



MUFON

Mutual UFO Network

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1-800-UFO-2166
(to report sightings)

ARIZONA CHAPTER

Volume 6 / Issue 4

The Truth is Out There . . .

MEETING DATE: Wednesday, April 23, 1997 ♦ MEETING TIME: 7:30 p.m. SHARP

PROGRAM: TED LOMAN -- "UFO CRASHES"

LOCATION: 5636 E. McDowell Road - National Guard Armory
(east of 52nd St. on McDowell; then north on Bushmaster Blvd. into Armory)

Tom Taylor
State Director
602/967-6265

[Vacant]
Asst. State Director

Jim Ossipov
Maricopa Co. Sect. Dir.
602/752-2280

Bill Hamilton
Field Investigator
602/404-7566

Earlene Ford
Media Representative
602/375-1942

June Scherrer
Pima County Sect. Dir.
520/326-0078

Bobbie Jones
Yuma County Sect. Dir.
520/627-2461

Mary Hart
Newsletter Producer
602/907-0609

Herb Funston
Cochise Co. Sect. Dir.
520/378-3024

Mike Hayes
Mojave Co. Sect. Dir.
520/692-1233

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

To say March, 1997, has been a busy month is an understatement! As we were going to press with the Newsletter last month, the Phoenix Lights, as this case has been called, occurred on Thursday, March 13.

Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of people across Arizona, from Kingman to Phoenix to Tucson, saw lights in the night sky. Our field investigators have been very busy viewing the many, many video tapes that were submitted by Arizona residents of this sighting. Both Richard Motzer and Bill Hamilton were on various radio talk shows in Phoenix which, in turn, resulted in many more eyewitness reports being called in.

Regrettably, Bill Hamilton is stepping down as Assistant State Director; the position remains vacant at this time.

I have to retract my comment in last month's Newsletter. One very reliable eyewitness has come forward to say they saw three jets from Luke Air Force Base intercept one of the objects over Phoenix! At the present time, it is thought the sighting was made up of several different objects,

accounting for the wide range of sighting reports and variation in number of lights and time of night in those reports.

The investigation is still ongoing, and it may be awhile yet before all the facts on this truly fantastic event are pieced together. If anyone out there knows of someone who witnessed the object(s) but has not given a sighting report, I urge you to have them contact Jim Ossipov, Maricopa County Section Director, whose phone number is just below the masthead on page 1 of this Newsletter.

If you were not fortunate enough to catch the excellent job "Strange Universe" has done on the story, perhaps we can show both segments at our upcoming meeting.

A special thanks goes out to Bill Strauss at KTAR Radio and to Erskin at 1310 Radio who allowed various field investigators to give their reports and got much-needed input from the public. It is unfortunate that the Arizona Republic and Mesa Tribune newspapers, among others, refused to cover this story to any degree. All of this proves it pays to

Keep your eyes to the sky!

Tom Taylor
State Director

TOUR OF V.L.A.

The tour of the VLA (Very Large Array) outside of Socorro, NM will take place on Saturday and Sunday, May 17 and 18, 1997. We are renting two 15-passenger vans and will have a list of motels in Socorro available for those who are serious about joining us. The cost per person, based on the number of people currently signed up, is \$30 apiece plus a share of the gasoline charges and plus motel. You will be responsible for making your own motel reservations for Saturday night, May 17, in Socorro. The vans will leave Phoenix early Saturday morning (attendees will be contacted with meeting place) and will return Sunday evening, May 18. If you have not already signed up but are interested in attending, call Earlene Ford at 375-1942 to get on the list. This is a very special event, as tours are NOT given to the public at large. YOUR \$30 CHECK must be mailed to Earlene at 3362 W. Grandview, Phoenix, AZ 85023 BY MAY 5!!



Media Watch

by Tom Taylor

UFOs have been in the headlines and on the news for some time now . . . too bad it's not all positive!

The Heaven's Gate cult and the suicide of 39 of its members is really tragic and unfortunate. The unfortunate event was overplayed, in my opinion, by the media.

Earlene Ford appeared on Channel 3 news to speak about the Paradise Valley crash in 1947.

Ted Loman, the speaker at this month's meeting, along with Whitley Streiber, were on Larry King Live talking about the Heaven's Gate suicides.

Bill Hamilton and Richard Motzer were on a radio talk show not carried here in our area called "End of the Road." Richard was also interviewed on KTAR's "Strauss' Place" program April 1 about the Phoenix Lights. The truck driver who reported the interception by the fighters from Luke Air Force Base called in as a result of this program. On Monday, March 31, Strange Universe showed the first part of the "Phoenix Lights" and it was very well presented. Part 2 is to be aired Wednesday, April 16th.

Pamela Hamilton, Bill's wife, appeared on "Strange Universe" April 1, speaking about black helicopters.

April 3 Pat McMahon's KTAR show featured Jim Dilettoso and Selman Graves, an eyewitness to the Paradise Valley Crash, for the entire three-hour program!

The interesting guests recently on Erskin's Overnight radio show have included Bill Hamilton, Robert Morning Sky, and Linda Moulten-Howe.

Channel 8 featured Budd Hopkins on a recent Nova special on alien abductions.

Art Bell and his alleged connection with the 39 Heaven's Gate/Hale-Bopp story appear in the April 14th issue of Time magazine. Too bad the story isn't completely correct.

The CBS Evening News mentioned the Phoenix Lights on one of their broadcasts. I received a call from David Martin, their reporter covering the story earlier in the day. He wanted to know if we had determined what the lights were yet; I told him there was an ongoing investigation. I felt they were not military flares, as the official report stated. The CBS affiliate here in Phoenix, Channel 5, is the only TV station not covering this story.

The CBS News on April 9 showed a report out of the Netherlands involving anti-gravity experiments.

In the interest of keeping the UFO topic before the public, the following is a list of programs on the subject recently aired via television, radio and newspaper in recent weeks. We will attempt to list programs ahead of time whenever possible; unfortunately, we are often not notified of programs until it is too late to publish them in the Newsletter in time for members to view, hear or read them. In the case of TV and radio programs, ask at MUFON meetings to see if anyone is aware of someone who may have taped them to share.

Always be sure to check current TV listings before viewing!

Mike and Roger Bollinger put out an interesting quarterly publication called UFO Update. To subscribe to this publication, or for more information, call (602) 494-9279.

WEEKLY RADIO PROGRAMS:

DREAMLAND - KFYI Radio, 910 AM, Sunday evenings, 8:00 p.m. - Art Bell hosts this interesting radio program. The program is aired on the following stations in other cities in Arizona: Globe: 1240 AM; Safford: 1230 AM; Tucson: 1400 AM; Kingman: 1230 AM; Yuma: 560 AM; and Flagstaff: 600 AM. Art also hosts

"Coast to Coast" weeknights at midnight and often features UFO related guests and/or topics. A "Dreamland" repeat is also broadcast at 8 p.m. on Saturdays.

Erskin Overnight, KXAM Radio, 1310 on the AM dial, Saturdays from 11 p.m. to 1 a.m.

UFO-AZ Radio Show - In the Tucson area on KTUC, 1400 AM, 10:00 p.m. Sundays (after "Dreamland").

Mysteries Around Us, KTAR Radio (620 AM), 12 midnight Saturday and 12 midnight Sunday, hosted by Frank Baranowski, a well-known hypnotherapist specializing in regression.

WEEKLY TV PROGRAMS:

UFO AZ/UFO TALKS: Scottsdale TCI Cable, Channel 28, Thursdays, 4:00-5:00 p.m. and Channel 22, Dimension Cable, Monday and Tuesday at 9:00 a.m.; now also in Prescott on Channel 13 Friday nights at 9 p.m. and repeated on Tuesday at 3 p.m. Co-produced by Alan Morey. Ted, Peggy and Jim co-host this continuing series featuring interesting guests and topics related to all aspects of the UFO experience.

Unsolved Mysteries - Fridays at 7:00 p.m., Channel 12.

X Files - Sundays at 8:00 p.m., Channel 10.

Sightings (cable only - SciFi Channel) moved to **Wednesdays, 8 p.m.** and **12 midnight** according to a MUFON member and viewer in California. Be sure to check your local cable guide for this broadcast.

Strange Universe - every weeknight at 11:00 p.m. on Channel 45.

Dark Skies, 7:00 p.m. Saturdays, Channel 12.

Late Night Cosmic Contact - Saturdays, 9:00 - 10:00 p.m., Channel 61 [TCI Tucson Public Access]. This new talk show features host Chris Maynard and guests who believe they have experienced contact with life from other worlds. Chris also

MUFON-AZ WEB ADDRESS: <http://www.idowebpages.com/mufon.html>

MUFON (INTERNATIONAL) WEB ADDRESS: <http://www.rutgers.edu:80/~mcgrew/mufon/index.html>

MUFON (INTERNATIONAL) E-MAIL ADDRESS: mufonhq@aol.com

examines national contact cases to evaluate facts, comparisons and trends of this growing phenomenon.

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Hey out there -- be smart like our member Roy Schott and advertise in the MUFON-AZ Newsletter!! Ads up to three lines long are \$5.00; business-card sized ads are \$10 [we can reproduce your business card as the ad]. See Tom Taylor for prices on larger ads. Submit your ad and payment by the first of the month to have it appear in that month's newsletter issue.

50 YEARS OF ARIZONA SIGHTINGS 1947-1997

Jim Ossipov has an updated version of reported Arizona sightings since 1947. Copies may be purchased at MUFON-AZ meetings for \$5.00 or ordered by mail for \$6.50. Contact Tom Taylor for details.



Many thanks to those submitting articles and book reviews, and if you haven't done so, here's an invitation to add to YOUR newsletter by doing so. Handwritten articles and those typed on a typewriter are fine, but if you do have a computer, it saves a lot of time if you can submit your articles on diskette. However, PLEASE save your articles in Word-Perfect 5.1 software or in ASCII (DOS text) format and put your name on them. Then send them (either the hard copy or the diskette) to Tom at 1433 W. Huntington, Tempe, AZ 85282 or fax hard copy articles to Mary Hart at 907-0609. You can also send them via internet to her husband's internet address, which is: taz7211@ix.netcom.com

Calendar

Cochise County Chapter - Meeting Saturday, April 26, 2-4 p.m., Sierra Vista Public Library (Mona Bishop Room), 2950 E. Tacoma St. in Sierra Vista. The library is next to the Community Center. Call Herb at 520/378-3024 for further information if necessary.

Pima County Chapter - Saturday, May 10, 1997 (Saturday), 1 p.m. Call June at 520/326-0078 for more information.

Yuma County Chapter - Meeting Sunday, June 1, at Desert Lakes Clubhouse. No meetings for the rest of the summer. Contact Bobbie Jones at 520/627-2461 for details.

Maricopa County Chapter - Meeting Wednesday, April 23, usual place and time (see page 1).

April 26, 1997: Tucson - Future Visions featuring Chet Snow and Crop Circles. Tickets are \$50 in advance or \$65 at the door. Call Russ Purvis, A.R.E., in Tucson at 520/751-7985 for details.

May 17-18, 1997 (Saturday & Sunday): Trip to Very Large Array in New Mexico. See article elsewhere in this Newsletter for more information.

June 7, 1997: Controlled Remote Viewing Training, basic course taught by Lyn Buchanan. See article elsewhere in this Newsletter.

June 21-22: "The UFO Event of the Year" in North Haven, CT. Stanton Friedman and Dr. John E. Mack. Contact John White; 60 Pound Ridge Rd.; Cheshire, CT 06410 or phone 203/272-2151 or fax 203/250-0501.

June 26-28, 1997 - 18th Rocky Mountain UFO Conference, University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming.

July 11-13, 1997 - 28th Annual MUFON International UFO Symposium, Amway Grand Hotel, Grand Rapids, Michigan. The theme of this symposium will be "The 50th Anniversary of UFOlogy."

August 15-17 - UFO Awareness Week. We will have our usual display in Christown mall. To volunteer some of your time at our display, sign up on the special signup sheet that will be at this month's meeting.

CULT EXITS AS HALE-BOPP PASSES

As everyone is no doubt aware, 39 members of the religious cult known as "Heaven's Gate" committed suicide "in preparation for meeting with the UFO following the Hale-Bopp Comet." They stated in a letter to the media that they came from beyond this earth and had inhabited human forms (incarnated human bodies) which they were now shedding to return "from whence they came." Their leader (a brilliant man and former mental patient) stated that a UFO would come for them and they would board it. They also believed that there was a UFO traveling with the Hale-Bopp Comet which was using Hale-Bopp as a shield from earth's view (a theory we in MUFON have heard before). Their philosophy on the creation of humans was very similar to that of Zacharia Sitchin. They also said they knew they would be perceived as a strange and dangerous cult.

It is sincerely hoped that this terrible tragedy will not adversely affect public opinion of organizations such as MUFON. While the beliefs of this cult may be held by some in this group, as in other groups, this philosophy is not the official position of MUFON -- rather, as Walt Andrus has reiterated, MUFON is concerned with the nuts-and-bolts scientific investigation of UFOs and related physical phenomena including the government coverup involved therewith. The beliefs of the Heaven's Gate cult in no way represent those of MUFON in general.

These deaths were a very strange and unfortunate circumstance, and it is sincerely hoped no one else will follow their path. As recently as April 14 Rio de Angelo, the purported 40th member, was interviewed by Jane Pauley and, although he does not contemplate joining the others in suicide, he was in complete agreements with their reasoning and defended their right to "move onto the next plane." He also believes he is a soul from elsewhere who is currently inhabiting an earthly form.

ANOMALOUS LIGHTS WEST AND SOUTHWEST OF PHOENIX

On March 7, 1997, I was driving westerly on State Route/MC 85 in Goodyear which is just to the west of Phoenix. At approximately 2110-2130 hours MST, I was on a fairly dark stretch of the road which runs parallel to the Goodyear Airport (at 968 feet above sea level) between Bullard Avenue and Estrella Parkway. At the time of this sighting I was headed approximately 240 degrees and I observed at some distance, but directly ahead of me, a large light the color of an amber sodium vapor lamp but with the intensity of the landing lights on a heavy jet aircraft such as a C-5A, DC-10 or 747. I first thought this to be an aircraft on a long final approach to Runway 3 at the Goodyear Airport (GYR) but at a relatively low altitude of 15 to 20 degrees above the horizon and more distant than an aircraft either on the approach to Sky Harbor (PHX) or GYR, this did not seem to be a possibility. I am very familiar with both the road and the types and varieties of aircraft lights seen in the area on the approach to both GYR and Luke AFB (LUF) to the

north as well as those aircraft making approaches from the west to PHX to land on Runway 26.

The light was on a line of sight which would have placed it approximately 5 to 8 miles south of the Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station which is 45 miles west at 250 degrees from PHX Sky Harbor or possibly as much as 30 miles from my position. Puzzled by this light, which was different than any I had seen after 48 years as a private pilot and a worker in the aviation industry, with tens of thousands of hours in the air and around airports and aircraft, I began to scan the sky just as the light blinked out. As I looked about the sky to try and find some context for the light, the road made a turn from 240 degrees to 250 degrees and looking to my left and on a bearing 90 degrees from the direction I was heading, i.e., SSE of me, I observed an identical but slightly brighter light at an elevation of 25 to 30 degrees above the horizon and just above the Estrella Mountains which begin to rise from 1500 to 4512 feet over a distance of 5 to 15 miles from my position. This sighting occurred within a second or two of my having observed the first light. As I was by now approaching my turn off at Estrella Parkway, I briefly diverted my eyes to the road but when I looked back to the southeast the light was gone.

I have observed flares under air combat conditions in Southeast Asia and elsewhere but I have never seen one which had the characteristics of these lights. When I arrived home at about 2145, I noted these lights to my wife and two of my daughters who had just arrived for a visit. I estimate the distance from the first light to the second light to be between 20 to 40 miles. They looked unlike any lights I have observed on helicopters, approach/landing lights on aircraft, flares, crop dusting aircraft, or military aircraft on routine and non routine flights. They did not appear to move while I observed them. They seem to match the descriptions given by many others the following week, on March 13. Some of those lights also were sighted near the Estrella Mountains.

A hoax? A mystery? Or a mysterious hoax? Time may tell. At

the least, they were anomalous aerial phenomena.

Herb Moran
AZ MUFON Member

COCHISE COUNTY ACTIVITY REPORT - 3/97

There were no new sightings reported in the Cochise County Arizona area during the month of March 1997.

There has been one source which has given repeated alleged sightings in the past. Each of these has been rigorously analyzed and found to be IFO's rather than UFOs and the alleged events have been considered either accidentally spurious or intentional hoaxes to gain attention and advance the observer's certainly non-scientific objectives which seem to border on the transcendental are therefore beyond the scope of investigation of our section.

The last such occasion of an incident (in February) resulted intensive cross questioning by the investigators after the observers presented their part of the interview. The alleged 'second witnesses' have repeatedly given nebulous testimony and were not contacted for that reason. The pair involved have not ventured any further claims of sightings.

The Cochise County Section has embarked upon an intensive training program. Material to be presented will include subjects common to elementary physics and astronomy, principles of flight and general aviation practices, different techniques and methods of measurement and standards of data evaluation, analysis and synthesis from a systems science standpoint. As much as possible members will present mini-classes in their areas of expertise. Beyond that we will engage experts in various areas to present special classes essential to investigator training.

Our next meeting will be Saturday, April 26, 1997 at 1:00 p.m. and will be held in a special conference room at the Sierra Vista Public Library.

CONTROLLED REMOVE VIEWING TRAINING COMES TO PHOENIX

Beginning June 7, 1997, Lyn Buchanan (recent guest on the Art Bell Show and retired military remote viewer for Project Stargate) will be conducting the basic course in CRV in Phoenix. Controlled Remote Viewing is the ability to acquire information without the use of the normal five senses, mechanical or electronic devices, logical deduction, or help from other people by purely mental means. Class space is limited, so early signup is recommended. Those interested in enrollment in this class should contact Problems>Solutions>Innovations at: 301/884-5856 (e-mail: raziell@mail.ameritel.net) or on the World Wide Web at <http://www.ameritel.net/lusersrviewer> -- or contact Pete Creelman at 971-9277 or e-mail Pete at AquaPete@AOL.Com

UFO SIGHTINGS IN PRESCOTT VALLEY

Despite reports, Luke Air Force Base denies sending aircraft to investigate

A man reported sighting UFOs above a shopping center in Prescott Valley at about 8 p.m. Thursday night [March 13], according to Prescott Valley police. Peter B. Davenport, director for the National UFO Reporting Center in Seattle, said his organization's hotline received more than a dozen calls last night from several areas of Arizona regarding objects seen in the sky.

Davenport said the hotline began receiving calls for a sighting in the Paulden area, then Prescott, then the Glendale area, and the last report was for objects seen over Tucson.

A man from Paulden called The Daily Courier and said he saw five diamond-shaped objects with wispy tails around 8 p.m. last night. Upon hearing that other people have reported also seeing the objects, he said, "I'm glad to know I wasn't the only weirdo."

Kurt Milam, spokesman for the Yavapai County Sheriffs Office, said they received some calls last night from people who saw low-flying

objects, but YCSO did not dispatch deputies to investigate.

A speaker at the Federal Aviation Administration said they had only received calls from people wanting to know if any UFOs had been sighted.

An astronomer called into the hotline office and told them he saw the UFOs in northern Phoenix, five of them with lights.

According to the hotline speaker, Luke Air Force Base apparently sent two jets last night to intercept the UFOs. The pilots recorded the objects on camera and returned to base. Allegedly one pilot was shaken, and the base was locked down for the night.

Media liaison at Luke Air Force Base Sgt. Rolla Suttmitter said no aircraft were sent out and there was no lockdown, adding that the cameras on the aircraft only take pictures of targets during practice. She said the base received no calls Thursday night regarding UFO sightings. "We do not respond to something like this," she said, "and we do not fly in the evening."

By Laura Hichey, Daily Courier
From America Online
March 16, 1997

REPORT ON PROJECT AWARENESS 1997 GULF BREEZE UFO CONFERENCE MARCH 21-23, 1997

The following is a summation of two of the 14 events offered at the 1997 Gulf Breeze UFO Conference. These two events took place Saturday evening in Pensacola, Florida. The first event was a Speakers Panel consisting of Stanton Friedman, Nick Pope, Whitley Strieber, George Wingfield (British crop circles), authors Larry Warren and Peter Robbins (Left at East Gate), and anthropologist Arthur Horn, who seemed at a loss as to what he actually studied to warrant being on the panel. Absent were Travis Walton and Mike Rogers. Scott Catamas was the moderator who chose audience members with questions for the panel and who kept the panel on track (not an easy task) regarding the topics.

Whitley Strieber spent several minutes explaining what happened regarding the reporting of a Hale-Bopp "companion" (referred to by Stanton Friedman as the "Hale-Mary"). Strieber said that there is now no evidence of an accompanying object, but he feels that the Japanese National Laboratory photo has not been satisfactorily explained and that the original anonymously-sent photo which caused all the speculation about a companion object "could be an attempt to discredit remote viewing."

In response to a question regarding the future of ufology, including government disclosures, Scott Catamas said that a lot of government leaders want information to be released. This release could lead to the development of alternative energy sources which the military-industrial complex would be against. Nick Pope, who is employed by the British Ministry of Defense, said that there is an interest by the mainstream in England. Peter Robbins thinks that a cover-up will not be revealed, but that there will be a discovery by our latest Mars probe which will deflect interest from probable past coverups by appearing to be the first evidence of ETs. Friedman said that 250,000 pages per week of classified documents are being reviewed by the Air Force in order to comply with government policy toward declassification. He also thinks there may be deathbed confessions by witnesses concerning the Roswell event at or around the time of the 50th anniversary of the Roswell crash. Strieber also thinks the visitors could change the policy of secrecy and that it's up to us and our relationship with the visitors; we need much more self-empowerment.

Regarding the audience question of whether the visitors are friend or foe, the panel responded by agreeing that we don't know. Be cautious. There are many types of aliens with no clear agendas. Stanton Friedman remarked that the Mars artifacts are far less frightening than flying saucers on Earth, and that there are complex political issues to be considered.

The second events, billed as a Scott Catamas Anniversary Special Event, was nothing more than excerpts from the TV shows

"Strange Universe" and "The Paranormal Borderline," both of which Catamas is associated with as a writer/producer. His comments between clips were interesting in that they revealed behind-the-scenes information and provided a real feel for the circumstances and locale of each filming and the personalities involved. Catamas made a point of saying that in all his years of association with Hollywood and film makers, he has not heard one thing that would lead him to believe in the idea that we are being purposely desensitized to the idea of the existence of aliens. He strongly believes that all the recent movies are being produced for the sole reason that they are huge money-makers.

Mary Myers
AZ MUFON Member

New York Times

U.S. Has Stopped Tracking U.F.O.'s

WASHINGTON, April 1 (AP) — Convinced that there is no extraterrestrial threat, the United States military long ago stopped keeping track of U.F.O.'s, a Pentagon spokesman, Kenneth Bacon, said today.

The suicide last week of 39 members of Heaven's Gate, a high-tech U.F.O. cult, prompted a question at today's Pentagon briefing on whether the military tracked U.F.O.'s.

Mr. Bacon said the Air Force investigated U.F.O. reports from 1947 to 1969. He said it stopped because, out of 12,618 reported sightings, investigators found no evidence of extraterrestrials or even of any aircraft representing exotic technology or a threat to the United States.

Virtually all the U.F.O. reports investigated were explainable as aircraft or weather phenomena, he said.

Asked about the possible existence of U.F.O.'s, Mr. Bacon said the United States Government "cannot substantiate that they exist."

Tuesday, April 16, 1996, Corvallis Gazette-Times, Corvallis Ore.

Implants in UFO abductees

A recent item of general interest, not presented by the regular news media, concerns the gradually tightening evidence indicating reality of the UFO phenomenon; especially the UFO abduction phenomenon. Dr. Roger K. Leir of Carrizo, California, along with four other surgical team members, has succeeded in removing implants from two UFO abductees, which were previously detected by X-rays. From the vicinity of the big toe of a woman abductee, he extracted a foreign object about one-half centimeter on a side having a dense membrane covering too tough to cut with a sharp scalpel. Later it was dried and the membrane removed, revealing a black shiny metallic core, now undergoing a battery of tests. A second, smaller implant was also removed.

From the male abductee the implant removed (from the back of the hand) looked identical to the smaller one removed from the woman; neither abductee knew the other. In all three instances, touching and removing the implant was painful despite the patients being under both local anesthesia and hypnoanesthesia. Later examination indicated peripheral nerves in tissue surrounding the objects, but no inflammation. These and the lack of rejection of the foreign objects seems unique. All three objects were magnetic and fluoresced bright green under ultraviolet light.

The doctor and most of his team have gone public. The event was recorded on paper at the time, and

a video taken of the surgery. The doctor's writeup is published in the MUFON UFO Journal, (April '96), 103 Oldtowne Road, Seguin, TX 78155.

Jim Deardorff
Corvallis

APRIL 1, 1997

Where weird is the word

Colorado community seems straight out of 'X-Files'

By ALAN DUMAS
Rocky Mountain News

CRESTONE, Colo. (AP) — Visiting Crestone is like going to a theme park based on television's "The X-Files."

Located in desolate high desert in the shadow of the Sangre de Cristos on the north end of the San Luis Valley, Crestone's official population in the 1990 census was 39, but that's because most people live in cabins or trailers scattered outside town.

Hundreds of tame deer walk the streets, sleeping on people's front porches and in back yards. Cranial cleansing and herbal colonics are readily available, but gasoline is scarce, sometimes rationed.

There's hardscrabble potato and carrot farming. There are also hot springs, crystal shops, ashrams and sufi dancing.

And at night, some say, the UFOs come out.

Christopher O'Brien, who has been chronicling weirdness in the San Luis Valley since 1992, late last year published "The Mysterious Valley," a compilation of "astounding true stories."

A New York marketing designer turned furniture maker, O'Brien moved to Crestone in 1988 to work in peace and quiet. Instead, he found an astonishing concentration of strange activity, a place where such things as cattle mutilations, unexplained lights in the night sky and rocks with magical properties have become commonplace.

"I've seen all kinds of odd lights in the sky at night," says Brian Norton, Rio Grande County undersheriff. "Just about everyone has, but they don't call us about them anymore, not more than once or twice a week anyway."

"There isn't anything we can do; we don't patrol UFOs. Personally, I think it's secret military stuff up from the White Sands Base in New Mexico, but there's no way to tell. You stop paying attention after awhile."

This matter-of-fact attitude confounds O'Brien.

"Look, I'm a skeptic," he said. "I assume that everything has a mun-

dane explanation, and 99 percent of the time that's the case.

"But in my database, I've collected over 600 unexplained UFO sightings in the valley, some witnessed by 30 or more people. And it's not just a modern phenomenon. This place was considered sacred by the Indians, and the first European explorers reported seeing lights in the sky. This place is what I call high strange."

Here are a few of O'Brien's discoveries.

The Crystal Skull

Donna Koch was riding fence on her ranch outside of Crestone in 1994 when she saw the sun reflect off something on the ground.

What she found was a twisted, humanoid skull made of glass. It had a maniacal grin, and intelligent eyes. It looks a lot like the popular conception of those big eyed extraterrestrials, although Koch says to her it looks like an "ant person."

When Koch took the skull to her home, a spare tire in the bed of a pickup truck in her yard exploded. Then people began to have bizarre accidents around her house, hitting themselves with hammers and brooms.

When O'Brien came over to videotape the skull, his camera broke, and no one has been able to repair it, he says.

Koch brought the skull to Denver a couple years ago to have it looked at by art collectors and by the Denver Museum of Natural History. But no one would hazard a guess on its age and origins. Although she was offered \$20,000 for it by a collector of the paranormal from Washington, she doesn't think she'll sell.

"I just have the feeling that if it was sold, nothing good would come of it," Koch says. "I get the feeling it came to me to protect it. It's very strange."

The Lights At Night

O'Brien is in one of his favorite UFO watching spots near the huge Baca Ranch, a few miles from Crestone. It's a clear and windy night, and he can see 100 miles in any direction.

O'Brien works with a pair of Army surplus Starlight binoculars that enhance night vision. They date to the Vietnam War, but it is the best equipment he can afford.

"It allows you to see commercial craft 60 miles away that would be invisible otherwise," he says.

Tonight, he's looking for the anomalous lights that dance over the valley in ways no commercial aircraft could.

And around 8 p.m. they appear.

Hovering over the Great Sand Dunes National Monument a few miles to the southeast are orange and white globes of light. They do zig-zag maneuvers in formation, break apart and then reassemble. Sometimes, they come to a full stop and just sit in the sky.

And although the occasional commercial plane fills the valley with the rumbling sound of its engines, these craft are silent. The only sound is the wind over the desert.

"My guess is what we're seeing is some new kind of helicopter technology being tested," O'Brien says. "Maybe some top secret black budget project. But we'll never know."

The Mutilated Cow

David Jaramillo has been the UPS delivery driver in the San Luis Valley for 21 years. He's also a small rancher. Like most residents of the valley, he says he's seen incredible lights in the sky and, once or twice, has seen them land and take off.

Last fall, he took his family up to the cabin he keeps in the Sangres at 10,000 feet. They found a cow nearby that had been killed and mutilated with surgical precision.

"I'd heard about cattle mutilations, but I'd never seen one," Jaramillo says. "The uterus and the colon had been neatly cut out, and something had taken off the ears and sucked the brain out."

Nearby, Jaramillo says he found circles pressed into the ground, each 4 feet in diameter, about 15 feet apart, forming a triangle. He guesses it's where some sort of aircraft landed.

Object seen over state a puzzle — was it UFO?

By Susie Steckner
The Arizona Republic

The first call reportedly came from a former police officer, who spotted the strange cluster of lights moving very quickly across the night sky near Paulden, north of Prescott in Yavapai County.

The bright red-orange lights formed the shape of a boomerang, he said, with a larger grouping in the lead followed by a single light.

Reports poured in Thursday to Luke Air Force Base, the National Weather Service and the National UFO Reporting Center in Seattle, which logged the call from the unidentified former officer.

Four days later, there is no clear

explanation for the object, described as both a triangle and a straight line, and varying from bright red to white to bluish white.

"We are confused about the exact details, but make no mistake about it," said Peter Davenport, director of the Seattle UFO center, "there was a dramatic event that took place in Arizona that night."

The National Weather Service can't offer any answers. Same goes for the officials at Luke.

"We just know it was not one of our planes," Lt. Col. Mike Hauser said.

"Everybody is telling me that we have UFOs stashed all over the Air

— See OBJECT, page B2

Object seen over Arizona still puzzling

— OBJECT, from page B1

Force," he said. "I'm not taking issue with what people saw, (but) lots of things can make lights."

Davenport's best guess is an "ultra-sophisticated craft" that did not come from this planet.

The first call to the center came shortly after 8 p.m. from the former police officer. Minutes later, reports were coming in from Prescott and Prescott Valley, Dewey and Chino Valley.

Davenport said callers checked in from the east Valley, Glendale and Phoenix. Some reported that, as the object moved south toward Tucson, it appeared to send out a red beam of light.

The last call that night came from a young man from Kingman, who was en route to Los Angeles.

He called from a phone booth, saying he had seen a large and bizarre cluster of lights in the northern sky.

Tim MacDonald, 11, was leaving his Cub Scout meeting in Phoenix when he saw the bizarre object.

"It looked like a stealth bomber," he said. "It was in a triangle shape and it had three lights. It was moving very slowly. It was there for two or three minutes."

The lights went out one by one.

"When it disappeared, I thought it was a UFO."

Tribune, SAT, MARCH 15, 1997

1 for 'X-Files'? Strange lights reported

The Associated Press

Strange bright lights over northern and northwestern Arizona evoked a bevy of telephone calls but drew no official explanation.

Law enforcement agencies said their phones began ringing Thursday night with questions from people wanting to know what the lights were.

One Valley man videotaped what appeared to be a string of

nine lights hovering above the desert floor. The video was highlighted on television news Friday evening.

The Arizona National Guard said Friday it has no earthly explanation. But, Capt. Eileen Bienz, spokeswoman for the Guard, said an Apache helicopter pilot told a Valley television station that the lights were caused by military flares sent up during a training exercise.

Now is good time to view Hale-Bopp comet

By Barb Linnert
Chino Valley Review

There is something exciting going on in the morning and evening sky. It may not be as flashy as a meteor shower or a shooting star, surely not as dramatic as an asteroid crashing to earth, but still possibly the phenomenon of the century, if not the millennium.

The Comet Hale-Bopp, visible since the beginning of February in the northeast sky an hour before sunrise (between 5 and 5:30 a.m.) is now visible approximately one hour after sunset (7:30-8 p.m.) just above the horizon in the northwest sky.

In Arizona, the final 10 days in March will be the most eventful viewing times. There is no need to rush out and purchase a telescope. Hale-Bopp is visible to the naked eye, and ordinary binoculars are

helpful once it is located. Because it is not high in the sky, it is best to be away from buildings, large trees and bright lights.

The comet is 122 million miles from Earth, about 13 times farther than last year's Comet Hyakutake, and is very large for a comet. The nucleus of an average comet is about 3/4 to 1-1/2 miles in diameter, but Hale-Bopp is a whopping 25 miles in diameter. There hasn't been a larger comet since 1811 or a brighter comet since the year 1577.

Hale-Bopp has more dust and sports a brighter, denser tail, containing a trillion tons of water, which is 50 percent more moisture than in all of the Great Lakes. Its brightness can range from a magnitude of minus 2 (making it the brightest object in the sky with the exception of Venus) to a magnitude

of 1, well worth spending a little time in the chilly air to watch. It will keep brightening for another two weeks, pass closest to the sun on April 1, and stay visible through the month of April.

Why do we know where to look and when to look to observe this wondrous event?

Thanks go to Alan Hale and Arizona's own, Thomas Bopp, co-discoverers of Comet Hale-Bopp in July 1995. The official name is Comet C/1995-01, assigned by the International Astronomical Union that adopted a formal naming system for comets. However, the name Comet Hale-Bopp is catchy and easier to remember.

Thomas Bopp is a 47-year-old amateur astronomer from Glendale who in July 1995, with a borrowed telescope set up in the desert near the White Tank Mountains, fol-

lowed a tiny, fuzzy sphere in the sky. At the same time, astronomer Alan Hale was in New Mexico looking at a star cluster in the constellation Sagittarius when he spotted a "fuzzy object."

Put the names together and you get Hale-Bopp. Hale got top billing because he reported the sighting first. He also recorded the exact time, whereas Bopp and his friends out in the desert did not.

According to an article in the *Arizona Republic*, Bopp was quoted as saying, "The sky is full of beautiful things, and now one has my name on it."

If that's not enough excitement for local stargazers, don't miss the partial lunar eclipse on the night of March 23-24 when the earth's central shadow will extend 92 percent of the way across the moon's face.

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