

An evening with...

Al Seckel "An Outline of Intellectual Or a Hilarious Catalog of Individual & Organized"

September 10, 1989 (Sunday) 2 p.m. - Baxter Lecture Hall
(NOTE: All other lectures will take place in the evening in Beckman Auditorium.)

It is said that man is a rational animal. Seckel will re-examine the "evidence" with a humorous look at the silliness of our day and then compare them with perhaps folly is perennial as Erasmus once observed. Seckel will also explore the prejudices, showing how they have tended to prevent beneficial changes in behavior practices have proved useless or even dangerous.

Al Seckel is founder and executive director of the Southern California spokesperson on the topic of "science vs. pseudoscience." He was instrumental in the preparation of two influential *amicus curiae* briefs presented before the U. S. Supreme Court in the recent abortion case. Seckel has also edited two books of Russell, and has written columns for the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Santa Monica*.

Douglas R. Hofstadter

"Ambigrammia: Battleground of Creation"
October 21, 1989 (Saturday) 8 p.m. - Beckman Auditorium

Pulitzer prize winner Douglas R. Hofstadter is probably best known as the author of *Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid* (1979) as well as *Metamagical Themas of Mind and Pattern*. He has also edited *The Minds I* (1981) with philosopher Daniel Dennett and a half year's column "Metamagical Themas" for *Scientific American*. He is currently a Chair in the College of Literature, Science and the Arts, University of Michigan. He also rejoined the faculty of the Indiana University Computer Department as Professor of Computer Science. His current research interest is in the field of artificial intelligence.

"...whatever he says is both exact and double-edged, reassuring but profoundly challenging. His scariest insights and most agonizing intellectual probings are delivered with humor, affection, and a kind of a musical charm." (Leonard Bernstein)

Roger Lewin November 14 Beckman Auditorium

"Bones of Contention: Controversies in the Search for..."

Roger Lewin will give a behind the scenes look at anthropologists making and interpreting human fossil discoveries. He will discuss many of the most famous and controversial in the search for human origins. Quoting liberally from the scientists who made let them speak in their own words about the significance of what they found -- made. The anthropologists reveal that their science depends heavily on interpretation and subjectivity, both of which have played a significant role in the history of the field. Lewin will demonstrate how scientists' preconceptions are at least as important to the fossils they are examining.

Dr. Lewin was an editor at *New Science* magazine, London, and is now editor of *Scientific American*, Washington, D. C. He is author of several books, and co-authored *Origins* with world renowned anthropologist Richard Leakey.

Francis Crick December Beckman Auditorium

"What Mad Pursuit: A Personal View of Science"

Francis Crick's place in history was assured when he and James Watson unveiled the double helix of DNA. Their discovery of the structure of the genetic material of virtually all life is the greatest biological advance of the twentieth century.

Dr. Crick will give his own long-awaited account of the unique combination of this epoch-making discovery, and how it led to the launching of the molecular biology revolution. Crick will explore the between truth and beauty that he has found in everything from the roles of experiment to the popular book, television, and movie versions of the double helix story. Crick will also describe how he is applying the lessons in molecular biology to his latest pursuit of "scientific gold" -- understanding the mind.

Steve Allen "DUMBTH: A Personal View of Science" Make America Dumber

January 16, 1990 (Tuesday) 8 p.m. - Beckman Auditorium

In the early 1960s, Steve Allen began to observe a sharp increase in ineptness and poor service. Developing his thesis that this incompetence was a breakdown in the capacity to reason, he undertook formal research. What he found on a scale more vast than anything envisioned by Laurence J. Peter (*The Peter Principle*) was DUMBTH for the middle-headedness which he says, has become pervasive. In the manner of all effective reformers, he points to a solution: the addition of instruction in this art, just as they do in piano playing, marriage, nutrition and health.

Best known for his work in music and comedy, Allen has also written 30 books and has hosted and created numerous television shows, including the award-winning *The Minds*.

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It is said that we live in a scientific age, but recent national surveys indicate widespread, growing belief in the pseudosciences (channelling, reincarnation, ESP, astrology, bigfoot, rhythms, crystal power, UFOs, and the like). In addition, a new kind of superstition has taken root as the public is bombarded with "scientific" information that is exaggerated for the purposes of advertising, chopped into unrelated "facts" and "bits" by the demands of the media, or circulated as mystical popular rumor as the cultural impact of both science and scientists is distorted. Science is often presented as fragmented information without the broader framework of the scientific method. It often appears that many individuals will believe in anything that claims to be "scientific." People are asked to accept ideas, which, after the smallest amount of probing could be shown to be invalid. This indicates that we do not, in fact, live in a scientific age, but rather in a technological age, in which neither the process nor the results of the scientific method are well understood.

This lecture series offers a fresh and incisive perspective on our understanding of science, American society, and the forces of irrationalism. A superlative line-up of internationally distinguished speakers will explore exciting areas of robust science, the reasoning process of critical thinking, and the foundations of creativity.

September's lecture will take place at our usual time and place in Baxter Lecture Hall on the campus of the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) in Pasadena.

Beginning in October the remainder of the special lecture series announced in this brochure will be held in Beckman Auditorium, also on the Caltech campus (see map below). Tickets are available through the Caltech ticket office. Phone 800-423-8849 or 818-356-4652.

General admission: \$8
Caltech students, faculty and staff, and SCS members: \$5

WATCH FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS OF SCS LECTURES IN OTHER LOCATIONS

SPRING 1990 - These and other prominent speakers will continue our Beckman Auditorium lecture series:

Paul MacCready
Internationally famous Inventor: "Father of Human Powered Flight."

"Flying Bicycles, Sunbeam Powered Vehicles, Flying Reptiles and Transparent Blenders: Catalysts for Changing Perspectives"

Murray Gell-Mann
Nobel Laureate, Theoretical Physics (1969).

"Quantum Mechanics and Flap-doodle"

James Gleick "Chaos: Making a New Science"
Editor and science reporter for the *New York Times*; best selling author.

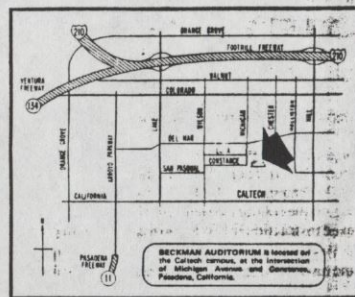
Jonathan Miller "Perceived States of Mind"
Internationally acclaimed author, director, and comedian. Host of the award-winning PBS series *The Body in Question*.

BOOKS AND LITERATURE WILL BE SOLD AT ALL LECTURES

Most speakers will be available to sign their books after the lecture

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The Southern California Skeptics (SCS), an affiliate of the Pacific Division of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, is a non-profit tax exempt scientific and educational organization, as defined in Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.



For information on SCS or this lecture series, telephone (213) 283-9773. Or write SCS at P.O. Box 5523, Pasadena, CA 91107