



December 2, 2023

151 West 30th Street, 3rd floor, Room 1, New York, NY

www.SkeptiCampNYC.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**, without insulting or disrespecting the people, themselves.
- Every speaker is required to endure at least 5 minutes of live Q&A, divided between those who arrived in person, and those attending on-line. Some presenters won’t even mind if you interject with a question in the middle of their presentation. *But, be respectful of those who choose to wait until the end for answers.*
- Behavior that is abusive to anyone, or disruptive of the event will get you ejected.
- Everything in front of a camera is going to be recorded, unless otherwise specified.
- No unauthorized videotaping or audio recording of your own, please.
- Everyone in the web conference will be muted while speakers will be speaking.
- Up to 100 people will be allowed into the web conference at once. We apologize to those who can’t get in.
- Always feel free to come and go into and out of the event, as you please. No one is forced to be here. Please do not be disruptive if you do decide to leave in the middle of a session.
- If you make a mess, you will be responsible for cleaning it up.
- ***The opinions of SkeptiCamp presenters do not necessarily reflect those of its organizers.***
- Have fun! And we hope you learn something awesome!

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://skeptcampnyc.org/SessionGuide.aspx>

Sponsorship

New York City Skeptics: <http://www.nycskeptics.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: Craig Sachs, Benny Pollak, Jonathan Nelson, Russ Dobler

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

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86434663486?pwd=Wnh6cXNjWFNneHJnNUZsVFVxRzJlUT09>

If you find anything going wrong with the Zoom meeting, please contact: admin@skeptcampnyc.org



share the apple of knowledge

SkeptiCamp NYC 2023

The Intended Schedule

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

9:00 AM - 10:00 AM Pre-Con Meet-and-Greet!
Schmooze with your fellow attendees, while we get things ready.

10:00 AM - 10:10 AM **Opening Ceremonies** and Other Obligatory Stuff

10:10 AM - 10:40 AM Tony Saunders **The Secret Music of - Plants?**
Category: The Arts
There are commercial products that claim to take live, electrical resistance signals from plants (and other organic sources) and translate them into "Music." We will show how these signals are taken in and assigned to musical values by the equipment, experiment with different organic sources, and allow for audience members to handle and interact with the system itself. The notion of plant "consciousness" will be discussed. One lucky attendee will go home with the plant "musician!" (but not the presenter...)

10:40 AM - 11:10 AM Spiro Condos, with Tony Saunders **A Scientist and an Artist discuss the importance of Narrative in the Visual Arts**
We will each show three works of Art; both representational and abstract, and discuss what can be gleaned from each piece. Does it tell a story? Does it evoke a mood? What does the observer's perspective bring to the meaning of the piece?

Is objective interpretation possible, or even desirable?

11:10 AM - 11:25 AM Short Break #1

11:25 AM - 11:55 AM Craig Sachs **Should We Abandon the Skeptics we Thought we Loved but are "Jerks"?**
Category: Controversies
(This ought to be a rather provocative discussion...)

11:55 PM- 2:00 PM **Lunch Break**

2:00 PM - 2:30 PM Benny Pollak **A Conversation About Artificial Intelligence**
A conversation about issues related to A.I.

2:30 PM - 3:00 PM Olga Ast **Was Time "Invented" or "Discovered"? My "Personal" "Conspiracy" "Theory"**
Category: Mysteries of Life, Time and Space
The question "*Was mathematics invented or discovered?*" has become very popular lately. Could we ask the same about our concept of time, was it invented or discovered?

My obsession with a subject of time started probably in my early childhood. Since then I published books, presented at interdisciplinary conferences, participated in the art-science exhibitions, and initiated and have been curating an interdisciplinary ArcheTime project that aims to foster critical discourse between artistic, academic and scientific thought on Time since 2009.

Is there a way to come closer to understanding of the subject of time and come up with a meaningful answers?

My questions are not usual "*What time is?*" or "*Is time an illusion?*" but: "*Why we created the concept of time? What could be the physical phenomena that causes our impression and makes us to believe that everything moves from the past to the future, even in one direction?*"

3:00 PM - 3:10 PM Short Break #2

3:10 PM - 3:40 PM Russ Dobler **What does Bigfoot SOUND like? Science vs. Observation**
What if someone asked you to yell like a Sasquatch -- and then judged you on the accuracy? How do you best simulate the vocalization of something that probably doesn't exist? Do you go for what our closest furry relatives sound like, or what Bigfoot hunters claim to hear?

I traveled to the "Sasquatch Calling Festival" in Whitehall, New York, to see how they determine their annual winner, and the whole experience was a scream.

3:40 PM - 4:10 PM Mitchell Scott Lampert **What would Intelligently Designed Life Actually Look Like?**
Those who do not accept the very idea that one lifeform can evolve into a completely different one, would like to think all life on Earth was the product of an Intelligent Designer. They claim to have evidence in the form of "complexity" and "information", even though there is really no reason those sort of things can't emerge over time, from natural causes. And, yet, there are those hallmarks of design we do NOT see in life forms: Replaceable parts, tooling marks, maker labels, etc. So, if one were to Design a life form, what would it actually look like, and how would it compare to evolved life forms we are accustomed to? And, most importantly of all, how can we find a way to bring LEGO pieces into this conversation?

(And no, Mitchell will NOT be discussing his crackpot ideas for how the mind works, during this talk.)

4:10 PM - 5:30 PM **Open Sessions** - Here, we open the floor to anyone else who wants to talk about anything involving science or critical thinking.

5:30 PM - 6:00 PM **Closing Ceremonies** and Cleaning Up After Ourselves

6:00 PM Until Whenever: After Party - Russ Dobler is picking a nearby place.

Note: The categories don't really mean anything, and aren't really very important.

