

UFO

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Teen receives some reassurance

Girl who reportedly saw UFO visits circle

By JIM LANGHAM
Staff Writer

PAULDING — It was a unique merging, a girl who had reportedly seen an unidentified flying object in Indiana, standing by a crop circle in Paulding County.

Dawn Sprunger, 19, Berne, Ind., reported last Saturday morning that a UFO had hovered over her car as she traveled a seven-mile stretch of highway west of Berne. Local law enforcement officials, including Berne Mayor Blaine Fulton, also observed the phenomenon, which Fulton captured briefly on a camcorder.

Berne police chief Merlin Bixler, along with three other officers, headed east out of town and verified the object.

Sprunger said that the object eventually drifted to the east and northeast and finally disappeared. Berne is located

in Adams County, approximately 40 miles southwest of Paulding.

At the time, Sprunger hadn't heard of the crop circle discovered in a Paulding County field later on July 4, but once she did, she knew she wanted to visit it.

Tuesday afternoon, Sprunger and a cousin, Shane Dailey, walked up the field path off of Paulding County Road 126 to observe the formation.

"I was overwhelmed by what I saw," said Sprunger, describing her first impression of the circle. "It was unreal to think that the same thing that I had seen might have something to do with that crop circle."

Sprunger's description of what she had seen was that of a triangular-shaped object, in vertical position, with red and blue lights blinking. When she realized that it seemed to be hovering over her

car, she became frightened and telephoned local law enforcement officials.

The Indiana woman's report came on the wings of UFO sightings in the Middletown and Carlisle areas in southwest Ohio on July 4 and 5. Tri-State Advocates for Scientific Knowledge, based in the Cincinnati suburb of Norwood, had said that it received numerous reports of sightings.

"(It (visiting the crop circle) reassured me that I wasn't crazy," said Sprunger. "I didn't feel that it was something that was man-made. I sensed within my self that it was something that was related to what I had seen.")

On Wednesday, Sprunger was back on the scene again with a close friend. This time as she approached the site, she was more relaxed.

"I didn't feel nearly as nervous as I had earlier," she said. "I told my friend all about it and she wanted to see it. She was in complete awe about the whole thing."

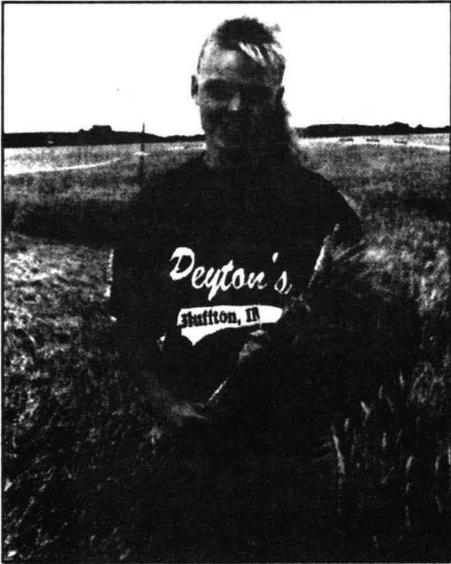
One of the things that Sprunger found interesting were the remarks of individuals at the circle. One person was certain that it was a hoax.

"I wanted so bad to tell him what I thought, but I decided to keep quiet because I knew that he wouldn't understand," said Sprunger. "People need to give these things a chance. It really bugs me when people judge the situation when they don't even have any facts or know how it feels."

One conversation that particularly grabbed Sprunger's attention was that of a couple discussing how they had heard on television that "some girl from Berne" had seen a UFO.

"I wanted to tell them so bad that I was the one who had seen it, but I didn't know how they would react," said Sprunger. "It was strange because they were all wondering, but I knew. It was so neat to know that, but nobody knew who I was."

"I feel so privileged. The thing I really like about it is the way that it's all bringing people together who wouldn't have met otherwise," she said.



Jim Langham/C-N Photo

Sprunger: Examines wheat by crop circle

Timmerman asks possible hoaxers for explanation

By JIM LANGHAM
Staff Writer

PAULDING — John Timmerman of the Center for UFO studies, Chicago, requested this morning that the individual or individuals responsible for constructing the Paulding County crop circle send an unsigned letter to *The Crescent-News* explaining their action.

"There are still a lot of unanswered questions in this situation and we are continuing our investigation," said Timmerman. "But there's still a possibility that this is a hoax."

Timmerman asked that the individual sending the letter explain in detail how his actions were carried out, including how and when. This information, he said, could assist with analysis of the situation. And he emphasized that it would be a waste of time

to send a hoax letter.

"We have enough information to verify whether or not the letter is a hoax," said Timmerman. "We can identify false information. But there is a lot of time, money and study going into this. This is not a joke. If there is a perpetrator out there, it would save everyone a lot of time and energy for that individual to come forth."

"We need to be sure that we have the right analysis of this thing," he said. "We need to get this thing taken care of as soon as possible, in respect to the Arend family. They are very kind people and have been most cooperative. We need to do all that we can to speed up this study so that they can go on with their lives as farmers."

Timmerman has also asked that individuals in the area who might have any additional information concerning the crop incident report that information.

"Anyone who noticed anything out of the ordinary could have helpful information," he said. "It's hard to say what piece of information out there could be something helpful to us."

Timmerman had said on Wed-

nesday, after studying the situation with Jim Beurlein, an Ohio State University agronomist, that there was a possibility that the crop circle could be man-made.

"That's still a possibility," Timmerman emphasized this morning, "but we need to get all of the facts together in this. There are still a lot of questions we need to answer before we can give a conclusive analysis."

The crop circle, located approximately seven miles east of Paulding on the Arend farm, has drawn national attention since it was first discovered by Mike and Sandy Dobbelaere on the afternoon of July 4 during a plane ride.

By Thursday afternoon, an estimated 4,000 people had visited the site to view the phenomenon.

Those having additional information are asked to send it to: John Timmerman, Box 1621, Lima, Ohio, 45802. He noted that he would accept letters or tapes. Information may also be faxed to 513-843-3834.

The address for *The Crescent-News* is 624 W. Second St., Defiance, Ohio 43512.

Museum: UFO Piece Jewelry Scrap

By JOHN FLECK
Journal Staff Writer

File the mystery of the Roswell UFO fragment under "case closed."

The Roswell International UFO Museum and Research Center's board of directors concluded Thursday the museum's purported alien spaceship fragment is of this Earth.

Not to worry, though. You'll still be able to drop by the museum to see what turns out to be a metal jewelry scrap from Utah artist Randy Fullbright's studio.

After initially rebuffing Fullbright's efforts several months ago to explain that the fragment was a castoff from his studio, museum officials on Thursday

morning compared samples of Fullbright's work and their UFO sample and concluded that Fullbright was right.

The museum still plans to exhibit the metal scrap, along with the story of the work that went into debunking it, as a testament to the institution's research skills, said museum co-founder Max Littell.

"We're going to make a display out of it and show our research department works," Littell said.

The fragment appeared on the public stage in March. When they unveiled it, museum officials said it was brought to them by a person who said a member of the military picked it up at the purported Roswell UFO crash site in 1947.

UFO buffs believe an alien spacecraft

crashed near Roswell in 1947. Skeptics suggest it was a top-secret Cold War balloon experiment.

After first publicizing the fragment, the museum launched scientific tests that concluded it most likely came from Earth.

But its origins remained a mystery until the Journal reported Fullbright's explanation that it came from his studio. Its thin layers and strange whirling patterns were the result of an ancient Japanese metalworking technique, Fullbright said.

Fullbright said he gave it to a friend, never claiming it was a UFO fragment, and had nothing to do with its eventual arrival at the museum.

When he called the museum several months ago trying to explain what the fragment really was, he was ignored, Fullbright said.

Littell said he did not know who Fullbright talked to when he called.

Museum board member Miller Johnson, who organized the scientific tests, contacted Fullbright after the newspaper article appeared, asking for some scraps from his studio to compare with the museum's piece.

The man who brought the fragment to the museum, Blake Larsen, said he believed it was collected at the Roswell site. Johnson said the museum might never get to the bottom of the mystery of how the claim of alien origin originated.

Psychic disputes alien abduction

BY MAX FOSTER
REPORTER

They've all tried — law enforcement authorities, a UFO group, a national television show and a Virginia psychic — but none can solve the mysterious disappearance of Devin Williams.

On the morning of Sunday, May 28, 1995, the long-distance truck driver for Flint Hills Transportation in Emporia, Kan., drove his refrigerated truck loaded with salad mix and strawberries off Interstate 40 in Winslow and onto the Beeline Highway.

About 50 miles later, near the Blue Ridge Ranger Station, the 28-year-old Kansas native turned onto remote Forest Service Road 95 and drove into the Buck Springs area. Several miles down the narrow, winding dirt road, the 18-wheeler became stuck and Williams abandoned the truck.

The incident remains a mystery to all.

Why would Williams — a respected married man with three children — drive his truck into a dense wilderness in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest and vanish without a trace?

They did it

Campers in the area told Coconino County Sheriff's Deputy

Bruce Cornish that they asked Williams around noon that Sunday why he had driven the truck into the rugged area.

They said he pointed to the truck and yelled, "I didn't do it. They did it." Then he walked back to the truck, they said.

During the course of the investigation, Cornish also interviewed witnesses who said they saw Williams on Monday, May 29, a short distance from the stranded truck and he was barefoot, disoriented and "talking to a tree."

That was the last time Williams was seen, Cornish said.

The highly unusual disappearance immediately attracted the attention of a Texas-based research organization known as MUFON — the Mutual UFO Network.

"The driver said, 'I didn't do it. THEY did it,'" said MUFON member Charlie Green. "That kind of makes you wonder who 'THEY' is, doesn't it?"

Today, the disappearance remains a topic of interest to both Green and MUFON because it was only five miles away from where Snowflake logger Travis Walton was allegedly abducted in the 1970s.

New leads?

Today, after more than a year of investigation, Cornish said there are still no leads concerning Williams' whereabouts.

But at least two other people think they have the answer.

Soon after the incident, the MUFON organization contacted member and Sedona resident Gerda Gallob, who identifies herself as a retired chemist and archeologist, to investigate the

case.

Last summer, 72-year-old Gallob drove into the Buck Springs area above the Mogollon Rim, took extensive pictures and compiled a report for MUFON President Tom Taylor of Tempe.

Gallob also enlisted the help of her friend, Joe McMoneagle, who is a psychic from the Intuitive Intelligence Applications Institute in Nellysford, Va. Gallob sent McMoneagle several pictures she had taken, her MUFON report and "a plea for help."

In January 1996, McMoneagle completed his report, in which he wrote that he sensed that Williams' disappearance was not an alien abduction, but rather a truck driver that "was suffering from delusions... was probably sick with the flu or a severe cold and possibly running a high temperature at the time of his disappearance."

The illness, combined with the flu or cold medicine he was taking left Williams confused and disoriented, McMoneagle said.

The psychic believes that Williams, in a muddled state of mind, took the wrong route in Winslow and drove dazed through the national forest.

The Virginia psychic said Williams attempted to hike out of the area, and eventually, "lost his balance while on the (Mogollon) rim edge and fell to his death."

In addition, McMoneagle provided Gallob with a location and description of where the body could be found.

Nature interferes

In February, Gallob drove to the area described in the report,

but found the forest roads near Buck Springs closed for the winter.

On May 11, she attempted to return to the area. She found the roads closed again, this time by order of the U.S. Forest Service because of extreme fire danger created by drought conditions in northern Arizona.

But Gallob has her own theory. She said that last winter, while waiting for the report from McMoneagle to arrive, she had two dreams about Williams' fate. The dreams were induced, she said, by the cold medication she was taking.

In the first, she said, "Devin Williams was attacked in a trucker's rest station between Kingman and Flagstaff."

In the altercation, he was kicked in the head and suffered either a concussion or serious brain damage, Gallob said.

In the second dream, she said, "I was lured between two vertical rock walls and a bush, which seems to me the place his body can be found."

Mystery unsolved

The drama of Devin Williams continued to unfold on the evening of March 15 when the National Broadcasting Company aired a prime time *Unsolved Mysteries* segment concerning his disappearance. The program did not make reference to the findings of either McMoneagle or Gallob.

According to *Unsolved Mysteries* producer Mary Pat Carney in Burbank, Calif., NBC received 133 tips immediately after the program was shown.

All of the tips received were forwarded to Cornish in Flagstaff. All were looked into by the sheriff's department, but

none proved to be of any value in solving the disappearance.

With information provided in McMoneagle's report and her own investigation, Gallob has been able to compile written directions and sketch a map of the Mogollon Rim location she believes Williams' remains may be found — near Promontory Butte.

However, she has been reluctant to provide authorities with the information, because she does not think they will believe her.

"I think they will not follow-up on an old woman's dream or a psychic's premonition, even when the person is well known for his ability," she said.

It's been more than a year since he vanished, but the whereabouts of Williams remains a mystery to all who have tried to solve the bizarre disappearance.

In Emporia, the rumors of alien abductions and other scenarios have circulated, co-worker Kyle Burris said. And now — after a long grieving period — Williams' wife, children and friends are "pretty well resigned that he's not coming back," he added.

However, there is one wish family and friends have:

"We'd all like to know what happened to him," Burris said. "We really don't know if he's alive or dead ... it would be better if we knew."

Roundup writer Max Foster is awaiting permission from the Forest Service to search the area described by Gallob. The authorization should clear this week. If we find anything, we'll let you know.

Test results official

JULIE MARIE BROWN
RECORD STAFF WRITER

Test results on the now famous piece of metal purported to be debris from the alleged 1947 Roswell UFO crash raises more questions for the International UFO Museum & Research Center.

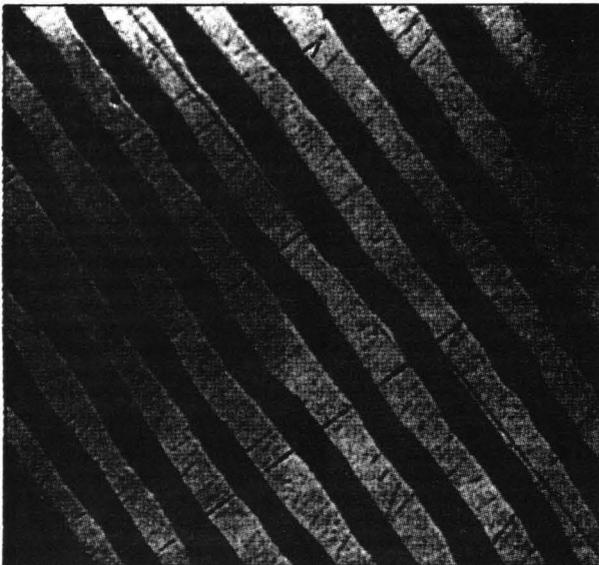
March 24, the museum received the metal fragment from an individual alleging the fragment had been smuggled from the UFO debris site during clean-up duties that first week in July 1947.

Since March, the museum staff and board have been actively attempting to answer the question, "Is this metal fragment a piece of a UFO or is it just a regular piece of metal?"

The latest test results from Los Alamos National Laboratory, where fragments were sent for additional tests in August, only raise more questions, said Deon Crosby, the museum's director.

She explained the initial composite test results on the fragment received in March performed at New Mexico Tech in Socorro revealed that the fragment was composed of several elements, but primarily of silver and copper. These results were received by the museum April 1, and stated, "... there is no evidence of extraterrestrial origins ..."

In June, the museum received a second fragment and along with a small piece of fragment 1 sent the fragments to Los Alamos for



Courtesy photo

This 'photo,' or optical micrograph, reveals the details of the cross-section of fragment 1 of a piece of metal received in March by the International UFO Museum & Research Center. The photo shows the 19 alternating layers of copper and silver contained in the metal that is only 0.015 inch thick.

testing. She said Los Alamos labs were picked because of their reputation and proximity to the museum.

The first test the lab ran was to see if fragment 1 and fragment 2 were at one time from the same source. They found the metal composition to be the same in both fragments.

Los Alamos Lab technicians, led by Larry Callis, then conducted isotopic analysis, which Crosby said was conducted because it is more technologically

advanced than other tests. She explained this type of analysis requires a very sophisticated piece of equipment, unique in its ability to measure the isotopic ratios of a given element. In other words, this machine "separates the isotopes of selected elements according to mass, and count very precisely the relative amounts of atoms having different masses."

The accepted value for each element is determined

by the International Scientific Community to be typical of materials found on Earth. If ratios varied to any major degree, this would, at the very least, suggest the alleged UFO material was truly made in conditions much different than Earth, Crosby said.

"Disappointingly, the isotopic analysis results did not shout of extraterrestrial origination," she said. The following is an excerpt from those test results, "As stated in the analysis, the fragments' isotopic ratios are not unusual. They are typical of terrestrial values. There are, however, some unusual circumstances that still require answers."

In conjunction with the isotopic analysis, several cross-section "photos," or optical micrographs, of each fragment were taken. Crosby explained, the sample is embedded in epoxy, then carefully sanded and polished to reveal details of its structure.

It was found that fragment 2 is composed of "... eight alternating layers of silver and copper." The fragment is only 0.01, or one one-hundredth of an inch thick.

Fragment 1, slightly thicker at 0.015 inch, distinctly boasts nineteen alternating layers of silver and copper.

"This is baffling," Crosby said. She explained that fragment 1, which is again 0.015 inch thick, is the same as one and a half pieces of paper thick.

Crosby said this was a major step in securing accurate information on the fragment and investigative research will continue.

She added that museum personnel were present and videotaped all tests to verify authenticity.

Most of the first fragment received in March is held in a safe at the Roswell Police Department.

Crosby said the public is welcome to come to the museum and review the test results and a copy of the results are available on the museum's web site.

SAUCER SIGHTINGS

Tales of weird, out-of-this-world take to the skies over West Slope

Story by Nancy Lofholm

The couple had just cast their lines in a Surface Creek lake at dusk June 16 and settled in for some relaxing fishing when they were scared out of their wits — and their lawn chairs to boot. Without warning, his glow-in-the-dark bobber suddenly shot 30 feet straight into the air, came zinging back to earth toward them, and landed at their

feet.

No whopper trout could have done that. The couple grabbed their gear, hopped in their Bronco, and hightailed it out of there, but not before they spotted some odd treetop-level lights in a canyon. They described them as two bright spotlights with three sections of long narrow lights between them.

Normally, driving that section of highway to their home takes about 10 minutes, but for some unfathomable reason the trip took a half-hour that night. They have no idea why. And they still have no idea what it was they saw.

At least, they have no earthly idea.

The thought has occurred to them that they've had one of those encounters of the third kind.

Theirs is the most recent report of the weird and out-of-this-world on the Western Slope, but it's by no means the only one. Colorado is known as a busy place for UFOs, and after the very cosmic San Luis Valley, Mesa County and the surrounding area is the happening saucer site in the state.

Consider this sampling of Western Slope reports that have gone into the Mutual UFO Network — a worldwide network of UFO believers and experts.

■ Grand Junction disc jockey Robert St.

John was out jogging early in the morning a year ago and reported he saw some sort of odd craft moving over the valley. It ejected two smaller crafts that appeared to crash into the Bookcliffs. That same day, a restaurant owner in Salida saw the same gyrating, pulsating cigar-shaped thing over Salida and caught it on his video camera. Ufologists (those that study UFOs) are now calling that sighting with its video proof one of the top 10 UFO sightings of all times

■ Last summer, a Glenwood couple observed odd maneuvering lights in the night sky and continued to see them all summer. The other adults they invited over to their deck, including law-enforcement officers, pilots and reporters, also saw the strange lights.

■ Late last year, three boys playing in a

How to report a UFO

303-451-5992 is the Mutual UFO Network 24 hour hotline for Colorado

603-497-2633 is the number for the International Center for Aerial and Abduction Research.

970-874-8679 is the number of Mesa, Delta and Montrose County UFO investigator Davina Ryszka.



Photo Illustration by Mickey Krawkowski/Daily Sentinel

church parking lot in Delta reported strange unblinking yellowish lights in the sky. The trio independently drew very similar pictures of the lights for an investigator.

Also late last year, a North Delta couple had just gone to bed when they saw a row of odd-looking lights outside their window.

They watched as it zoomed off and disappeared in the eastern sky.

■ In November of 1995, a man driving after dark from Grand Junction to Delta saw a bright white light that zoomed very quickly straight toward the ground then reappeared off and on low on the horizon.

"UFO sightings have gone through the roof," says Michael Curta, the Colorado Mutual UFO Network director. "People are more

aware. They're looking up more."

The movie "Independence Day" has probably done the most recently to turn heads heavenward. Television is also doing its part with shows like "The X-Files" and "Sightings." Twenty-two new movies and TV shows about aliens and space ships are due out by the end of 1997.

ing the switch from oddball subculture to middle class mystery.

Some 52 percent of Americans responded that they believe in UFOs, 29 percent that the government has been in touch with aliens, and 48 percent that there's a government plot to cover up that contact. That's more Americans believing in UFOs than believing they will collect Social Security when they get old.

"People that used to make fun of UFOs are now taking it serious," says Davina Ryszka of Delta.

Ryszka takes it very seriously. She is the mutual network's official investigator for Mesa, Delta and Montrose counties and is also Colorado's only member of the

International Center for Aerial and Abduction Research.

She goes out with recorder, camera, nightscope, tape measures and tools to take soil and plant samples and tries to find earthly reasons for celestial sightings.

Ryszka doesn't just investigate what's in the air. She also looks at crop circles that some people (Ryszka included) believe are left behind by saucer landings. She examines cow and horse carcasses to search for explanations for livestock mutilations. She has found they sometimes appear to have been made by someone or something wielding advanced laser-type cutting tools.

Curta says that of the 80,000 or so UFO sightings and UFO-linked oddities like mutilations that are reported worldwide each year, 90 percent can be explained.

They turn out to be stars, aircraft, satellites, weather balloons, mid-air jet refuelings or manmade lights of one sort or another. One percent to 2 percent of reports are hoaxes. The remaining 8 percent to 9 percent are truly unexplainable to investigators.

Curta says that means there's a lot of unexplained phenomenon out there because only one in 10 sightings are ever reported. The other nine who witness weirdness evidently clam up in fear of being considered kooks.

People shouldn't feel like space-cases when they observe odd things in the sky, Curta says.

After all, the textbooks used by the Air Force Academy in Colorado Spring have a chapter on UFOs, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency includes instructions on how to deal with alien landings in its disaster manuals for fire chiefs.

Roy Craig of Pagosa Springs politely calls all this hogwash.

In his new book "UFOs: An Insider's View of the Official Quest for Evidence," Craig talks about his involvement in the U.S. Air Force study of UFOs initiated in 1952. For Project Blue Book, the Air Force commissioned a team of University of Colorado scientists to do an independent study of about 12,000 UFO reports.

The team — including Craig — concluded UFOs were not threatening national security and recommended no further study of the phenomenon.

"Most of what we saw could be dismissed as misunderstanding," Craig says. "When people want to believe, they will reject all facts that contradict that belief."

Curta counters that there are some kooks and nutballs in ufology, but he thinks those who summarily dismiss any possibility of extraterrestrials are also out there.

"It's naive to believe we are the only living beings anywhere in this universe of zillions of stars," Curta says.

Cheryl Powell, co-director of the aerial and abduction research center, has some down to earth advice for Western Slope sky watchers who statistically have a higher chance of sighting something strange in the sky: "Be open-minded, but keep your feet on the ground."

And, she adds with a laugh, "Keep your eye on your bobber. Those aliens seem to have a sense of humor with that bobber thing."

There's more to the trend than fiction: Ted Koppel and Newsweek have both tackled UFOs this month in serious news reports. Japan just opened a \$52 million space museum housing UFO-related documents from around the world.

The centerpiece of Walt Disney World's revamped Tomorrowland exhibit is an ExtraTERRrestrial Alien Encounter.

The UFO Museum and Research Center in Roswell, N.M. — the most famous saucer landing site in the country — has drawn 160,000 people from 60 countries in its first two years.

The peripheries of Area 51 — the U.S. military's top-secret base in

Nevada where the government purportedly carries out UFO work — has become a vacation mecca for ufologists.

The influence of the Internet on otherworldly phenomenon also can't be overlooked.

Believers flock to hundreds of chat lines and Web sites for the latest Uinfo — out-of-this-world stuff like Jimmy Carter's account of his 1969 UFO sighting, interviews with astronauts who have seen alien craft in space and descriptions of surgeries to remove alien implants from abductees' toes.

Toe implants may be too much for some skeptics, but a recent Newsweek survey showed that belief in extraterrestrials is mak-

UFO

SIGHTINGS & REPORTS: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Story by Kirsten Mangold
Photos by Chris Kaufman

Twenty years ago this July 6, a San Bernardino woman visiting Chico for the weekend witnessed a sight that she'd never forget. Donna Hodge and several friends went to the Chico Municipal Airport to watch the fireworks display that Saturday night, and as they looked up into the night sky near Eaton and Cohasset roads, they saw what Hodge later insisted was an unidentified flying object — a UFO.

She watched the thing for about 50 minutes total. It was triangular-shaped with a large white light that changed from green to red and back again whenever it changed direction.

It moved at incredible speeds, she said.

Hodge filed a police report on the matter. Nothing ever came of it, and the Enterprise-Record wasn't able to contact her for this story. But Hodge's tale of an otherworldly sighting is just one in a bundle of clips published in the E-R over the years.

All total, in fact, more than 150 articles about possible UFO sightings in Chico have appeared in the E-R since 1949. And those are just the people who came forward, and the ones who agreed to be interviewed.

How many others have gone unreported?

Though there haven't been any recent UFO sightings in the Chico area, the E-R's clip file shows that such reports seem to go in cycles. An editorial from August 1965 begins with, "They're back again — and right on time! ... They have been reappearing irregularly ever since the 1940s and usually in August." That theory seems to have held up even to now.

The E-R's collection of UFO articles spans the gamut of situations. Some of the stories are just too bizarre to be anything more than the product of an overactive imagination; others were later proved to be hoaxes.

In 1966, four Chico Junior High School students were nabbed by police for creating fake "flying saucers" out of plastic bags and candles. The four boys constructed their devices to fly as the hot air from the candles filled up the bags.

After a rash of phone calls from worried neighbors, the four were apprehended and scolded for their prank — not only were the neighbors frightened by the potential alien invasion, but the homemade contraptions could have exploded or caused a fire.

Charges, the article said, were pending.

Then there was the 80-year-old woman who insisted to police in 1969 that she'd seen six red and white stripes resembling an American flag, stretching across the entire sky one Friday evening at Sunset. Odd, she said — especially since the stars from the flag were missing.

An alien formation? Probably not, police agreed.

Still, there have been plenty of other reports that just couldn't be explained. These were called in by regular, everyday people, including schoolteachers, homemakers, businessmen, truck drivers, members of the media and law enforcement officers.

Throughout the 1950s, there were a few sporadic radio reports here and there. The real craze didn't start until August 1960, when suddenly everyone and their best friends were spotting strange objects in the sky.

It started with two California Highway Patrol officers who swore that they saw a fast-moving, brightly lit object hovering in the sky just south of Red Bluff. They released a detailed description of the "beautiful object," and an Air Force investigator was called out to talk to the two officers. The Tehama County sheriff ordered all of his officers on night patrol to call for cameras if they saw anything out of the ordinary, and people began to sit out in their back yards at night with binoculars, gazing up at the stars and waiting.

Chico, and the surrounding area, was mesmerized.

Within a week, though, the Air Force announced its official finding: No flying

saucers; it never happened.

But the UFO craze had only just been ignited. Before the end of August, reports were coming in from all over Butte County. One night, no fewer than 10 people in the vicinity of Neal Dow Avenue — including a city police inspector — witnessed a fast-moving, red and black object headed east over Chico. Louis Hunerlach, who lived on the street at the time, was quick-thinking enough to grab a pair of field glasses and sneak a closer look at the object before it disappeared. It was the color of a harvest moon, he said, with a black bottom.

Guy Hall, another Neal Dow neighbor who still lives in Chico, says he can still remember standing on the lawn with his wife and four children, marveling at the thing in the sky. "It was there for such a long time," he said, describing it as "kind of a round object flattened out. It could have been a saucer, but it was facing us from such a position that it looked elliptical."

Hall said his family was embarrassed to report it at first, but since all the other neighbors saw it too, they figured it wouldn't hurt. Now, 35 years later, they still wonder what it was. "We didn't believe much in UFOs at the time, but now I wouldn't venture the foggiest guess as to what it was," he said, chuckling. "Everybody was excited for a while; it was interesting. But then we got bored with it and it went away."

The Neal Dow Saucer was, in fact, among the first of a number of group sightings in the 1960s (see related story). For a while, people who claimed to have seen saucers were anxious to get the word out, seeking others who might have witnessed the same thing. Almost always, there was someone out there who came forward.

There were a number of reports made in the 1970s, but by the 1980s, they were beginning to taper off. The 1990s offered only a handful of sightings, all of which were vague and lacking detail.

Could it be that the saucers just don't come around Chico anymore?

Not according to Andrew and Heather Tomas, Chico's very own UFO experts. Says Heather Tomas, "People don't want to come forward anymore, because nobody believes them. It shoots the hell out of (society's) ideas of politics and religion. They're reviled."

Andrew Tomas, who moved to the United States from Europe in 1971, and to Chico in 1977, has written a number of books on

unknown phenomena, including "We Are Not the First" and "They Were the First." His specialty is "ancient astronauts" — beings from other planets who visited the earth in pre-Biblical times.

But he has also been involved with current UFO studies, and he's traveled all over the world to investigate reports of sightings and to study what he's certain is physical evidence of otherworldly visitings. Tomas could even be considered a pioneer in the UFO movement — a book he wrote in 1935 discussed the possibility of flying saucers, long before it was politically correct.

"Yes, I think they're real," he said recently. "First, they don't look like planes. Some are 35-40 feet across or more, and they fly low and close to earth. And there are photographs ... so many photographs."

But what about the skeptics who say that the photos are all faked?

"There are thousands of them. They couldn't all be faked."

Tomas and his wife both say they take the scientific approach to studying unknown phenomena: With so many other planets in the universe, logically, there must be some that support conditions suitable for life.

Their stories are fascinating — from the Christian missionary in New Guinea who witnessed a saucer along with 40 natives, to the mysterious "angel hairs" that were allegedly dropped from a UFO over Melbourne, Australia and sent to Tomas for laboratory examination. The latter case, he says, was particularly perplexing. Several Russian scientist friends of his determined that the light, airy filaments were made up of four basic chemicals known to humans — barium, magnesium, silicon and calcium — but the elements were arranged in a bizarre chemical configuration that they'd never seen before.

And while he doesn't doubt that beings from other worlds are "monitoring" us, Tomas laughs at the notion that people are scooped up and carried off for "interplanetary adultery," as he calls it.

"In 1951, we were expecting them to land on the lawn of the White House," he muses. "But the fact is this — these astronauts could be millions of years advanced beyond us in evolution,

and they look at us as primitive people. They look at our atom bomb, and they don't trust us. We don't have peace; we're killing each other. Why would they want to make contact?"

Sadly, for those who believe, the high number of hoaxers and liars dim the hopes of ever getting to the bottom of the matter.

In the 1970s, at the height of Chico's interest in UFOs, several speakers came through town on lecture circuits. Not all of them were impressive. In November 1974, a Dr. Ed Palmer of Portland, Ore., gave a lecture to a packed house about his own "saucer experience."

According to an E-R editorial that ran the following weekend, "people who attended the lecture told us later that they had been very disappointed in what Dr. Palmer had to say."

Among Palmer's claims, apparently, was that he had made a three-and-a-half hour trip to the moon with the crew of a flying saucer. He also insisted that the moon's gravity is the same as earth's — a claim that was especially unbelievable in light of the successful Apollo 11 flight just five years earlier.

"Dr. Palmer finished with a credibility of zero," the editorial lamented. "This was a case ... in which a fellow set back the cause of truth insofar as the UFO matter is concerned. Quite a few people seem to be doing that these days in attempts to capitalize on the natural interest and curiosity of the people."

"People like that disassemble believability, and make people like us look foolish," Heather Tomas said.

Those who have tried to report curious sightings certainly know that to be truth. When Donna Gillispie of Chico tried to report a UFO that hovered next to her car on Highway 70 in 1979, she was left feeling a little sheepish.

"When I called the Sheriff's Department, a lady answered and I said, 'I'd like to report a UFO,' and she said, 'Oh, no!'" Gillispie told an E-R reporter shortly after her unusual experience.

At one time, there was a Durham couple, Wayne and Sharon Edmiston, who collected information about local UFO sightings. They called themselves "UFO researchers" and often published their phone number, urging local UFO sighters to contact them. Unfortunately, the number has long since been changed, and a recent call to the forwarding number in another area code went unanswered.

What about going straight to the top, then?

As George Mason of Paradise could testify, that doesn't always work, either. One night in October 1987, he was sitting in his back yard when a chartreuse-green, oblong object flew overhead. Stunned, he watched the thing speed to the west and make a 90-degree turn before disappearing over the hills, presumably into Chico.

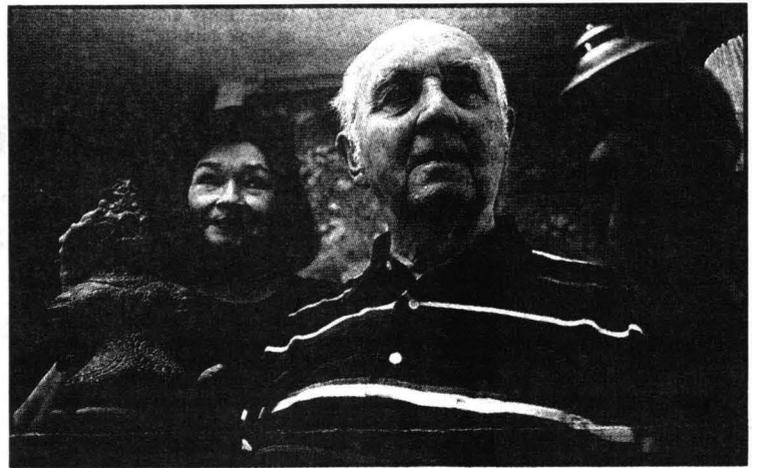
Desperate to find other witnesses to the sight, he first called the Paradise Police. Then he tried "Tell-it to the E-R," and got a number of responses. Unfortunately, most were from jokesters, and one was from a psychic who sent him a questionnaire to fill out. Not much help there.

Eventually, he found a Durham family who had, he's sure, seen the same thing. But they were too far away to get a good glimpse.

Frustrated, Mason called Beale Air Force Base to report what he'd sighted. The young man he talked to, he says, brushed him off.

"I never got any encouragement from anybody," Mason said recently, as he pointed to the sky from the same chair where he was sitting that fall night nine years ago. "When I told people about it,

(continued on page 5) 4



they'd say, "What were you drinking that night?" I wasn't drinking anything, though, and I swear my story is the gospel truth."

Mason has said from the very beginning that although he's positive he saw an unidentified flying object, he's not so sure it was from outer space. The windows of the object, he says, were too uniform — rectangular, with rounded edges, like on a standard 747 airplane.

"I have a hunch it was American-made, but I don't know what it was. The Air Force sure didn't want to talk about it. I keep thinking, if it was from outer space, it wouldn't have had windows just like something we would make."

Mason knows he may never get to the bottom of his mystery, but even now it bothers him. Earlier this year, he saw two UFO experts on the "Larry King Live" show and debated writing them a letter about his experience.

But he's been scoffed at so many times that in the end, he decided it wasn't worth it.

"I know what I saw," he says, his brow furrowing slightly. "I've said all along, I hope this comes out before I die."

Heather Tomas would agree. She became interested in UFOs after witnessing one herself — she saw one in Oregon in 1957, and still shudders when she talks about it — and she knows what it's like to be shunned. "I had read all the reports about people seeing UFOs, and I was afraid that someone would say I was lying, so I didn't come forward," she said. "I definitely sympathize with people who are made fun of."

She said that knowing what she knows today, she believes the best advice she could give to a fellow "sighter" would be to skip the law enforcement and military reports, and go straight to an organization, such as MUFON (Mutual UFO Network), a national organization which is specifically geared towards such things.

Whatever discouragements mar the way, Tomas said, it's important that people step forward and insist on sharing what they've seen. "The more people out there pursuing these things, the more answers we're going to get. It's the only way."

In Northern California, the closest MUFON office is in Berkeley. Their number is 510-524-9446.

At left, Paradise resident George Mason is one of many Butte County residents who has seen a UFO. Even though his sighting was years ago, he says he "remembers it like it was yesterday" and he's still looking for answers. Above, author Andrew Tomas and his wife, Heather, show off some of the artifacts they've collected in their many years of worldwide UFO and "ancient astronaut" research. Both of the Tomases are convinced beyond a doubt that otherworldly beings exist and regularly visit the Earth.

DESERET NEWS, Salt Lake City, UT - Oct. 20, 1996 CR: Z. Van Eyck



UFO SIGHTINGS

'Mysterious Valley' sheds light on a litany of anomalous events

By Zack Van Eyck
Deseret News staff writer

THE MYSTERIOUS VALLEY, by Christopher O'Brien; St. Martin's Press; 300 pages; \$6.99 (paperback).

Skeptics who dismiss UFOs and other paranormal phenomena say flatly that you just can't trust eyewitness testimony.

There's no escaping that many claims of the unusual are actually mundane events mistaken for something more profound. Many sightings these days are captured on videotape, which skeptics say can be faked. They're right, of course. And still photographs are just as easily manipulated.

But what about mass sightings in which several, if not dozens, of sober adult witnesses see the same orange fireball streak across the sky, change direction, split into several pieces, reunite as one object and then vanish? What about cattle mutilations, in which physical evidence of a bizarre encounter is left behind?

The skeptics are forgetting, of course, that our entire judicial system is based on eyewitness accounts. If three ranchers in rural Colorado say they saw a man shoot another, their claims are taken seriously. If they say they saw a giant triangle-shaped craft glide across a field, shine a beam of bluish light

on the ground, then fly silently away with six helicopters in pursuit, they are ridiculed and second-guessed.

Chris O'Brien's biggest accomplishment in "The Mysterious Valley" — aside from his appropriate choice to focus on a current UFO hotspot rather than add to a growing collection of diatribes about the Roswell incident and alleged alien abductions — is his refusal to cast judgment on the people of the San Luis Valley.

O'Brien's first foray into paranormal journalism reads like a novel but is in fact a true story of high strangeness on the high plateau nestled between the San Juan and Sangre de Cristo mountains of south-central Colorado and northern New Mexico.

The story actually begins in south-central Utah in 1989, where O'Brien, a thirtysomething musician and fossil hunter raised in Seattle, experienced several hours of "missing time" while camping in the desert. His travels take him to Crestone, Colo., where he settles in — unaware of the strange occurrences he is about to observe and document. At a New Year's Eve Party in December 1992, O'Brien overhears friends talking about unusual lights and glowing objects in the sky.

"My full-time investigation liter-

ally began that night, and I can't help but look back at that pivotal evening and view my naive excitement with a smile," O'Brien writes. "If I had known what I was getting into, my excitement would have undoubtedly been tempered with the realization that years of frustrating and unrewarding hard work lay ahead with no promise of any firm answers."

Indeed, "The Mysterious Valley" raises more questions than it ever attempts to answer. But that is its value and charm. O'Brien, with a healthy amount of objectivity, reports in great detail through first, second and thirdhand accounts of an incredible litany of anomalous events. Included in the mix: bigfoot, abductions, shape-shifters, triangular ships, orange and green fireballs, 6-foot-long orange "streamers," a partially translucent lizard-like creature, unmarked helicopters, unusual animal deaths, UFOs that come closer if you "call them in your mind" and a mysterious "glass skull" artifact.

One of the more bizarre cases he comes across is the story of a hunter missing for several days in Huerfano County in 1994. He claimed that "a large group of 'aliens dressed in camo appeared' at his campsite and before he could react, he was gassed, captured and tied up. They never spoke to him and never fed him. . . . He said at one point the group started to get aboard a small ship. (The hunter) was astonished when the 'ship expanded' to accommodate them all.

"The ship allegedly took off, morphed into the shape of a bear, then morphed into 'a three-headed wolf,' then turned into a cloud!"

Many of the tales and sightings are more down to earth and, O'Brien concedes, could be linked to a growing military presence in the San Luis Valley. But it's hard to tell from simply watching the night skies whether the UFOs are really secret military operations or if the military is secretly observing otherworldly exercises.

"As I look back on my past years of investigation, I see that this has not been merely a quest to explain unusual lights in the sky nor to explain the unusual deaths of (mostly domesticated) animals," O'Brien confesses in the final chapter. "It has been a quest to learn more about humanity's perceptions, about the origins of human consciousness, about myself."

For Utahns, O'Brien's work offers a greater understanding of events similar to those that have allegedly taken place in the state's own paranormal wonderland, the Uintah Basin.

DAILY RECORD, Roswell, NM - Sept. 10, 1996

Littell confirms objects in sky

JULIE MARIE BROWN
RECORD STAFF WRITER

Roswell's skies made for a beautiful sight Sunday night to anyone who enjoys the mystery of unidentified flying objects.

The bright light in Roswell's skies was not the moon, according to some Roswellites who were kept out of bed until about 1 a.m. viewing a UFO sighting in the south end of the city.

Daniel Valdez, of 5100 Juanito Road, described the objects he saw in the sky as an object with a bright white light in the middle and red and green lights on both sides.

Juanita Valdez called the Chaves County Sheriff's Department and Max Littell, board member of the International UFO Museum & Research Center.

Littell said the object was easy to see with the naked eye, but much easier with binoculars.

Littell and the Valdez family soon saw a second object farther toward the east, with lights the same as the first object.

The Valdez family reported still two more objects, smaller than the first two.

Three generations of the Valdez family viewed the lights for several hours.

According to Valdez, the sheriff's deputies on the scene were unable to identify the objects. The deputies could not be reached for comment Monday.

Littell said an airplane flew by and was distinguishable in the sky. The other objects were not the same, he said.

Valdez said the first object he saw in the northwest sky, which prompted the phone calls to Littell and the sheriff's office, disappeared and reappeared moving quickly towards the southwest sky.

A video was taken of the objects, but it's very hard to see them on the video, said Valdez.

Valdez said the sheriff's deputies attempted to reach the tower at the Roswell Industrial Air Center, but could not get through.

He added it was very exciting for everyone and they would definitely be out looking at the sky again.

Tres Rios Nuevas

by Celia Ruiz Home Office 786-3074



Buenos Dias!

If you teach your children not to lie and give them the confidence that they can always confide in you with anything, would you believe them if they said that they had seen a UFO, an alien, or such?

This was part of the Maury Povich, NBC television program on Wed., Sept. 11, that featured Ray Muniz, Jr., formerly of Three Rivers and the son of Ray and Eugenia Muniz.

Ray was the only male in the panel of six guests that related their chilling experiences of their encounters/abductions. The other male was Budd Hopkins, "Alien Abduction Researcher", who offered advice and comments on what was said or as questions were asked by the audience. He is internationally respected authority on this topic.

Ray was the first to acknowledge that they "had alot to lose and nothing to gain" by appearing on the show, but wanted to do so, "so we can be informed".

In a previous Progress article, Ray is quoted, "I fear public ridicule, not only for me, but also my family because most people don't understand situations like this. When man doesn't understand something, he hates it." What he hates, he destroys so history repeats itself. My main purpose or goal is to help people understand. This is something that really needs to get out because it's here."

One comment that has stayed with me, and that Ray again stated during his exclusive nation wide appearance/interview was "that people don't realize that our taxes are used to build underground military bases so that the government may work in collaboration with the technology they discovered after the Rowell UFO discoveries," which happened to my understanding, about 50 years ago. Is this going on, and do we have the right to know where our tax money is going?

Ray's comment was very forceful, when he said, "I feel that all of you have the right to know!" and then repeated that neither he nor the other guests "had any reasons to lie."

When Ray spoke of his experience, he related that he was with his father at the age of 9 going down a country road when his dad's pick-up ran out of gas. Knowing that the Pullins lived down the road, his dad told Ray to wait in the pickup as he got out to walk the short distance. Ray, being young and curious got out of the pickup and walked down to the creek below, and laughed as he quoted "I remember there was these little naked kids with big heads that came out." They kept touching Ray's head, and communicating among themselves but not verbally while Ray kept laughing at them because they were naked, and asking them questions that they never answered. As soon as they all heard the sound of another vehicle down the road, and Ray knew that his dad was coming back with gas for the stalled pick-up, he states that they scurried off into the woods. His experience lasted about 20 minutes and it was put off "as a kid's imagination." Yet this has repeated itself every four years and he was not given the chance to describe any of his most recent encounters, while the other guests took their turns.

Ross Reynolds declares that she has never been able to have children and tears rolled down her

face as she relates that if in real life a rape is committed, that at least there is a chance that the criminal can be punished, but in her situation nothing can be done, and this has changed her life for the worse nightmare of not knowing when these encounters are going to happen again and the fear that she cannot do anything about them.

Lynn acknowledges that she was diagnosed with terminal cancer and was given 3 months to live and due to her encounter she was cured. Doctors attribute her fast recovery as her "positive mental attitude" and in the Medical Journals as a miracle cure of T-cell Lymphoma.

One other interesting interview was from Ginger Thomson who related that she has a "scooped mark" on her leg and at that time Ray took off his boot and sock and the camera focused on a scoop mark on the lower part of his ankle. These scooped marks or triangles, according to the expert Budd Hopkins, are areas where possibly flesh tissue samples were removed.

Ginger stated that under hypnosis, where most of them have been, she has been able to know one of her aliens by the name of "arron" described as typical grey with large black eyes, oval head wearing a jumpsuit with an emblem of a triangle on the upper chest area.

Most of them expressed fear on not wanting to be examined; yet they seem to remember some sort of laboratory or examining room, but not knowing how they happened to be on the examination table. They related that the hands on them felt "like rubber gloves."

Through hypnosis, they remembered exact details about the room or the conversations they had, especially when Lisa related that she and her husband were abducted from different parts of the world at age 15. Lisa's father moved frequently with his job and it wasn't until Lisa met her future husband in Massachusetts that they both felt they they had met before.

Budd Hopkins stated that cases like these are that people can be picked and brought together as if the UFO occupants are interested in watching how relationships form, or how people as children relate to each other. And as relationships form, these people actually marry each other. Lisa recalls that her 3-year-old daughter said one Christmas Eve that "A bad man came and hurt me last night, and described it as a little man with black eyes, about my size, but bigger and took me up into the sky." They lived in a 3rd floor building and Lisa controlled her fear in front of her child and offered love and support, but wonders if their destination includes their children being studied by these aliens.

One of the guests, a politician up for reelection, knew that her opponent would use her appearance on the show as a means to defeat her. Her choice to appear despite a possible negative impact, shows just how important it was to her to tell her story.

All the guests openly talked of their sightings and encounters with beings from other worlds. Most of us never have this experience. Without having this experience, *How Can Any Of Us Fully Identify With Those Who Have?*

Adios.

Mystery light baffles officials

By MIKE PETERS
Greeley Tribune

A mysterious light, described either as a "green flash" or a "blue bubble" in the skies over northern Colorado, caught the attention of several people Sunday night, but authorities have no explanation of the incident.

Four people reported Monday to the Greeley Tribune that they saw green or blue lights between 8:30 and 9 p.m. Sunday. One woman said she knows of six other people who saw it.

"Some of the people were in Greeley and said it was north of them," said Judith Ball, "and others were in Eaton and said it was to the south."

Ball said the light was dark green and came up from the ground. "There was no noise," Ball said, "just a green light that covered the sky."

However, two men who didn't leave their names came to the Tribune offices Monday to report a "blue bubble" in the sky about the same time Sunday night. They said it was between Ault and Fort Collins and was "a blue light that filled the sky and formed a kind of a bubble on the ground."

Neither the Greeley police nor the Weld County Sheriff's Office reported anyone called about the flash, and scientists said they also had no reports.

At Colorado State University, physics professor Roger Culver, who writes a newspaper column about the night skies, said he hasn't received any reports of an unusual "green flash."

"I guess it could have been a meteor, but that isn't usually the way a meteor looks," he said.

Richard Dietz, professor of earth sciences at the University of Northern Colorado, said he hadn't received any reports of the green flash and added it's unlikely a meteor could cause that kind of light. He said if several people's eyewitness accounts of the light could be collected, it might give a better clue to the source of the light.

And while the Colorado State Patrol dispatchers said they hadn't received a green flash report Sunday night, they received a call Friday night reporting a UFO over Dacono. There were no other reports of a bright light hovering over the southwestern Weld County town.

TRIBUNE, Greeley, CO - Sept. 10, 1996

Just Talkin'

Lelia Sibley called JT earlier this week to see if anyone else had reported a UFO sighting on Lake Street last Sunday night.

According to Lelia, she thought she heard a sonic boom but happened to notice what she called "balls of fire."

Somewhat apprehensive at first, Lelia decided to venture outside where she saw 15 to 20 flashing lights.

Her sighting was confirmed by a neighbor who was outside and witnessed the event. If you live in the neighborhood and saw the mysterious lights and balls or have an explanation, give JT a call.

TIMES, Matchitoches, LA - Oct. 3, 1996

Woman tells of abduction by space aliens

By Iris Eustace, The Leader

The continued popular interest in the paranormal and supernatural has risen to a sensationalized high. From the recent blockbuster "Independence Day" to the cult television program "X-Files," the question on everyone's mind still remains: Are we alone? Maybe not.

According to a recent survey, nearly 3 million Americans claim to be UFO abductees and twice the number say they have witnessed some form of paranormal activity.

One such person who claims to have been abducted by space aliens is Joy S. Gilbert, who spoke at a recent meeting of MUFON LA in Burbank, the local chapter of the Mutual UFO Network, an international UFO research organization.

"They are here, they've been here long before us and will be here long after us," Gilbert said, as she came on stage wearing an alien mask in jest during her lecture held at the Los Angeles Equestrian Center last week. "They are not gods, but they are here to help us remember who we are, show us our way home."

As the room continued to fill with an assortment of MUFON members, from professional-looking types, to students and housewives, even a movie producer snuck in quietly, while Gilbert told her enraptured audience how she's struggled to come to grips with her terrifying experience in Sisters, Oregon on January 31, 1993.

Gilbert, who holds a bachelor's degree in psychology and is the vice president of a retail company, told her story to the nearly 70 people attending.

During a two-hour lecture, Gilbert recounted the night of her abduction in 1993. As she and her husband went to bed around 10:30 p.m., she found herself unable to sleep. Suddenly, a blue-white light came piercing through the curtain. Four beings materialized through the wall and came toward her. Dazed, perplexed and paralyzed, she watched as the closest being touched her forehead and instantly her head exploded into light.

Levitating, Gilbert found herself naked and on a table. A being entered the room, whom she described as bluish-grey in color, about 5 foot, 9 inches tall, with large, black, piercing eyes, an abnormally large head, four fingers and a rubbery texture to his skin.

As he looked into her eyes she instinctively knew he was "the doctor."

"It's time to remember, you are chosen," he told her.

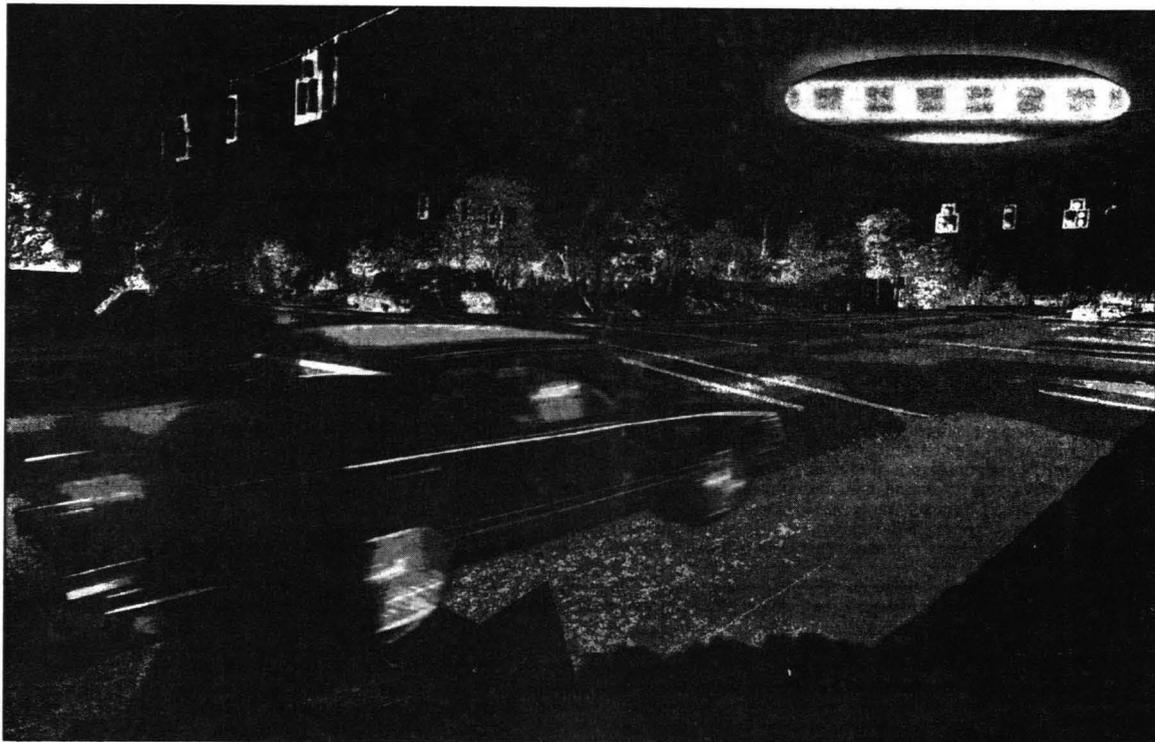
Gilbert, feeling complete terror, watched helplessly as he plunged a long instrument into her molecules without tearing her skin or physical body and pulled out an implant that was pliable and about four inches in diameter. When he was finished working on her he told her, "you're completely activated." He added, "It's your task to activate those who are ready."

When Gilbert finally awoke she felt raped, violated, angry, crazy, but at the same time, she felt love, joy, peace and bliss.

Unlike many abductees, who describe their experiences as a curse rather than a blessing, Gilbert reports having experienced a fusion into them. "I feel I am never apart from their sweet and loving qualities. I feel as though we are one."

Reflecting on her extraordinary experience, Gilbert said she realized that she had been visited since the age of 3 by strangers she then regarded as guardian angels.

LEADER, Burbank, CA - Sept. 25, 1996



TIMES-DISPATCH PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY JIM CAIELLA

PRACTICAL OR PARANOID? Forty-eight percent of Americans are sure the government is involved in a cover-up of UFOs.

ANYBODY OUT THERE?

Poll shows almost half of Americans believe UFOs are among us

BY GARY ROBERTSON

TIMES-DISPATCH STAFF WRITER

"There are more things in Heavens and Earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your Philosophy."

— William Shakespeare, "Hamlet"

From Orson Welles' 1938 radio broadcast of "War of the Worlds," which sent the country into a panic over the possibility of an invasion from Mars, to Steven Spielberg's 1982 feature film "E.T. The Extraterrestrial" — the highest grossing movie of all time — Americans have both feared and been fascinated by the possibility

of alien life.

This week, movie theaters again are clogged with another alien blockbuster: "Independence Day," the story of extraterrestrial conquest and the courageous defense of Mother Earth.

But the movies don't tell the half of it.

Reports of flying saucers and unexplained phenomena — from bright lights in the sky to dark impressions on a rural highway — have fanned the imaginations of generations of those looking into the skies ... for something.

According to a recent poll by Newsweek magazine, 48 percent of Americans believe UFOs are authentic and 29 percent believe

humans have made contact with aliens.

An additional 48 percent are sure the government is involved in a cover-up, which might explain the raging success of the television series the "X-Files," which is based precisely on that premise.

Many of us want to believe.

Over the years, Virginians have boldly stepped forward with their own sightings and claims. Some say they've seen visitors from outer space — or even been abducted by them.

In 1979, Harry Joe Turner, a 250-pound Winchester trucker, reported that an alien

craft whisked him and his 80,000-pound tractor-trailer rig — loaded with ketchup and mustard — up for a spin through the galaxy. He said the experience gave him a case of the nerves.

Another big year for UFO sightings in Virginia was 1967.

It began in April, when a respected warehouse manager in South Hill, C.N. Crowder, reported seeing a craft that he described as looking like an aluminum-colored storage tank about 12 feet in diameter sitting on legs 3½-foot high.

It had landed in the highway ahead of him, Crowder said, and when he flicked on his high beams, "a tremendous burst of white-looking fire came from the bottom of the object and it went right straight up in the air like a bullet."

When local police checked out the report, they found a burned spot several feet in diameter on the road where Crowder said he had seen the object.

The U.S. Air Force investigated and would say only that whatever Crowder saw was "unidentified."

Two months later, in June, dozens of Lunenburg County residents said they saw an object with a luminous orange glow that "moves like lightning."

Juanita Stokes, a country storekeeper, said her encounter with the light was accompanied by a noise "like a rocket or jet." The next morning, she found nine horse-shoe-shaped tracks on state Route 685.

A similar incident occurred shortly afterward, prompting a visit by the National Investigators Committee on Aerial Phenomena, a private group exploring UFO sightings, but their investigation was inconclusive.

Across the state in the tiny Augusta County hamlet of Crimora, hundreds of people swarmed to the Mount Bethel Evangelical United Brethren Church to watch a glow "the size of a basketball" that witnesses said emerged from the base of a tombstone, then flitted across the cemetery.

When, after weeks, the crowds grew to more than 700, Augusta County Sheriff John Kent called in state police and threatened arrest for those trespassing in the cemetery at night "except for the purposes of burial."

Of course, this was tame stuff to Kent, compared with the UFO scares of 1965. That's when gangs of men armed with guns descended on a site midway between Waynesboro and Staunton looking for visitors from outer space.

That preceded a sighting by a local industrial draftsman, William Blackburn, who said he witnessed two

noiseless cone-shaped craft land at an archery range, and three small creatures disembark.

That was in February 1965. Only two months earlier, a local gunsmith, Horace Burns, said he saw a huge object 80 to 90 feet across that landed "like a bubble" in a meadow outside of Waynesboro, before flashing into the heavens again.

Ernest Gehman, a professor at Eastern Mennonite College in Harrisonburg, went to the scene with a Geiger counter and reported high readings of radiation — 60,000 counts per minute — in the meadow.

A local DuPont engineer confirmed the findings, noting that the needle of the Geiger counter "went off the scale."

However, when a team from the Air Force's Project Blue Book, organized to investigate UFOs and other aerial phenomena, took readings 11 days later, they said they found nothing. The case was closed.

In the Richmond area, city police officers and county deputy sheriffs have provided some of the most stirring accounts of UFO sightings.

Take the case of Richmond Patrolman William L. Stevens in July 1966. He spotted a UFO as he was cruising near the State Fairgrounds.

Here was his account:

"As I approached the intersection of East Laburnum Avenue and Meadowbridge Road, I saw a strange looking object in the air. It was about the size of a large zeppelin. It was oblong-shaped and had green and yellow lights around the entire outside.

"There was a mist or steam vapor encircling the entire object. I sped with my emergency lights on to try to catch this object, and the faster I went, the faster the object kept moving steadily in front of me.

"I followed this object well into Hanover County, and it began to leave me and disappear out of sight. At no time did this object make any sound. The object seemed to be playing tag with my police unit."

The 1940s and 50s also had an enormous number of UFO sightings.

Among other things, Richmond-area residents reported seeing "great balls of fire," "a moon-sized flying blob," and "a blue-cigar shaped light."

In some instances, what they saw were balloons or meteors or carnival lights. In other instances, nobody knows what they saw.

The last greatest UFO sightings in Virginia occurred Oct. 5-7, 1987, in Wythe County in Virginia's far southwest.

Clintonville man puzzled by colored lights in sky

By Dan Wilson
Post-Crescent staff writer

CLINTONVILLE — A Clintonville man reported seeing colored lights in the sky Monday night over the eastern horizon — lights which he said "looked like a Christmas tree."

Marvin Reinke, N10354 County Y, said he came home from work about midnight and was checking his deer feeder in the back yard when he noticed the lights.

"I noticed something red and flickering," he said.

"So I got a pair of binoculars with a zoom on them and it was lit up like a Christmas tree. There was red and blue and green lights and they were stretched out, kind of elongated. Sometimes they would be all together and other times it looked like it turned sideways."

Reinke woke up his wife and also called a friend, both of whom saw the same thing he did.

"I watched it for about 20 minutes and it didn't move. If it was an airplane it would be moving. The lights were flickering and flashing and it was going upwards and getting higher and higher."

Because he was looking at the eastern sky, Reinke speculated the lights were moving in relation to the rotation of the earth.

"The colors were so bright. We watched it for an hour and it was still up there when we went to bed."

Clintonville police could not verify the report.

Vegas hunters claim silent UFO chased them out of Cave Valley

TIMES, ELY, NV - Oct. 7, 1996

Two hunters camping near Cave Valley yesterday told a sheriff's deputy that an unidentified flying object chased them from Cave Valley to Lund.

David Cox of Henderson and Michael Jacobsen of Las Vegas claimed that a flying object with no engine sound and lights came by their campsite. They said they got in their car and tried to drive away, but the object chased them, following within 200 yards.

They said the object finally quit chasing them when they got near Lund.

Wythe Sheriff G. Wayne Pike, who talked to many of the UFO spotters, said they all described the UFOs as either an ice cream cone type-thing or a pyramid — they had one large end and one small end."

The sightings were never explained, but NBC made a television movie based on the incidents. And reporters from all over the world talked to county residents about what they saw or didn't see.

The Air Force officially ended its investigation of UFOs in 1969 when Project Bluebook ended. The government concluded that Unidentified Flying Objects didn't exist, nor did extraterrestrials.

That's a view shared by the Buffalo, N.Y.-based Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal, which includes some of the nation's most eminent scientists.

Then, a movie like "Independence Day" arrives and people leave the theater looking ... for something.



(SUN Photo illustration by James C. Svehla)

Karen Klinger, a member of the Chicago UFO Education Committee, tells of her UFO experiences.

Is anybody out there?

Local group offers testimonials on alien encounters

By Lisa Leland

The day Karen Klinger accepted her former husband's proposal of marriage in June of 1975 was also the day the two were abducted by aliens.

As outlandish as that sounds, it's exactly how she says she's come to understand the surreal summer evening when the two sweethearts took a romantic moonlight stroll at a rural lake in Minong, Wis., and saw three bright orange unidentified flying objects cross their path in a suddenly pitch-black sky.

"I've gotten a lot of flak from my family for telling this stuff," admits Klinger, 40, a free-lance illustrator and part-time teacher who says she only learned of her temporary captivity by extraterrestrials two years ago when she underwent extensive regressive hypnosis sessions regarding her apparent UFO sighting. "It sort of stretches their perception of reality a little bit."

Klinger is one of a dozen formal members of the local organization,

Chicago UFO Education Committee, committed to spreading their beliefs of the existence of sentient life forms from other planets by sharing admittedly bizarre-sounding personal testimonials along with mounds of "evidence" they say has been compiled as a result of documented scientific research across the country.

In observance this week of what is dubbed "National UFO Awareness Week," the group will present an outdoor exhibit Friday at the Kluczynski Federal Building in downtown Chicago, including photo displays, open-forum discussions and educational materials to hand out.

The group also will present two lectures on Saturday, one by a professor of political science at Emory University who will address the U.S. military's study of the ET phenomenon and another by a foot surgeon in Southern California who claims to have surgically removed metallic objects from two patients with ET abduction histories.

"Over the past year, we have noticed more of a gradual interest in



While under hypnosis, Karen Klinger drew pictures of what she remembered about the night she said she and her former husband were abducted by aliens.

and acceptance of the possibility of UFO contact," says Mary Kerfoot, 54, a computer systems analyst in Schaumburg who founded the group three years ago out of her belief that aliens have been training her telepathically since age 2 to spread awareness on their intervention with earth. "It

gets easier as the public is exposed to more movies and TV shows on the subject. People are thinking more about it and at times even discarding old explanations for what they have experienced or heard reported."

Klinger never gave much serious

consideration to her sighting of the UFOs in 1975 until she accidentally caught the end of a television documentary two years ago relaying famous accounts of encounters with UFOs and/or aliens.

Specifically, she heard for the first time details of the widely renowned Allagash Abduction case from 1975, in which a group of four men, visiting a rural lake in upper Maine the same month she visited the lake in Wisconsin, reported seeing three extremely bright orange flying objects. The men reported being abducted for about an hour by extraterrestrials, the same length of time Klinger later learned she and her former husband were held by aliens for observation.

"After first seeing this, I felt sick; I thought, 'Oh my god!'" recalled Klinger, who is co-authoring with her former hus-

band an anthology detailing aspects of their UFO encounter. "The case had such eerie similarities to our story and that's what prompted me to see the hypnotherapist. They reported seeing the exact same things we did." Klinger said her former husband wishes to remain anonymous for the time being "because he is a physics teacher at a big school" and fears repercussions for expressing his belief that he had an encounter with aliens.

The couple's account begins with them deciding to get out of their car and walk down a small pier. The moon, which she had noticed moments earlier was nearly full and high in the sky at a 45-degree angle, suddenly vanished.

"There was no cloud cover or anything so we were very confused — we were like, 'What happened? Where did it go?'"

recalled Klinger. "All of a sudden something that looked like a bright orange star zipped above the trees over our heads and began to dart around in diagonals from one end of the horizon to the other like a falling leaf. There were two other identical objects that appeared."

At the urging of her fiancé, Klinger rushed back to the nearby cabin where they were staying with four other people, mostly relatives including her future mother-in-law, and begged them all to hurry to the lake to see the objects, which became larger and larger as they got closer to the sight where everyone stood watching.

One friend in the group took out a high-beam lantern from the car trunk and flashed it four times at the objects, which responded by flashing bright beams of light onto the ground

the same number of times. The friend changed the sequence of his flashes and so did the UFOs.

"By this time my mother-in-law was hysterical, screaming, 'They're going to kill us!'" recalls Klinger.

Just a few minutes later, though, the objects disappeared behind the trees and were no longer visible. About a half-hour had elapsed since the objects were first spotted.

"Then we went back in and drank a bottle of wine," she says, confirming that even to this date everyone at the lake with her that evening testifies to seeing the exact same objects. "We looked around everywhere the next day but never found anything."

No normal explanation

Earlier this summer, Klinger's former husband returned to

the site to do research lending possible explanations for what happened. The only explanation they currently have for the disappearance of the moon is what is called "missing time" in the UFO community. They now believe they were plucked from the ground by the aliens and then deposited on the same turf an hour later.

"We figured it would take at least an hour and a half for the moon to set from the angle we saw it at before it instantly disappeared and so, at the very least, there was an hour of time that elapsed where we were unaccounted for," explains Klinger. "When both of us finally discussed this two years ago and realized what had happened, I felt almost nauseated at the thought of it."

(continued on page 9)

The decision to submit to hypnosis came after Klinger visited the Center for UFO Studies on Peterson Avenue in Chicago and regressive hypnosis was suggested as a method of finding out about her possible interactions with aliens.

"I experienced a physiological effect during the first session that was so frightening they had to stop the session," recalls Klinger, who actually drew sketches of the UFOs and the alien under hypnosis. "There was a feeling of being enveloped by an intense white being. In another session, I was facing a form that had static electricity around it. It had a head with shoulders. I received messages telepathically of what the (form) was trying to convey. The message was that the world was on the verge of environmental catastrophe and I had a role to play in the rebuilding process. They told me they weren't going to allow the people to destroy themselves. They told me to feel free to tell anyone I wanted to tell about it, but to be forewarned that I would not be taken seriously, which generally happens to be the case."

Klinger revealed these revelations to her family members only to have them scoff.

"Whenever I've brought it up, my parents get funny looks on their faces and they get kind of squirmy and try to change the subject right away," she confesses. "I don't discuss it with them anymore because they're so judgmental about it. They're like, 'Aren't you taking this kind of far?'"

Lending support to those who find the outside world disbelieving or unaccepting of their UFO and extraterrestrial encounters is one of the primary functions of Kerfoot's UFO committee.

Many of the members are professional people with good jobs and family lives who know they risk ridicule and persecution for revealing their incredible stories. They include doctors, scientists, teachers, lawyers police officers, theologians and paramedics.

Feedback from others

One man who worked for NASA who is now a physics teacher in Chicago revealed that his appearance on the "Oprah Winfrey Show" to talk about "ufology" and his own encounters "ruined his life," reported Klinger.

Kerfoot, for one, doesn't reveal for publication the name of her place of employment for fear the company executives would not like their name associated with her extraterrestrial work. However, she says she rarely receives negative feedback from co-workers who learn of her UFO awareness

crusade or her personal experiences with alien life.

"It's really surprising how interested and accepting the majority of them have been," says Kerfoot. "I suppose with some of them they're just being polite."

It wasn't until five years ago that she finally shared with anyone at all — including her own family — her encounters that she now understands began at age 2.

"I just couldn't do it," explains Kerfoot, who, along with other members of the committee, has spoken about UFOs and the encounter phenomenon to civic and professional groups and provided radio, television and newspaper interviews in Chicago and locations as distant as Binghamton, New York, and Zagreb, Croatia.

"I have remembered a lot consciously all these years, but until recently I never really wanted to know more than what I already knew," she continues. "Then five years ago, a light came into my bedroom after I turned the lights off. I felt the familiar, self-induced paralysis I had experienced since a young child. It's a lot like a rabbit; when it's really frightened, it freezes."

"It was a pale yellow light that looked like a flat circle and it moved around. In the morning after the incident, it's like my life changed. I remembered that I needed to let other people know. I feel like (the alien presence) was following through with something I was programmed to do; something I was trained to do by outside sources."

Different alien entities

Kerfoot says she has had five different alien entities appear to her, including one that came in the image of a shadowy dark figure and another which appeared as a black hole.

"When I was 10 some came to me that looked pretty human with large bulging eyes," she testifies. "There were three outside my window."

Strangely enough, Kerfoot's brother — who had never previously discussed the subject of UFOs or extraterrestrials with her and didn't know much of her own interest — informed her recently that he had seen as a child what he thought might be extraterrestrials. His description of a swarm of miniature men matched her own memories of what she saw in one childhood encounter.

"We had never talked about anything related to the subject until a year and a half ago when I just simply asked him if he had ever seen a UFO or its occupants," she explains. "He became very agitated and couldn't talk, but then six

months ago he called me and explained that he had once seen these 3-foot-tall men."

Members of Kerfoot's group have widely varying reports of what aliens look like, ranging from ones that look like reptiles to ones with Nordic blond facial features. While most relay having a positive experience when encountered by an alien, some report being traumatized by abductions that involve being poked and prodded as part of physical examinations. Some even report sperm or ova samples being taken.

Kerfoot thinks it's getting easier to convince people there are other life forms: "I think that we are being climatized more rapidly now to feel comfortable with the alien presence," she says. "I think they want us to know gradually and to feel comfortable. It does seem, though, that the timetable is speeding up because of the barrage of information being put out there."

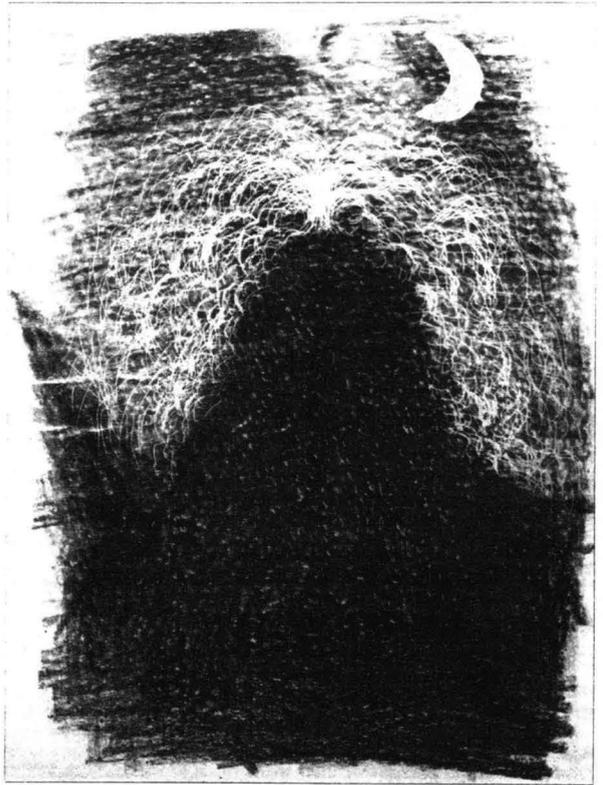
Scientific evidence

Among the purported scientific evidence, is the retrieval of foreign objects found in individuals with abduction histories. These objects found in MRI scans have been found lodged, for example, in nasal passages, various areas of the brain, behind the eye, in and behind the ear, in the pituitary gland, in hands, feet, ankles, etc. The objects removed by Dr. Roger Leir, one of the speakers in this Saturday's lecture program, were embedded in a rich supply of nerve endings in the toe.

The other speaker, Dr. Courtney Brown of Emory University, will address his use of what is called "remote viewing," a form of data-gathering using the human tools of consciousness rather than physical/technological tools, for investigating extraterrestrial life and the UFO phenomenon.

As part of the photo display at the outdoor exhibit are photographs from 19 case histories of UFO sightings considered to be well-documented and credible. They include still photographs taken from video clips of a UFO filmed over the city of Casino Cabreo, Brazil, on May 11, 1991. Supposedly, as the UFO moved across the sky, it repeatedly changed color and shape and winked in and out of sight. Numerous people were reported to have stopped along the highway to observe the object as it stayed above the city for an hour and a half.

"There's no rational explanation for my intense interest in all this," says Kerfoot. "It's something I feel I must do and it's almost like I've been told, 'The people must know.'"



In this sketch done by Karen Klinger while under hypnosis, she depicts the alien she says she encountered, showing the static electricity that surrounded the form.

VIRGINIAN PILOT, Norfolk, VA - Sept. 26, 1996

Unexplained light hovers in night sky over area

By STEVE STONE
STAFF WRITER

jects could be seen on or near the horizon.

What's that light in the sky? A lot of folks were asking that Wednesday evening as they studied a twinkling, multicolored object in the western sky. And there were no ready answers to explain it.

The light triggered calls to several media outlets in the area. Callers described it as a "flashing" and "pulsating" light that was alternately white, green and red.

One woman, who lives along the Elizabeth River in Portsmouth, said she and her family had watched the light through binoculars for more than a half-hour with no sign of movement.

From downtown Norfolk, the light was visible in the western sky, about 10 to 15 degrees above the horizon.

It was visible in a sky so hazy that no other stars or celestial ob-

And while most often white, it did occasionally appear to turn red and, a few times, green — but not in any sequence, as with aircraft lights.

An employee of the Naval Eastern Oceanography Center at Norfolk Naval Air Station said he noticed the light as he came to work about 6 p.m.

He thought it unusual because it never appeared to move.

Robert J. Hitt, Jr., director of the Chesapeake Planetarium, said he knew of no star or heavenly body to account for the light, and a meteorologist at the National Weather Service office in Wakefield said his office had not been notified of any military activity that might explain it.

The light disappeared from sight in downtown Norfolk about 9:45 p.m.

TENNESSEAN, Nashville, TN - Oct. 15, 1996 CR: B. Kinnard

Close encounters of odd kind leave residents, police baffled

By BETH WARREN
Staff Writer

First Williamson, Sumner and Warren counties, and now Rutherford. Could the unidentified lights reported hovering in the sky be visitors from another planet on a tour of the Midstate?

Maybe the aliens, scoping out a new hometown, are comparing rural countryside, affluent suburbia and life in a college town.

Reports in the four counties — so far unexplained — detail a bright, stationary light adjacent to red and green — and sometimes blue — lights.

Witnesses wonder if the sightings are connected. But police are investigating the incidents separately.

"It's still a mystery and there's no definite answer as to what it is," said Janet Sharpe of the Upper Cumberland Mutual UFO Network. "Because the sightings are very similar it could very well be the same craft that is crossing the various counties."

Police in Hendersonville, where strange sightings were reported last week, believe other explanations are more probable.

"The officers were unable to determine what the complainant saw," said Lt. Terry Frizzell. "Lights in the sky in this area aren't unusual because we're in the flight pattern of Gallatin and Nashville airports."

Murfreesboro resident Jennifer Robinson said her father was skeptical, too, until Friday night when her mother spotted the bright lights as she put the dog outside.

"It's not a star and it's definitely not a plane," she said.

Robinson grabbed the video camera while her mother went for the binoculars.

"The sky was dark except for a bright light and a few little stars. ... All of a sudden this cluster of lights start forming to the right. ... It looks like this thing is flying in real fast and it's leaving a trail then it stops. Then the smaller one that was sitting still goes straight back — zip, an evident move — like someone threw it in reverse."

A sheriff's deputy and two others saw something unusual in the night sky Thursday in Williamson County. Sharpe said the UFO network also received calls about sightings in McMinnville that night.

"These things seem to happen in cycles, flare-ups of activity," Sharpe said. ■



North Coast UFO sightings continue to spark fascination

By Vanessa Blackburn
The Times-Standard
From Crescent City

The strangeness started in 1987. Kerrie Mirante and her family were living in Freshwater when unexplainable things started happening — bright lights blasted through the windows at night, their pets behaved strangely, objects moved around of their own volition and Mirante and her daughter were having unsettling dreams. Mirante was convinced her house was haunted.

"I was so terrified some nights when I woke up that I couldn't move," she said. "There was no possible way that the lights could have come in without coming from high up because we were surrounded by trees. I had no idea what was happening to us."

Then her young children started waking in the mornings telling her that they had seen

the "airplane" again.

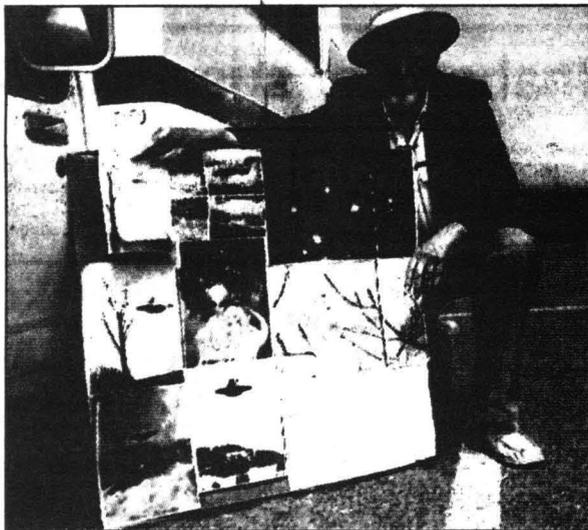
"My little girl would say, 'Mommy, Daddy, the airplane landed again with kids on it,'" she said. "She kept telling us things that she could have no knowledge of."

Her daughter showed her where the craft had apparently landed, where the trees were bent down. Then the dreams came, the bruises and the scars.

"Needless to say, I eventually knew what was happening. But I wanted to deny what was going on," she said.

Mirante said her house was not haunted — she was being visited by beings from another world.

Mirante is one of millions of Americans who claim to have had experiences with unidentified flying objects or alien abductions. Stories such as Mirante's, both fictional and retold by firsthand observers,



Michael Hughes/The Times-Standard

Ray Martin of Brookings, Ore., shows material he says supports UFOs and extraterrestrial sightings.



Shaun Walker/The Times-Standard

Humboldt State mathematics Professor Bob Hunt says that from a mathematical point of view, it is unlikely that the planet Earth is the only place in the universe to have life forms.

those polled believe they have been abducted.

A survey conducted by the Roper Organization in New York reported that 7 percent of the 6,000 people polled have seen a UFO.

And for some North Coast residents, an extraterrestrial presence on the planet is very real.

But unlike the doomsday evil-alien movies, many people who believe they have been contacted say these beings are benevolent and are here to guide us.

Although Mirante's experiences initially were terrifying, she soon accepted the contacts and even encouraged them.

"Some people call them aliens, but in a sense they are more like guardian angels," Mirante said. "Most people would flip out if they saw them, though, because it goes against what they've learned."

When Mirante first came in contact with the beings, she was disoriented, scared and unsure what was happening.

"One night I went out and I thought to myself, if this is happening I have a right to know," she said. "That night, I woke up and was in a craft. There was a being behind me whose voice sounded like a whale, and it soothed me. I had been panicking, but I surrounded myself in the light of God, and they respected that."

Like many who have been abducted, Mirante believes these experiences started when she was a child. She said she has talked with many people who have had similar experiences.

All of the contactees with whom Mirante has spoken have had similar experiences. They include lost time, dreams of UFOs and aliens, waking up feeling tired, memories of being given medicine or shots, and symptoms of multiple sclerosis, such as visual problems, weakness and loss of strength on one side of their body.

Mirante, who also had UFO experiences after she moved to Crescent City, said these beings have been around for a long time.

"They're called the ancient ones by Native American tribes, or the guardians of nature," she said. "They're concerned about us destroying the Earth, and that was the prevalent theme that they would communicate with me. We are seconds from losing the planet. I don't think of them as aliens — they are a higher species. They are much more advanced."

Crescent City seems to be an active area for UFOs. Many sightings on the North Coast have come from that area, according to the National UFO Reporting Center in Seattle.

Peter Davenport, director of the center, said that the whole area north of Santa Rosa has had a lot of reported activity recently.

August 1995 seemed to be a busy month for UFOs, and on several different nights UFOs were spotted off the Del Norte County coast.

One of the major incidents in the last year and a half took place on the night of Aug. 25, 1995, and early the next morning. The UFO reporting center said that 50 to 60 witnesses saw several "peculiar" objects to the west maneuvering over the water, and the TriPLICATE newspaper in Crescent

(continued on page 11) 10

Sightings: Where to report

By Vanessa Blackburn
The Times-Standard

McKINLEYVILLE — Keep watching the skies.

According to the National UFO Reporting Center in Seattle, North Coast residents have been seeing some strange things in the air. During the last year and a half, Humboldt and Del Norte County residents have reported multiple UFO sightings to the center, and some of those reports are from more than 50 people at a time.

The UFO reporting center has a 24-hour hot line that receives calls from all over the country. It fields calls or referrals from law enforcement agencies, the Federal Aviation Administration, the National Weather Service, military facilities, NASA and many 9-1-1 emergency dispatch centers across the United States and parts of Canada.

According to the center, local UFO sightings have been reported in an area stretching from Garberville to Fort Dick, north of Crescent City.

One particularly detailed sighting took place during the wet and stormy winter of 1995. A McKinleyville man reported to the center that at about 2:30 a.m. on Jan. 15, 1995, he was awakened by barking dogs in his neighborhood, and he went outdoors to smoke a cigarette.

As he smoked, he looked up into the storm clouds overhead and saw a cluster of perhaps

twelve cobalt-blue objects in a loose grouping, which appeared to be flitting between the tops of two adjacent storm formations, according to a center report.

After several minutes, one of the objects appeared to climb to a higher altitude, hover briefly, and was joined from all directions by a cluster of considerably smaller, green objects that seemed to streak in from all directions. The green objects suddenly "locked" in formation with the blue object and then drifted west out to sea.

The observer reported that he watched this process of assembly take place perhaps a dozen times over the course of 45 minutes, at which point he became tired of the spectacle and went back to bed.

Other reports filed to the center by Humboldt and Del Norte county residents include:

■ Feb. 12, 1995 — a McKinleyville man sees two delta-shaped "aircraft" with lights blinking in sequence within 400 yards of him.

■ Aug. 15, 1995 — a Crescent City woman and her daughter are walking from their garage to their house when they see a streak pass overhead.

■ Aug. 25, 1995 — 50 to 60 witnesses, including a sheriff's deputy, see several peculiar objects to the west maneuvering over the water off the coast of Crescent City.

■ Sept. 19, 1995 — a U.S. Navy chief petty officer reports

seeing a "red orb under Jupiter" that moved right, then left, then zipped off at a very fast rate.

■ Oct. 2, 1995 — a Garberville man sees a bright light moving faster than a satellite, from north to south. He watches it for two to three minutes, then with a bright flash, the object disappears.

■ Oct. 13, 1995 — a Crescent City woman reports going outside to get her paper and seeing white lights that turn red and begin to zigzag.

■ Oct. 17, 1995 — a Crescent City man witnesses a strange white, oval-shaped light, being pursued by two fast aircraft. They were very high and fast, but the object outpaced the aircraft.

■ Feb. 9, 1996 — a Eureka woman and her neighbor witness a bizarre formation of up to 10 objects overhead with white flashing lights.

■ July 19, 1996 — a young Eureka boy reported to the Times-Standard seeing a round, white object during the day shoot through the sky, turn then disappear. It left no trail, was large and moved faster than an airplane.

Calls regarding recent sightings are welcomed by the National UFO Reporting Center Hot-line, agency officials said. The group's 24-hour Seattle number is (206) 722-3000.



Billy Meiers/For the Times-Standard

Ray Martin says that this image was captured on film with the help of a friend. The reliability of UFO sightings captured on film have been up for debate for decades, with most photos dismissed as hoaxes or fakes.

experiences are more ghost stories than close encounters with extraterrestrials.

"There's no doubt that there's something going on out there," he said. "But many of the things seen in the sky might be biological or dimensional in nature, rather than a tin can flying through the sky from a distant planet. Most of the 'gray alien' sightings are written off as being fantasy. People have transferred the old stories of ghosts and monsters to gray aliens."

Humboldt State University mathematics Professor Bob Hunt is not so quick to discount theories of extraterrestrial encounters, however. Hunt, who worked for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration during the 1960s and '70s, said that although he has never seen a UFO, he believes that the mathematical probability points to the strong chance that Earth is being visited by beings from other worlds.

"The probability is very high that it has happened and is happening," he said. "From a mathematical point of view, I think it's mathematically improbable that we are the only inhabited planet in the universe. We are probably one among many, and I would imagine we have been monitored since the beginning of life on this planet."

He said that while working for NASA, he learned that humans have much more to discover about space flight, and — technologically speaking — are probably in the middle range of scientific advancement.

"Some groups of scientists are very skeptical," he said. "But I think it is very likely that eventually contact will be made if it hasn't happened already. It's the choice of the extraterrestrials, though, not ours. They can contact us anytime they want."

One thing he certainly does not believe in, however, is a government cover up or conspiracy.

"I think government conspiracy theories are just grist for the rumor mill," he said. "I don't think the government is well-

enough organized to keep these things secret.

"I was working with professional scientists and physicists, and they were only interested in getting a flight to the moon, not with trying to encounter extraterrestrial beings. If people have information about UFOs, you'd bet they would be looking for the opportunity to communicate that."

About the writer

Vanessa Blackburn examined organic farming for a recent Sunday Close-up. Blackburn



attended Western Washington University, where she earned a B.A. journalism degree in 1995. In the past year, Blackburn has worked at weekly newspapers in Seattle and the Arcata Union before it was shut down.

City reported in its police log that callers on Kellogg Beach and Pebble Beach Drive saw UFOs circling and flying vertically overhead.

A week before that, a front-page story in the Aug. 15 newspaper reported that several residents of Fort Dick, north of Crescent City, saw gravitating lights that were "motionless in the sky, then doing U-turns and returning to the previous location," according to the Del Norte County Sheriff's Department.

The story reported that a deputy who responded also noted seeing "lights in the eastern sky ... hovering and then moving east to west." It was never determined what the objects were.

Mato Yanpi, a resident of Crescent City, said that he has heard many stories of UFO contacts and sightings in the Crescent City area.

"There's a lot of stuff that goes on around here," he said. "Locally, I've heard of many stories of ships coming up out of the water, and once I saw a ship under the water."

Yanpi, an American Indian medicine man of Oglala and Pueblo descent who has said to have had contact with UFOs since he was a child, said many tribes have stories that go back centuries of contacts with extraterrestrial beings. He also calls them the "ancient ones."

He first started experiencing these phenomena when he was 4 years old, and they continued heavily until he was 16. At the time, he attributed the experiences to the intense training for the medicinal ways, but then he realized it was something more.

The first major experience he had was when he was 7 years old.

"A bad storm came through where I lived. There was lightning and thunder, and the sky opened up and was orange and red. My sister and I had to shade our eyes. The next thing I knew, I was hiding under my bed with my sister," he said. "We never talked about it, but my sister was never the same."

As time went on, and he turned 16, the experiences slowed down. Then he had an accident when he was 30 that left him with a broken neck, a broken back and paralysis for 18 weeks. It was expected that he would never move again. But he went to a sweat lodge, and within two weeks was walking.

After that, his alien contact experiences became very intense. He had visions and was having out-of-body experiences almost daily. He would wake up in the morning and have sore spots, new scars or wounds on his body. Once he woke to find a small hole in his leg where bone had been removed, and another time he had an 8-inch cut in his kneecap.

Like many abductees, Yanpi said that even though he has had strange and uncomfortable things happen to him, these ancient beings are here to help preserve and guide humans. The most important message he has been given is that people should stop, look and listen to the world around them.

"They are around us all the time. But it's up to us to be open to their presence and what they are trying to tell us," he said. "Society takes this planet for granted. There are so many types of life."

He also feels that these beings don't want to interfere too much with what we do with our planet.

"They can only tell us so much," Yanpi said. "They can't interfere, they can only plant the seeds to help move things along."

He said that our society denies both what we are doing to the Earth and the very real presence of extraterrestrial life.

"We need to acknowledge them. But we're a society in denial," he said.

Ray Grant Martin of Brookings, Ore., believes that mankind has had contact with flying saucers since the beginning of civilization, and the U.S. government knows all about it.

Martin worked for many years as a courier for the State Department and has traveled all over the world. He said that what he has learned in his travels has led him to strongly believe that the federal government is in secret collaboration with extraterrestrials.

He said the government does not want the general public to know about the extraterrestrials because they don't want people to achieve the same level of technology as the aliens.

Martin has had several direct experiences with saucers, and has seen UFOs in the Hollywood area, Alaska and around Lake Tahoe. He believes the aliens have mind-over-matter control, and that's how they can travel such extensive distances and excessive speeds.

His first experience came when he was 27. He and a friend went to meet a saucer that had landed in the desert.

"I was very disbelieving and was just going out there because my friend had talked about seeing saucers and had gotten my interests up," he said. "I just couldn't imagine what he was talking about."

He said there are two types of aliens common to Earth — those that look like humans and "clones" which are short, gray, hairless and have large eyes.

"There are species who have the human form all over the universe, and we're just lesser-evolved than these species," he said.

He said that there are some "scam artists" out there who would like to capitalize on the UFO phenomenon. But for the most part, many of the stories he has heard he believes. For instance, he has seen autopsy films that were real, and some which were obviously fabricated.

"Some are completely ridiculous," he said. "I'm sure that some film makers couldn't get the real thing, so they made one up."

Some people don't agree that these UFO or abduction phenomena can be attributed to space aliens or "little gray men," however. Michael Theroux, the director of the Borderlands Sciences Research Foundation in Arcata, said that a lot of the stories out there are missing what really is going on.

"We've looked at the issue from a different perspective," Theroux said. "A lot of people think that there are government cover ups and conspiracies, but a lot of these reports are fabrications from the people who report them. People want to believe that there are conspiracies."

He said that the foundation, which studies paranormal phenomena, does not discount reports of UFOs or abductions, but Theroux believes these

'I wasn't dreaming'



County Councilman Lynne Plaskett caused a stir when she went on television last week and said an alien life force cured her terminal cancer 20 years ago.

Plaskett's claim still alien to some

By MATT REED

NEW SMYRNA BEACH — The media went wacko this week over Lynne Plaskett's claim that an "alien" life force — specifically, a small flying saucer — cured her cancer 20 years ago.

She told her story Thursday morning on a taped installment of TV's syndicated "Maury Povich Show." Within an hour, the County Council member from New Smyrna Beach was bombarded by calls from radio, TV and newspaper reporters.

She thought she answered every question consistently and with sincerity.

"If you believe, no proof is necessary," Plaskett said. "If you don't, then no proof is sufficient."

But wide-eyed Volusia residents were left with some nagging questions:

- Did she REALLY have cancer?
- Why did she blurt this out so close to the November election?
- And didn't she say something on the "Maury Povich Show" about writing a book? Could this be a big stunt to plug it?

Plaskett said she was diagnosed in 1975 with T-cell lymphoma and given three months to live. From her Los Angeles hospital, she went home to bed and cried.

As she tells it, "I'm lying in bed, and I hear this electronic buzzing sound behind me like it's emanating from the wall. The room filled up with a fog-like smoke. I was levitated off my bed, and a disk-like object about 8 inches in diameter came in, hovered over me and passed three times down the length of my body but never touched me."

The next day, she didn't remember the encounter, but knew she'd be OK, Plaskett said. Within four days, her cancer had retreated drastically. Within four months, she was in remission.

She said she recalled the close encounter in 1981 while watching a TV program on UFOs. The program played an alleged tape recording of a "mother ship."

It was the same buzzing sound, and it triggered her memory.

Medical records released by Plaskett confirm she was diagnosed with cancer in April 1975. Tests found signs of widespread cancer in her throat, bone marrow and kidneys.

But after just two days of chemotherapy, "the patient had a very dramatic reduction in the tumor burden as seen by chest X-ray," according to records from Harbor General Hospital.

Plaskett credits her alien encounter.

Dr. Walter Durkin, an Ormond Beach oncologist, who in 1975 worked at the University of Southern California teaching hospital across town, isn't a believer.

"Back then, we had reasonably good treatment for lymphoma," Durkin said. "Lymphomas are very chemotherapeutically sensitive."

Today, about 90 percent of lymphoma patients go into remission, and half are cured for good, he said.

Would a four-day turnaround seem unusual to him?

"No. Not at all," he said.

Cancer patients given little time to live often don't know how to ex-

plain it when they suddenly get better, Durkin said. They often fill that gap in their understanding with "recollections" of miracles or strange encounters.

"What she should be doing is encouraging people to get treatment because her doctor is the one who cured her," Durkin said.

But Plaskett, who is up for reelection, remains a believer.

"I know I wasn't crazy, and I wasn't dreaming," she said.

Plaskett said she "thought about the political ramifications" of telling her story before flying to New York on Aug. 15 to tape the show. But she said she felt compelled to tell Americans the information she, until this week, had shared only with loved ones.

Producers paid her air fare and lodging expenses, but not to appear on the program, she said.

"It's my time — and I think it's important that people know there are positive encounters, too," said Plaskett, who has produced only a few hand-written pages for a book. "I'm not ashamed of that. If it hurts my political career, then so be it."

As her story was picked up by news wires, national radio broadcasters and other television programs, fellow county councilmen said they still have confidence in her.

They described Plaskett as a level-headed expert on planning and zoning issues. Her campaign opponent, former Port Orange Mayor Jim Ward, declined to make her story a campaign issue.

All called it a "personal issue." And no one will ever know for sure exactly what, if anything, Plaskett experienced in her Los Angeles-area home 20 years ago.

"You have to be so hard-nosed about stuff like this. I would want as much evidence as possible," said Don Berliner, a director of the nonprofit Fund For UFO Research in Washington, D.C. "Just because event 'B' happened after event 'A' doesn't mean there's a connection. There can be any number of explanations."

But does Berliner believe aliens from outer space are among us?

"We don't have any proof," Berliner said. "But we do have impressive testimony — hundreds and hundreds of accounts that seem remarkably consistent."

Cameras focus on Maury UFO mystery

▼ *Ufologist still looking for witness.*

By GERRIT KOEPPING
Staff Reporter

Move over bike-eating flora, allegations of 1940s intergalactic visitors with mechanical problems has given Vashon-Maury Island a new oddity drawing national television cameras.

"Sightings," a show whose normal fare includes faith healing, UFOs and ghosts, sent a camera crew to Maury Island on Saturday, Oct. 12, to investigate an alleged UFO sighting almost five decades ago.

They were drawn by two men's contentions that Maury Island was the site of an inter-

galactic jump start on June 21, 1947.

Retired Baptist minister Bob Le Roy said his late brother Bernard Ramey Le Roy was fishing off Piner Point when he saw a spacecraft falling from the sky. But before the doughnut-shaped craft crashed into the water, another spaceship swooped down and touched the ailing UFO, said Le Roy.

The falling saucer halted its descent but began to spew silver ash all over the area, said Le Roy. Then it allegedly flew away.

Self-described ufologist Ron Halbritter of San Diego said he is still looking for witnesses of what he calls the "Maury Island Mystery."

Halbritter said the television show contacted him after a Beachcomber article published earlier this summer dis-

cussed his interest in the mystery. The article came to the attention of the Sightings producers through a clipping service they subscribe to, said Joyce Goldstein, segment producer.

The show flew Halbritter to Seattle and paid for two nights at a hotel, said Halbritter.

Halbritter traveled to Maury Island on Saturday, Oct. 12, with the "Sightings" camera crew and a director. They met Le Roy on the island.

For most of the morning they filmed on Piner Point and that afternoon they rented a boat in Dockton and filmed in the area where the UFO was said to have been plummeting.

The "Maury Island Mystery" segment hasn't been edited yet and so it's not known when it will air, said Goldstein.

She did estimate that the segment would air sometime in January.

The show's segments typically last between six and seven minutes.

The "Maury Mystery" segment will present skeptics as well as believers, said Goldstein.

In fact, the segment will include one man who feels that the sighting was a hoax, said Halbritter.

"The UFO community doesn't necessarily embrace the Maury Island incident," Goldstein said. "But there is Ron (Halbritter) and people like him who don't want it to disappear."

Goldstein declined to say whether she believes in UFOs.

Sightings is shown on the Sci-Fi Channel, which has a viewership of about 34 million.

Some witnesses say flash wasn't meteor

By BRUNO J. NAVARRO
The New Mexican

Officials propose it was a meteor — seen as far away as California — that streaked across the heavens Thursday night. But some local eyewitnesses say what came from and disappeared into the dark sky was no space rock.

Kevin Walsh and his mother, Frances, both of Eldorado, were driving back from Albuquerque on Interstate 25 when they spotted what looked like an approaching airplane and pulled on to the shoulder.

"It wasn't, like, 'Cool, a UFO.' We pulled off because we thought it was going to crash into the highway," he said. "It never occurred to me that it was a meteor."

Walsh said the fast-moving lights traveled north, managed "a graceful, immediate pause," and then "shot east," apparently disappearing into the mountains.

Phil Romero, who lives on the south end of Agua Fria Street, said he was home, playing his accordion with the lights off, when he spotted about 100 yards away what looked like a "helicopter without rotors — just a fuselage," trailed by sparks. By the time he put down his instru-

Peggy Prince said what she and a friend saw was "a white ball streaking across the sky with red and yellow sparks and a very distinct tail" about 15 degrees from the horizon and with a 10-degree downward trajectory.

"It was the biggest one I'd ever seen," she said. "It was beautiful."

Official pronouncements were less remarkable.

"It was not on our radar. We're assuming it was a meteor," said a Federal Aviation Administration representative in Albuquerque.

However, Neil Weathers, an Albuquerque-based air-traffic controller for the FAA, said, "It was a pretty heavy-duty meteor that impacted in Northern New Mexico." He said he did not know where in the region the meteor might have landed.

"I don't think any of the people who called were concerned that it was anything other than a meteor," Weathers said. "But it was quite large."

It wasn't, like, 'Cool, a UFO.' We pulled off because we thought it was going to crash into the highway.

KEVIN WALSH
Eldorado resident

ment and walked to the window to get a better look, the light had disappeared.

A third witness reported seeing "a string of seven lights, emerald green in color" shoot across Siringo Road, vanishing into the mountains.

Despite the proximity of the putative sightings, no one reported hearing any accompanying sounds.

Other witnesses, however, reported seeing a larger-than-normal meteor along the horizon.

Doug Bland, an amateur astronomer in Eldorado, said the meteor appeared "greenish-white with bits of orange" for about 15 seconds before breaking into eight separate pieces. "It was absolutely gorgeous."

A public information officer at the Air Force Systems Command 6585th Test Group, which tests navigational systems, gyroscopes and accelerometers — instruments that are likely useful in extreme maneuvers reportedly seen — said he had only read of the sighting in the local newspaper. The division is part of Holloman Air Force Base.

At first, some said it might have been a falling satellite. But the North American Aerospace Defense Command in Colorado Springs, Colo., which tracks satellite debris, said the flash could not have been caused by any items it was following and was likely a meteor or other natural phenomenon.

Meteors are pieces of metallic or stony matter that enter Earth's atmosphere, heating up through friction with air and creating bright streaks of light popularly called shooting stars or falling stars. They usually burn up before reaching the Earth's surface.



[All British clippings courtesy of Timothy Good, unless otherwise credited.]

BORDER MAIL, Albury, N.S.W., Australia - Aug. 29, 1996 CR: P. Norman

Close encounters

By RACHEAL MARTIN

Comets and other light mysteries

THERE were no little green men or bug-eyed space monsters, just three bright orange lights moving slowly across the sky on Tuesday night.

The lights were seen by several people between 9.15pm and 10pm, moving from Lavington toward Wodonga.

Stuart and Catherine Taylor from East Albury watched the moving lights for about 15 minutes.

"I left work and arrived home around 9.15pm," Mr Taylor said.

"I got out of my car and was walking towards the house when I saw the lights."

He called to his wife to come outside and they watched as the lights drifted over East Albury.

"We could see them fading in and out as they passed through clouds," Mr Taylor said.

"They were constant orange lights, arranged in a triangle pattern."

Mrs Taylor said it was obvious the lights were separate, rather than three lights on a single aircraft.

"Two of the lights were travelling parallel to each other, then suddenly they moved closer together and crossed over," she said.

"Then they kept travelling along together while the third light seemed to head off in a different direction."

Mr and Mrs Taylor watched the lights until they faded out of sight.

"They didn't just disappear," Mr Taylor said.

"It was as though they just kept going until they were too far away for us to see."

Mrs Taylor said that her husband was sceptical when it came to life on other planets, but she was open-minded on the subject.

"I believe that there are other things out there," she said.

"It would be naive to think that we are the only life form that exists."

"Unless someone can tell me what those lights were, I will continue to believe that they were UFOs."

Mr and Mrs Taylor were not the only people who witnessed the strange lights.

Albury Police received two phone calls at 9.52pm and 9.54pm from people worried about the lights.

A police spokesman said no officers had witnessed the strange lights so there was nothing they could do.

Yesterday morning Radio Albury-Wodonga had six phone calls from people who had seen the unidentified flying objects.

No one has been able to provide any explanation for the orange lights.

A Bureau of Meteorology spokesman said he did not know of any weather phenomenon in the area, and could not speculate on what caused the light.

"Often objects that are still can appear to be moving because of cloud cover," he said.

"But without seeing them it would be impossible to say what they were."

Sydney Observatory had no explanation for the sighting.

Albury Airport terminal manager Mr Denis Tiernan said to his knowledge there was no aircraft activity in the area at the time of the sighting.

"The tower closed at 8.30pm - if there was something it would be impossible to tell what it was," he said.

The strange sighting coincided with the launch of the U.S. movie, Independence Day, a film about alien invasion.

According to Albury Cinema Centre marketing manager Ms Annette Cannon, the sighting was not a promotion for the film opening.

"It was just a coincidence - but I wish we had thought of it," she said.



● Catherine Taylor - searching the sky for an answer to the UFO mystery.

TRUCK & DRIVER, London, England - April 1996

UFO: Unidentified Following Object!



Mick Easton: followed 15 miles by a UFO

Night trucker Mick Easton will never forget his first week on a new job - he was followed for around 15 miles by a UFO.

Sceptics might scoff, but Mick has a witness to the weird goings-on as he was accompanied in the cab by senior driver David Coleman who was training him.

The Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, drivers saw the UFO while travelling via the A14 and M11 to their first drop of the night at Rushden, Northants.

"It suddenly appeared from nowhere out of the clouds," said Easton. "It began to follow us and continued to do so for 15 miles."

He described the UFO as a series of dense rectangular blocks of intense white light, each rotating on its own axis but also forming a larger circle which alternated between turning clockwise and anti-clockwise.

"It swept over the truck and stayed there for a good while, hovering at about 30 feet above us," said Easton. "We decided to pull over and as we did so a car did likewise. A woman got out, she looked frightened and said she'd been followed from Bishop's Stortford."

Easton and Coleman continued their journey towards Thetford, Norfolk, and the UFO dropped out of sight.

On the return leg of the trip they spotted the UFO again: "It was as big as a roundabout and this time followed alongside the truck in line with the unit," said Easton. "As we approached a service station it held back."

He dashed into the service station hoping to buy a camera and get a picture of the UFO but a staff member dismissed the sighting as laser lights from a new disco.

However, Easton had already seen the disco's strobe lights on the horizon, and they didn't follow the truck like the UFO did.

Easton has since discovered a car driver ran into the garage shouting that he'd seen a UFO before collapsing on the floor. The local *Herald & Express* newspaper has also received reports of a number of other UFO sightings in the area in recent months.

It's an alien world!

LANCASHIRE EVENING POST, Preston, England March 21, 1996

HERE'S a case for the X-files. Sightings of UFO-type lights in the skies over Preston have led to claims that Lancashire planemakers are developing a secret radar-invisible fighter jet.

UFO experts believe a possible explanation for several sightings of bright orange lights above the M55 are from a top secret plane being developed by British Aerospace at Warton.

UFO expert Catherine Calvo, of North Lancashire UFO Investigation Group, based in Morecambe, supported recent research into the sightings.

She said: "There is a claim that something is going on. There have been so many sightings in the Warton area that have gone unexplained."

But BAe today disputed the claims. A spokesman said: "There is no truth in this theory despite much investigation. The idea is really quite alien to us!"



Mysterious sightings in the North West, including Warton, will be the subject of a BBC1 Close Up North investigation tonight when researchers open up The UFO Files.

ON THE CASE? Dana Scully in The X Files

NORTHERN LIFE, Sudbury, Ontario, Canada

Aug. 9, 1996 CR: M. Deschamps

UFO information available on-line

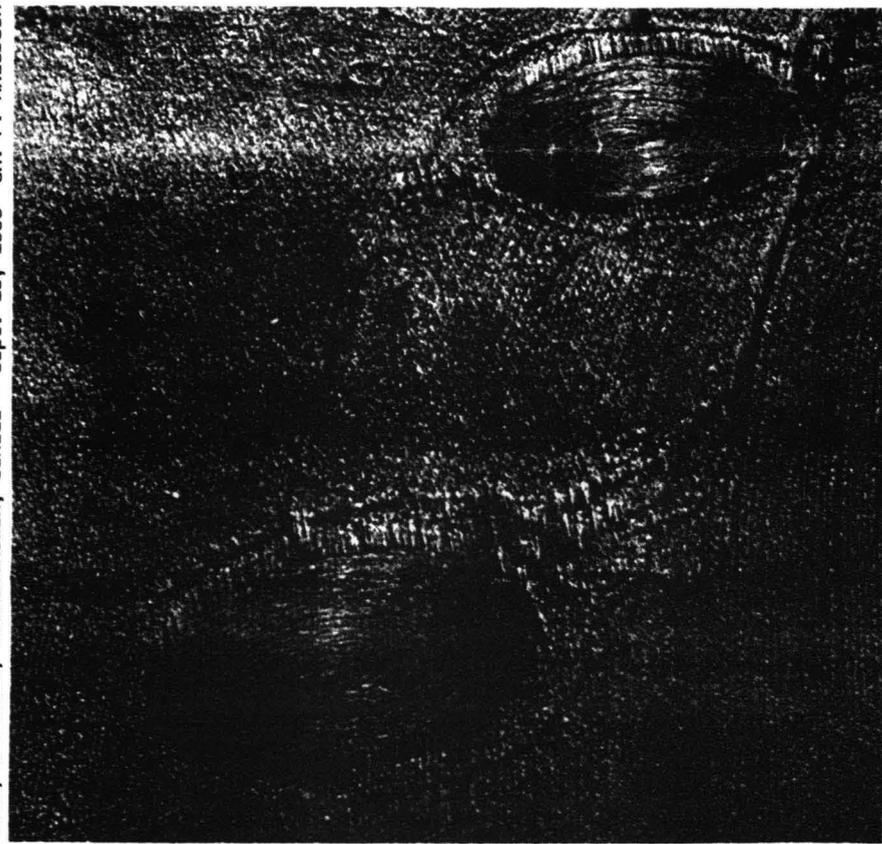
X-Files lovers and other Sudburians interested in UFOs now have a web site in the Internet dedicated to the subject.

The Northern Ontario UFO Research Site—or NOUFORS for short—went on-line earlier this summer.

Web surfers who visit the site will find articles on such topics as alien abductions, government cover-ups and UFO sightings in Northern Ontario.

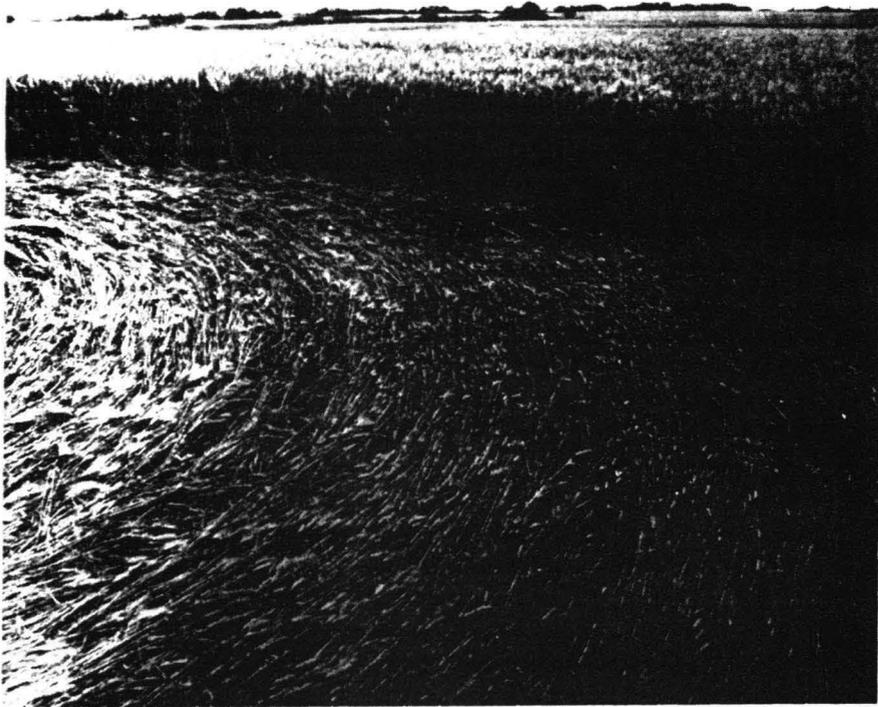
Visitors are urged to share their own experiences of UFO sightings, with the promise that all information will be kept confidential.

The web page also includes links to several related web sites, as well as a warning that aliens are probably already living among us, and may not be as cute and cuddly as E.T. The address of the page is <http://www.cwconnect.ca/~cbid/ufo.htm>.



No explanation

No one seems to be able to come up with an explanation of how two 45-foot-diameter crop circles appeared last Wednesday in a wheat field near Rocanville. The circles have attracted a lot of curiosity seekers, hence the paths through the field.



A mystery

No one is quite sure how this crop circle and another like it appeared in a Rocanville-area wheat field last Wednesday. The wheat within the circle was neatly laid down in a spiral pattern.

Circles leave people wondering



By KEVIN WEEDMARK
Two almost-perfect circles of flattened crops in a wheat field near Rocanville have left local people wondering what could have caused them.

The crop circles were first seen Wednesday morning in the field used by the Rocanville Rink Board as a fundraiser this summer.

The field is located southwest of the PCS Rocanville mine. The two circles are about 45 feet in diameter.

The circles have already attracted a stream of onlookers from throughout the area.

Bob Langley was the first person to see the circles. He saw one of the crop circles early Wednesday morning, and said he didn't know what to think. "I've never seen anything like it," he said. "There was no wheat trampled down — no sign that anyone had been in there."

He walked through the field to take a closer look at the crop circle, and spotted a second one nearby. He says there was no trampled wheat and no other sign that anyone had been in the field.

The first person he told about the find was Wayne Kingdon, who was just as surprised. "It's hard to imagine what could do this," he said. "If it was wind, you would think it would have tossed things around a bit. If somebody was in there, you should have been able to tell."

Neither of the men has any idea what could have caused the circles. "I don't know what could have done that, and I'm not sure I want to find out," said Langley.

There was nothing unusual spotted in the field as of dusk on Tuesday. A crew had been working on the road allowance next to the field and no one saw the circles or anything else in the field on Tuesday.

Wheat stalks in the circles are bent close to the ground, but the stalks are not broken. The ground is not compressed within the circles. All the stalks are neatly laid down and appear to be woven together in a spiral pattern. The edges of the circles are clean, with stalks standing straight up next to stalks laid flat.

Rick Holm, a professor of crop

science and plant ecology, says he has heard about six reports of crop circles in Saskatchewan in his 12 years at the University of Saskatchewan, but he doesn't have any explanations.

"It's a bit of a mystery," he said. "There is no explanation."

He said there are three theories about the origin of crop circles. "One is pranksters, one is some sort of local whirlwind, and the other you hear is UFOs and that sort of stuff."

Holm doesn't put much stock in the UFO theory, and while many crop circles have proven to be hoaxes, he believes some are caused by wind or some other natural phenomenon.

He investigated one crop circle just outside Saskatoon which was an obvious hoax.

"It was within sight of a new subdivision, and it looked like someone had just picked up a 2x6 from one of the construction sites and laid the crop flat with it in a circular pattern. The stalks were broken, and you could see footprints in the circle."

However, he has seen photos of other crop circles that are harder to explain, leading him to think that some unexplained natural phenomenon is causing them. "A lot of them have turned out to be the work of pranksters, and people have admitted to it afterwards, but I don't think all of them can be explained that way. Some remain mysteries."

One person who has made a point of studying crop circles is Daniel Clairmont, an IMC Esterhazy employee who spends much of his spare time investigating unusual phenomena.

Clairmont said in an interview Thursday that there are more crop circles than people know about in southeastern Saskatchewan.

"They're happening all over the place, but most people don't want to report them," he said. He took measurements and samples at the site of the Rocanville crop circles on Thursday.

This is the third local instance of crop circles Clairmont has investigated. In each case he has taken soil, grain, and straw samples from inside and outside the circles.

In the earlier instances, Clairmont says analysis of the samples showed a number of differences between samples taken inside and outside the circles, differences that point to sudden heating in the circles.

Clairmont says he doesn't draw any conclusions from his investigations, but the results raise a lot of questions.

"Some people think the crops have just been flattened down by something," he notes. "But why are the stalks not broken? I looked at the soil in the circles at Rocanville, and the ground isn't compacted at all. The stones aren't pushed into the ground."

"Some people think it's just a whirlwind. But what kind of wind can do something like that — take the wheat and lay it down and weave it together?"

Clairmont took measurements, and found that the circles are

not perfectly round. One, on a slight incline, has a diameter that ranges from 44.5 to 46.5 feet. The longer diameter runs along the incline, as would be expected if a circle was impressed from above. The other circle, on more level ground, has a diameter that varies from 45.5 to 46 feet.

Clairmont isn't counting on his investigations ever turning up the source of the crop circles.

"It's really hard to imagine what could be behind these things," he says. "Until we're ready to know, or whatever is doing it decides to let us know, I don't think we'll ever find out."

The crop circles have attracted a lot of media and public attention, and will be left as is. The area including the circles will not be harvested along with the rest of the field.

GAZETTE, Brentwood, England - March 14, 1996

More strange sightings

FURTHER sighting of UFOs has been reported, following a story in last week's Gazette revealing that a number of strange flying craft have been seen in the area.

Since then calls have been coming into the UFO hotline at the home of Mrs Barbara

Johnson with details of more mysterious experiences in the area, including over Coxtie Green Road, Galleywood and Great Baddow.

In one incident at Mountnessing round about a woman was forced to stop her car when she was faced with an intense white light

about 20-40 feet up in the sky. She saw a solid, black mass before she sped off.

Mrs Emily Chatfield and her husband Arthur were called to look at the huge, mysterious object in the sky by their son, Roy, aged 50, when he came in from work, one evening about a fortnight ago.

Mrs Chatfield said: "It was in the sky over the A127 making no noise at all, it was big and white with little white lights and we watched it on and off for about an hour."

"Two jets flew over after it left and seemed tiny in comparison."

Anyone who sees any UFOs should call the hotline before 10.30 pm on 01277 230013.

Colombian close encounters

Everything and everyone looking up at UFO rally

By **TIM JOHNSON**
Herald Staff Writer

SOACHA, Colombia — Forget about hostile aliens trying to blow the Earth to smithereens. Or itty-bitty signs of life on a rock from Mars.

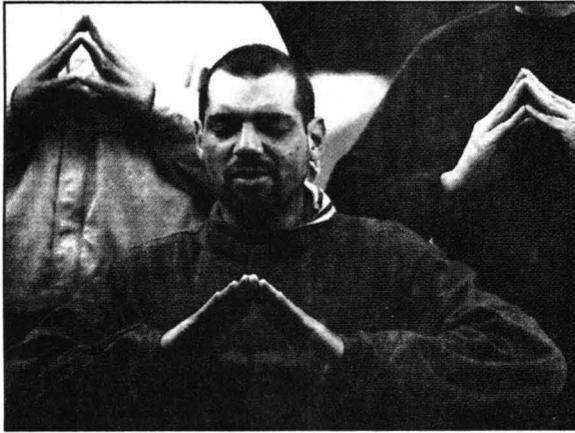
The aliens out there are big, friendly and chatty.

At least, that's the view at an encampment along an Andean ridge where UFO believers from 15 nations converged to harmonize with the heavens, and hunt for flying saucers.

"There is no reason to be afraid. If they had wanted to conquer us, they would have done so long ago," said Charlie Paz, a Peruvian believer in unidentified flying objects, who spoke like a man with thorough, unshakable convictions.

Some 380 people trekked to a camp site at a private nature reserve, then spent the weekend scanning for any nighttime sign of lights.

Sometime before dawn, a cry went out: "Look, I see three!"



Agence France-Press

ANYBODY OUT THERE? Seeking interplanetary contact, UFO believers perform a mantra Sunday near Bogota.

By the time people emerged from sleeping bags, and tent zippers flew open, a second cry came: "They're gone!"

By the time the First International Congress of UFO Researchers and Those Contacted in Colombia disbanded Sunday afternoon, the attendees appeared to have broken down into UFO experts who said they communicated often

with aliens, and others who dearly wanted to spot a UFO for the first time.

Paz offered them hope. "Never in the history of humankind have there been so many observations," he said. "Last year in Brazil, there were 500 UFOs sighted. Just in the first three months of 1996,

other galaxies, who send messages as regular as the daily mail.

"Last night, I received a communication from one of these beings, who calls himself Sordaz and comes from the constellation Apus," said Rafael Garcia Bido, a Dominican electrical engineer. "He offered us a welcome to this Congress."

Much of the interplanetary talk was mixed with paranoia that would have been fitting at a convention of survivalists in the Rocky Mountains.

A former Chilean military officer, Juan Valdes Ibanez, said he believes ETs living on the star Ceti "made a pact with the CIA. ... This is the truth."

A political agenda

Others explained that most of the world's major religious prophets were, in fact, extra-terrestrials in disguise. Many said aliens are attempting to correct environmental and political problems on the planet, and that an active intergalactic consciousness is the only way to end conflict on Earth.

As hundreds swayed around a roaring fire on Saturday night, Doraluz Aragon, a Colombian woman who said she has been in contact with aliens from Pleiades, exhorted listeners to look skyward and appeal to the aliens.

"Wisdom, descend!" she cried. "Use me! I want to be part of the force! Take me away!"

A day later, a broad smile on her face, her eyes aglow, Aragon said she had been one of the few to observe UFOs during the night.

"I saw four of them. Two were vessels filled with light. Two were support vessels," she said, pointing away from the dramatic cliff-side campsite, about 25 miles from the capital of Bogota.

Not everyone took such claims seriously.

Room for doubt

"There is a lot of manipulation going on," said Carlos Torres, a Venezuelan author on UFOs who uses the pseudonym Sol-Ra-Ser. "A lot of people think they've made contact but really haven't. Others have had contact but don't understand it."

He added: "You should doubt everything."

Torres said he was pleased at the renewed attention on alien life brought about by the announcement weeks ago that signs of microscopic life had been found on a meteor from Mars, and the premiere of the movie *Independence Day*, about hostile aliens attacking Earth.

"It was great. I liked the special effects," said Zoller.

Others said the movie portrayed aliens in a negative light, but Torres said he thinks even such movies turn attention in the right direction: "There is no other frontier. Everything is pointing to the stars."

Visitors from outer space turn their noses up at smelly Burton

Aliens give us a miss

Report by **Andy Parkes**

LITTLE green men are steering clear of Burton — and flying saucer buffs say the town's characteristic beery pong could be putting them off.

Dozens of Unidentified Flying Objects have been spotted elsewhere in the Midlands in recent months.

A rash of spectacular sightings of objects with flashing lights around Tamworth has fired the imagination of Staffordshire UFO group members.

But group organiser Irene Bott says she has not had a single report of any odd goings-on in and around Burton.

Now she has appealed for townsfolk to contact her if they have seen anything which could come from outer space.

Her fellow-UFO enthusiast Steve Collier from Eton Road, Burton, says he has seen unexplained phenomena elsewhere, but heard of no recent sightings in his home town.

Both he and Irene believe the pong of the place from brewing and food industries could be putting the alien visitors off.

Steve said: "It must be the smell of the breweries they don't like."

"It would be quite nice to have something in the area because we do seem to have been missed out."

Mrs Bott, who lives in Rugeley, said: "There are certain areas such as army bases, airfields and reservoirs they seem to like."

"There have been more than 20 sightings in the Birmingham area, and a rash of them in and around Stoke."

"But we don't know why none seem to be cropping up around Burton."

"If it isn't the brewery smell maybe it's the Robirch factory."

"But it may just be that people don't know who to report these phenomenon to."

One obstacle could be that UFO-type sightings are often reported to police, who then pass them on to a central register in London.

The register rarely passes sighting details on to regional groups.

Anyone who wants to contact Irene should phone her on (01889) 515507.

more than 600 sightings were reported."

Other self-proclaimed experts offered steps for communicating with aliens telepathically. Surrounded by several dozen eager listeners, a 25-year-old Swiss, Martin Zoller, said a key is opening the heart.

"You just need to have confidence and faith, and not intellectualize," he said. "A lot of people are not open to see it."

He added that it is often the aliens who decide when to show themselves to humans, selecting only those prepared for the experience: "The extraterrestrials are careful. They prepare people slowly."

Several people said their beliefs in alien life brought them some scorn.

'Planetary children'

"It is not easy having these convictions," said Ana Cecilia Morales, a young industrial engineer from El Salvador. "Many people say, 'You are crazy. You are one of those planetary children.'"

Morales said she had never seen a UFO but is a longtime believer: "I am convinced that alien cultures exist."

Others, including a number of former military officers, asserted that they were in regular telepathic contact with aliens from

Was Brecon visited by silent Vulcan?

THE description of a mysterious formation of lights in the sky near Penlan, Brecon, by local mother of two Sarah Barnard fits closely with reports of an unexplained flying object in a national newspaper.

Mrs Barnard and her children were frightened and mystified when they saw a large ring of lights close to the ground moving towards Groesffordd on Thursday March 14 and told of their experience in the *Express*.

Saturday's *Daily Mail* included an article describing a slow, silent object dubbed the 'Silent Vulcan' or 'Flying Triangle'.

The article reported the

announcement by a senior Ministry of Defence official that he believes in the possibility of an extra-terrestrial explanation for UFO sightings.

Nick Pope, head of Secretariat (Air Staff) 2a from 1991 to 1994 was the government's expert on UFO

phenomena.

His statement adds weight to the growing body of UFO testimony and could reduce the scepticism which greets many reports.

Did you see the object described by Mrs Barnard? The *Express* would be interested in hearing your account. Please

telephone the editorial department on (01874) 623230.

The British UFO Research Association also welcomes reports of sightings.

Stamped addressed envelopes should be sent to: BUFORA, 1 Woodhall Drive, Batley, West Yorkshire WF17 7SW.

BRECON & RADNOR EXPRESS, England - March 28, 1996

FRANCE-SOIR, Paris (?), France - June 27, 1996

A UFO at Vilnius

A UFO was seen not far from Vilnius and observed for half an hour by two police officers (gendarmes) who have alerted all the Vilnius police. At 12:30 a.m. Wednesday, on the Vilnius-Miadinkai, near the village of Nemejis, the UFO (a round luminous object shaken by pulsations) was motionless at 20-30 meters from the ground, according to the police officers. "At the same time, there was a strange noise, like an electrical or electronic crackling," they added. But when they came within 50 meters of the object, it began to move, rose in the air and went away rapidly.

CR: D. Weinstein

The aliens are coming! And they seem to like Spain best

MADRID, Sept. 23 (DPA) AS the American box-office hit *Independence Day* is drawing crowds to cinemas to watch a hair-raising story about an invasion by extra-terrestrial beings, the message of the movie - "we are not alone in the universe" - is no news to Spaniards.

Since November last year, dozens of witnesses claim to have seen unidentified flying objects in various parts of Spain and have presented photographs and videos as proof.

Even army units and local television stations have filmed disc-shaped luminous objects in the sky, press reports say.

The "wave of UFOs" has confirmed many Spaniards in their belief that *Independence Day* could indeed come true, maybe in their own country.

This year, there have been over a dozen incidents of people claiming to have seen UFOs in and near the region of Galicia in northwestern Spain. Similar incidents have also taken place in other regions including Aragon and La Rioja in the north and Extremadura and Murcia in the south as well as in the Canary Islands.

Some of the UFOs were seen by groups of people or by several witnesses who were observing them from different places. Many of the witnesses were considered little prone to superstition as they were local government officials, academics, journalists or policemen.

In Zaragoza on June 28 around 11 pm, several people in different parts of the city saw a strange flying object which illuminated the sky with an orange glow, according to press reports.

It moved slowly, witnesses said, could be seen for about ten minutes, and was heading northwards. Its diameter must have been over a hundred metres, one witness calculated.

Other witnesses have described the UFOs as emitting a bluish-orange light, as being slightly transparent and as appearing to have dark concentric circles inside. Some UFOs are said to have been flying very fast. The UFOs have not been detected by radar.

In the case of the UFO seen in Zaragoza, the military discarded the possibility of it having been an aircraft, a weather bal-

loon, or a flare, press reports said.

In 1994, a supposed UFO left a crater of 300 square metres in Galicia, tearing trees from their roots and hurling them hundreds of metres away.

That event, as well as the appearance of a UFO in Galicia last June, have been investigated by scientists.

"The crater could have been made by a meteorite-like object. The UFOs described by witnesses could also have been concentrations of gas, pieces of satellites, or phenomena related to military experiments," astronomer Jose Angel Docobo of the University of Santiago de Compostela said. "In some cases the UFOs could even have been eerie-looking clouds."

This is not the first time that UFOs are being sighted in Spain.

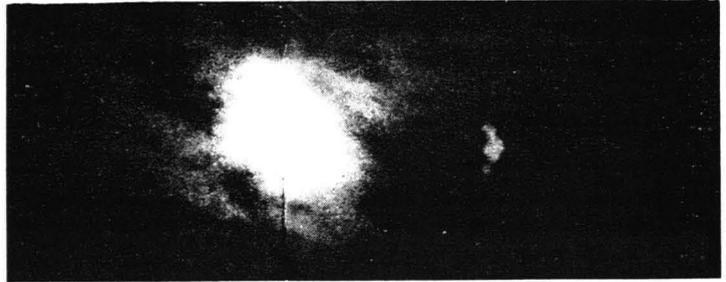
In 1976, marines of a navy corvette and other witnesses saw a large UFO above the Canary Islands, an event which the army kept secret for 20 years, according to press reports. In 1979, a military pilot followed two UFOs after they had scared a passenger plane into landing in emergency in Valencia on the eastern coast. In 1980, seven pilots of the national airline Iberia claimed to have seen UFOs in northeastern Spain during their flights on the same day.

Some of the descriptions border on the fantastic. In Lugo in Galicia last March, Jose Manuel Castro, a peasant "of excellent reputation", and two other witnesses told of "small monkey-like creatures" stepping out of a UFO which had landed on a field - a sight which scared them out of their wits and sent them on the run. Large and deep tracks with long toes were indeed found in the grass, the weekly *Tiempo* wrote. "The tracks did not resemble those of any known animal," reported the magazine which published photographs of the tracks.

"Serious witnesses have seen strange things," Docobo concedes, but nevertheless advises to take the sightings of UFOs with a pinch of salt. "I won't believe in UFOs until I see them myself."

Many Spaniards recently thought an extraterrestrial invasion had already begun. A television advertisement for *Independence Day* was taken seriously by viewers whose terrified phone calls flooded the television station.

Amateur photographer John Rowland believes he has captured a UFO on film



The truth is out there...

FLYING SAUCER buffs are set to probe two sightings of odd objects in the skies over Burton.

One was seen by Linda Gumbleton near her home at Fauld, a few miles north-west of the town.

On December 15 last year she saw a 12ft-wide bright light hovering over nearby fields and watched it as it hung in the air.

A few weeks earlier amateur lensman John Rowland captured a UFO on film when he was photographing the moon from his home in Wetmore Road in Burton.

He spotted an unexplained light near the moon, and several weeks later when he had the film developed he found a clear image of a flying shape.

Irene Bott, who runs the Staffordshire UFO Group from her Rugeley home, complained two weeks ago that there had been no recent UFO sightings in the Burton area.

She had joked the town's characteristic pong might have put them off.



Linda Gumbleton: "I looked out of the bedroom window and saw this massive bright light in the sky"

Now she says: "We will want to look into these sightings - they are clearly unidentified flying objects."

"Whether they are extra-terrestrial in origin is unclear yet, but it does give the lie to the idea that they could be avoiding Burton."

Mrs Gumbleton (43) said she was

woken by her three dogs barking at 3.10am on December 15.

"I looked out of the bedroom window towards Anslow and there in the air was this massive bright light, moving slightly and hovering."

"It was about 50 feet above the trees and the ground below it was illuminated for about a mile around."

After watching the light for several minutes she went back to bed, but contacted the police the next day.

They told her nothing had been picked up by radar at local airports, and eventually concluded it was a low-flying post plane that had been diverted.

But she says: "There was no noise except a slight whir, which was unlike an aircraft."

"I don't think it was a spaceship - but I have no idea what it was."

Mr Rowland said: "The speed at which the light I saw was moving meant it was not an aircraft or a meteor, or a star or planet."

"I don't know what it was but it was certainly odd."

Cumbria's X files: Case Three

THE CLOSE ENCOUNTER KEPT SECRET FOR 31 YEARS

A COUPLE have spoken for the first time of their bizarre close encounter on a deserted Cumbrian roadside.

It was 3am, on a storm-swept winter's night in 1965 as the couple - then in their 20s - drove along the A6 between Beetham and Milnthorpe in South Cumbria, explains UFO investigator David Sankey.

Deciding to pull in and wait for better weather, the couple parked up at the roadside.

"After a few seconds, they noticed what appeared to be a luminous red dome, its lower half obscured by a dry-stone wall," explains David, an official investigator for Quest International, a paranormal research organisation.

"They couple thought the

dome was about 25 yards away from their car. Then they noticed three small figures, all of them slightly luminous, standing in front of the wall, slowly making their way towards their vehicle.

"Two appeared to have their arms outstretched towards them, while the third had its arms at its side."

The couple described the creatures as having "turnip-shaped" heads, with round staring eyes.

As the creatures approached the car, the terrified couple panicked and drove off into the night.

Added David: "Neither of the couple have spoken of this to anybody before. I only found out because I am a friend of the family. One disturbing feature

of this case is that the couple's son, who was a baby at the time of this incident, developed cancer while he was in his teens.

"Tests showed his body contained amounts of radium."

"Fortunately he survived, but the couple were obviously very upset by the whole experience. They have kept quiet simply because they were afraid of what people might think."

"I will now submit a report to Quest International's director of investigations, but I have to say this couple are totally straight forward, and were in no way under the influence of drink or drugs when this happened."

"Nor do they have any mental problems."

Puzzle of A64 lights in sky

MYSTERIOUS lights in the sky by the A64 have been baffling people for more than 20 years, it has been revealed.

Dennis Elliott of Moorland Road, York, said he saw a "bright green ball" fly over him at high speed while driving in Copmanthorpe in the early 1970s.

He contacted the Evening Press after reading of a number of UFO sightings in the A64 corridor between Copmanthorpe and Tadcaster.

"My wife Valerie and I were in Manor Heath, Copmanthorpe, when a

bright green light the size of a football passed over our heads," said Mr Elliott.

"It lit up the sky and then passed over some trees in the direction of the Wild Man."

"We still do not know to this day what it was. It seems strange that once again unusual lights are being seen in that area."

A woman from Woodthorpe, York, saw a bright light hover in a field close to the Wild Man pub, now restaurant, last July.

"It just hovered over the field for ages - at least a couple of hours. It definitely was not a helicopter, it never moved," she said.

Last November, two barmaids at the Wild Man told police they had seen a "large ball of light" come down by the pub last November.

But after intensive search by police, firefighters and the RAF nothing was found.

A massive rescue operation was recently launched in Doncaster after a number of people saw "a ball of fire" fall to earth.

But like the Wild Man "crash" no wreckage was found.

Strange sightings over York continue. Mary Wilson, of York, contacted the Evening Press after spotting a "very big" light in the sky over hospital fields, Fulford.

"It was quite low and sparkled. I've never seen anything like it before. It was so unusual," she said.

Mary Cooper, of Burnholme Crescent, York, saw two clusters of bright lights in the sky.

"I was taking my dog out for a walk and was looking up at the sky when I saw three roundish shapes whizz past. Then I saw another three," she said.

"The lights seemed to be all joined together. They went over in a matter of seconds and then just disappeared. There was no sound at all."

Have YOU had a close encounter with a UFO? If so contact Simon Ritchie on the Y-Files desk on York 653051 ext 347.

Five people who met aliens and returned to describe experience

Jane Murphy, 22, a housewife from Birstall, West Yorkshire, was taken from bed in March 1981, given a bath by seven-foot aliens with wholly black eyes, then experienced "the best sex I ever had".

Rohan Hinton, 17, a schoolgirl from Chesapeake Bay, Delaware, in the US, was taken in sum-

mer 1988 from a motel on "what looked like a sheet of metal" by light grey visitors with large dark eyes. She woke up back in bed shouting "They lied, they lied. They promised they were going to leave me alone, but they didn't."

Commander Horatio Penrose RN was lifted from his car at Burnaston, Der-

byshire, in May 1954 into "a large circular object which was hovering overhead". After an examination by short, almond-eyed aliens in blue one-piece suits he was injected with a green fluid and found himself in the back of his crashed car.

Douglas Tams, a bus driver, was taking the last

service from Kidsgrove to Burslem, near Stoke-on-Trent, in June 1974 when a "300ft oval machine lit with a hazy green glow" passed overhead and all his bus's electrics failed. The bus started again immediately, but when Mr Tams arrived at the depot, 10 minutes away, he was an hour late.

Foreman forester Robert Taylor, a father of five, was confronted by "a 30ft high dome-shaped object" in woodland near Livingston, Lothian, in November 1979. Two spherical objects attempted to grab him by his trousers, using spikes, and he remembered "an appalling stench" before blacking out.



Peñasco farmer finds mutilated cow in pasture

By Phaedra Greenwood
The Taos News

A new rash of unexplained cattle deaths in northern New Mexico and the San Luis Valley in southern Colorado has spurred private investigators to join forces across the nation, sharing reports of new incidents, fresh observations and protocol for collecting tissue samples. Are there actually more cattle being mysteriously slain or just more being reported? Investigators say they count on the cooperation of farmers and ranchers to document these incidents.

The newest casualty was a prize bull found in a pasture above Peñasco that cattle owner Carlos Trujillo shares with his partner, Wilfred Romero. "We were talking about it on Saturday," Trujillo said. "Wilfred said he didn't believe in cattle mutilations. And Sunday, there it

'We were talking about it on Saturday. Wilfred [Romero] said he didn't believe in cattle mutilations. And Sunday, there it was.'

- Carlos Trujillo

was. Here's a herd of 25 to 30 head and only two bulls. He was the main bull, and they took him. It was not little green men! I never said that," he insisted. Trujillo says he tends toward the Satanic cult theory. "What animal is going to remove the blood?"

As usual in these cases, there was no blood and no tracks. Missing from the animal were the sex organs, part of the

intestines, the tongue and the heart, which was removed through a hole in the chest. "They didn't do such a perfect job on that cut," Trujillo said. "They missed a jag and had to go back. It wasn't cut all the way through. The ear was bit or pulled off." There were no marks on the other side of the Santa Gertrudis bull when they flipped it over, he said.

The Taos County Sheriff's Depart-

ment checked out the scene and turned over their report to Ted Abeysa of the state livestock board. "Ted looked at it and said 'Dogs,'" Trujillo said. Abeysa took pictures, but no tissue samples, and did not offer to do an autopsy or any further investigation, Trujillo said. "It's too much bother, too much paper work."

But it's not too much bother for private investigators who are fascinated by a worldwide phenomenon that has been going on for more than 25 years without anyone being caught in the act. The estimated 10,000 inexplicable cattle deaths are bizarre and varied; no single theory fits all the facts, and the temptation is to ignore the facts that don't fit your pet theory.

According to criminologist Bob

ling bull, thought to have been dead six to 10 hours. It had a cored-out rectum and was missing the tongue and sexual organs. The second animal, a 700-pound yearling bull which had been dead about a week, was found the same way, but with the ears cut off.

The animals belonged to Paul Velasquez, a retired sheriff's deputy. A third animal, a year-old steer, is missing. Friday evening (Sept. 13) at dusk, Velasquez said he and his college-educated daughter observed some weird, soundless object with white lights on it that they thought might have been a weather balloon.

Perkins also reported that on the morning of Aug. 1 at 3:48 a.m., five people traveling together on Highway 69 through the Huerfano Valley in southern Colorado saw a constellation of three yellowish-white lights moving from northeast to southwest toward Mount Blanca. Beau Seawell and his family described the object as "huge, 200 to 300 yards long." They said they lost track of it over the city of Blanca. Perkins compared this sighting to the one Aug. 31 reported by Jenny Meadowcroft over Gallina Canyon 10 miles north of Taos.

If you discover a dead cow, or any other animal you think might be part of this phenomenon, call Taos private investigator Michael Abbey at 751-1969, the county sheriff or the livestock board.

Keller of Pueblo, Colo., a few months ago a rancher in the San Luis Valley lost two prize bulls with the usual body parts removed, but didn't report the incidents because he was too discouraged by the lack of response. Dr. Keller said, "One of the bulls was found in a small cottonwood tree."

Keller links the incident with what he calls "Notar" military helicopters that he thinks might come from Fort Carson Military Base in Fort Carson, Colo. "They have crane capacity," he explained, "and they've taken the tail rotors out of them, so they are capable of silent operation."

Like Taos attorney John Paternoster, Keller would like to set up a forensic team to investigate unexplained cattle deaths "and treat it like any other crime scene." Keller, a professor of criminal justice in the graduate program at the University of Colorado in Colorado Springs, and co-author of "Prison Crisis," a college text book, says he is currently putting the final touches on a book that will establish his theory of a government cover-up.

In a telephone interview with *The Taos News*, David Perkins, a writer and private investigator from Gardner, Colo., said two more mysteriously slain cows have been found 30 miles west of Dulce. The first, discovered Sept. 3 at 2:30 p.m., was a "black baldy" year-

LAKE CO. LEADER, Polson, MT - Oct. 10, 1996

Nessie shows

DAYTON - The first Flathead Lake Nessie sighting of the year and only the second since the hoppin' summer of 1993 was reported Wednesday morning by Karen Davis.

Davis said what appeared to be a large, white-capped wave, 4-5 feet high, moved along about 25 feet from her shoreline home in the direction of the Dayton yacht harbor. Weather was clear, wind was calm, and there were no boats in the area.

Davis said the object was definitely not a log, yet there was no discernible shape. Others witnessing the sighting were Victor Davis and Mike Blount.

The Davises have lived here for the past six years and Wednesday was the first time they've encountered anything like this.

New SLV unusual cattle death case reported

by Christopher O'Brien

Southern Colorado cattle may have escaped unscathed the entire summer. However, the onset of fall produced an unusual cattle death report filed with this investigator by U.P.S. driver Dave Jaramillo on September 23, 1996.

Jaramillo told me that he and his family had been up at the family's property west of Antonito, Colorado, near Osier Park, on Sunday, September 22, when they discovered, and videotaped, an (as-yet) unidentified slain cow. The animal's tongue, rear-end, udder and one ear appeared to have been removed, and Jaramillo observed that "the cuts were real clean with no tears or jagged edges." He noted, "When a cow dies around here, the scavengers always tear it up in a couple of days; they haven't touched this one."

In his estimation, the incisions were not mundane, and he figured the animal had been killed Friday or Saturday night. (Incidentally, this is the same area where Jaramillo videotaped a large noc-

turnal UFO-type lighting array the night of December 25, 1994.)

The family conducted an immediate and thorough search of the remote pasture and found no tracks, footprints or blood. They were amazed, however, to find three, 3-foot circles whirled flat in the grass, approximately 100 feet from the carcass. The circles were arrayed in a triangular pattern approximately twelve feet apart, and additional triangular patterns of three, four-inch circles were found around each 3-foot circle. Videotape of the impressions did not appear (to this investigator) to have been caused by any great weight. They were not pressed into the soil and the grass appeared to be whirled flat.

This type of potential physical evidence is very rare. Besides the carcasses themselves, a vast majority of unusual animal death (UAD) cases feature no additional clues whatsoever. Only a handful of cases on record feature these circular markings.

Elsewhere, there was an

unconfirmed UAD report from the Trinidad area in July. Six unusual cattle deaths have been reported in north-central New Mexico since August 1, 1996. Three of the reports were from Arroyo Hondo, two from Aztec and a single case from Peñasco. UFO sightings were also reported around the time of the third Arroyo Hondo case and the two Aztec cases. No apparent reports of helicopters were associated with these cases. A series of three *Taos News* articles written by reporter Phaedra Greenwood covered the Arroyo Hondo cases in full.

Over thirty UFO-type reports were logged by this investigator this summer. Two of these reports feature rather large objects moving at fantastically slow speeds. One object, witnessed by five people in the early morning on August 1st, near La Veta Pass, was reportedly over a mile in length.

Several misidentified celestial objects were reported as "UFOs" and include sightings of Venus, a meteor, and the star Arcturus setting.

Word of our region's activity has again garnered national media

interest. The Paramount program "Sightings" will be in the SLV the first week of October to shoot a segment on the latest cattle deaths and UFO sightings that have been reported in the region. The new paranormal news program "Strange Universe" will be in the valley next month to shoot a segment as well.

JOURNAL/CONSTITUTION, Atlanta, GA
Nov. 1, 1996 CR: R. Howard

Mysterious booms

Booming noises reported in the western Florida Panhandle and southern Alabama remained a mystery Thursday after military officials denied jets were to blame and scientists detected no earthquakes. Dozens of people have reported booms that shook homes, rattled windows and vibrated doors in their frames Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday nights from Mobile, Ala., to Pensacola and neighboring Santa Rosa County.

EAGLE, Crestone, CO - Oct. 1996 CR: W. Jones

Phantom of the Woods, Phantom of the Psyche

BY MARK McDERMOTT

"... that we do not know you
is your perfection
and our hope."
The darkness keeps us near you."
— Wendell Berry,
"To the Unseeable Animal"

THERE ROAMS IN THE mountains and the mist of the Northwest either a giant bipedal ape or a phantom of the imagination so often dreamed as to firmly exist in the reality of thousands of people.

There roams also an old hunter, a man who has spent nearly half of his 68 years in pursuit of this mystery, and who is now conducting a hunt unlike any before. He has downed tigers in India and mountain goats in Nepal, but on this, perhaps his last great hunt, he seeks not a body but proof of a body. He wants to show the world that Bigfoot exists.

The Bigfoot Research Project, headed by veteran Bigfoot hunter Peter Byrne and funded largely through Boston's Academy for Applied Science, describes itself as "a benign, scientific investigation designed to prove the existence of a large, bipedal, hair-covered hominid believed to be living in the forested mountain ranges of the Pacific Northwest."

The project, which operates out of a house northeast of Mount Hood in Oregon, began in August 1992 with five years and, by some reports, a half-million dollars to achieve its end.

When Byrne, an Irishman and former "great white hunter" in Nepal and India, first hunted Bigfoot in the

early 1960s, the hunt was conducted much as any hunt would be: out in the field for weeks at a time, well-armed. The object was to track and kill a Bigfoot.

Now, Byrne has at his disposal an 800 telephone number, heat- and motion-sensing equipment, monitors, day-night cameras and two Bell helicopters. And, in a decision unique in the annals of Bigfoot hunting, Byrne most decidedly does not wish to kill a Bigfoot. He has armed himself only with a tissue-collecting dart, which would take only a small bit of Bigfoot flesh.

How exactly does one hunt a Big-

foot?

"Mostly we just sit around and drink coffee," said Byrne, "and wait for one to come through the door."

KEVIN JONES IS A DEER hunter. The 31-year-old Salem, Ore., resident cleans aquariums for a living, but whenever he has the chance he heads for the woods. Like most hunters, there is a particular place that draws him back again and again. He has been hunting in the foothills near Grants Pass for close to 10 years. Three years ago, he says, he saw something he cannot forget.

Early morning had burned into a bright autumn day when Jones decided that any deer nearby were now likely bedded. He walked into a small clear-cut and found a stump to rest on while his hunting partner caught up. He had been waiting a few minutes when out of the corner of his eye he saw something moving in the old growth bordering the cut.

As he turned his head to look, out walked a 7-foot-tall female Bigfoot, followed by an apparently younger one about half the size. Jones watched the pair undetected for five or 10 seconds. The younger one, he noticed, seemed to be playing, walking kind of lackadaisically, planting its heels with each step. The adult paused and looked directly at him; she was now about a hundred feet away.

Jones was holding a rifle but was too completely awestruck to consider using it. "It was like, whoa... they really do exist!" he said. Upon seeing him, the female turned to the small one and seemed to beckon it forward. Not running but a little more hurried, they crossed the cut and disappeared into woods on the other side.

"I'm open-minded, and I'd heard about this kind of thing but never really given it much thought," he said. "After I'd seen one, it kind of shattered my whole idea of reality. I had it in my mind how things were, but everything isn't always as it appears to be."

He told his hunting buddy and he told his wife, but he told no one else for nearly a year. He began researching the phenomenon and came across the (800) BIGFOOT number. "I called them just to get more information, but ended up kind of spilling my guts. You just have to tell someone."

Jones was brought up religiously and taught not to believe in evolution. Since his encounter, he has become a self-educated student of anthropology. What he saw, he said, was very human-like. It had big, pendulous, hair-covered breasts, ➤

If Bigfoot doesn't exist, we face a deeper mystery of collective regional imagination



This famous Bigfoot image is from film shot in Northern California's Trinity Alps in 1967. Film experts have said the images do not appear to be a hoax.

and indeed hair everywhere except around its eyes, and a small spot above its breastbone. He estimated it weighed between 450 and 525 pounds.

"I still find myself in disbelief," he said. "I sometimes feel blessed and sometimes cursed. It has caused problems in my life. I spend more time in the woods now, and probably less time with my family than I should." Jones can't stop wanting to see it again; now when he goes into the woods, he never goes without a video camera.

It is sightings such as his, clearly and consistently described, which give the Bigfoot Research Project clues to go on.

Peter Byrne has never seen a Bigfoot, but he has no doubt such a creature exists. "Look, I could be anywhere in the world," he said. "If I didn't believe there was something out there, I wouldn't be here. There is too much evidence, too many sane people who have seen something — and who have seen the same thing — for this just to be myth or hallucination."

He has been looking for large apemen off and on since the late 1940s, when, hunting big game in the Himalayas, he saw his first yeti tracks. In the late '50s Byrne was hired by Texas oil heir Tom Slick to lead expeditions into the Himalayas of Nepal in search of the yeti, or "abominable snowman." His connection with Slick eventually brought him to the United States to take part in the Pacific Northwest Expedition — the first large-scale hunt for Bigfoot.

"I flew over here, went down to

Texas," he recalled, "and looked at a map of the Northwest and realized it was an area four times the size of the Nepal Himalayas from Northern California to Alaska. It's a tremendous, huge area."

This is a point Byrne stresses. "A lot of roads, yes," he said. "A lot of people, yes. But still, there have been 73 aircraft lost in these mountains since World War II — that's an FAA statistic — and Bigfoot is not something sitting on the ground. This is something elusive, shy; something moving that does not want to be found."

THE NORTHWEST HAS ALWAYS been known as a robust and prodigious land. Early European explorers were struck by the richness of the streams, woods and peoples they encountered. When tribes told of the existence of large ape-men, it hardly seemed unfathomable; the land seemed big enough to produce just about anything.

It has become increasingly harder to fathom ever since. At this point, as we debate how much and how wild a land it will take to support a small population of owls, Bigfoot seems only a story we tell ourselves in tabloid newspapers and children's movies. Among Bigfoot believers, however, there is a body of evidence regarded as borderline proof of the animal's existence.

First, there are the footprints, thousands of which have been found, and which are usually measured between 14 and 18 inches long. Washington State University anthropologist Grover

Krantz, one of few academics to take an interest in Bigfoot, published a book which analyzed this evidence and concluded that many of the footprints are indeed authentic. Krantz identified "dermal ridges" on many of the tracks he examined — essentially skin prints — and argued that it would be impossible to achieve such widespread and detailed fakery.

Second, there are the sightings, both historical and contemporary, which are so frequent and from so many different sources that, as Byrne argues, it would seem as implausible for there to be no Bigfoot as for there to be such a widespread public hallucination.

Bigfoot hunter John Green, a contemporary and critic of Byrne, has logged more than 1,300 sightings; Byrne has recorded more than 1,000 as well, but for the purposes of the project has whittled them down to just under 100 fully "credible" sightings. He determines credibility through interviews, a 13-page questionnaire and, more than anything, his judgment of that person's judgment and intent. It is not an exact science.

Finally, there is the 1967 film made by the late Roger Paterson of Yakima, which seems to show a female Bigfoot bending over a stream in Northern California's Trinity Alps. The short, shaky film is regarded by many believers as the greatest piece of evidence for the existence of Bigfoot. It has been examined by Universal Studios and Disney, both of whom concluded that it most likely is not a hoax.

Nothing thus far found, however, qualifies as scientific proof. Daris Swindler, professor emeritus of physical anthropology at the University of Washington, said the Bigfoot phenomenon is not regarded seriously by most anthropologists or the scientific community.

"On a scale of 1 to 10, it's about 9.995 outside the conventional consensus," said Swindler. "We need more evidence. I find it hard to believe that there is a population of large primates in these or any woods that we have not discovered. I'd love to see it myself, though. As an evolutionist, I'd love to study a 7- to 9-foot living primate."

REPORTS OF LARGE APE-MEN haunting these parts — stories, if you prefer — go as far back as histories of the Northwest go. Native peoples have had various names for what we call Bigfoot, including sasquatch, omah and sealtik. Peter Byrne likes to point out that Bigfoot was not a myth in any of the tribes' histories — as, say, raven who brought fire to the world — but was known more as "that big hairy tribe that we stay away from."

British explorer and trapper David Thompson was one of the first whites to encounter the phenomenon when, in the late 18th century, he found large tracks that didn't seem to be those of a bear. Lore continued to accumulate from trappers, loggers, and other outdoorsmen as the Northwest was settled, but it wasn't until the late 1950s that Bigfoot hunting began. At that time, log-

(continued on page 19)

(continued from page 18 - TIMES/POST INTELLIGENCER, Seattle, WA - July 7, 1996)

gers in the Klamath River area of Northern California found dozens of tracks and went public with large plaster casts of the "big feet." The announcement attracted national media attention and a small group of men who would end up pursuing the mystery for the next 40 years.

BYRNE HAS NOT BEEN ALONE on his quest, although probably no other person has more successfully made a living out of the search for Bigfoot. The Slick expedition, which ended with Slick's death in a plane crash in 1962, included three other men — John Green, Rene Dahinden and Bob Titmus — who continued to hunt individually. Green and Dahinden are active to this day, although Green no longer does field work.

Bigfoot hunting was from the beginning an acrimonious field of endeavor; few of its participants speak to each other, yet most of them speak very badly of one another. Byrne, in particular, has drawn the ire of his colleagues.

"The Bigfoot Research Project is a con operation," said Green, a retired newspaper editor who lives in Harrison Hot Springs, B.C. "It has nothing to do with Bigfoot. The whole game is money and notoriety for Peter Byrne. The sasquatch part is a joke."

Green has many quarrels with Byrne: He has attacked his claims to be a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society (Byrne is a fellow) and accused Byrne of misrepresentation on many occasions (in various Bigfoot newsletters). Their biggest difference, however, is that the two have a vastly different conceptions of what Bigfoot is, or would be if found, and how to go about the hunt. Byrne opposes shooting a Bigfoot, and Green believes it is necessary.

Krantz of WSU takes issue with Byrne on this, as well. "I can't figure out what Byrne is doing," said Krantz. "If he wants to show that Bigfoot is a real animal, the only conclusive, tangible proof that will suffice is a body. Nothing else will do. I don't know what kind of game he is playing. A photo isn't enough — it can be tampered with. The time-honored way, throughout the centuries, has been to produce a body. That is what zoology is based on."

Krantz believes that Bigfoot belongs to a relict species, a remnant population, perhaps of *Homo gigantapithicus*. Green thinks the animal is more ape than human, whereas Byrne notes that many eyewitness accounts have described the Bigfoot as "possessing a strangely human face."

Rene Dahinden disagrees with the methods used by other hunters, arguing that they spend too much time conducting the hunt on computers instead of the way they all originally did it, out in the woods, looking. He still hunts this way, disappearing into the mountains for months at a time.

"The search for Bigfoot is a bit like the search for the Holy Grail," Dahinden concludes, "except it is being conducted by very unholy people."

Byrne's take on the situation is that the acrimony stems from competition. "My feeling is that for the most part it is generated by the prize, the prize at the end, the winning line at the end of the race for Bigfoot, the find. And Bigfoot is a prize, make no mistake about that. As far as I am concerned, it is a fair race, and may the best man win."

REGARDLESS OF WHETHER Bigfoot exists, Byrne has raised more money to try to find one than anyone else, ever. He is reluctant to discuss funding, other than to say his sources are "basically a group of rich men." Some close to the project estimate it has at least a half-mil-



COURTESY OF BIGFOOT RESEARCH PROJECT

Byrne photographed this 14 1/2-inch-long print in Northern California in 1960.

lion dollars to work with over its five-year span.

The project has three full-time employees, 15 volunteer "investigators" and 60 on-call "associates" who wait for the day the big hunt begins. The project initially focused on building a Bigfoot database; field work began only early this year.

Byrne and his staff spend most of their time fielding phone calls — between 3,000 and 4,000 a month. "A lot of kids," said Byrne, "a lot of crank calls — barking, screaming, that sort of thing. And a lot of calls just for information. Then, occasionally, someone will call, and there will be a bit of a hesitation, and they will say, 'You know, I haven't told anyone this, but I saw one. I saw a Bigfoot.'"

With enough credible sightings, Byrne hopes to determine the "geo-time patterns" of bigfeet — where and when one would most likely be if there are seasonal migrations — and then place an electronic snare.

The project's field director, Todd Deery, whose last job was as a civil engineer in Andover, Mass., said the field equipment — day-night cameras and motion-sensing equipment for military use — was finally deployed in January. "This is Desert Storm-quality equipment," he said, describing seismic detectors that will be tripped by anything weighing more than 400 pounds, configured to cover an area of 9,000 square feet. Deery declined to say where the equipment was placed. So far, nothing has set off the detectors.

When it happens, it will happen something like this, according to Byrne: He will wake one night to the sound of a beeping monitor, and clamber to his desk to find that the field cameras are showing a Bigfoot right there, on his screen. In less than two hours he, his staff and a posse of associates will zoom to the area in helicopters, equipped with infra-red sensors and accompanied by famed tracker Joel Hardin. Their objective will be to extensively film the animal and obtain a piece of its flesh with a tissue-collecting dart.

"We are conscious of the fact that we are dealing with something that should not be harmed," said Byrne, "and certainly not be shot. And due to the unknown physiology of the animal, we don't feel it would be safe to shoot it with a tranquilizer."

Byrne's other hope regarding a Bigfoot encounter reveals much about his benign approach: He wants, if possible, to communicate with the mysterious beast. In other words, he has very high hopes about the intelligence of the creature, and believes a Bigfoot has not been found because bigfeet simply do not want to be found.

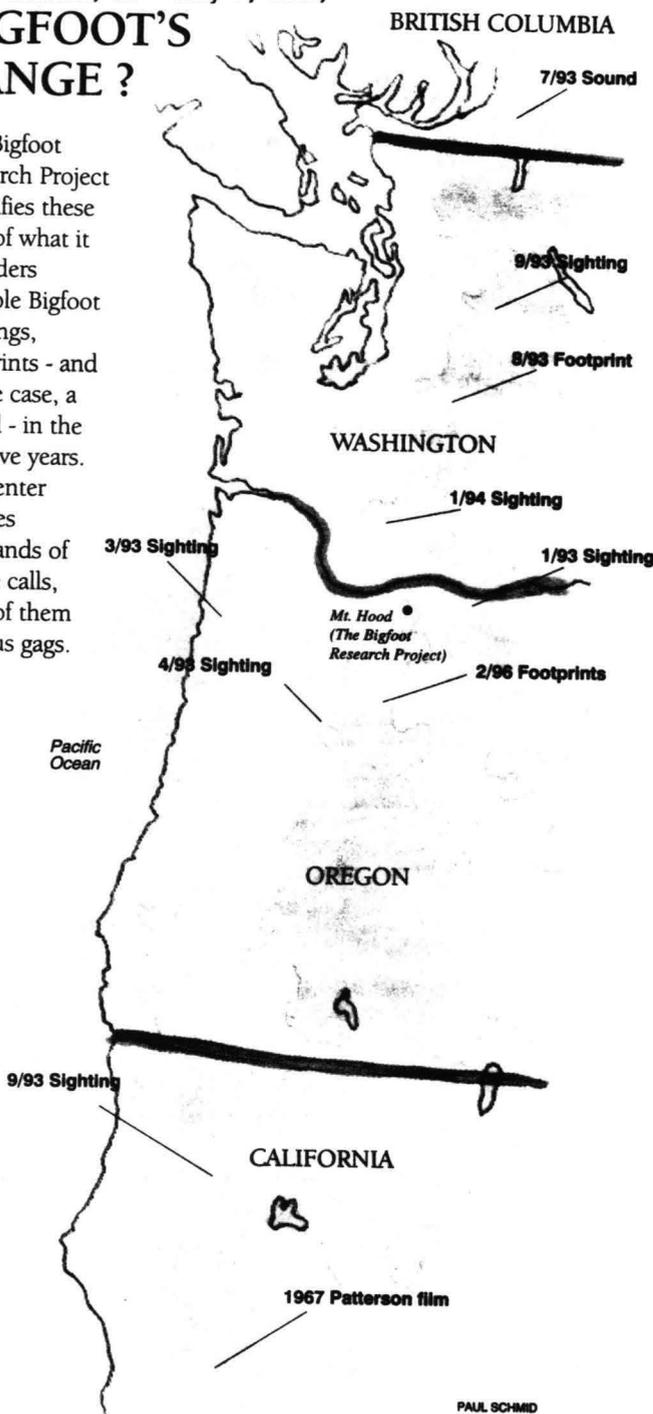
CONSIDER THE ALTERNATIVES. PERHAPS ALL the footprints, all the sightings, all things Bigfoot, are just a collection of fabrication, hallucination and wishful myth-making. Say that there is no Bigfoot, no upright ape other than ourselves now living.

And then what are you left with? An almost greater mystery, for what need compels us to tell the tale of this wild cousin of humanity if indeed it is not so?

Or perhaps we live in a land yet big enough to hide 7-foot ape-creatures. Perhaps the persistence of mystery is greater

BIGFOOT'S RANGE ?

The Bigfoot Research Project identifies these sites of what it considers credible Bigfoot sightings, footprints - and in one case, a sound - in the past five years. The center receives thousands of phone calls, most of them obvious gags.



PAUL SCHMID

than we have imagined. Picture it as a creature almost of the trees, "... being, whose flesh dissolves at our glance," as poet Wendell Berry wrote. It could be a band of 10, or a population of a hundred, a thousand, a relict species, as some speculate.

Be it phantom, foolery or beast, there is mystery afoot in the great Northwest.

Mark McDermott is a writer who works in Petersburg, Alaska.



HARLEY SOLTES

As a Northwest icon, images of Bigfoot turn up far more obviously than any creature does. This is a version at a campground entrance in Harrison Hot Springs, B.C.



RICHARD COCKLE

Peter Byrne walks near headquarters of the Bigfoot Research Project he directs near

Mount Hood. He has been looking for Bigfoot and other mysterious creatures since

the 1940s, when he says he saw tracks of the "abominable snowman" in the Himalayas.

New England scientists hope finding Nessie is a Loch

By PAUL SULLIVAN

A pair of New England researchers are trying to determine once and for all if the Loch Ness Monster is fact or fiction. They will journey to the misty, mysterious lake in Scotland early next spring with sophisticated sonar

equipment to get a snapshot or two of Nessie. These adventurers, Charles Wyckoff, 80, of Needham and attorney Robert Rines, 73, of Concord, N.H., also believe there "has to be more than one" Nessie in the loch. "I didn't believe the damn thing. I thought it was a myth," said Wyckoff, who has invented both film

and specially designed underwater cameras. "Plenty of people have said that to me. "But I'm a scientist and one of my ambitions is to find out what it is," Wyckoff said. "I've been over there (Loch Ness) a number of times and I realize



CHARLES WYCKOFF

TIMES, Seattle, WA - Aug. 13, 1996

Want to know about Bigfoot? Ask your uncle

STEVE JOHNSTON

Seattle Times columnist



Hey Johnston: Has Bigfoot ever been spotted in the Cascades? I remember hearing a story when I was little that someone saw him near Snoqualmie Pass. I don't know if that's true or if my uncle was pulling my

leg.

Answer: Uncles are famous for pulling the legs of nephews and nieces because that's their job. A good thing for uncles when talking about Bigfoot sightings is that they can say they saw one just about anywhere, and no one can say they didn't.

Of course, people may say the uncle is nuts. Big surprise there!

There used to be an organization called Bigfoot Central in Bothell. It was run by a guy who claimed his first encounter with Bigfoot was near Duvall — another big surprise there — and he had several local sightings on file. But Bigfoot Central has become as elusive as Bigfoot itself, and the organization has disappeared.

The Bigfoot Research Project at Oregon's Mount Hood said there have been 103 sightings in the Pacific Northwest in the past 50 years, including some near Snoqualmie.

These are legitimate sightings, not something your uncle claims to have seen while wandering around in the woods.

While no one has ever captured a live sasquatch, there are several organizations around the world set up to look for them. It's a very popular way to spend a weekend.

Bigfoot even has its own Web site: <http://www.teleport.com/~caveman/wbs.html>



SCIENTIFIC METHOD: Charles Wyckoff, 80, of Needham displays his dolphin camera, an instrument he will use to try and unravel the mystery of the Loch Ness Monster. He plans to travel to Scotland next spring with another New England scientist. Staff photo by Michael Fein

it's more than a myth."

Asked if his dalliances with Nessie could ruin his reputation, Wyckoff answered, "Plenty of people have said that to me and I ignore them. I've had plenty of chances of ruining my reputation."

Nessie popped her big head back into the news at 10 p.m. on June 13 when it was spotted by Kate Munro, joint owner of the Craigdarroch House, a hotel on the edge of the Highland lake.

She alerted her husband Dave and 14 guests who watched the object for five minutes.

They told reporters that it appeared to be something large just under the loch's surface, moving at high speed.

"There was no traffic on the loch at all, yet here was a wake as big as comes from a cruiser," said British tourist David Neeld.

"I cannot find a rational explanation for what I saw," added Neeld. "I do not think there is any other explanation than it was the Loch Ness Monster."

Another tourist, Karen Hemingway, said: "Whatever we saw was certainly quite strange. There were no boats around at all. I think I could well have seen the monster."

Both Wyckoff and Rines believe there is more than one Nessie. "There has to be for them to have survived all these years," Wyckoff said.

"There haven't been as many sightings in the past few years and they may be dying out," Wyckoff said.

Sightings of the monster, often described as having a long neck and large body like a brontosaurus, have been reported since the 15th century. Several expeditions have been undertaken in the loch but they have found nothing.

Wyckoff and Rines have been to the loch about a dozen times and Rines says — with a perfectly straight face — that they saw the monster from the deep in August 1971.

"We saw it for 10 minutes. It looked like the back of an elephant but we didn't see any neck or head," Rines said. "It moved out into the bay and then turned around and came back" before diving beneath the waves.

Rines, who founded Franklin Pierce Law School in New Hampshire, said in the early 1980s they got "a wonderful picture of the front part of the body and it has stood the test of time."

The pic didn't arouse too much furor but something called the National Adventurers Hall of Fame in Akron, Ohio, "gave us a big vote of confidence," Rines said.

"It looked like a plesiosaur," said Rines. That's an underwater dinosaur that went swimming for the last time some 200 million years ago.

"It was maybe 45 feet in length with a neck 4 or 5 feet long, according to eyewitness accounts," Rines said.

Space object moves like comet, looks like asteroid

Associated Press
LOS ANGELES — A strange object that moves like a comet but looks like an asteroid was spotted in space by a U.S. Air Force telescope using a special camera.

The object, with a diameter of eight to 16 kilometres, may be an unusual asteroid or a dead comet stripped of all volatile material, NASA officials said Wednesday.

"This is a misfit in the grand scheme of things," Eleanor Helin, principal investigator of the Near-Earth Asteroid Tracking program at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, said in a statement. Scientists said nothing like it has been seen before.

The object, dubbed 1996 PW, was spotted in data taken from an Aug. 9 observation atop Mount Haleakala on Maui, Hawaii. A special camera attached to the telescope automatically surveys the skies for objects — asteroids and comets — that could pose a hazard to Earth.

Asteroids are rocky bodies that mainly orbit in the "asteroid belt" between Jupiter and Mars. Comets generally have orbits that go beyond the planets and have volatile material streaming off.

No comet-like gas emissions were observed from 1996 PW, even during its closest approach to the sun, supporting the argument that the object is an asteroid.

However, its orbit is estimated to have a period of 5,000 years, an elongated, comet-like circuit that stretches into the void beyond the orbits of Neptune and Pluto.

The orbits of the majority of asteroids are on the order of three to five years, and in an extreme case, 50 years, said Steve Pravdo, project task manager for the asteroid tracking program.

SUN, Vancouver, B.C., Canada - Sept. 6, 1996 CR: G. Conway

Scientists hope to catch 'the face' again

By Paul Hoversten
USA TODAY

One of the strangest images the Viking mission ever sent to Earth 20 years ago was that of "the face," a mile-long human-like visage on the surface of Mars.

NASA says the face is natural rock rising 1,500 feet, eroded by wind and shadow. But there are plenty of others who insist the rock and nearby formations were carved by aliens as some kind of message to Earth.

Scientists for the Mars Global Surveyor mission say they'll try to photograph the region to resolve the controversy. From orbit 234 miles above Mars, Surveyor's cameras can see objects as small as 6½ feet across.

But the scientists can't guarantee the craft will have its high resolution camera on when it's over that area.

For one thing, there are 4,000 high-priority science targets to shoot elsewhere on Mars during the 687-day mission. And Surveyor must alternate its sharpness settings to achieve its goal of mapping the entire planet.

But if the spacecraft is in a position to see the face on a given day, "rest assured, I'm going to try to take a picture," says camera designer Mi-



From Viking mission: Photo shows 'the face.'

chael Malin, of Malin Space Science Systems in San Diego.

When he can, Malin plans to announce in advance on the Internet when the spacecraft will pass over the face, and he'll post the images.

Richard Hoagland, author of *The Monuments of Mars*, says NASA is "doing everything they can to leave themselves a legal loophole" to withhold the images if they show signs of alien handiwork.

Malin, who believes the face is natural, says he has no reason to hide anything.

"Either way I win," he says. "If it turns out to be artificial, I'm the guy who took the picture. If it turns out to be natural, then the images will go a long way to providing the confirming evidence on something I've done the research on."

USA TODAY, Arlington, VA - Nov. 5, 1996

The comet-like motion was spotted by scientist Gareth Williams while processing the data with a computer at the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory in Cambridge, Mass.

Scientists using a five-metre telescope at Palomar Mountain in San Diego County plan on making observations to determine the object's physical measurements and composition.

The Jet Propulsion Laboratory's special camera, installed on Maui in December 1995, uses time exposures to spot the movement of objects near Earth among the thousands of celestial bodies in every image.

But there's no reason to worry about 1996 PW hitting Earth, Pravdo said.

It's in a "dumb orbit," he said. "It's on its way out."