



December 5th, 2020

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81387580309>
www.SkepticCampNYC.org

Skepticamp is an Open Conference on science and skepticism, where any of the attendees can also be presenters! It is based on the “BarCamp” event model that was once popular among technology communities. In the past, people have camped out overnight at those types of events. But, today, the “camp” suffix doesn’t really mean anything, anymore.

We have some rules and things to keep in mind, during the event:

- Skepticamp lectures are not to be passively accepted. We encourage the asking of challenging questions! But, always please try to **argue the argument**. We request that you avoid insulting or disrespecting the people, themselves. Every speaker is required to endure at least 5 minutes of live Q&A.
- Behavior that is abusive to anyone, or disruptive of the event will get you ejected.
- Visit the Dashboard page, for any important status updates about the meeting: <https://skepticampnyc.org/webcasthome.aspx>
- Everyone will be muted while speakers will be speaking. However, mute should only be considered a courtesy feature, NOT a guarantee of privacy. Sometimes, on rare occasions, mute systems fail. If you have something private to say, it is best to do it outside of earshot of the computer, entirely. Just in case.
- Everything is going to be recorded, unless otherwise specified. And, if you are on camera, you will be recorded as well. So, turn your camera off, if you object to this.
- No unauthorized videotaping or audio recording of your own, please.
- ***The opinions of Skepticamp presenters do not necessarily reflect those of its organizers.***
- If anything goes wrong, contact: admin@skepticampnyc.org
- No one is being forced to be here. You should always feel free to leave the meeting, whenever you need to or want to.
- Only up to 100 people will be allowed into the meeting at once. We apologize to anyone who cannot get in.
- If you would like to speak at Skepticamp NYC, either next year, or to fill a gap this year, please read the Session Leader’s Guide on our web site: <http://skepticampnyc.org/SessionGuide.aspx>
- Have fun! And we hope you learn something awesome!

Sponsorship

New York City Skeptics: <http://www.nyckskeptics.org>

New York City Skeptics is an all-volunteer, 501(c)3 nonprofit that promotes critical thinking and science education. Consider donating so that we can run fabulous, thought-provoking events!

Mitchell Scott Lampert

Mitchell is just some guy, you know. But, he puts a lot of time and resources into this. So, we think he ought to be listed here, as well.

Organizers

Lead Organizer: Mitchell Scott Lampert: MitchLampert42@gmail.com

Assistant Organizers and Volunteers: Spyridon Condos, Benny Pollak, Johnathan Nelson, Russ Dobler

Other Consultants (from previous years): Michael Feldman and Reed Esau



share the apple of knowledge

SkeptiCamp NYC 2020

The Intended Schedule

This schedule, of course, is subject to change throughout the day.

Starts	Ends	Session Host	Title	Category	
9:30 AM	10:00 AM	Pre-Con Meet-and-Greet! Schmooze with your fellow attendees on Zoom, while we get things ready.			
10:00 AM	10:10 AM	Opening Ceremonies and Other Obligatory Stuff			
10:10 AM	10:35 AM	Janyce Boynton	Facilitated Communication - I Thought That Died in the 1990s! Facilitated Communication is a technique used on people with severe spoken and written language difficulties and requires a facilitator to provide emotional and physical support, plus cuing. Proponents claim messages obtained using this technique are "independent" of facilitator control. Controlled testing shows it is the facilitators, not people with disabilities, authoring the messages. Why are we talking about it today? Not only didn't FC die, it has mutated and flourishes still today.	The Guerrilla Skeptics	
10:35 AM	11:05 AM	Rob Palmer	Belief in Psychics: What's the Harm and Who's to Blame? The talk will be an expanded/updated version of my presentation to CSICon in 2019 about the devastating monetary impact, up to personal financial ruin, that is all too often the result of believing in psychics and mediums. I will give legal system case-examples, discuss why this paranormal belief is so prevalent in the US, and discuss what skeptics must do to curb this largely under-the-radar national scourge.		
11:05 AM	11:30 AM	Mark Edward	Skeptical Activism and the Paranormal Highlighting recent successes in exposing psychic fraud.		
11:30 AM	11:45 AM	Short Break #1			
11:45 AM	12:15 PM	Susan Gerbic	Grief Vampires, Wikipedia and More I will discuss recent work with the various Grief Vampires I'm been working on through the pandemic lock-down and tie the activism up with a bow to link with the GSoW project.		
12:15 PM	12:45 PM	Adrienne Hill	A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to a Wikipedia Edit I will describe my journey to becoming a Guerilla Skepticism on Wikipedia editor. I will share the strange and weird discoveries made while researching for articles, along with stories from some of the amazing people I have met along the way since joining the project.		
12:45 PM	1:15 PM	Olga Ast	Tomorrow, Yesterday I would like to show a small collection of Soviet representations of the future mainly from the Space Race era, focusing on 1960's and 1970's science fiction, utopian literature and futuristic publications popular during that time, and compare it to a few American futuristic depictions of the period. I plan to concentrate mostly on visual representations as opposed to literary or narrative descriptions, predictions and forecasts.	History	
1:15 PM	2:15 PM	Lunch Break! We will let everyone unmute and allow chaos to rein, for about an hour or so.			
2:15 PM	2:30 PM	A Tribute to James "The Amazing" Randi, and Others We've Lost			
2:30 PM	3:00 PM	Spiro Condos	Quo Vadis? (Whither goest thou?) Can we develop an Ethics that is rational and at least partly empirically derived? How do I live my life? What should I do? What should I give importance to? Is Ethics a purely subjective field that is merely a matter of personal preference, or can we develop some broad outlines based on anthropology, Science and empiric observation and study?	Ethics	
3:00 PM	3:30 PM	Massimo Pigliucci	The Stoic Skeptic: What Marcus Aurelius Teaches Us About Being a Good Critical Thinker Turns out, fighting pseudoscience and bad thinking is as old as Socrates, and the ancient Stoics had developed a number of approaches that are still very much relevant today. We'll take a look at what the emperor-philosopher Marcus Aurelius advises modern skeptics to do.		
3:30 PM	3:45 PM	Short Break #2			
3:45 PM	4:15 PM	Russ Dobler	The Real Secret of the Skinwalker Ranch - Laughable Research Methodology As the story goes, Utah's 512-acre Skinwalker Ranch has been a hotbed of bizarre occurrences for 50 years -- from UFOs to cattle mutilations to Bigfoot emerging through a dimensional portal. This summer's "Secret of the Skinwalker Ranch" series on History Channel, sadly, captured nothing exciting, but did show how the "sciencey" cast completely botched an investigation. Having worked in underground detection for 13 years, I'll run down just how ridiculous their (mis)use of ground penetrating radar (GPR) really was.	Entertainment	
4:15 PM	4:45 PM	Mitchell Lampert	Can VR Really Enhance Education? What, of any practical, effective value does the immersive experience of virtual reality truly bring to the table, in regards to education? Here, we will attempt to separate the hype from the actual reality! I am speaking as a fan of VR technology, and someone who hopes to see the market for it continue to grow (in annoyance of its doomsayers). However, I happen to like facts even more! If VR cannot truly cut it as an educational tool, we should know that, and can continue using for mere entertainment, anyway. There is hope, though, that it can excel in helping us experience things in unique ways, that we barely get to appreciate on flat screen monitors. And, perhaps someday, its expense will be low enough to bring that kind of unique boost of understanding to public schools. (NOTE: Mitchell will NOT be discussing his crackpot ideas for how the mind works, during this conference.)		
4:45 PM	5:00 PM	Closing Ceremonies			
5:00 PM	6:00 PM	Grand Finale: General Q&A and Socializing!			

Note: The categories on the side really aren't very important.

