet (BASIS)*.

For more information, contact:

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GETTING TO LA SIERRA COMMUNITY CENTER

From Highway 50: Take the Watt Avenue exit and head north. Turn right on Marconi, by the Raley's store. Travel east on Marconi to Walnut and turn left. Travel north on Walnut to Engle and turn right. Turn left at La Sierra Community Center. Follow the road past the main parking lot and along the east side of the building. Room 800 is in the second building on the left (just past the open, grassy area). Park, look for the SORT sign, and come on in!

From I-80: Take the Madison exit and head east. Turn right on Garfield and head south. Turn right on Gibbons and left at La Sierra Community Center. Follow the road along the east side of the building. Room 800 is in the last building before the open, grassy area. Park, look for the SORT sign, and come on in!

RATIONAL COMMUNITY CALENDAR

November 28: Sacramento Organization for Rational Thinking (SORT)

Topic: “The Eye of the Beholder: Pornography”

Time: Tuesday, 7:30–9:00 p.m. (social period until 9:30)

Place: La Sierra Community Center, Room 800, 5325 Engle Road, Carmichael
Everyone is welcome and all meetings are free.

PLEASE NOTE: The next SORT meeting will be January 30, 2007; no SORT meeting in December

December 23: Atheists and Other Freethinkers (AOF) and the Humanist Association of the Greater Sacramento Area (HAGSA) Joint Winter Solstice Potluck

More Details: Check <http://aofonline.org/events> re: this secular celebration of the season (3rd year)

Time: 3:00–6:00 p.m.

Location: Sacramento Co-Housing Common House, southwest corner of T Street and 5th Street. Guests are welcome.



*Educating Ourselves
and Educating Others*

**Sacramento Organization
for Rational Thinking
P.O. Box 2215
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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED