

UFO

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SUSAN ORR
Carolina Corner



In Roswell, eyes remain on the skies, hoping ...

Do you believe in UFOs? If so, you're in good company.

In a recent survey commissioned by LIFE magazine, 43 percent of subjects said they think UFOs are real. This survey of 1,564 adults is included with a cover story in this month's issue of the magazine.

Furthermore, the survey says, 54 percent of respondents believe there is intelligent life elsewhere in the universe.

And 49 percent said they think the U.S. government is withholding information about UFOs.

So what's behind these ideas? Are science fiction shows feeding Americans' belief in aliens and UFOs?

This isn't too far from the truth in the opinion of Glenn Dennis, a founder of the International UFO Museum and Research Center in Roswell, N.M. The museum opened in the early 1990s, and last year it saw 181,000 visitors from all over the country.

"From the day we've opened, we've had an increase (in visitors) every month," Dennis said. "It's way beyond our expectations."

Dennis believes alien-based shows like "The X-Files" and "Roswell," along with NASA's increasingly advanced space exploration efforts, are introducing young people to the mysteries of UFOs.

"What's happening is the younger generation's getting interested, not old guys like me," Dennis said.

Researchers from all over the world come to use the Roswell center's resources, which include about 3,300 books, 56,000 documents and hundreds of videos, Dennis said.

And some colleges have even contacted the center with interest in adding the study of UFOs, or ufology, to their curriculums, Dennis said.

"I think it's just beginning, really," Dennis said of the interest in UFOs.

Though Dennis said he's never seen a UFO, he did have some odd encounters one day in July 1947. That was the day of the famed Roswell Incident in which, believers say, an unidentified object crashed to Earth.

ISLANDER, Gulf Breeze, FL - April 19, 2000

UFO Sightings

Almost everything you're told is wrong



Photo Source: www.au.sprintweb.org

ROBED HOODED ALIENS

Darlene writes, "Please tell me if the suggested responses to contacts of this type are of the 'tongue-in-cheek' variety or just plain sarcasm. Unless I'm denser than I think I am, I cannot see why there would be meteorite powder, silicon or other residue left behind by visitation; nor can I believe such acts as contacting the police or contacting newspapers, etc., would produce anything but disbelief, and ridicule. Thanks to dcs

Editors' Note: Thanks for your note; Well sometimes a little

ridicule gives you a boost of courage. I go on radio several times a week, and I'm often ridiculed over my research. To my knowledge, not one abductee has ever contacted the police or their congressman about their abductions. When I talk to police they act very interested and claim they would enjoy such a case. We have numerous police and military officers joining MUFON and other organizations hoping to find answers. Both Derrel Simms and my investigators have found silver powder on abductees. We have noticed other anomalies indicating

evidence is being left behind. For any of us to be believed, we need evidence. We now have thousands of tape recordings of abductee's stories, but without real solid evidence they are considered interesting dreams. We have stayed up all night watching abductee homes, spent hours videotaping, interviewing, discussing, watching videos, but little real tangible evidence has been obtained. We are aware the abductees seem programmed to destroy the evidence.

Many investigators spend their time and efforts as unpaid volunteers trying to solve this mystery. If

I pick up the phone and make a long distance call, drive to an abductee's home, video tape, it costs both time and money. I encourage abductees to collect evidence or call experts in for help. We have indications some abductees may be harmed during an abduction. This can be checked with a blood test and a physician's examination. Most abductees will not get tested, despite the fact they have insurance coverage. There are indications black light can pick up a silver like powder left behind, and other tiny objects. If you give credence to Dr. David Jacobs from Temple University, the future of the human race may be at stake. I don't think it's funny, and I'm not poking fun. The craft in my opinion are real.

We may not be sure what their aircrews are doing here. However, they are spending in real terms billions of dollars, their time and health to be here. I wonder why? I don't think it is a game for either side. More definitive research is needed.

MARS POLAR LANDER CERTIFICATE

Aaron G. Crossley, Jr. writes, "My name is included in a data tape that was sent to Mars aboard NASA's Polar Lander. MSFC

passed around a sign up sheet for names to be put on the Mars Polar Lander. The requirement was you had to be eighteen or under to get your name on the tape so I signed up. Kind of makes you wonder, are Martians reading my name off a data tape as we speak?

Thanks to Aaron G. Crossley, Jr. "Raverkid@earthlink.net" You can see Aron's Certificate at: <http://www.filerfiles.com/>

AUSTRALIA FLYING TRIANGLE

ENDEAVOR HILLS -- VICTORIA -- Peter Ho reports he saw a large V shaped UFO on January 2, 2000. Peter went outside to feed his dogs at 10:50 p.m. and decided to relax and do a bit of stargazing. He noticed a large, solid black V shaped object blocking out the Big Dipper constellation. There were dim orange lights along the front of the object. He could hear no sounds. Peter estimates it was five times bigger than a Jumbo Jet. He sighted the object for four seconds before it disappeared from view. Thanks to Alice Mitchell AUFORN Keith Basterfield Network Australia,

DAILY RECORD, Roswell, NM - April 13, 2000

UFO museum adds veteran newsmen

KELLY LAUGHEAD
RECORD STAFF WRITER

A former CNN newsmen will be working to promote one of the hottest tourist attractions in Roswell.

Mark Wolf, a native of Carlsbad, has been hired by the International UFO Museum and Research Center to serve as their director of fundraising and promotion. Wolf is a 25-year veteran newsmen and was one of the six original anchors of CNN International.

Wolf also produced the first feature length documentary on the 1947 Roswell incident, titled "UFO Secret: The Roswell Crash." He said he was living in Carlsbad when the UFO incident occurred but he didn't actually hear about it until about 10 years ago.

Wolf said he began his documentary fully expecting to hear from people who were less than reliable. However, he was surprised when he interviewed several apparently sensible and down-to-earth individuals. Even more astonishing was that they seemed to be corroborating each others crash stories.

Wolf said he first met Glen Dennis, who would later co-found the UFO museum, during the filming of the documentary.

"He was reluctant to talk about it," Wolf said. "I had to seek him out."

As far as plans for the museum, one of the things Wolf hopes to do is upgrade some of their exhibits.

"I want to make the museum in Roswell the focal point, worldwide, for the research of the UFO phenomenon," Wolf said.

Wolf and his wife, Judy, are currently living in Georgia.

Dennis then worked as a mortician who did considerable contract work for the local military base, the Roswell Army Air Field. That day he got a call from a man who identified himself as a mortuary officer for the military.

The man asked how many hermetically sealed, infant-size coffins he had in stock. Dennis said he told the man he didn't have any, but could order some.

The man never pursued the matter, and Dennis said he doubted the caller's identity. "He said he was a mortuary officer, but he wasn't. He wasn't asking the right questions," he said.

Dennis also worked as an ambulance driver, and later that day he was called to a motorcycle wreck involving a soldier.

Dennis transported the soldier to the military hospital, and while he was on base Dennis saw two ambulances full of debris. He said he mentioned the debris to an army captain at the hospital and asked if there had been a wreck.

He was promptly escorted off-base, which he called unusual because he had a close working relationship with the base.

As for the LIFE survey, though many respondents said they believe, a much smaller number indicated personal experience with the otherworldly.

Only 6 percent said they had personally seen a UFO, and only 1 percent claim to have had an encounter with an extraterrestrial being.

As for Roswell, Dennis said, the town remains ever hopeful.

"People in Roswell, they're looking every night. They wish one would come," he said.

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SPACE

CALLS

MELVERN NOLL WHEELED HIS GMC SONOMA PICKUP INTO the parking lot of Fun Land of Highland. It was 4 a.m. on Jan. 5 and dead quiet in the small Illinois town some four miles south of I-70 in Madison County. Fun Land has been Mel Noll's enterprise these last 12 years, operating for all but the winter months, offering the folks of Highland wholesome diversion with its miniature-golf course, go-kart track and video games. Noll, 66, coming off an overnight run to Bloomington — he's also a part-time truck driver — had stopped at his business on the way home that frigid morning, worried that the pipes might freeze. He stepped out of his pickup and started toward the office/snack bar/arcade room when something caught his eye. "I happened to look toward the northeast," he says in a down-home country dialect, "and seen, like, a bright star and never thought too much about it, just 'That's awful low for being a star.'" He went into the office for a bit, checked the plumbing and returned to his truck: "I looked up and there it was, just like a big house floating in the air, with windows in it and a bright light on the inside, like there might've been a big room in there."

Although it is difficult to judge the size of an airborne object at a distance — there's no point of reference by which to gauge — Noll estimates that the craft was "about the size of a football field." The object was moving slowly, perhaps 50 mph, some 800-1,000 feet above him and off to the south, providing a view of its side and bottom as it passed along a stand of trees. "I just couldn't hardly believe my eyes what I was seeing up there," he recalls. "I mean, there was no noise, nothing! And I was looking for wings and couldn't see no wings on it. I thought, 'What in the heck is it?'" Noll stood on the parking-lot gravel contemplating this strange sight for five minutes or so: "I just kept watching it, and at one point it seemed like it slowed down and I had the feeling it spotted me down here, and it scared the heck out of me. Then it kept a-going toward the southwest." The last he saw of the craft, a mysterious and silent behemoth, it was sailing silently past the Oberbeck Grain Elevator.

When Noll walked in to the Highland police station and told them about the UFO, he felt compelled to add that he hadn't been partying. The dispatcher, Nancy Edwards, reassured him: "I believe you. I can see it in your face that you saw something." Edwards then got on the horn and notified a St. Clair County police dispatcher, who in turn began a round of contacts to patrol officers in various jurisdictions.

Nothing much was shaking in Lebanon at 4:11 a.m. when Officer Ed Barton received the call from St. Clair County dispatch. Barton, who at first scoffed at the dispatcher's request to look for a flying object in the shape of a "two-story house" with white lights and red blinking lights — "If I find it, what am I supposed to do with it?" — soon changed his tune when he spied a "very bright white light just east of

town." From the time he first saw it, "and that was a good five, six miles away," says Barton, "it looked like two large — very large — bright white lights so close together it looked like they were almost touching, with rays of light emitting from them." Barton switched on the cruiser's overhead lights, driving south on Route 4 in the general direction in which he'd seen the craft. "I was going rather fast," he says, "because I thought at first it was a plane going down."

Getting an occasional visual on the craft through the trees, Barton turned on Route 50, heading eastbound about three miles into the village of Summerfield. And there it was. "Just imagine an elongated, narrow triangle, but massive, so big it blotted out the stars that would've been above it," Barton says. "And on each of the corners of this thing were these round, bright white lights, so bright I had to squint to look." It had been stationary, but then it began to move. "That's when I noticed it was coming toward me, and so I pulled off the road, turned off my overhead lights, turned off my squad car."

All the witnesses saw the object at different distances and different angles. Barton had one of the closest views — by his reckoning, it was some 200 feet away and about 1,000-1,500 feet in the air. Barton's proximity helps discount the theory that the craft was an airplane. "I was a military brat 21 years — my father was active-duty Air Force — so I'm familiar with both foreign and domestic aircraft," he says. "It got to where I could usually identify an aircraft just by the engine noise, and when this thing went over, it made zero noise. I mean, that's what *really* caught my attention — no noise whatsoever."

At that moment, a mere half-mile from Officer Barton, a resident of Summerfield was also observing the aeronautical phenomenon. Johnny Doss, 43, had undergone heart surgery in July. He still wasn't back on the job as an environmental-waste hauler, and he wasn't sleeping well. His wife, Cindy, an EMS coordinator in Lebanon, has a police radio that the couple keeps tuned to police and fire chatter. Sometimes Johnny passed the hours listening in. That morning, he heard the report of the UFO and listened to Officer Barton's live account through the crackle and static that the object was "just east of Summerfield and it keeps changing colors." Doss thought he might just walk outside and see for himself. The thing — "way larger than an airliner, with several bright lights" — had already passed over his home. He says he stood out in his yard watching it for a few minutes, until the low-flying, westward-heading craft receded behind some trees at the edge of town. When he came back into the bedroom, Cindy woke up. "I asked him what he'd been doing," Cindy says, "and he answered, 'I was outside looking at the UFO.'"

Meanwhile, on Route 50 near a hummock called Haas' Hill, Officer Barton stood outside his patrol car, watching whatever it was move on. "It started going away from me again rather slowly, almost like a hovering or a floating, and

then when it turned away from me, it didn't bank like an aircraft or a helicopter. It was almost like a car going around a curve, just a flat turn. Then it seemed to accelerate fairly rapidly, and I reached back in the car, picked up the radio, told St. Clair County what I was seeing, and the next thing I know it looked to be over Shiloh, about seven miles away. I told CenCom (the St. Clair County police dispatcher), 'If you have one of those Shiloh officers look up now, they should see it.'"

"Yeah, I think I'm seeing it," Officer Dave Martin of the Shiloh Police Department told the CenCom dispatcher over in Belleville. "It's big; it looks like an arrowhead; it's got three bright lights shining downward and small flashing red lights between the bright lights. No markings, just plain. I couldn't tell you what it is," he offered, "'cause I don't know."

When Millstadt police officer Craig Stevens, working the graveyard shift, heard the unfolding accounts on the radio that morning, he thought he might as well go see what was up. Whatever it was seemed to be on a flight path toward Millstadt. "I went over to the east end of town and sat in a car-wash parking lot and didn't see anything," he remembers, "so I went over on the north end of town to Liederkrantz Park, where there's a big open field and it was a lot darker. I was sitting there seeing blinking lights from airplanes, and I thought that's all they saw. I turn around, and I was, like, *wow!* This thing was only 500-1,000 feet off the ground, and it was huge."

Stevens says the craft was shaped like a "fat arrowhead, about 18-20 feet thick, with three white lights in back and a red light at the bottom." Soundless, it passed almost directly overhead. "It was a rush," he says. "First thing that popped in my head: 'Get the Polaroid.' I ran to the trunk, grabbed the Polaroid, snapped the picture." Unfortunately, Polaroids aren't made for shooting distant objects at night, plus the cold temperatures had retarded the development chemistry. Nothing truly discernible was on the developed print, just some faint lights.

By the time the thing appeared in Dupo, a small town along Route 3 some eight miles south of the Poplar Street Bridge, it had been followed sporadically for nearly an hour over a 60-mile-long northeast-to-southwest flight path that, drawn on a map, looks like a fishhook. Dupo police officer Matt Jany saw the UFO within minutes after being alerted by the Millstadt PD, though only from afar, through binoculars. Still, his description corroborates the others'. The object "wasn't like a normal aircraft," Jany remarks. "It was real wide and real long and taller in the middle." It had "lots of lights on it, white lights at the extremes, red lights in the middle. There may have been some blue in there, too." When he first viewed it, the craft was "heading north, and it wasn't going very fast." After only a few minutes, however, it changed course and headed east, back toward Millstadt or Cahokia.

Some two hours after Jany watched the object disappear from sight, a 50-year-old English teacher spotted the UFO while driving to work. Where the object had been in the interim and why no one else saw it during that time is another mystery. Steven Wonnacott's workday commute is a routine one: Each morning he leaves home at 6:45 and follows Lake Drive west through Belleville to East St. Louis High School. The thoroughfare eventually crosses over I-255, he explains, "and on the west side of that overpass there's Frank Holton State Park and quite a vista of the southwest sky. That's where I first noticed it. At first I thought it was airplane from Parks (Airport, in Cahokia), but it looked far too big for an airplane and it had no navigational lights." Dawn was breaking, and Wonnacott, "arrested" by the unusual sight, slowed down as much as he could to watch it longer. "As the sun came up, I could see it

was an arrowhead shape," he says, "and it had a couple of really bright lights with many other smaller lights around it. It looked to me to be motionless, but it was hard to judge, since I was moving."

The incident impressed him enough that he told his wife and children about it over dinner that evening. "My daughter said matter-of-factly, 'Oh, that was a UFO, a space-ship.'"

IF MEL NOLL HADN'T HASTENED TO the local police station to report what he had seen, his experience might have been just another unsubstantiated UFO sighting, another case for the crackpot file. As it happened, Noll's sense of citizenship set in motion a series of sightings, remarkable even in the voluminous and storied annals of UFO sightings. Where it came from and where it went nobody knows, but the Metro East residents and police officers who saw the

enormous, wingless deltoid craft as it traveled over Madison and St. Clair counties that morning insist that it was neither an apparition nor a manifestation of peculiar atmospheric conditions. It was not the result of a mass hallucination, as some purported experts would later suggest. It was not a hoax concocted by these officers. What they saw was something real, something awesome and, as yet, something unexplainable.

For all the media attention the story would eventually bring, the initial accounts were decidedly subdued — at least in the big-city newspaper. KTVI (Channel 2) first broke the story on a Jan. 7 newscast, but it wasn't until Jan. 9 that a rather sketchy story appeared in the Sunday "Metro" section of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. That first article mentioned by name only Millstadt police officer Craig Stevens, who told *P-D* reporter Valerie Schremp that "it's been driving me nuts since I've seen it. I haven't been able to

sleep for the last day and a half." The *Lebanon Advertiser*, on the other hand, gave the story front-page, over-the-fold prominence in its Jan. 12 edition: "Huge UFO Is Reported to Have Flown Over Lebanon," blared the headline. The story's final paragraph noted that "the Federal Aviation Administration has suggested that the object may have been an advertising blimp."

The second article in the *Post* appeared on Jan. 12, and this time it made the front page. A week later, the sightings had drawn national media attention, chiefly because of the credibility of the witnesses. It's not often that four police officers come forth to report seeing the same UFO. Art Bell, host of a nationally syndicated late-night radio talk show, lost no time in snagging Stevens and Barton for interviews the day after the incident. As word spread, the calls

(continued on page 3)

became so numerous that Millstadt Police Chief Ed Wilkerson put out a gag order on media interviews, snubbing such outlets as ABC News and *Extra*, a tabloid TV-news show. Interferes with policing, the chief said.

Moreover, the reports had prompted intense interest among professional UFO investigators, the real-life counterparts of *The X-Files*' Scully and Mulder. Peter Davenport, director of the National UFO Reporting Center in Seattle, got some quality time with the witnesses — four cops and three civilians — as did Forest Crawford, assistant director of Illinois Mutual UFO Network. The most exhaustive effort was undertaken by John Velier, director of the Las Vegas-based National Institute for Discovery Science (NIDS). Millstadt

was the first department to go public with a report on the sighting, and Officer Stevens took the initiative and contacted NIDS, the result of a flier sent to police departments nationwide requesting reports on this very sort of thing. Working from a motel in Collinsville, Velier and a team of investigators spent several days interviewing witnesses and officials at Boeing and Scott Air Force Base. (Those interviews may be perused at www.accessnv.com/nids.) A retired FBI agent, Velier assured anyone who asked that he had no hidden agenda. "I'm not here to prove or disprove the existence of extraterrestrial life," he remarks. "I'm here to gather facts through a scientific approach."

Meanwhile, some of the witnesses were trying to make sense of what they had seen through any approach available. Officer Martin met with Officer Barton at the MotoMart in O'Fallon after their shifts were done that morning — to compare notes and check reality. "We basically saw the same thing," says Martin. Two hours after the fact, the sightings were but tidbits in the ravenous vortex of the tabloid-news industry, but in their small-town-cop way, the officers suspected that a gale of publicity was even then en route to beat down their doors. "We were half-joking around," recalls Barton, "like, 'Why couldn't somebody else have seen it? A rookie — let them take the heat.'"

Two months later, the heat is still on. Officer Barton and other witnesses who were known to the media (seven Metro East residents were interviewed by "official" — or at least experienced — UFO investigators on the promise of confidentiality, and five of them have talked to the media), were still being hounded for interviews. Noll, for one, seems to enjoy the notoriety. "I'm meeting more people," he notes blithely. "A lot of radio stations have been calling. Newspapers too — from Chicago, Peoria, Springfield and as far away as Seattle. It don't bother me to talk about it. You know, I'm glad I got to see it — a once-in-a-lifetime thing."

Even as late as the weekend of March 11, personnel from a TV station in California had come to the Midwest to interview as many of the witnesses as they could muster. "The phone's been ringing off the hook ever since," says Ed Barton. "And I've had people tell me I was lucky to see it and so on, and I think, 'Ah, if they only knew.'"

The publicity has made some of the witnesses celebrities in their own towns. Kathy Floyd, Noll's girlfriend, says they can't even go out for a cup of coffee anymore without townsfolk approaching, rather shyly at first, then asking questions, generally the same ones: What was it like? What does he think it was? Was he scared? "Every place you go, they want to talk about it," says Floyd. "We were in Hardee's for an hour-and-a-half the other night, just answering questions. Mel's not tired of it. His story's always the same, and that's one of the reasons people believe him."

The clerk at the Gas N' Grab on Millstadt's main street says the March 7 edition of the *National Examiner*, the one with the story about the Metro East UFO featuring Millstadt's own Officer Craig Stevens —



Melvorn Noll (above) reported the UFO first: "I looked up and there it was, just like a big house floating in the air, with windows in it and a bright light on the inside, like there might've been a big room in there." Millstadt Police Officer Craig Stevens tried documenting what he saw: "It was a rush. First thing that popped in my head: 'Get the Polaroid.' I ran to the trunk, grabbed the Polaroid, snapped the picture."

big picture of him in uniform and all — was pretty much snapped up the day it came out. Everybody in this town of 2,700 knows about the UFO; it's hard to not know when you have TV vans with unfamiliar call letters on the sides running around town, not to mention reporters and photographers pestering the citizenry. Some, such as the stocky counterman at Hardy Feed & Grain, refuse to offer comment on the UFO affair — too controversial — whereas others, such as librarian Sue Huckle, warm to the topic. "This is a German community," she explains. "We take things with a grain of salt — anybody who said anything about it did so with a smile on their face. I doubt that anybody here thinks there's anything to worry about."

And there will always be someone to try to make a buck on anything. Over at Mertz Ford, also on the main street, a few little-green-men blowups are still sitting in the windows of the dealership. They first appeared about a week after the sightings. "That was my wife's idea," says Don Mertz. "We got a lot of action out of these guys — must've given away 20 or 30 of them. Buy a car, get an alien. The great thing is," he grins, "they only cost a couple bucks apiece."

Even the authorities have been swept up in the wave of interest in the sightings. When Lt. Frank Szcwzyk of the Millstadt PD is asked to comment on the publicity, which seems to be building rather than dying down, he blurts, "I'm really pissed at Stevens," emphasizing "pissed." It initially seems that he's angry with his subordinate for dragging the department and the town through the muck of notoriety — Millstadt was, after all, the department that spurned advances by the East Coast media — but appearances deceive: "I'm really pissed at Stevens," he repeats, deadpan, "for not calling me that morning and waking me up."

Whereas the tabloids and radio talk shows played up the story, emphasizing the more lurid elements — the monstrous craft hovering motionless over the puny awestruck earthlings below as if scrutinizing them — John Velier lived up to his promise to employ sound judgment and empirical data in trying to arrive at a plausible explanation. By the end of January, two theories had been advanced on the NIDS Web site: the B-2 and Aereon hypotheses.

The first theory assumes the presence of a B-2 Spirit bomber that night. The general outline of the B-2 fits the arrowhead or triangular shape reported by most witnesses, and the wingspan of the aircraft is 172 feet, more than half "the size of a football field." The speed of a B-2 varies greatly, and with its flaps down it can fly quite slowly. Further, the B-2 has three lights that are retracted when the plane is put into stealth mode. The bug in this theory is that Whiteman Air Force Base, 200 miles west of St. Louis, is the only B-2 base in the country. A check of

the flight records at the 509th Wing at Whiteman AFB by NIDS researchers indicates that no B-2s were flying at the time of the sightings.

The Aereon hypothesis was spawned when Craig Stevens verified that the craft he observed bore a resemblance to a picture found on the Internet. The picture was an artist's impression of a "stealth blimp" published in the September 1999 issue of *Popular Mechanics*. (In fact, Stevens made a sketch of what he saw that very day, a sketch that, coincidentally, looks like the stealth blimp, though at the time he had no idea such a thing existed.) The stealth blimp — actually a revolutionary hybrid of a conventional airplane and a lighter-than-air dirigible (and the subject of John McPhee's 1973 book *The Deltoid Pumpkin Seed*) — was tested, flown and patented by the Aereon Corp. of Princeton, N.J., in 1970. That prototype was but 26 feet long, though at the time the company envisioned 800-foot Aereons, floating freighters, for use in both the military and civilian sectors.

The Aereon craft could fit the collective descriptions of the UFO: its configuration, low altitude, slow speed (though Barton's testimony that it accelerated fairly rapidly belies this) and lack of noise. The only problem is that an Aereon spokesperson, questioned by NIDS, "stated emphatically and repeatedly that no craft of such size was ever built, at least at Aereon." In the mid-1990s, says the report, Aereon obtained seed money from the military to develop a stealth-blimp-type craft that would contain three 50-foot radar antennae. Funding fell through, but the patent, with drawings, is still out there. Informed of the characteristics of the Illinois UFO, the Aereon spokesperson said, "If a large Aereon-type craft is flying, then it represents a stolen patent by persons unknown."

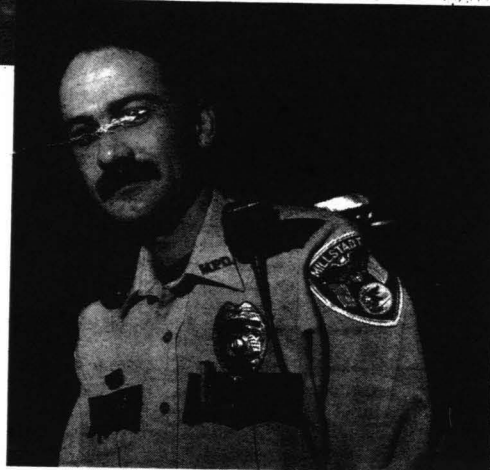
Although the craft was near Scott Air Force Base — practically invaded the airspace there — officials deny any knowledge of a UFO near the base. Lt. Col. Allan Dahncke, 375th Airlift Wing public-affairs director, said in the *Base News*, "The (air-control) tower was closed at the time of the sighting and no aircraft were in the air." The base no longer has radar facilities on the field, adds Dahncke, but relies on the FAA radar approach system at Lambert Airport. Lambert reported that the object did not show up on its radar. That the object did not present itself on a radar screen doesn't mean squat to Kathy Floyd and Mel Noll. "Heck, they're probably smarter than we are and they used radar evasion," Floyd says. Who "they" are, she is not saying.

ALL THE PUBLICITY CERTAINLY DID NOT help the witnesses put the incident to rest — that is, those who want it put to rest. Of the seven witnesses, Noll and Barton seem the most receptive to discussing what hap-

pened, but all of them will talk, likely because it was such an amazing episode, way out of the realm of the probable. UFOlogists say it is not unusual for folks who witness something that they can't explain, something ostensibly otherworldly, to have their imaginations ignited in the days following the incident. None of the witnesses has been obsessively building Devil's Tower replicas out of mashed potatoes, as Richard Dreyfuss did in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, but all say the experience has changed their lives in some way — from perceiving a divine causality to feeling physical aftereffects to simply pondering the meaning of it all.

Dave Martin, 28, is possibly the least impressed by the mysterious incident. "It was different," he concedes. "But when it happened, you know, it didn't really hit on me because I'm not into that stuff — the military aircraft, the 'other world' or the stars. I'm more of a sports jock. It's not my thing to start reading into it and looking for some deeper meaning. They asked me, 'Did I follow it?' No, I didn't. I just went on with my business. I didn't think nothing big of it at the time."

Over time, however, such an experience can cause even a sports jock to start mulling



things: "Like I told these interviewers, I know it was no plane, no helicopter, nothing like that. I doubt that it was a military aircraft, though I'm not that familiar with all the military aircraft out there. Until someone tells us for sure, 100 percent, what it was, I'll always wonder about it. Meantime, I've caught myself several times just looking up at the sky."

For Craig Stevens, 33, a three-year veteran of the Millstadt PD, the experience has left a yearning for the truth and whatever realizations it may bring. "Since then, I've searched the Internet and kind of started my own personal investigation," he says. "I'm trying to find out what it was, and I'm 98 percent sure it was either a military or experimental craft. You know, the stealth fighter was out, what, six to eight, maybe 10 years before the public actually knew about it, and I'm sure that was called 'sightings' prior to us knowing about it."

"Still," continues Stevens, "the questions run through your mind. It makes you take a look at yourself and your beliefs. I've just tried to make some sense of it, because I believe in God and I haven't been able to nail down how the Bible and all this relates. I still think this was something manmade, but there is that vague possibility it was something else, and if so, I don't know how God would feel about it."

Ed Barton also has a difficult time putting the experience behind him. "I'll tell you," he says, "I'm still wondering what the hell it was I actually saw. If it was one of our government's new projects, just have them say, 'It was one of ours, but we can't tell you any more about it.' OK, fine — case closed, as far as I'm concerned. But what leads me to believe it probably wasn't some military R&D craft, No. 1, why would they test something like that over a populated area, where if the thing went down you've got a bunch of civilians to worry about and trying to contain the site would be sheer hell on the military? And two, why would they light it up like that? Why draw attention to it?"

Among the witnesses, Barton was the one who had at least already entertained the notion of UFOs' appearing at odd times and places on the planet. This open-

(continued on page 4)

(continued from page 3 - RIVERFRONT TIMES, St. Louis, MO - April 5, 2000)

mindedness on the subject has no doubt been fueled by listening, as he does, to the late-night ruminations of Art Bell on KTRS (550 AM), where no conspiracy theory, no government coverup, no paranormal experience is too far-fetched. Bell, coincidentally, claims that he and his wife saw something quite similar to the Metro East UFO some two years ago in the American Southwest, where he lives. If this revelation brings out the sniggering skeptics, Barton is not among them.

"Personally, I think it's kind of arrogant for us to sit here and think we're the only life forms in the entire universe," he says. "That doesn't mean I believe that whoever, whatever it is was coming from light-years away just to see us for whatever reason."

Both Stevens and Barton have experienced bouts of insomnia since the sighting. "When the incident first happened," says Barton, "I didn't sleep for two-and-a-half days. I finally calmed down to where I was able to get some sleep." Then came the headaches — "real strong, above and behind the left eye" — which began a few days after seeing the UFO. "I don't want to say it's directly related to this (Jan. 5 incident)," Barton cautions, though he has contacted Peter Davenport at the National UFO Reporting Center in Seattle. "I told him what was going on, and he said that headaches were a fairly common occurrence (after seeing a UFO). He said they should go away pretty soon, which I'm hoping, because it's not a case where they slowly come on and slowly fade. It's like one minute — boom! — they're there, and the next minute they're gone."

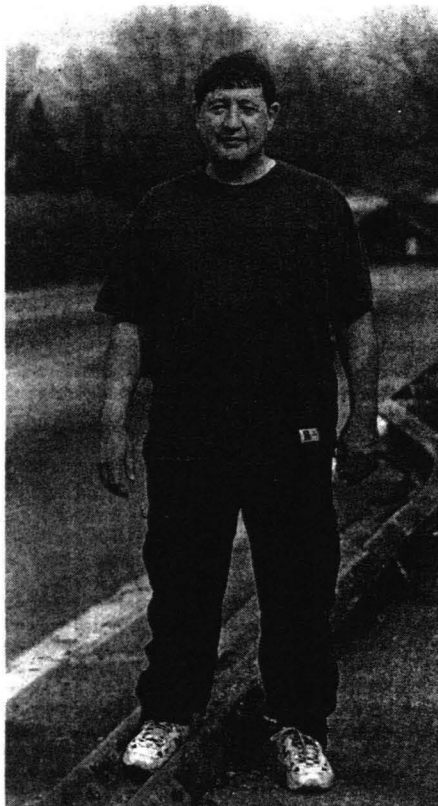
Though his daughter had assured him he had seen an actual UFO, Steven Wonnacott kept wondering about it, and when he saw the article in the *Post* the next Sunday, he was largely delivered from his state of bewilderment. "It was such an unusual thing I had seen," he says, "and I wasn't sure there was some rational explanation for it." Wonnacott still doesn't have a rational explanation for it, but, like Officer Stevens, he's become more interested in the subject of UFOs — searching the Internet, reading books. "Just curious," he says, "no more than that. I think about it from time to time, especially when I drive over that overpass."

Despite differing attitudes toward the experience, the witnesses are united in their reaction to the dismissive comments in the Jan. 25 *Post-Dispatch* by four UFO experts, including Phillip Klass, founder of the Committee of Scientific Investigations of Claims of the Paranormal and the purported "dean of UFO research." Among the article's speculations: that the sightings represent a "social-psychological phenomenon" in which people believe they see a UFO because they are looking for one; that movies and TV shows such as *The X-Files* have stepped up belief in extraterrestrial life, causing more people to see more UFOs; that smart, honest, good people can still be seriously wrong about seeing a UFO. The most contentious comment was by Klass, who flatly stated the object described was "probably a hoax" and called the entire remarkable incident "bogus."

"When I read that, I wanted to call Mr. Klass and give him a piece of my mind," says Barton. "Well, I'm sure that someone who's never seen what we've seen can talk the skeptic," Stevens adds. "It (the article) kind of aggravates me because I feel that my credibility and integrity as a police officer is pretty high held. I mean, I state facts all the time, and that's what I saw, and that's what I reported."

"I didn't read about it," offers Martin, "but the other guys told me about it and, you know, it kind of pissed us off. At first we thought we ought to call them up and give them a piece of our mind, but then we thought, 'Well, that's just going to carry it on, so maybe we shouldn't.' So we just let it at that and said, 'Whatever they want to print, that's fine.'"

Mel Noll puts it succinctly, saying, "Nobody seems to know what it was, but I know what I seen, and that's all the further I can go." Seven witnesses in seven separate localities — that number holds reassurance for Noll. "That night they told me somebody else seen it, I was relieved. I could sleep better then. I didn't know what I'd seen, and I wanted somebody else to see it, too." Maybe others did see it but are keeping mum — well, not talking to the press, perhaps, but willing to share with a fellow witness. "I've had five to six letters from people, saying they saw it the same morning," says Stevens. Is it possible other cops saw it that morning? Barton thinks so. "There's two



Steven Wonnacott says his co-workers "make spaceship noises and joke about my credibility."

officers in Mascoutah that saw it," he says, "apparently watched it go from I-64 to Summerfield. One is Sgt. (Cathy) Anstedt and the other is Officer (Bob) Ribbing, but for whatever reason they've decided not to come forth." He adds with a chuckle: "I've been dimmin' 'em out anyways."

When contacted, however, Ribbing says, "It was just an aircraft," sounding as though he has explained all this before. "We saw an airplane with its landing lights on up near Scott Air Force Base in the early-morning hours. But as soon as it turned off its lights, I could see it was an aircraft." Although Barton is skeptical of this explanation, he understands the officers' reluctance to divulge the truth about what they saw, if indeed they saw it. Barton speculates, "They don't feel like talking about it because of the ridicule I and the other officers were getting."

For Stevens, that ridicule comes in the form of sophomoric pranks. "For the most part, the officers here have been real supportive," he says. "You know, there's one who kind of bugs me about it, in a joking manner. He believes I saw something, but still he leaves a little gummy green alien in a tube on my desk, calls it Craig's test-tube baby." With Martin, it's shades of *Mork and Mandy*. "Folks at the gym, the supermarket, they don't make remarks," says Martin. "The ones that give me shit are the guys I work with. They just joke around, sarcastic, do that 'nanoo-nanoo' thing with the fingers. Little stuff like that, nothing big." Wonnacott, too, admits to being the brunt of some mild ribbing. "They make spaceship noises and joke about my credibility," he says of his colleagues at East St. Louis Senior High School.

Of course, it may be that those who dispense gibes are in reality envious. Harrison L. Church, publisher of the *Lebanon Advertiser*, sitting in a room that looks more like a museum than a newspaper office, says he has no doubt that Barton and the others saw something quite remarkable: "Whether it's of this earth or another planet, who knows? Most people have formulated the impression there are things out there we don't know about, don't understand, probably from other worlds, but are no threat to us. I think we've figured out if they wanted to sack and burn the place, they would've done it by now."

Mel Noll sits in the arcade room of Fun Land, a bunch of newspapers with stories about the UFO spread out on a table. "Tell you what," he says, "a lot more people around here are looking up at the sky." Ditto for Noll, the inadvertent instigator of this entire affair. "Well, maybe not inadvertently, for Noll believes that some higher power guided him to be in



Lebanon Police Officer Ed Barton: "Personally, I think it's kind of arrogant for us to sit here and think we're the only life forms in the entire universe. That doesn't mean I believe that whoever, whatever it is was coming from light-years away just to see us for whatever reason."

that place at that time; he believes that his part in the event was more than caprice. "Oh, I think I had help letting me know I should look," he says. "Otherwise, most times if I stop in here on cold mornings, I don't bother to look at the sky. But, you know, it just seems that everything was timed just right so I could get here at the time that light was coming. And then I went in and came back to the

truck and something made me look again. You don't just normally look up in the air, and I was just amazed what I saw coming. I just couldn't hardly believe myself. My goodness, what is that? Just like a floating home up there, something big with lights in it. And close, so close somebody could have waved at me out the window and I would've seen it."

NEWS & OBSERVER, Raleigh, NC - April 7, 2000 CR: G. Fawcett

'PRETTY DEAD': UFOs a no-show, so N.C. investigator says he has to go

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DURHAM

One of North Carolina's volunteer UFO investigators is moving to Florida because he has had little to investigate, and he finds Florida's climate appealing.

"It's been pretty dead," said Berne Bennett of Durham, an official field investigator for the Mutual UFO Network for the past four years. "It's really been disappointing not having anything to investigate."

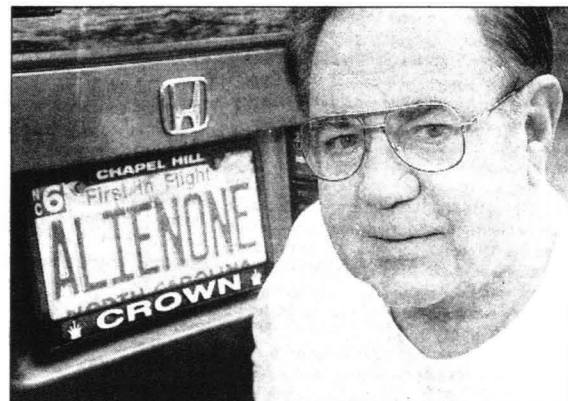
He had no cases to investigate until a few months ago. That is a sore point with Bennett, 67, who had to take a thorough MUFON investigation course. He aspires to write a book about his investigations.

MUFON, which says it has 4,000 members in 50 states and about 75 countries, describes its role as a sober, fact-based explorer of UFO phenomena.

Little alien activity has been reported in the eastern half of the state, but reports are more frequent in the west, and North Carolina is among the top states for MUFON's membership, with about 80 members. Most are spread along the Interstate 85 corridor from Charlotte to Durham, said George Lund, MUFON's state director, who is based in Charlotte.

Members include people from all walks of life: doctors, police officers, electricians, engineers and airline pilots.

Most appear interested only in going to the regular meetings so they can discuss UFOs in an environment where people will not make fun of them. But Bennett is more interested in investigating reports.



AP PHOTO

Berne Bennett, a UFO investigator, says he is moving to Florida.

On March 31, he retired after 28 years as a chemist with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency at Research Triangle Park. Now he is moving to the Gulf Coast of Florida, where he can include tropical plants in his gardening hobby.

Only in the past eight months has he been sent on an investigation. The first, in Durham County near Bahama, appeared to have been a meteorite, he said. The second report was different.

Three preteen girls at a Feb. 19 sleepover near Chapel Hill reported seeing a large triangular object descending and, later, three small humanoids — one each in white, blue and green — outside the home. The white one, about 2½ feet tall, stood at the patio door and made facial gestures, perhaps a smile, and some bowing movements directed at them, the girls said.

MUFON's professional ethics

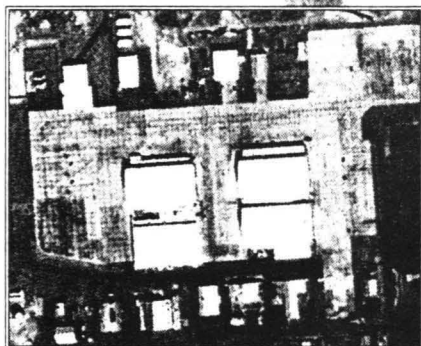
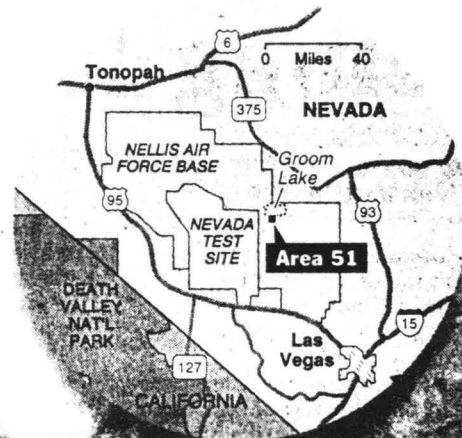
dictate that Bennett not disclose the witnesses' names so that they will not face ridicule. But Bennett said he believes them. He visited the site twice and took photos. It was unclear, Bennett said, what the being was trying to communicate.

"What made it credible to me, the girl and her two friends seemed sincere and truthful," said Bennett, who has never seen a UFO. "I couldn't think why they would make up such an outrageous tale, or how they would even have knowledge of things like that at their age."

His luck as an investigator might be about to change. In a telephone interview from MUFON's international headquarters in Texas, the group's founder and director, Walter Andrus, said that since 1987, Florida's Gulf Coast has experienced an extraordinary level of UFO activity.

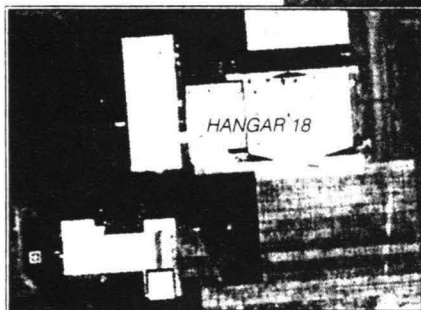
Alas, No Aliens

The secret base in Nevada known as Area 51 has one of the world's longest runways — nearly five miles. Experts say it has been used for testing the U-2 spy plane, the F-117 stealth fighter, the B-2 bomber and captured foreign jets. But it is most famous, perhaps, as an object of curiosity for U.F.O. enthusiasts. Many of them say that years ago, Area 51 acquired dead aliens and wreckage from a crashed flying saucer. Playing on that theme, the 1996 movie "Independence Day" helped turn Area 51 into a household name. This 1-meter-resolution image is being published here, as well as on the Web site of Public Eye, at www.fas.org, for the first time today. The group has also analyzed what the photos reveal.



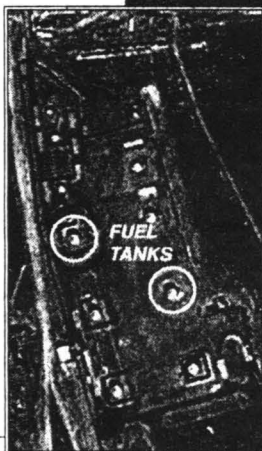
NORTHERN HANGARS
The oldest part of the base; It is believed that captured foreign aircraft may be kept here.

AREA FOR TOXIC WASTE DISPOSAL
A cleaned up area once used for toxic waste



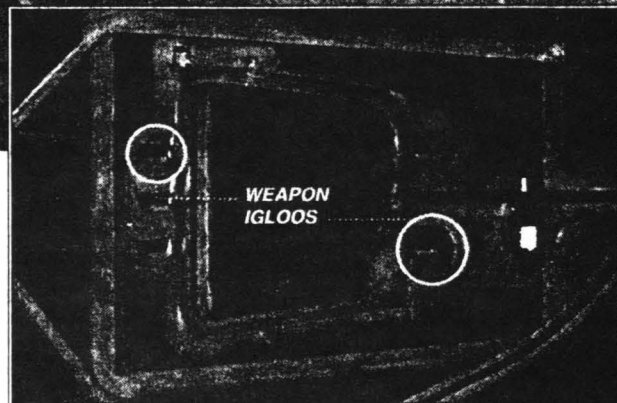
HANGAR 18
Approximately eight stories high; U.F.O. enthusiasts believe this is the home of an alien spaceship.

FUEL STORAGE
This area holds giant fuel-storage tanks for planes.



WEAPON IGLOOS
Earth-covered structures, about two stories high, used for storage of weapons.

Source: Federation of American Scientists



GROOM LAKE
Dry lake bed

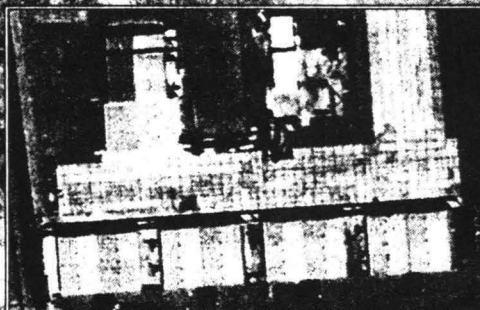
OLD RUNWAY
(4.8 MILES LONG)

NEW RUNWAY
(2.1 MILES LONG)

BUILDING 201
The main operations building, the heart of the base.



HANGARS 9-17
Used for the A-12, a high-altitude spy plane.



Arkansas' own X-files number close to 100

While the Southwest United States seems to be a popular location for UFO sightings, Arkansas has had its share of encounters of the unidentifiable-flying-object kind.

On the National UFO Reporting Center Web site, 86 sightings have been reported in Arkansas in recent years.

■ March 9: A Mountain Home couple witnessed a series of "fireballs" soaring through the sky around 10 p.m., followed by several aircraft. Someone in Eureka Springs reported seeing a fireball about the same time. On the same evening, mysterious fires were reported between Scott and England. A falling "star" was seen before the fires were reported.

■ Feb. 14: A Hermitage resident viewed through a telescope a sphere-shaped object crossing the sky, then splitting in two before disappearing.

■ Nov. 11: A flying disc was reported over Dover.

■ June 1998: Someone in Fort Smith reported seeing a flying disc overhead that was shining a bright light. This person is unable to account for 15 minutes of time and believes he was abducted and experimented on.

www.ufocenter.com

Eureka Springs is set to be invaded with UFO devotees ready to discuss close encounters for the 12th time.

BY KELLY BRANT
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

EUREKA SPRINGS — You're not alone. Comforting words, right? But what about when those three words are applied to life beyond earth?

It's a big universe out there and it makes a person feel kind of lonely to think earth is the only planet inhabited by life. But does the thought of little gray men with egg-shaped heads and just three fingers really make you feel any better?

How much does our government really know? Does the government have information that could prove we are not alone? Is the truth already there?

These questions and many others will be the topics of the 12th annual Ozark UFO Convention today through Sunday at the Inn of the Ozarks in Eureka Springs.

The conference, organized by Lucius Farish, will focus on all things UFO-related with presentations by nine experts in "ufology" and one person who says she has been abducted by aliens.

"We get together to present new information, old information that hasn't been discussed in a while, and put some things out there for people to think about," he says.

Farish has organized the conference since 1989, when he took over for Bill Pitts, who had the idea of doing a small conference a year before but didn't want to do it annually, Farish says.

"Some of us here in central Arkansas said, 'Let's try this,' and here we are, 12 years later, still doing it," he says.

Farish says he's always been fascinated with UFOs.

"I don't really have a specific event that set it off," he says. "I've never seen anything spectacular like little guys leaning out the windows. But I've seen things I couldn't explain in conventional terms."

With UFO activity in the state, it might be helpful to know what to do if you encounter something not of this world. From Michael Curta's *10 Things You Should Do If You Encounter a UFO*, here are some basic things to keep in mind.

1. Remain calm.
2. Be objective. Not every unidentified object is a UFO.
3. Try to visually record the event by video, pictures or drawings.
4. Record your observations on a tape recorder or on paper as it happens.
5. Ask other witnesses to record their observations.
6. If the UFO left some trace of its presence behind, do not disturb the area.
7. How far away was the object? What size object would it take to cover it up from arm's length?

UFO-related trivia knows no bounds

From T-shirts to pencil erasers, aliens seem to be everywhere these days. But there's more to UFOs than just little green men.

■ **Foo fighters.** And you thought they were just a really cool band. Foo fighters were shiny metallic-looking spheres seen floating in the skies during World War II. Both sides believed that they were rockets being developed by the other side.

■ **Men in black.** OK, so this one, thanks to Will Smith, is a little more well known. In the late 1950s, people reported strange men arriving at the homes of UFO witnesses, often before the sightings had been reported. These men wore black suits and black shoes and usually drove black cars. They spoke in monotones or sing-songs and walked with strange limps. MIB, as they are called, would caution witnesses against reporting what they saw.

■ **Dark Side Hypothesis.** No, this isn't Darth Vader's dark side. The Dark Side Hypothesis refers to a region of Nevada known as Area 51 (where the government is said to test new planes and conduct research). The hypothesis states that this area is no longer under U.S. control because aliens have taken over. The hypothesis also claims that the government made a deal with the aliens: In exchange for their technology, the aliens can abduct as many humans as they want.

Information comes from the UFO Glossary at:

ourworld.compuserve.com:80/homepages/AndyPage/WWWUFO.htm
— Kelly Brant

Farish says that though the majority of people who attend the conference have either studied UFOs or had some kind of UFO experience, many are simply curious.

"I think it would be hard to find someone who hasn't seen something unusual," he says, adding that most people don't report what they see out of fear of ridicule or people thinking they are crazy.

"We have come a good ways in the last 20 or 30 years in terms of public acceptance," he says. "But people are still very reluctant to report it."

The convention could be seen as a safe place for people to share their experiences and their knowledge. Topics will cover everything from alien abductions to the history of UFO photography to the idea that humans were created by extraterrestrials.

The sessions will feature presentations by Joe Lewels, Dr. Roberta Fennig, Melanie Young, Norman Oliver, Forest Crawford, Wendelle

Event

Ozark UFO Convention

Today-Sunday, Inn of the Ozarks Convention Center, U.S. 62, Eureka Springs.

Registration: \$40.

(501) 354-2558

8. How fast was it moving?
9. If you encounter a being, be prepared to take evasive action.
10. Report the event to a UFO research organization.

From:

www.members.tripod.com/~arkmufon/Investigative_Tips.htm

— Kelly Brant

Stevens, Jim Marrs, Antonio Huneus, Linda Moulton Howe and John Foster.

TODAY

Lewels is the author of *The God Hypothesis: Extraterrestrial Life and Its Implications for Science and Religion*. His presentation will focus on UFOs in Mexico.

"There have been a large number of reports in the last nine to 10 years," Farish says. "He's been down there investigating some of those cases."

Fennig is a psychiatrist, who will discuss alien abductions from the psychological point of view with Melanie Young, who says she was abducted. Oliver will discuss the "12th planet theory" and the idea that mankind was created by extraterrestrials, and Crawford will present an introspective on reasons to study UFO phenomena.

SATURDAY

The presentations will continue Saturday with Stevens presenting a roundup of UFO photography and the history of UFO photographs.

Marrs will discuss UFOs, extraterrestrials and remote viewing (clairvoyance). Farish says the government has used remote viewing extensively in its research projects for many years.

"Jim will go into the experiences remote viewers claim to have had concerning UFOs and ETs in those projects," Farish says.

Huneus will talk about foreign UFO sightings, especially activity in China and Chile, and Howe will present "Crop Circles Formations 1999 and Mysterious Lights."

"Linda [Howe] was in England during the height of the crop circle season last summer and will show a video and give her personal perspective," Farish says.

Foster will talk about his experiences with extraterrestrials.

"He says he's had a lifetime of experiences with ETs," Farish says. "He's going to go into that with a great slide show of the different kinds of beings he's encountered."

Saturday evening will conclude with a speakers panel and a question and answer session.

The convention wraps up Sunday morning with informal presentations by people who have research they want to share.

Vendors will also be on hand with books, videos and related items.

Almost everything you're told is wrong

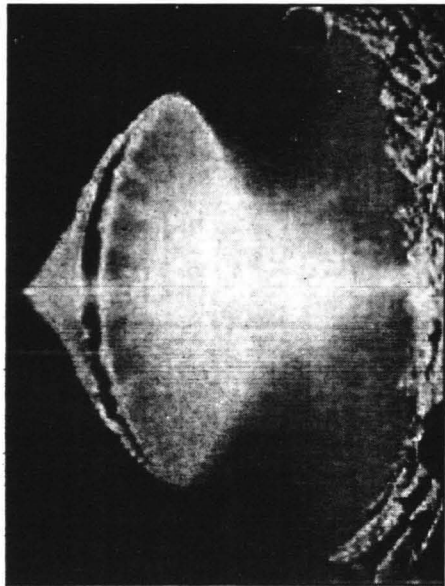


Photo Source www.au.sprindweb.org

night. It just disappeared." Lynn found the flowerpot, but the plant and the soil were missing. Hillman's Corner is eleven miles south of Mobile. Thanks to UFO Roundup Vol. 5 #5 2/3/00 Joseph Trainor editor Masinagan@aol.com

ILLINOIS UFO INVESTIGATION CONTINUES

I called Peter Davenport at the National UFO Reporting Center and spoke with John Alexander at National Institute for Discovery Science (NIDS). Their investigation has now located eight witnesses who observed the UFO in Southern Illinois east of St. Louis. Some of the police were chasing the UFO at speeds up to eighty mph. The UFO moved very slowly at an estimated twenty mph. Then suddenly streaked eight miles in three seconds, according to the witnesses. Craig Stevens in Milstadt saw it to the west of him seem to suddenly jump twenty to thirty miles. Assuming the witnesses were correct the craft moved at 9600 mph. The object was described as like a guitar pick with panel of red or pinkish lights. The aft-end of the craft was lit up, indicating some type of propulsion system.

FLORIDA CLEARWATER -- Nimlok writes, "A few years ago, I was sitting on the back porch of my parents house having a party with four other relatives." It was around 8:30 p.m., a very hot but clear night. All of a sudden, we all jumped to our feet and watched a UFO land right behind our house in a huge orange grove. I saw the bright lights and colors. The others described it as a "sphere" that had multi colored chasing lights around the band of the UFO.

It made no noise and then just vanished into thin air. My aunt, uncle and grandfather all saw this at the same time. We jumped into our cars hoping to get another glimpse, but it was gone. Geographically, we are in a perfect position for these sightings, and most people around this area have seen something strange. Thanks to Tiffany Stratton **ALABAMA COUPLE SEES UFO** TILLMANS CORNER - On December 28, 1999, Lynn L. and her husband were outdoors in Southern Alabama when they saw a UFO. "My husband and I were looking at the moon, and saw what we thought was a moving star. I got out of the car and looked at it. Two large bright lights were in front, with a red light in the middle. It wasn't a plane, since it flew over us at a very slow speed and made no sound" Lynn added. "The object

Kenny Young interviewed Craig Stevens from the Milstadt Police Department.

Craig said, "I was the Officer in Milstadt that witnessed the object at 4:28 a.m. on January 5, 2000." #1 - I feel the testimony of four, possibly five police officers is very credible, considering we are trained observers.

Our credibility has to be justified since we testify in a court of law. We watch things on a daily basis, and have to report our findings in evidence and reports. I feel I have done this by attempting to capture the photo that morning, and immediately returning to the department to report my findings in a report and make a drawing. Sketches of the object are shown on the NIDS web site at <http://www.accessn.com/nids>. For detailed investigation, sketches, route of flight see this excellent

report. Thanks to Kenny Young, John Alexander and Peter Davenport who have all done excellent work on this case.

CALIFORNIA FLYING TRIANGLE EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE

-- Billy Dee reports a witness writes, "Sightings seem to be picking up again. Although, I'm wondering if it has anything to do with the airliner going down off the coast. The last time it was real active here was when the Egyptian airliner went down.

On January 31, 2000, I saw another large triangular craft over the base. It was outlined with several very bright, non-blinking red lights. Just like the last one, this one tilted to a completely vertical position and flew like this for quite some time. It then rotated back to horizontal, flew back and forth, and then descended straight down. Last night, I was watching a

fighter over the base, when I noticed two dimly lit objects about a quarter of a mile in front of it. These objects were moving very erratically, back and forth, and up and down. The fighter appeared to maintain a steady distance behind them as they circled the base. I lost sight of the objects briefly behind a tree, but could still see the fighter's lights through the tree. I then saw the two objects coming out from behind the tree, still moving erratically. They suddenly got very bright, changing from an amber color to a bluish white and literally shot out of sight to the north over the base. They disappeared in less than a second. The fighter did some tight maneuvering, circled around a couple of times, and then landed.

Because of these two sightings, I'll be out again tonight, and will keep you informed. God bless. Thanks to BillyDee@ufoasi.org.

Continued next week

SUN-LEADER, Camdenton, MO - March 30, 2000

Petition from outer space

Drive aimed at getting state to recognize UFOs

By Ceil Abbott

JEFFERSON CITY — If an initiative petition being circulated around the state is successful, this year could be proclaimed the Year of UFO Awareness and a state law might be written that says Missourians believe the federal government is purposely hiding the truth about visitors from outer space.

According to Missouri Secretary of State Claire McCaskill's office, an initiative petition has been approved for circulation which could place a question on November's ballot to give Missourians a chance to vote on the name designation and to ask the U.S. Congress to divulge everything it knows about UFOs.

The petitions are not a joke but the project of the Mutual UFO Network, Inc., of St. Charles. The petition reads, "Be it enacted by the people of Missouri that the year 2000 be proclaimed and observed as the Year of UFO Awareness. Because of the federal government's failure to be officially forthcoming about Unidentified Flying Objects, the public remains ill-informed and confused on a matter of potentially great consequence."

However, the petitioners don't stop with asking that the year 2000 be given an official name

designating their pet project they also want voters in the state to demand that Congress hold public hearings and declassify the military's secret information about aliens and flying saucers.

The petition sample form supplied by McCaskill's office reads in part, "We therefore urge the U.S. Congress to expeditiously convene open, comprehensive hearings in which government personnel (military, civilian-contract and agency employees - active and retired) are permitted to present sworn testimony regarding their personal

knowledge of any UFO-related evidence... This proclamation acknowledges the following facts: (1) the weight of the cumulative evidence - e.g. eyewitness, electronic detection, photographic, documentary - overwhelmingly supports the conclusion of a majority of Americans that some of the reported UFOs represent somebody else's spacecraft..."

If the petitioners gather enough signatures from registered voters the ballot question will incorporate both of those issues and if enough people vote yes the whole thing will be written into state law.

DAILY RECORD, Roswell, NM - March 5, 2000

Burleson talks UFOs to capacity Abilene crowd

Dr. Donald R. Burleson, investigator for the International UFO Museum and Research Center, gave a lecture titled "UFOs: In Pursuit of the Truth" to a capacity crowd Feb. 26 at the Grace Museum in Abilene, Texas.

The lecture was part of a November through March series of events titled "Space 2000," co-sponsored by the Grace Museum and Hardin Simmons Universi-

ty. Burleson described his own 1947 UFO sighting and showed numerous transparencies of his various computer image enhancements, both of UFO photographs and of the Ramey letter, a memo photographed in the hand of Gen. Roger Ramey July 8, 1947, at a press conference at which Ramey told the media that only a weather balloon had crashed near

Roswell.

The letter, greatly enlarged and enhanced by computer methods, mentions recovery of a "disk" at Roswell, transporting of crash victims to be examined by a team and a weather balloon cover story.

Burleson is a director of a computer lab at Eastern New Mexico University-Roswell and a research consultant for the Mutual UFO Network. He writes a monthly UFO-related column called "Looking Up" for the Roswell Daily Record's monthly magazine insert, "Vision."

NEWS MINER, Republic, WA - March 2, 2000

UFO's In Area?

Residents of this area of the state reported an unidentified flying object on February 19 about 11:45 p.m.

According to a Molson area man the object was green, glowing and oblong in shape. It was said to have streaked across the sky from west to east.

According to Peter Davenport of the Seattle UFO Center, there were several nearly identical re-

ports that night. A few days earlier, jets scrambled over Illinois because of reports of a flying, glowing object, said Davenport. A few minutes before the Molson sighting, another, similar object was reported to have been spotted over south Seattle.

Davenport asks that anyone in northern Ferry County that might have seen something that night to call him at 206-722-3000.

Look, up in the sky — A meteor? An aircraft? A UFO?

■ Opinions, descriptions on what flashed across the sky vary from Michigan to Iowa

By MIKE NORTON
Record-Eagle staff writer

TRAVERSE CITY — So what was that thing?

Depending on who you asked, a bright object that streaked across the sky Tuesday evening was everything from a crashing aircraft to a meteor to a UFO. According to the space guys at NASA, it was an "earth grazer."

Whatever it was, it caught the attention of people from Gaylord to Cincinnati, West Virginia, Iowa and Illinois.

"We saw it right at tree level in our back yard," said Gale White of Elk Rapids, who watched the

Man plans to get aerial view of meteors

By MARJORY RAYMER
Record-Eagle staff writer

TRAVERSE CITY — Typical Earth-based stargazing isn't good enough for Rob Lewis. Plane is much more his style.

While the rest of Traverse City's meteor-hunting night owls craned their necks Wednesday, Lewis decided the sky was the limit for a good view of the intense Leonid meteor shower's second and last day.

The co-owner of a four-seat Cess-

na airplane planned to shoot up to about 10,000 to 12,000 feet to view the shooting stars. Wednesday had potential to be the best meteor show for decades to come.

"I should have about a 100 miles of horizon to look at," said Lewis, a pilot for 25 years.

Initially, he thought about dragging out lawn chairs to view the spectacle. Then he realized his most unobstructed view would be in the sky.

His brother-in-law, artist Royce Deans, planned to accompany Lewis. Armed with a video tape

recorder and still cameras, they hoped to catch some of the estimated 20,000 meteors expected to fall every minute.

"Worse-case scenario, I'll have a nice night flight," Lewis said.

Plenty of friends have envisioned a more tragic scenario.

"Most people said, 'At least we'll know who was in that plane that got shot down by meteors,'" Lewis reports. "Come on, what are the chances?"

Technically, he figures the odds of that happening are astronomical.

display with her mother, Byrneece, shortly after 7 p.m. "It went real slow, and it looked like a train going by, with square windows and darkness between the win-

dows. It was right in our pasture."

Scientists said the brilliant display — which was seen throughout most of the Midwest, but seemed to viewers as though it

were happening very close to them — was probably caused by a meteor or a piece of debris from space burning up in the earth's atmosphere.

Officials at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration said it was most likely not a part of the Leonid meteor shower, since it was traveling from west to east and was in the wrong part of the sky.

The meteor shower was expected to put on a celestial show of its own Tuesday through tonight.

NASA called the object at "earth grazer" — a meteoroid or piece of space debris that travels nearly parallel to the earth's surface as it disintegrates in the atmosphere.

Tuesday night's object traveled slowly across the sky just above the horizon, and many observers say they saw it fragment into many iridescent pieces that then traveled in a line like a string of Christmas lights.

Like the Whites, many viewers thought they were seeing something much closer.

And one Kewadin woman called a national radio talk show to report that she and her family had watched an object hovering in front of their car for several minutes early in the evening.

Whatever it was, the display caused emergency switchboards to light up as far south as Cincinnati, as hundreds of panicked sky-watchers reported UFOs, burning planes and huge fireballs.

In Indiana and Wisconsin, authorities told panicked callers not to worry. There were also reports in West Virginia, Iowa and Illinois.

NASA, which sent two airplanes aloft to study the meteor shower from above the clouds, counted up to 40 meteors per hour by mid-evening Tuesday. Later the count trailed off to 10 to 15 meteors per hour.

Astronomers predicted there would be even more shooting stars Wednesday night as the Earth passed through the tail of Comet Tempel-Tuttle, and meteor-watchers were planning to gather away from city lights all over the country to watch the rare Leonid meteor shower.

The most dazzling displays are possible every 33 years, as the comet passes the sun and sheds more debris than usual.

The last time, in 1966, the shower peaked in a storm of 144,000 shooting stars per hour. A typical year might yield just 20 per hour. Some astronomers were predicting 2,000 meteors per hour this year.

ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE, Little Rock, AR - April 18, 2000

Web photos unveil legendary Area 51

Satellite snaps secret Nevada test site

BY MARTHA WAGGONER
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

RALEIGH, N.C. — The truth is out there — on the Web. Photos of Area 51, the supersecret Air Force test site in Nevada that has long tantalized UFO and conspiracy buffs and fans of *The X-Files*, are being posted on the Internet.

"This is the first glimpse into the most secret training and testing facility for the Air Force," said John Hoffman, president of Aerial Images Inc. of Raleigh.

The company planned to post five images of the site, divided into four frames each, in collaboration with Microsoft, Kodak, Digital Equipment Corp., Autometric Inc. and the Russian agency Sovinformsputnik.

The partners launched a Russian satellite from Kazakhstan in 1998 to map the earth's surface and Area 51. An open-skies agreement signed in 1992 by 24 nations,

including the United States and Russia, made the effort possible.

The Air Force only recently acknowledged that Groom Dry Lake Air Force Base even exists. The 8,000-square-mile base is 75 miles northwest of Las Vegas, in the arid, rugged Nellis Range.

Beginning with the U-2 spy plane in the 1950s, the base has been the testing ground for a host of top-secret aircraft, including the SR-71 Blackbird and, more recently, the F-117A stealth fighter and B-2 stealth bomber.

The base's airspace is restricted; aircraft are not allowed to fly over it. But satellite overflights are allowed as part of an agreement to verify arms-control compliance.

Among UFO aficionados, it has long been known simply as Area 51, the base's designation on old Nevada test site maps. They believe that unidentified flying objects from other worlds are hidden at the base, where their parts are copied for U.S. prototypes.

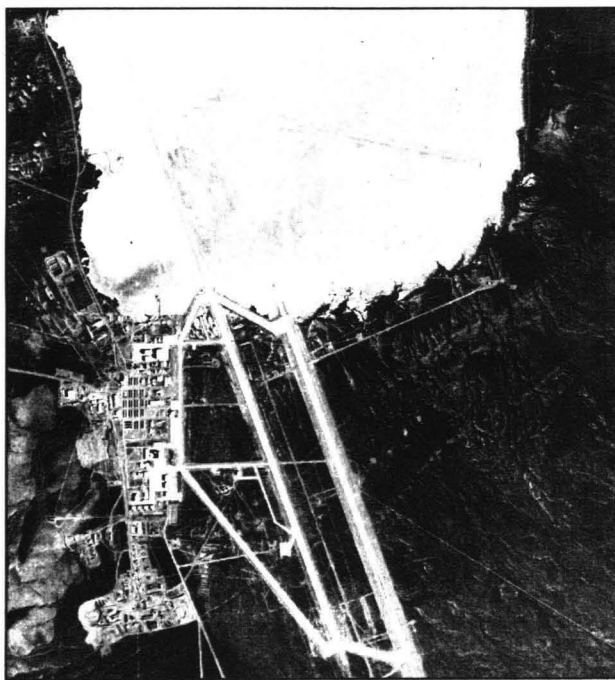
The images, with resolution good enough to distinguish a car from a truck, are better than earlier telephoto shots from the nearby mountains. The only other known image purportedly was shot by a satellite in the 1960s. It is much fuzzier.

"There are runways, there are buildings, there are buses, there are test sites, but there aren't any little green men or supersecret aircraft to be seen," Hoffman said of the new photos.

Several government agencies are aware of the images and haven't responded, said Hoffman, 52, a Vietnam veteran who recently retired from the National Guard after 23 years. "I've had no feedback from anybody that indicates anybody gives a hoot," he said.

An Air Force spokesman would not comment Monday on any security concerns about the images.

"We acknowledge having an operating site there, and the work



Associated Press

This satellite image of Groom Dry Lake Air Force Base, also known to UFO aficionados as Area 51, was taken by a Russian satellite in March 1998 and was posted on the Internet on Monday by Aerial Images Inc. of Raleigh, N.C.

is classified," spokesman Gloria Cales said. The work involves "operations critical to the U.S. military and the country's security."

Aerial Images, at

<http://www.terraserver.com>

planned to offer a link to the Area 51 pages. Viewing the images is free; downloading them costs \$8.95 and up. Kodak will print photographs for \$20 to \$30.

The images show craters, some seemingly formed by something dropped from the sky, others possibly by something coming out of the ground. There are hundreds of buildings, living quarters, tennis courts, a baseball field, a track and a swimming pool.

There are no paved roads and no parking lots; buses are the only visible vehicles, raising the question of how employees get to and from work. Unpaved roads disappear into cliffsides, suggesting a possible underground network.

A shrouded aircraft is visible on a ramp, unusual considering the Air Force knows when Rus-

sian satellites are overhead, Hoffman said.

Walter Andrus Jr., international director of the Mutual UFO Network, based in Seguin, Texas, seemed to have a hard time believing the object of so much secrecy and discussion would soon be available on the World Wide Web.

"We have other photos taken from the ground and from the air, but they aren't this current," he said.

Even Chris Carter, creator of the television show *The X-Files*, apparently was skeptical when Hoffman contacted him. Some of the show's favorite themes are UFOs and secret government activities, and one of its mantras is "The truth is out there."

"He clearly didn't believe me," Hoffman said. "From his tone, you could tell he didn't believe me that we had Area 51 and we had the whole area covered."



FOREIGN NEWS

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

GAZETTE, Shields, England - April 6, 2000

Stranger in the night...

I THOUGHT it was a while since anyone had contacted me with a good UFO story, but the one which follows certainly makes up for that.

My contact, who wishes to be known only as Peter, is a retired airline pilot who regularly flew both European and Transatlantic flights.

Peter still has contact with his old chums, and is reluctant to supply any specific details which could help identify him.

"There is an unwritten rule which exists in most airlines, and that is that you don't discuss UFOs," he told me. "It isn't very good for your career".

Despite the absence of detail, what Peter told me still makes fascinating reading.

During the summer of 1986, Peter was the captain of a passenger flight heading for Rome from "a major English airport".

It was night-time, but the weather conditions were excellent and the plane was full of excited holidaymakers looking forward to a fortnight in the sun.

About 80 miles from Rome, Peter happened to look out of the cockpit window.

Below he could see myriad sodium lights, as millions of

BIZARRE

Italians went about their business, each one unaware that Peter was staring down at them.

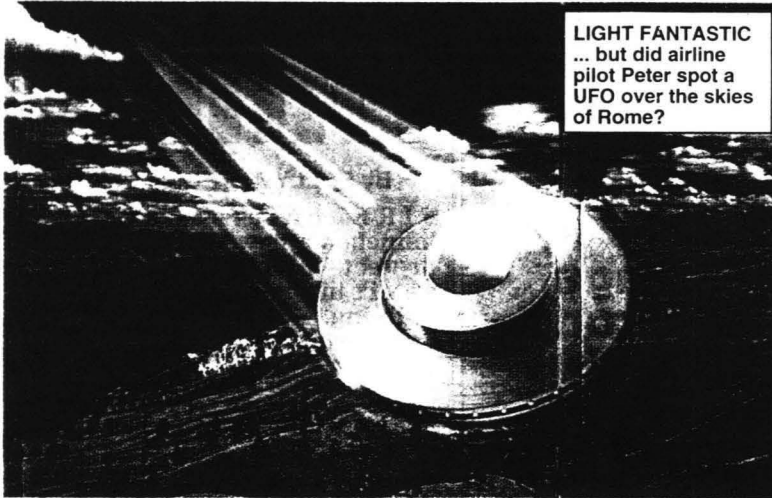
The view was breathtaking. Suddenly, out of the corner of his eye, Peter saw a pinpoint of light.

It was coming out of the north-east and was slowly getting bigger.

"At first I panicked and thought it was another aircraft, but then it started to dance up and down in a bobbing and weaving motion."

"I checked with Rome tower to see if there were any other aircraft in the vicinity, but they said negative."

"The light seemed to be keeping pace with us. I would estimate its distance at a



LIGHT FANTASTIC
... but did airline pilot Peter spot a UFO over the skies of Rome?

mile.

"I couldn't begin to estimate its size, but it was definitely under intelligent control. As we began our descent, it began to descend with us. Then it just disappeared."

Peter never filed a report about his sighting, and neither did the co-pilot.

"We knew what would happen. We had heard stories about others who had spoken

out and been made to suffer for it. I had a mortgage to pay and school fees to find for the kids."

And yet Peter definitely saw something strange that night; something which unsettled him.

"I don't mind admitting that I was scared. My stomach was in a knot. I just couldn't help but think that I was being watched intensely, or observed."

commented: "Personally, if I ever saw a flying saucer or something like that, there's no way I would admit it. The company doesn't want its passengers to get the idea that they're being flown across the globe by a bunch of spaced-out nut-cases."

Which is a shame, really. How many other good UFO sightings have been kept hidden from the scrutiny of investigators out of fear and embarrassment?

Until we have a climate of openness about the UFO enigma, where people are no longer frightened to admit what they've seen, the real proof of their existence may never be forthcoming.

Why are some people so reluctant to accept the existence of these strange aerial objects?

A fear of the unknown, probably. We really haven't a clue where they're from, why they're here or what they're after.

I think a lot of people would rather just shut their eyes and hope they'll go away!

Have you seen a UFO? Been scared to death by a flying saucer?

Tell Gordon Host about it by writing to him at the Gazette, or by e-mailing him at: gordonhost@lineone.net

As one American pilot

DAILY STAR, London, England - Feb. 4, 2000 CR: N. Oliver

ET PHONE DOME



Aliens buzz tourist zone

THE Millennium Dome has finally found some fans - aliens.

UFOs have been spotted buzzing about above the huge saucer-shaped building in Greenwich.

And experts reckon the visitors from another world have mistaken the £785m Dome for a gigantic mother ship.

They are said to have been attracted to it because - alongside the Great Wall of China - it is one

by NEIL CHANDLER

of only two man-made landmarks visible from outer space. Local UFO spotters clocked NINE saucers in the last week.

Spheres

There have also been sightings at nearby Eltham, Woolwich and Shooters Hill, south-east London.

Woolwich saucer expert Chris Everard said: "Someone saw a

luminous ball of light and some young girls saw four spheres above Greenwich. Another man saw a triangular-shaped object about the size of a jumbo jet flying very low near Eltham."

A Dome spokesman said: "We are aware that there have been some sightings. We knew the Dome was out of this world."

WATCH THIS SPACE:
Aliens are taking a look at the Dome

SUNDAY MAIL, Glasgow, Scotland - Jan. 2, 2000

UFO man's £200 vanishes into TV black hole



Alienated:
UFO spotter Andrew

WHEN amateur cameraman Andrew McLeish videoed a couple of UFOs, it led to an encounter of the expensive kind.

London Weekend Television offered to pay £200 for a copy of the unemployed father-of-three's video. After the money mysteriously failed to materialise, Mr McLeish, to whom contract law is completely alien, turned to the Judge to help prevent star wars breaking out.

He claims he was contacted by makers of a documentary on UFOs

and offered cash and postage if he sent the footage within two days.

The former machine operator, of Maddiston near Falkirk, sent it by express delivery within an hour.

Mr McLeish said: "A few months later I received the tape without payment and, even more galling, there wasn't even a letter of thanks."

"The footage has been verified by UFO expert Malcolm Robinson and by organisations in England. The two bright lights which I videoed for 11 minutes are 'unexplained', meaning

this was a genuine sighting of UFOs.

"I was never told I would only be paid if they used the clips."

Thousands have reported seeing strange phenomena in the skies over Central Scotland, especially an area dubbed the Bonnybridge Triangle.

LWT spent a weekend in the area in March with Falkirk Councillor Billy Buchanan, who has become a focus for UFO spotters. They were keen to get hold of Mr McLeish's footage, which was shot in the area.

LWT say: "We disagree with Mr

McLeish's version of events. The deal was that he would be paid £200 if the clips were used. They weren't and the tape was returned to him."

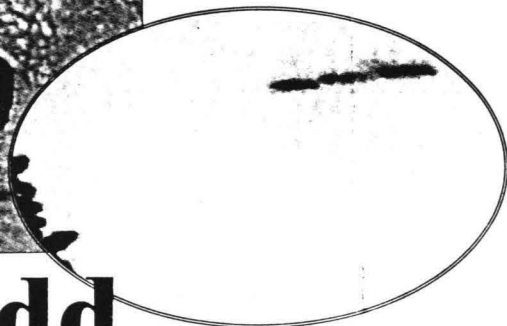
"This is standard practice. LWT is happy to reimburse Mr McLeish the cost of postage."

The position is as clear as the UFOs on Mr McLeish's tape - the next time a quick-thinking amateur cameraman captures one on film, they should steer well clear of LWT and their own UFOs - Unlikely Film Offers.

It's not a bird, it's not a plane. . .but is it a UFO?



■ Left: The object streaks across the sky, captured on video by the group of mountain boarders. Below: the streak, with the edge of the trees in the front left, when increased in size has three distinct parts to it, but the picture gives little clue as to what it might be. (S)



Video reveals odd craft in sky

DAILY NEWS, Anchorage, AK - April 19, 2000

Paranormal zeal gripping Chinese

Thousands search for UFOs, Bigfoot

By HENRY CHU
Los Angeles Times

BEIJING — The truth is out there.

It's hiding in the Shennongjia forest, eluding capture with its loping stride and superhuman strength — marks of its origin as half man, half beast, says Yuan Zhenxin.

Or it's up in the sky, which Sun Shili scours for signs of life from beyond. UFO buffs in China say their nation has become a popular destination of late for interplanetary visitors, and Sun is determined to figure out how they come here — and why.

"Previously, most UFO sightings were in developed countries, like the U.S.," said Sun, an expert in foreign, if not extraterrestrial, trade. "Now China is developing ... so this may have aroused the interest of beings from other worlds."

As China sheds the shackles of its Marxist past, the old Communist emphasis on strictly scientific, rational and atheistic thought is running into robust competition.

A cottage industry has sprung up here around investigations into "X-Files"-type phenomena, ranging from the alleged existence of Bigfoot to a hill in northern China that reportedly causes passing cars to flip over without warning.

This explosion of interest in the paranormal follows 20 years of bewildering social change, years that included the erosion of communist ideology and sent many Chinese on a quest for some deeper meaning, or at least a little excitement and wonder, in their uncertain lives.

As head of the Chinese UFO Research Association, Sun presides over a nationwide network of government-approved UFO clubs that boast a combined membership of 50,000. The group hosts national conferences to

discuss principles of jet propulsion as well as reports of sightings of flying saucers. Sun counts party officials and serious academics among his supporters, who see his research as both scientifically valid and technologically valuable. The Chinese air force even sent an officer to his association's most recent convention, in 1998.

Sun receives up to 500 reports of UFO sightings a year. A rash of alleged sightings came during the final months of last year, when thousands of people across China reported seeing strangely glowing objects hovering in the sky.

China also has its share of reports of alien abductions. A few months ago, a Beijing man claimed to have been beamed aboard a spaceship in the dead of night and made to supernaturally heal another captive earthling. After interviewing the man and having him examined by a psychiatrist, Sun concluded that the story was true.

While Sun and his fellow enthusiasts scan the skies for signs of higher intelligence, Yuan keeps his sights low to the ground for evidence of a creature of lesser intelligence: Bigfoot.

Yuan is convinced that between 1,000 and 2,000 of the apelike creatures roam the forests of central China, particularly the Shennongjia Nature Reserve in Hubei province.

Such fascination has flowered in China in response to the ideological vacuum created by the deterioration of communism, analysts say. Unorthodox ideas long suppressed or declared illegal are bubbling back to the surface.

Scoffers note that scientific education in China is weak, making it easier for people to fall prey to theories that wouldn't pass muster in more educated societies.

REMARKABLE footage apparently showing three UFOs shooting across the North Devon sky has been caught on camera.

Shot near Shirwell in January, the UFOs went undetected until 28-year-old Jim, from Barnstaple, (he and his friends do not want their surnames published) began to edit the tape two months ago.

"When me and my friends Kevin and Simon went mountain boarding out there there was nothing untoward about the day, there were no noises to indicate these craft flying over us.

"We didn't realise we had the clip until six or seven months later," he said.

The footage of the UFOs — only visible when the digital video tape is played in slow motion — shows a close group of three discs flying at high speed across the afternoon sky.

Even on the film, the three objects make no noise as they pass over the heads of Jim, Kevin and Simon.

"I was the only one looking towards it but as I was filming I was focusing on the mountain boarding," said 35-year-old Kevin, who comes from Barnstaple.

"The footage clearly shows, on close examination, three disc-shaped craft travelling in a triangular formation at a speed that leaves the competition behind," said Jim.

The trio believe the UFOs, which were caught on camera at about 1.15pm on January 12, were probably about 100ft off the ground.

In the footage, they appear from the right-hand side of the screen and streak diagonally across the sky before disappearing behind the trees.

By MADELEINE BRINDLEY

mountain boarding. At first glance they look like a long black streak, but on closer examination the three separate craft are just visible.

The three discs are only visible for seven 25ths of a second and cover roughly half a mile in that time.

"The footage has not been doctored in any way — what you see is what you get. The three of us were there that day and know it to be the case," said Jim, who has seen such objects on a number of different occasions.

"It's great we have got it on film."

UFO expert Nick Pope, who used to investigate sightings for the Ministry of Defence between 1991 and 1994, said: "I think this is a spectacular piece of footage — it's genuine and it's unknown."

"The craft do not fall into any obvious category so it is possible that they could be something more exotic."

"I believe in extra-terrestrial space craft and it's quite possible that this is what Jim has recorded," said the author of *Open Skies, Closed Minds*.

"But I don't have enough data to make a firm assertion."

Peter publishes 17th UFO book

WHEN it comes to UFOs and the paranormal few men know more than Warrington's very own answer to the X-Files.

Peter Hough has been writing about unexplained phenomena for more than 25 years and has recently published his 17th book on ufology.

The new book, *Visitation: The Certainty of Alien Activity*, is crammed with extra-terrestrial tales from all over the world and presents well reasoned evidence for believing in an alien presence.

There are accounts of UFO sightings and physical landings and even interviews with people who believe they have been abducted.

Peter, a professional ufologist and paranormal researcher, said: "My interest in UFOs goes back to my childhood. I thought that science would have all the answers, but as I got older I realised there were mysteries that just could not be explained."

"Ufology is a fascinating subject. Almost every religion is based on close encounters with beings from other worlds, only these days we tend not to call them gods or angels, but extra-terrestrials."

Peter, of Silsden Avenue, in Lowton, is the chairman of The Northern Anomalies Research Organisation and was the first ufologist to lecture at the Jodrell Bank Science Centre.

Visitation: The Certainty of Alien Activity is available in bookshops priced £6.99.



Peter Hough

STANDARD, Moorabin, Australia - April 4, 2000 CR: P. Norman

Paul on the tail of UFOs

by DENIS BROWN

MOORABBIN Airport was the launch pad for Australia's most notorious UFO flap.

No trace has ever been found of 20-year-old Frederick Valentich, who took off from the airport on October 21, 1978 in his Cessna 182, en route for King Island.

In his last on-air communication at 7.12pm, he described being buzzed by a fast, long shiny metallic object. He then reported his engine spluttering.

His final words before a strange noise interrupts the transmission were: "It is hovering and it's not an aircraft".

Veteran UFO investigator Paul



UFO researcher: Paul Norman.

Norman is convinced Mr Valentich came face to face with an alien craft.

"I don't know whether he went up, down or disintegrated, but that's a genuine case," he said. "About

six weeks before he disappeared we were seeing an increase in numbers of erratic moving flights and they reached a peak that very weekend."

Since retiring from his day job in 1976, Mr Norman's search for positive proof of extraterrestrial life has been a full-time occupation.

A key member of the Moorabbin-based Victorian UFO Research Society (VUFORS), the Tennessee-born Mr Norman has published several reports on the Valentich case. On the VUFORS Web site, he has posted what is apparently a portion of the flight transcript, obtained from the Australian Department of Transport.

■ Check out VUFORS Web site on www.ozemail.com.au/vufors/

CR: J. & L. Nicholson



Ruskin resident John McConnell's drawing of a space ship he says he saw.

'I SAW ONE LAST NIGHT'

Stories by Greg Middleton
Staff Reporter

You could almost hear the theme music for X-Files playing in the background.

Residents of a small trailer park overlooking the Stave River out in rural Ruskin, up the road from Mission, say they've been seeing UFOs for several months.

"I saw one last night," said Vina Stockbruegger, 76. "I didn't believe in these things until I started seeing them. Little ones, big ones, all shooting out lights and hovering and moving."

Mission RCMP laugh off the reports. They call the trailer park the Twilight Zone.

John McConnell, 49, a warehouseman on a disability pension, began noticing the strange activity out over the Ruskin dam back in August.

"I don't do drugs. I don't drink. This is not a hoax. I know what I've seen," he says with a passion that can't be disputed. He says he's seen flying saucers twice the size of a panel truck doing aerobatics in the night sky.

"They are shooting off here, shooting off there and doing somersaults," said McConnell. "There is nothing on the face of this earth that can do that."

McConnell has been trying to get photographs of what he's seen. He's managed to capture a light that seems to be revolving, in which McConnell, at least, sees a space ship — of which he's made a drawing.

McConnell says he's sending his material off to NASA in the U.S.

Another man in Ruskin says he got a glimpse of someone short and human-looking, dressed in coveralls, in the window of a space ship.

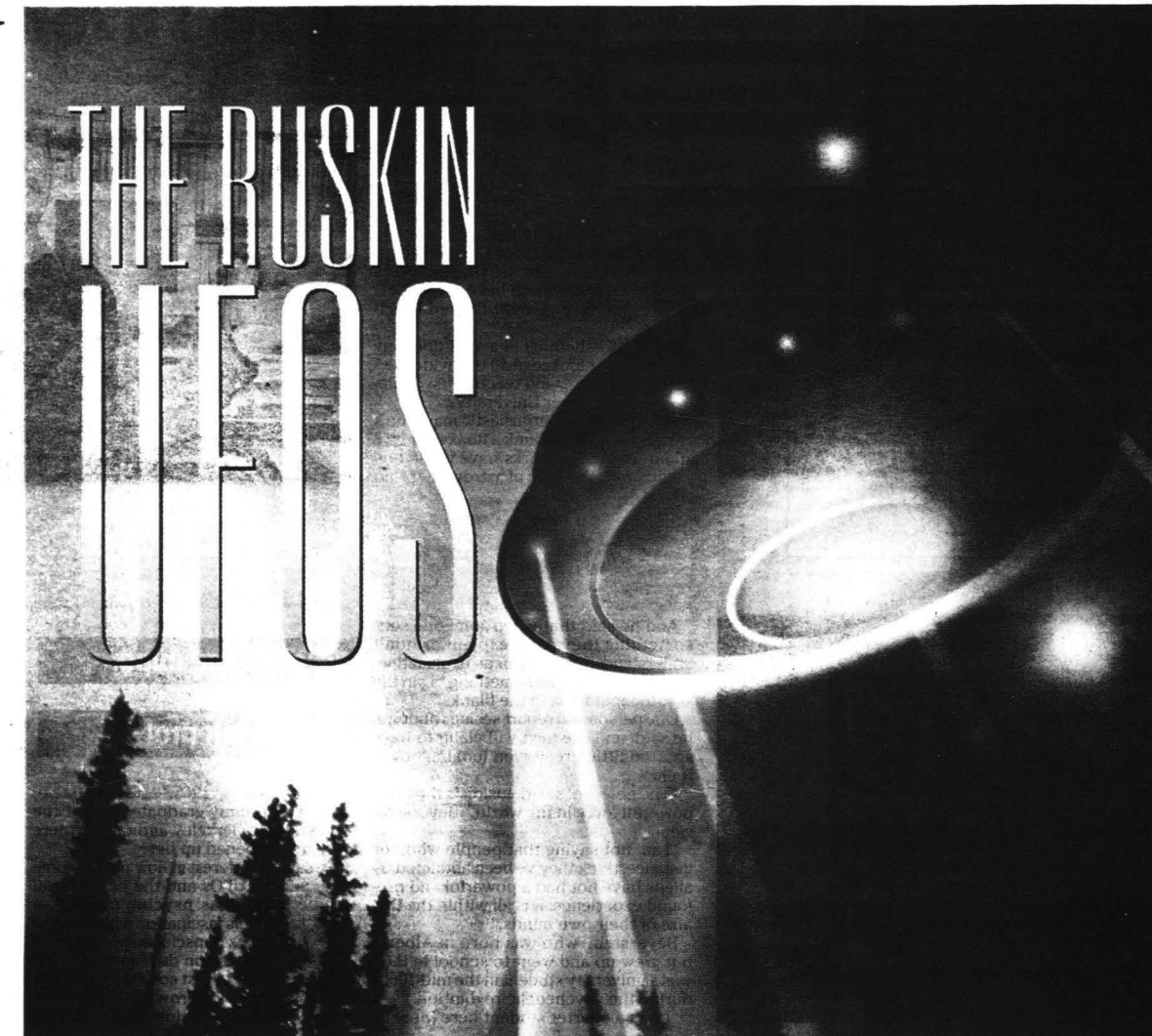
Lela New, 49, and a couple of friends who drove over to the dam where the

lights were sighted, say they lost several hours they can't account for — a common report by people who later come to believe they were abducted by aliens.



Vina Stockbruegger, 76, standing on the porch of her trailer in Ruskin, near Mission, points to the spot in the sky where she says she saw multicoloured moving lights recently.

David Clark — The Province



SKY'S SECRETS 'MORE THAN

Dave Pengilly figures he's got his finger on the alien pulse. He's the editor of UFO*BC — a magazine dedicated to unidentified flying object sightings in British Columbia.

"There is so much more going on out there than we can grasp," says Pengilly, 46, who looks after the GVRD's air-pollution monitoring equipment when he isn't out chasing UFOs.

"I don't understand why everyone isn't interested in this kind of stuff. It's mind-boggling."

Pengilly rattles off a quick summary of recent sightings.

■ Castlegar, Jan. 23: A blue light, flashing red, moved across the sky low on the horizon.

"That was most certainly a planet," states Pengilly, who admits many sightings can be

Recent sightings

'mind-boggling,'

says editor of UFO

magazine

explained by natural phenomena.

■ Burnaby, Jan. 17: A cigar-shaped object with flashing red, green and blue lights appeared over Deer Lake as four people watched it for five minutes

before it vanished.

"Who knows what that could have been? How do you explain that?" Pengilly asks.

He said that one of the most exciting local sightings was during the summer five years ago. People out watching meteors saw a huge, saucer-shaped craft float over their house, not once, but three times.

"They could hear a humming noise and see a ring of lights," Pengilly said.

"We get things like this all the time. There is more going on out there than we realize."

Pengilly, who runs UFO*BC from the basement of his north Delta home, said the organization recorded 120 UFO sightings in B.C. last year.

"Whenever people have a rea-

WE CAN GRASP'

son to look up into the sky, like when there is a meteor shower, they see things," said Pengilly, who was fascinated with UFOs and things like that as a teen and then began reading about it all again a few years ago.

He rummages around among the dozens of books he's collected for one on alien abductions, saying the reports of this phenomenon now number in the millions.

"I don't know what's going on, but something is," he says with the vehemence of someone who sometimes has trouble finding people to listen to him talk about what clearly fascinates him.

"You mention any of this stuff and you can hear people's minds slam shut," Pengilly says, a note of resignation in his voice.

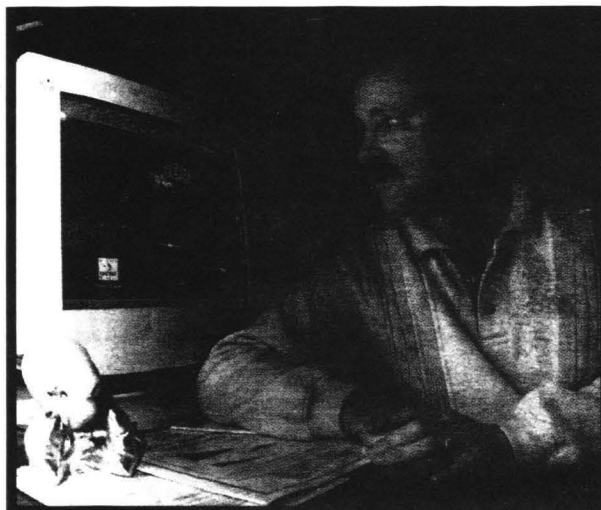
"Scientists are the most closed-minded of all and yet a lot of the time all they say is you couldn't have seen what you've seen."

Pengilly is now including reports of sasquatches in his magazine and putting them on the UFO*BC web site because people are linking sasquatch sightings with UFO sightings.

To get a taste of what Pengilly believes is out there, check out <http://www.ufobc.org> — and if you want to report a UFO to UFO*BC, call its hotline at (604) 878-6511.

Editor Dave Pengilly says UFO*BC recorded 120 sightings last year.

Nick Procylo — The Province



SITE FOR STARGAZERS

The UFO*BC people run what is acknowledged to be one of the best UFO web sites in the business.

"A lot of them are just reprints or rip-offs of other people's stuff," said Dave Pengilly of UFO*BC. "We do a lot of original research and go out and interview people ourselves."

The site — <http://www.ufobc.org> — has not only the latest B.C. sightings, but items of astronomical interest, such as stories and photos of a meteor that streaked across the northern sky Jan. 18.

And there's a story about family who came across a man who had just seen an iceball — believed to be frozen water from a comet's tail — that fell from the sky in Surrey on Jan. 2.

The magazine also has a section on things that are identified and identifiable, such as planets, comets and meteor showers, in the night sky.

Skywatch planned for Harrington



UNIDENTIFIED flying objects remain one of the greatest mysteries of modern times and Harrington woman Sharon Larkin has dedicated her life to researching strange and unexplained phenomena.

A would-be Dana Scully-style X-Files special agent, Sharon is the investigations director for North West Cumbria UFO Research and Investigations, part of the national UFO Awareness Group which has hundreds of members across the country.

Her work and research into unexplained phenomena in West Cumbria is to be featured in a double page spread in next month's edition of UFO magazine.

Sharon is delighted that it will not only help to promote her group but also



UFO spotter
Sharon Larkin

allow her to stage the special meeting and skywatch she's been planning for some time for fellow UFO and paranormal enthusiasts.

She said that representatives from UFO magazine together with top UFO

ogists will be coming to Harrington for the week-end of August 27-28 with some new footage of UFO sightings.

Anyone who wants to see the UFO video can contact Sharon Larkin on 07788 543850.

There's Something Out There Somewhere.

Sharon shared these two new cases she's currently investigating with the *S-Files*.

S-FILE

Subject: Unidentified V-shaped flying object

Location: Spotted over Harrington travelling from the Isle of Man towards Carlisle

Dateline: 22.06.99, approximately 13.30 hours

Report: Sharon said she has received a lot of reports from people who

saw a large, black, low-flying V-shaped craft which appeared to fly over Harrington from the Isle of Man and head towards Carlisle. The craft moved rapidly across the sky with no sound.

"A very unusual craft which has just started to make an appearance in other parts of the world, maybe it's a new military plane or just a good old UFO. There was a number of people out that day so maybe others have seen it. I would be interested to know if they had," Sharon said.

Subject: Animal Mutilations

Sharon and other members of the UFO Awareness Group around the country are currently looking into claims of animal mutilation. An increasing

number of dead porpoises and dolphins have been washed ashore and appear to have had large chunks of flesh surgically removed from one side of their face, she said.

There has been a number of dead porpoises found on shores at Flimby, Mary-

port and Workington in recent weeks and Sharon said a number have shown exactly the same form of flesh removal. She believes it's something more sinister than just birds feeding off the bodies because of the way the flesh has been removed so precisely and

in exactly the same place on the bodies.

** If you have any UFO sightings to report or paranormal experiences to share, then contact Andrea Thompson at The S-Files on 01900 607628.*

There's something out there

CRIVEN HERALD, Skipton,
England - Nov. 12, 1999

SIGHTINGS of unidentified flying objects (UFOs) across Craven have increased over the last few months, according to an expert.

Former policeman Tony Dodd, who became interested in UFOs after a close encounter above Ilkley, told the Herald there had been several sightings this week.

People had reported seeing a green ball of light above the sky over Bradley at the beginning of the week.

"It was lighting up the whole sky and was so large that it wasn't a conventional object," said Tony, of Grassington.

"There has been a lot of activity around here at the moment, possibly due to the darker nights and clearer skies."

And the Herald was contacted by 16-year-old Jonathan Masters, who claimed he spotted a UFO while walking to school with friend Mohammed Djevanroodi.

He says the spherical metallic object hovered over Morrison's supermarket before disappearing in a split second.

Jonathan, of Greatwood Avenue, claims he has also seen a UFO on the moors near his home.

SUN, Vancouver, B.C., Canada - April 8, 2000 CR: G. Conway

Alberta a hotbed of UFO activity



IAN JACKSON/Special to The Sun

FROM THE LAND OF THE BELIEVERS: Frank Florian, educational services manager and community astronomer at the Edmonton Space and Science Centre, receives many calls a month from people who say they have spotted UFOs. Many take the phenomena seriously.

A space subculture takes claims of alien visitation seriously.

SCOTT McKEEN
SPECIAL TO THE SUN

EDMONTON — The object was silent on the wind, the colour of cast iron and hovered over Edmonton's south side for more than 30 minutes on a Sunday evening earlier this year.

The craft, known as a "black triangle" by UFO devotees, was witnessed by three people in different parts of the city, but barely created a stir.

Simple skepticism? Well, that's one possible explanation. The other is that Alberta is such a hotbed of UFO activity that one little-old sighting is hardly worth getting off the couch to investigate.

A mysterious black triangle in the sky? Ho hum. Alberta, you might not know, is home to several hundred Vulcans, a UFO landing pad and a society of displaced aliens.

The Vulcans are citizens of the town of Vulcan, the UFO landing pad was one town's Centennial project and the displaced aliens are part of a satirical society.

But that's not to say Albertans don't take UFOs seriously. On the contrary. There's a subculture that takes it very seriously indeed.

"I know that the Canadian military has sent up jet fighters to check out objects in the sky," says Frank Florian, an Edmonton astronomer and proponent of more scientific study of the phenomenon. "Why would they? They must have ~~some interest~~ in these objects."

In Edmonton alone, there are a gaggle of E.T. groups and specialists, including the Society of Earthbound Extraterrestrials, the Alberta UFO Study Group and Florian, who regularly takes calls on weird flying objects.

The epicentre of extraterrestrial existentialism in Alberta is in the town of St. Paul, 200 kilometres northeast of Edmonton. An area farmer, Fern Belzil, has become Canada's foremost cattle-mutilation investigator and his work has been featured on national television. Belzil has been to about 50 mutilations himself and collects dirt and other samples for U.S. researchers.

St. Paul, a town of 5,000, also boasts a UFO landing pad, a

(continued on page 13)

WEST CUMBERLAND TIMES, Cockermouth, England - Sept. 3, 1999

UFOs are closing in on Cumbria

SHARON Larkin, investigations director for North West Cumbria UFO Research and Investigations, is starting to receive an increasing number of reports about UFO sightings now that the nights are closing in.

One of her latest reports comes from witnesses who claim the UFO they spotted on July 22 has continued to return to the Carlisle-Southern Scotland area.



"They described it as a large object which had a white illuminated dome on top and ring of lights round the base, which were red, green and white. It hovered erratically and emitted a burst of blue vapour from one side and a tunnel of white light from the other side, and departed at great speed east-

wards," Sharon told *The S-Files*.

At 1am on July 28 the witness saw the same object and a smaller object flying off at great speed. The objects reappeared at 11.30pm the next night and this time the witnesses saw the smaller object hover above and then dock or disappear into the large craft. It then emitted the same blue vapour and took off rapidly in an easterly direction. The craft appeared to be well above the

flight path of jets.

Sharon said: "It seems that this craft knows the area! It keeps coming back - what a brilliant sighting! Other people must have seen this, especially as it has returned to the same place so many times."

Anyone who has seen this or any other UFOs can contact Sharon on 07788 543850. Or why not share your paranormal experiences with *The S-Files*? Contact Andrea Thompson on 01900 607630.

(continued from page 12 - SUN, Vancouver,

B.C., Canada - April 8, 2000)

1-888-SEE-UFOS hotline and will again host a UFO conference this summer.

Obviously, you have to wonder what's going on here to generate all this attention in UFOs. Is Alberta the Canadian equivalent of Roswell, New Mexico, the famous site of an alleged UFO crash?

"You could say that all of western Canada is active — crop circles, cattle mutilations, UFO sightings," says Paul Pelletier, chairman of the UFO 2000 conference in St. Paul. "Alberta has had lots going on, too."

According to Chris Rutkowski, a Manitoban who collects UFO statistics, some of the first reports of crop circles and cattle mutilations came from Alberta and both phenomena have become part of UFO mythology.

But Alberta doesn't appear to have more sightings than other Canadian provinces. Instead, the main reason for all the UFO interest in Alberta is, well, all the UFO interest here.

One of Canada's most famous UFO researchers, John Musgrave, lived here. Musgrave was known for his academic work in comparing UFO abduction stories to historical accounts of abduction by fairies or witches. Musgrave believed UFOs were more mythical or cultural than alien.

Gord Kijek, with the Alberta UFO Study Group, also struggles against the extraterrestrial explanation. "I like to think of myself as an open-minded skeptic," said Kijek, who is nevertheless touched by the fact so many people who claim UFO encounters are terrified by the experience. "All that we're left with, and what I'm intrigued in, is the human experience."

Another local with a skeptical interest is Guy Desrosiers, who set out years ago to write a comedic book about an alien view of Earth — working title: *Welcome To Earth* — and on a lark started the Society of Earthbound Extraterrestrials. But the group and its name attracted national attention and even some UFO cases to investigate.

When asked about Albertans, and their UFO interest, Desrosiers tells the story of being called out to a crop circle discovery southwest of Edmonton.

He says there was a steady parade of curiosity seekers all day. "One woman got out of her car, pulled some of the grass out and started washing herself with it," he said. "Some people out there take this very, very seriously."

Florian, community astronomer at the Edmonton Space and Science Centre, is another serious investigator into things extraterrestrial. "A hotbed? Well, I'd say it's as good as any other place," says Florian, referring to Alberta. "We do get a lot of sightings of the so-called black triangles."

Florian says most UFO sightings in general are made by people who know little about the night sky and mistake Venus for an alien invasion.

Still, he remains open to the E.T. possibility, having been involved indirectly in one sighting that left the military baffled, too. He and his brother

were driving towards Banff when they spotted strange lights in the sky. The military dispatched interceptors, but found nothing to explain the UFO.

Florian's attitude of openness is typical in a province where 83 per cent of people believe there is intelligent life on other planets, according to a 1996 poll. Compare that to the 67 per cent of believers in Ontario. Most Albertans, 55 per cent, felt Earth had already been visited by E.T., while another 43 per cent expected a visit during their lifetime. Contrary to what you might think, the better educated the survey respondent, the more likely a belief in life elsewhere.

Steve Kent is a sociologist who studies alternative religions at the University of Alberta and isn't sure exactly what to make of all the UFO interest in the province. At the heart of the UFO myth, as he sees it, is a hopeful belief that otherworldly beings will bring aid to our troubled world.

"The belief that a supernatural force will provide salvation often appeals to people who feel unable to achieve societal solutions to their problems," Kent says. For example, he says, look at farmers and their years of financial

difficulty, which leads to distrust in government, federal and provincial.

"Belief in UFOs gives them the belief they may still get a salvational message, even if it's from an extra-terrestrial source."

But at the end of the day, much of Alberta's alien interest comes down to the almighty dollar — as in

those dollars generated by tourism.

No one knows that better than the towns of Vulcan and St. Paul.

Vulcan has for years now traded on its name with annual Spock Days and a *Star Trek* convention. There's a parade, slow-pitch tournament and *Star Trek* memorabilia for sale, including pointy Vulcan ears.

Back in the early 1960s, probably about the time the original *Star Trek* was in first run on TV, a bunch of town officials in St. Paul were cracking wise over a few beers. The topic? A centennial project for the town.

Someone suggested a UFO landing pad. After everyone stopped laughing, the idea sank in. The premise was that St. Paul was so friendly it would roll out the red carpet for everyone and anyone to town — even E.T.

Later, after the landing pad was established, someone suggested a hotline for UFO sightings and Pelletier, who was with the chamber of commerce, became directly involved.

Pelletier, like the guy who opened UFO Pizza in St. Paul, was in it strictly for business. But after a while, his UFO skepticism faded. "When you begin hearing stories from people in the military, the air force, the police — well, it makes you think."

Pelletier proposed that if the hotline was "hot" enough, that St. Paul would host a conference. It held its first two years ago, featuring UFO legend Stanton Friedman.

This July, St. Paul will again host a brood of E.T. experts at its UFO 2000 conference. Such speakers as Bruce MacCabee, a PhD in physics and veteran UFO researcher, are booked for the weekend. Two years ago, 300 delegates attended. This year, as many as 600 are expected and will eat in local restaurants, stay in local hotels and take in the local sights.

COURIER & ADVERTISER, Dundee, Scotland - Nov. 23, 1999

Experts puzzled by UFO sighting

EXPERTS ARE mystified by reports from three north east youths who claim to have seen a UFO hover above their car last week.

Kevin Smith, Paul Samat and Sean Sinclair were travelling home to Aberdeen from their work in Ellon when they spotted the mysterious flying object above them.

The UFO, which was the size of a house, had red lights "glowing" from it, and other green lights around it.

The trio spotted the object at 7.30 on Friday night next to the A90.

After studying it for several minutes and ruling the object out as a helicopter, the intrepid youths decided to follow it.

The friends kept track of it in the direction of Newburgh as the UFO either continued to move beside the car at a distance or stay stationary for short periods.

However, after several minutes the object suddenly shot off, and they lost it in the lights of the nearby village.

The group of friends did not report their sighting to police, but are convinced other motorists must have seen the unidentified object.

An expert UFO spotter said the description they gave and the behaviour of the object seemed to concur with it being a UFO.

The spokesman said, "This is a classic UFO sighting—a glowing red light which does things ordinary aircraft can't."

A spokesman for RAF Kinloss said they received no reports from people about a UFO and said nothing out of the ordinary showed up on their radar screen that night.

He added, "All I can say is it is not one of ours. It does not really fit the description of anything based here."

POST, Birmingham, England - Sept. 16, 1999

Experts baffled by UFO-style sighting in sky

By PETER WOODMAN

Special Correspondent

A UFO-style incident — reported by two passenger airline pilots flying from Heathrow airport — has baffled aviation experts.

Flying in and out of cloud at 3,000ft, the pilots of an Oslo-bound McDonnell Douglas MD81 aircraft reported seeing a metallic grey-coloured object 20ft away.

No explanation for the object could be found despite extensive inquiries, said a report from the Civil Aviation Authority.

The captain reported the object as being the size of a small aircraft, while the co-pilot described it as a "bright light, very close".

Reporting to an air traffic controller, the captain said "a flare or something passed 20ft from our aircraft".

The pilot agreed to file an airprox, or near-miss, report and commented that the object "looked like a fighter or something moving very fast".

A series of checks into the incident, at mid-day June 12, 1998, revealed nothing on a radar replay screen, nothing from a local police investigation and nothing from inquiries among the general public.

"Despite the extensive efforts of the police, the military aeronautical information services and the general public, there are no clues as to the nature of the object."

Cosmic predators

When cases of cattle mutilated with surgical precision coincide with other strange events, investigators suspect a deadly extra-terrestrial breed, reports NICK REDFERN

For 30 years rural America has played host to an uninvited and most definitely unwelcome guest. With remarkable stealth, it prowls the length and breadth of the country, committing atrocious acts of mutilation on innocent cattle; blood, bodily organs, fluids and glands are removed and glands are removed with disturbing speed and precision, giving every impression that a superior technology far exceeding that of 20th century science is at work.

Moreover, in many instances of mutilation, strange aerial lights are seen in the same area suggesting that the two phenomena, whatever their ultimate nature, have a common point of origin. And it is not just unidentified airborne objects that are seen. In a number of cases, the cattle mutilators have been witnessed committing their savage acts of slaughter, and those responsible are not predators such as foxes or coyotes; they are not livestock rustlers; and they are not mentally deranged people seeking macabre thrills.

No, all of the evidence suggests that North America has in its midst a silent and deadly breed of extra-terrestrial which is literally harvesting animals on a massive scale, and the authorities are fully aware of what is taking place.

For those investigators who have looked into the animal mutilation mystery, the premier event was that of September 1967, when Lady, a three-year-old horse belonging to Nellie Lewis, was found killed and mutilated under shocking circumstances on the ranch of her brother, Harry King, in southern Colorado. While the body of Lady was left essentially intact, the flesh from her neck and head had been completely removed in what seemed to be a surgical procedure.

From his Alamosa home, Nellie Lewis' husband, Berle, commenting on the sudden increase in UFO sightings which accompanied Lady's death, said: "We see something, I won't say what it is, every night."

A further account came one month after the events at the King ranch from two witnesses who caught sight of a pair of high-flying, cigar-shaped objects each about half the size of a football field on a course that would have taken them over the southern Colorado area.

In May 1973, Judy Doraty was driving home with her family after an evening in Houston, Texas, when they actually came across apparent alien creatures in the process of conducting a mutilation procedure on a calf. State investigator Linda Howe said: "Judy described how in a pale beam of yellow light, a small brown and white calf was taken up into the craft. Then, in an extraordinary way, Judy was inside the craft, and she watched the calf have pieces of it excised: the tongue, the sex organs, the eyes..."

And who exactly, was carrying out the procedures on the unfortunate creature? "Two little men about 3.5ft to 4ft tall with large egg-shaped heads," reports Howe.

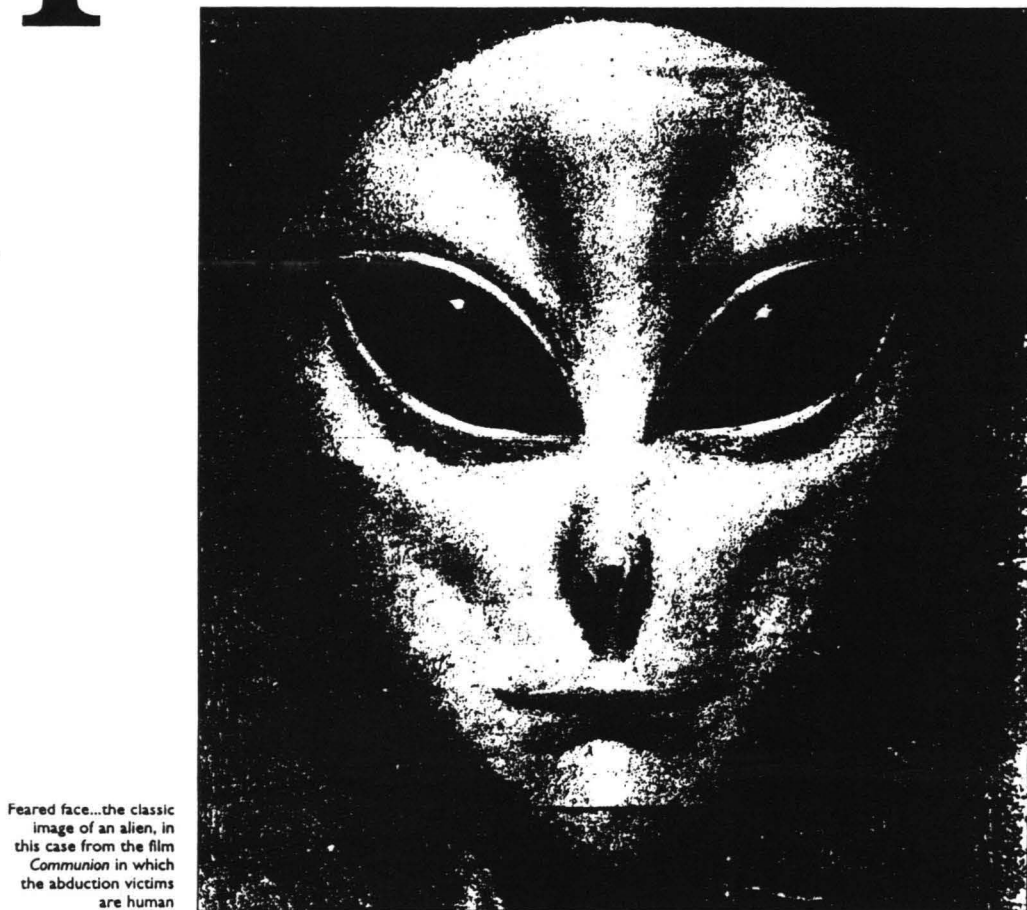
During mid-1974, at least five cattle were found slain and mutilated in Madison County, Nebraska. In all cases the genitalia of the animals were removed, and in one instance the cow was reported to be minus one ear and eye, as well as its nose, mouth and tongue.

Again UFOs were reported. One witness, Harold Kester, described seeing an object that "looked as if it had a little bluish-green light on each side with a glow surrounding it. It was behind a tree and moved from one side of the tree to the other. We couldn't tell how close it was or how fast it was moving."

In June 1990, Ralph Steiner, an award-winning radio producer who lives in Berkeley, California, conducted an interview with Linda Howe, during which Howe discussed the testimony of a Waco, Texas, rancher who in 1980 had a practically identical encounter with two 4ft tall creatures, with oversized, oval heads and "long, solid" black eyes, carrying the body of a calf near a small hill on his ranch.

"That rancher was petrified" said Howe. "He ran away, and it took him three days to get the courage to go back. When he did, he took his wife and his son with him. There they found the calf, completely eviscerated of skeleton and organs."

Bringing matters more up to date, in January 1974, cattle mutilations were rife in Colorado. A local journalist, Christopher O'Brian, informed a UFO researcher, John Grace, that over the course of the previous one and a half months, the San Louis Valley area had played host to a variety of unusual and unexplained phenomena. Almost



Feared face...the classic image of an alien, in this case from the film *Communion* in which the abduction victims are human

“THEY WERE EXPERIMENTING WITH ORGAN HARVESTING, POSSIBLY FOR TRANSPLANT”

nightly, O'Brian advised Grace, formations of helicopters had been viewed in the vicinity of the valley perimeter, as if waiting for "something" to make its presence felt; and more disturbingly, the local cattle population was also suffering adversely at the hands of unknown forces.

But if UFOs and alien creatures are involved in the bizarre mutilations, then what is their purpose? An alarming scenario has been put forward by former CIA pilot John Lear (the only pilot in the world to have obtained every airman certificate issued by the American Aviation Authority). As Lear says: "The EBE (Extra-Terrestrial Biological Entity - a term reportedly used in government circles to describe alien creatures) have a genetic disorder in that their digestive system is atrophied and not functional. In order to sustain themselves they use an enzyme or hormonal secretion obtained from the tissue that they extract. The cattle mutilations that were prevalent throughout the period from 1973 to 1983, were for the collection of these tissues by the aliens."

A similar account comes from Colonel Philip Corso, who served on President Eisenhower's National Security Council: "In the Pentagon from 1961 to 1963, I reviewed field reports from local and state police agencies about the discoveries of dead cattle whose carcasses looked as though they had been systematically mutilated. Corso said

that typically the animals were found completely drained of blood and the bodily organs "were removed with surgical skill". He concluded: "It was the EBEs who were experimenting with organ harvesting, possibly for transplant into other species or for processing into some sort of nutrient package or even to create some sort of hybrid biological entity."

If this sounds like something straight out of science fiction, it should be noted that not only did Corso serve on Eisenhower's National Security Council, but he also served on General MacArthur's staff in Korea, worked with the Warren Commission that investigated the killing of President John F. Kennedy and, during his military career, was honoured with no fewer than 19 medals, decorations and ribbons for meritorious service.

Reports such as these do little to inspire the feeling that our other-worldly visitors are essentially benevolent. Yet, examined logically, this may simply be the cosmic equivalent of a visit to the local butchers. Horrific from our point of view, but who is to say what code of ethics an extra-terrestrial species adheres to?

If the full truth surrounding the UFO controversy ultimately surfaces, aspects of it may not prove to be to our liking...

UFO investigation didn't delve far enough

TOPPER, Nottingham, England - Oct. 6, 1999

DEAR Editor, it was with much intrigue that I read last week's article about the suspected UFO sighting over Nottingham three years ago.

Whilst the story brings us little fresh evidence, I feel that the authorities behind the investigation — despite the lengthy study — should

continue to probe the sighting.

A case of 'file still open', you might say.

Whilst UFO investigations are difficult tasks at the best of time, surely the sheer number of reports from the public on that day in question justify further inquiries.

I mean, this thing was described as 100ft in diameter; now that's one big footy pitch.

Did the police and authorities ask if anyone had video footage?

Did they speak to people in the immediate vicinity? I don't think they did.

If this was an elaborate hoax that really worked, then surely some of the answers from these sources would have ruled out the old alien theory.

As I see it, we are all too quick to dismiss the fact that there are other objects — and beings — in this mighty universe we are part of.

G. Lomas
The Meadows

US radar 'tracked doomed alien craft which crashed in Staffs'

A SECLUDED wood just off the New Penkridge Road on Cannock Chase was the scene of a major UFO crash in the spring of 1964.

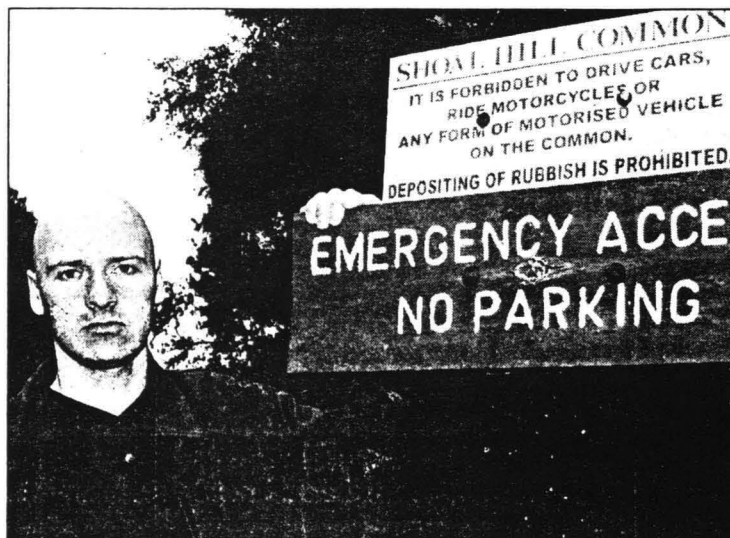
American radar tracked the UFO, which appeared to break into two parts, one crashing in Germany, the larger part falling to Earth in Staffordshire.

Military and intelligence forces were quick to start the retrieval operation which, according to Nick Redfearn's investigation, may have included several bodies.

But what is almost as remarkable is the chain of events that led Nick to this conclusion.

He said: "A small triangular or delta-shaped object was definitely retrieved from the Cannock Chase forest," Nick said.

He first heard about the incident from a former US Air force



THE SCENE: Nick Redfearn on Shoal Hill Common, Cannock Chase

intelligence officer, Leonard Stringfield.

"He was given details of a crash at Penkridge, a village of which he could not have heard, which involved the recovery of three alien bodies, so I carried out some research of my own," he said.

Nick published an appeal through a Black Country newspaper, giving only scant details of the incident in question.

One witness, whose own story matched the facts in the American intelligence account, was a man called Harold South.

Nick and Irene Bott, of the Staffordshire UFO Group, paid Harold a visit to hear his story.

He was a travelling salesman at the time and stumbled upon the crash retrieval operation.

The keen train-spotter always

carried a camera, and was allowed by the guards to photograph the operation.

But later Harold was taken to Bloxwich Police Station and his camera confiscated. He was told never to talk about the incident and the camera was returned with a brand new film.

"On the day we visited him he received a phone call from the Ministry of Defence police, which was clearly an attempt to stop him talking.

"We were able to confirm this and get the contact with the Ministry on audio cassette.

"This does suggest to me that 30 years on, the MoD was still concerned that this guy was going to talk publicly and was still being monitored," Nick said.



If extraterrestrials really are out there, the odds are good they can be found floating over British Columbia. The West Coast was the place to be in 1999 if you wanted to spot a UFO, says a University of Manitoba science writer. Chris Rutkowski reports

a 30% national increase in UFO reports, fueled largely by the B.C. boom of 118 sightings, accounting for almost half the objects seen in Canadian skies last year. Ontario was second with 79 reports, while there were none

at all in Nova Scotia or the Northwest Territories. Mr. Rutkowski says B.C.'s very active UFO community may explain the extra sightings. "B.C. has a UFO hotline and they have a TV show and they publish a magazine and there's really quite a devoted following in B.C., while that isn't the case in Saskatchewan or New Brunswick," *The Canadian Press*

B.C. shows that the greater the interest in UFOs in a province, the more likely they'll show up there

ENOUGH ALREADY

NATIONAL POST, Toronto, Ontario, Canada - April 28, 2000 CR: G. Duplantier

YELLOW ADVERTISER, Colchester, England - Oct. 1, 1999

Sky shocker

THE unidentified flying objects seen in the skies above Southend on October 14 1954 provide a prime example of a local close encounter of the first kind, and were expertly witnessed by a reputable RAF pilot.

On the date in question, Flight Lieutenant James Salandin was flying a Meteor 8 twin-jet, single seater fighter plane from North Weald airbase.

From 1950 to 1958 the Meteor 8 was the RAF's main daylight interceptor, part of a nationwide air defence network in the early days of the Cold War.

Ft Lt Salandin was a 'weekend' pilot of the No 604 County of Middlesex Squadron, Royal Auxiliary Air Force.

Reputation

He was not a glory hound or sensation seeker, and placed a great value on his personal reputation, so there seems little likelihood of him fabricating his encounter for 15 minutes of fame.

At 4.15pm Salandin took off into a blue and cloudless sky in a southerly direction from North Weald. He flew his Meteor up to about 16,000 ft, and observed the formation flights of two other Meteors high above him.



words by
Matt Adams

At the very last minute the UFO swerved off past the Meteor and vanished, again to the left, leaving the Ft Lt so badly shaken after such a near miss that he took ten minutes to recover before reporting the incident to ground control.

Salandin went on to detail his encounter in an interview conducted by Derek Dempster for Flying Saucer Review, and the truth behind what he saw remains a mystery to this day.

Bearing in mind that his experience took place at a period of great East-West tension, it could be argued that the UFO was a secret airforce experiment.

Unidentified

But the technology required for such aerial manoeuvres seems far in advance of anything known today, let alone 40 years ago. It seems likely therefore that this particular flying object will remain unidentified.

The Y Files would welcome readers' accounts of their own personal UFO sightings for inclusion within future articles. Anonymity will be provided if privacy is requested, although a name and address must be supplied.

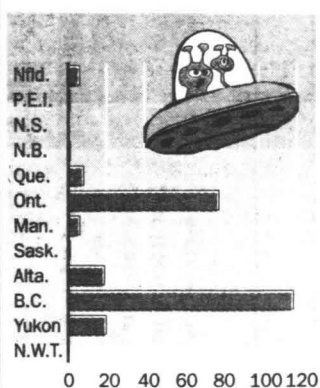
But as he passed over the outlying districts of Southend, Salandin saw two circular objects pass rapidly between the other planes from the opposite direction.

The two UFOs, one silver and the other gold, disappeared out of sight to the Ft Lt's left, but in front of him he saw another silvery object hurtling on a collision course towards his plane.

In the few minutes during which Salandin saw the UFO, he observed that it had a bun-shaped top, a flange like two saucers in the middle, and another bun underneath. It also overlapped his windscreen, and he therefore assumed it was very close (a Meteor's 37 ft wingspan filled the windscreen from a distance of 150 yds).

B.C. the nation's hotspot for UFO sightings

UFO sightings by province, 1999



Source: UFOlogy Research of Manitoba CP

From Surrey to Kimberley, almost half the sightings in Canada come over B.C.

SCOTT EDMONDS
CANADIAN PRESS
and JIM BRONSKILL
SOUTHAM NEWSPAPERS

WINNIPEG — If the truth really is out there, the odds are good it's going to be found hovering over a fern bar in B.C. British Columbia was the place to be in 1999 if you wanted to spot a UFO. British Columbians helped drive a 30-per-cent national increase in unidentified flying object reports, says Chris

Rutkowski, a University of Manitoba science writer and amateur astronomer who has just published the 11th annual survey of sightings.

Almost half the sightings in Canada last year — 118 — were seen over the West Coast.

Ontario had 79 reports and after that they drop off sharply: Yukon 20, Alberta 19, Quebec eight, Manitoba and Newfoundland six each, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Saskatchewan one each, and none in Nova Scotia or the Northwest Territories.

A very active UFO research community in B.C. gets some of the credit, suggests Rutkowski.

"B.C. has a UFO hotline and they have a TV show and they publish a magazine and there's really quite a devoted following in B.C., while that isn't the case in Saskatchewan or New Brunswick.

"So I think that and the larger population base has added to the fact that there's so many UFO reports there."

One example of the reports out of B.C. last year included a sighting in May over the Richmond area, not far from Vancouver International Airport.

It was seen by observers just about 300 metres from ground level.

"They described it as a rectangular sheet of plywood with lights on it floating above the ground. That certainly doesn't sound like your average Cessna or DC-3."

In another B.C. report, a 16-year-old girl in Surrey had just turned her bedroom light off one January night when she heard a noise and felt a presence. She went to the window and saw a glowing object hovering over the trees.

The object projected a light from underneath, a ghostly apparition she described as "dancing shapes coming together to form a beam." The creature-like figure settled, as if crouching in a tree, and the glowing object quickly disappeared.

Frightened, she roused her parents but by the time they arrived there was nothing to be seen.

Rutkowski says the incident was not among the eight, high-quality unexplained cases logged last year — about three per cent of reported sightings — because there was no corroboration or physical evidence. "It's strange, but I don't think we have enough information about it."

Other B.C. sightings include:

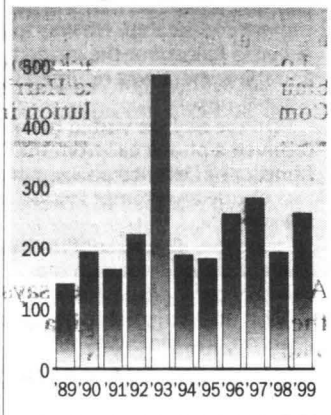
- Kimberley, March 5: Six people see a diamond-shaped object surrounded by brilliant lights. Shiny beams come from a pyramid-shaped protrusion on the bottom of the object.
- White Rock, April 27: A cluster of rectangular lights appear on the ground in front of a house, then vanish.
- Surrey, May 31: Two witnesses observe 10 small red lights form geometric patterns in the sky and then vanish.
- Courtenay, June 16: A Canadian Forces air force officer and two other witnesses see what they first think is a satellite. It stops its forward motion, moves erratically then interacts with another object and flies away.

When B.C. is removed from the mix, the last decade shows a fairly consistent level of UFO activity, says Rutkowski. The average is around 230 a year although last year there were 259.

"If you look at the entire 11-year-span I think things even out quite well."

Almost 80 per cent of last year's sightings could be explained away as natural phenomena such as meteors or fireballs. But it's what's left that has

UFO sightings in Canada



Source: UFOlogy Research of Manitoba

kept people like Rutkowski engrossed in the study of UFOs.

Some provinces showed a decrease in UFO sightings. Manitoba, for example, reported just six sightings compared with 15 in 1998.

For the second straight year, however, there were a large number of sightings in the Yukon, despite its rather small population. There were 22 sightings in 1998.

"One theory that's been suggested is if it really is related to the testing of secret aircraft by the Americans, the perfect place to do it would be in the Alaska-Yukon area where there's very little population.

"If it's not that, then maybe the aliens are looking for a place where there's not very many people either."

He says the Yukon continues to be a hot spot.

"It's showing no sign of stopping. Already this year in 2000 there have been some extraordinary cases coming out of the Yukon. We have no idea why this is so."

Rutkowski also speculates that the mystery of the millennium may account for the increase in reported sightings last year.

"I would call it millennial fever. There was a lot of speculation that as we approached the year 2000, that people would be caught up in millennial frenzy, that they'd be looking for the end of the world and signs in the heavens and so forth," said Rutkowski, a Winnipeg science writer.

"So it could be that a lot more people were looking up or were paying attention to things that were just a little bit out of the ordinary in their environment."

TOPPER, Nottingham, England - Sept. 29, 1999

UFO sighting: boffs baffled

BRITAIN'S top scientists have failed to come up with an explanation for a UFO sighting over Nottingham three years ago.

Hundreds of people telephoned the police to report a brightly-lit object the size of a football pitch hovering above Carlton.

So many people claimed to have seen it that investigators thought it unlikely to be a hoax or a hallucination.

But despite an investigation into the incident, scientists are still unable to explain what the object was.

Dr Jackie Mitton of the Royal Astronomical Society, one of the world's most respected UFO investigators, said: "There is not a single scrap of evidence that earth is being visited by aliens."

"The phenomenon of UFO sightings is real and needs to be studied but most sightings have a rational explanation."

Scientists think the

'spacecraft' over Carlton may have been caused by a bizarre optical illusion from sunlight reflecting off a massive flock of geese or a nearby lake.

Another possible explanation is that it was caused by high level noctilucent clouds which can form eerie patterns in the setting sun.

Other possible reasons include tests of top secret military aircraft, magnified reflections from real spacecraft such as the Mir space station or rare atmospheric conditions resulting in magnified 'mirages'.

But despite the possible explanations, many people who witnessed seeing the object say they will never forget what they saw.

Witness Richard Gould of Netherfield, who was driving through the area when he saw the UFO, said: "I don't know what I saw but it certainly wasn't a flock of geese or a reflection from a cloud."

"It was absolutely massive, very bright and very low — loads of us saw it so we can't all have been hallucinating."

BRIGHOUSE ECHO, Yorks., England - Nov. 12, 1999

Excitement over UFO footage

UFO video footage shot over Hipperholme has produced some of the best film of the phenomenon taken in England for three decades.

Mr Paul Mercer, of Queensbury, filmed the strange flying object at around 8am on Monday, October 25.

UFOlogists who have studied the film say the object darts about too quickly to be a conventional aircraft and seems to constantly shift in shape.

Mr Mercer was filming the moon and then started filming a plane, but was astounded when he saw the strange object gliding nearby.

The UFO takes on a ball-like shape before shifting into a hamburger, an oyster opening up and a cigar.

"This film has given some of the best footage caught in England during the last 30 years," said Mr Russell Kellet, co-ordinator of the International UFO Research Network.

He said a spate of sightings had been reported in recent weeks. He wanted to find out if anybody had seen something similar. He can be contacted on 01274 501463.



Physicists say they developed way to flip nature's circuits

Using copper to make a "metamaterial," the two scientists say their work shows the "left hand of nature."

By Jim Dawson
Star Tribune Staff Writer

Two physicists have created a "composite material" that has the ability to reverse some of the natural laws governing ordinary material, potentially causing a host of wave phenomena, everything from light to microwaves, to move in directions exactly opposite of what occurs in nature.

Put another way, the researchers said, everything in nature is "right-handed" while the new material is "left-handed."

The material, developed in the past two months by Sheldon Schultz and David Smith, both of the University of California, San Diego, was presented Tuesday at a national meeting of the American Physical Society in Minneapolis. While the implications of the discovery aren't yet clear, several experts said it could be of great importance in expanding the speed and efficiency of myriad computer-chip-sized communications and data-transfer devices.

Exactly what Schultz and Smith did involves the complex physics of how a substance responds to electric and magnetic fields. By directing microwaves into a unique arrangement of copper wires and circles, the researchers got specific electric and magnetic

responses — known as "epsilon" and "mu," respectively — to go from positive to negative energy. When that happened, Schultz said, the microwaves dramatically changed their behavior.

Because microwaves are just one portion of the electromagnetic spectrum, Schultz believes the same phenomenon might occur at other wavelengths, including light, although he was careful to note that the phenomenon might not work at wavelengths of visible — that is, beyond infrared — light.

What became clear as the researchers spoke is that their new "material" isn't a material in the traditional sense. The phenomena that they created depend on a device made of normal copper. Their unique material is more of an electromagnetic state of being, or environment, created out of ordinary material.

Schultz described the discovery as "metamaterial," or "artificial, constructed components" that produced the unusual phenomena. Flow microwaves into the device in a precise way, and the new material exists. Turn off the power, and the device reverts to normal copper.

Using light beams to demonstrate how the phenomenon might work in a "left-handed" piece of glass, Schultz noted that a beam deflected up from a normal piece of glass would deflect down from the new glass. In another example, he said that a person looking through a normal glass window at a lit candle would see the rays of light diverging from the flame, whereas left-handed glass would focus the light to a point on

the glass. In summing up the opposite nature of the "left-handed" phenomenon, he said that "a concave lens becomes convex, and a convex lens becomes concave."

Walter Kohn, physicist at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and winner of the 1998 Nobel Prize in chemistry, said after listening to Schultz and Smith that he had just "learned about this 'Alice In Wonderland' yesterday," but found the work "extremely interesting and would be surprised if there weren't some interesting consequences."

Physicist Marvin Cohen, of the University of California, Berkeley, said that he too first heard about the work Monday and quickly read the scientific papers. "I was very impressed that they have done this," he said. "A lot of people will be thinking along the lines of 'How can you do this in regular materials?'"

The potential applications for the "metamaterial" are unclear, but Schultz noted that because the discovery "carves out a niche of [electromagnetic] material space" in which everything is reversed, "somebody is going to think of clever things you can do with it."

Even if the phenomenon just works in the microwave wavelength, he said, it could lead to better antennas and more efficient satellite communications systems.

"This may be a little bit like the laser" when it was discovered, said physicist Phil Schewe, a spokesman for the physics society. "People at the time were not sure what it was good for."



Nurit Karlin

By HENRY FOUNTAIN

Play It Again, Earth

Carole King had it right: the earth *did* move under her feet. In fact, it is still moving, and not just whenever some heartthrob is around. The earth is continuously vibrating, although at extremely low frequencies (on the order of once every couple of hundred seconds or so) and amplitudes.

Just what makes the earth hum has been unknown, though scientists who confirmed the hum several years ago speculated that the earth might be oscillating in resonance with the atmosphere. Now, new research reported in the journal *Science* supports that idea.

The researchers, from Japan, examined how the amplitude of this background vibration varied over 10 years, as measured continuously by specialized seismometers. They ignored periods when strong earthquakes sent vibrations off the scale.

They found that the amplitude varied annually, reaching peaks in July and August. This, of course, corresponds with summer in the Northern Hemisphere. And they noted that convective turbulence, the movement of warm air to the top of the atmosphere, is greatest in northern summers (the effect in summer in the Southern Hemisphere being more effectively mediated by oceans). All this convective cycling, the researchers suggest, results in dynamic pressure on the earth that keeps it humming along.

Falling ice baffles scientists

Wrong color for jet waste, expert says

Associated Press

MADRID — A team of scientists hope chemical analysis will reveal this week why at least 15 blocks of ice, some as big as basketballs, have plummeted from Spanish skies in the past 10 days.

"The most surprised person of all by this phenomenon is me," said geologist Jesus Martinez Frias who is heading a team of Spanish scientists that has trav-



Associated Press

The Scientific Research Center in Madrid displays ice blocks that fell from Spanish skies recently.

eled over the country collecting and analyzing the blocks of ice which weigh as much as 8 pounds.

The chunks of ice, which have landed in the countryside, on city

plazas and in streets, have so far caused no serious damage or injuries.

Spanish meteorologists say no weather phenomenon could explain the ice.

Frias told the daily *El Pais* that the blocks, which scientists have wrapped in plastic and refrigerated, appear to be nearly 100 percent frozen water, but chemical testing should reveal their origin by Friday.

In the past, falling blocks of ice have proven to be waste flushed out of passenger jets or pieces of comet tails. But Martinez said the current giant hail lacks the coloration of jet waste.

And the chunks are too scattered and infrequent to come from a comet.

He said that, as they reach Earth the size of basketballs, they should have been large enough while plummeting through the atmosphere to register on radar screens.

VANCE ORCHARD: Touchet Valley Ramblings

Take two goats and call me!

A bunch of Walla Walla men have sort of taken the lead in running down this Bigfoot thing around here, but a woman is right up there with them, heading into the hills every chance she gets.

Dar (Glasgow) Addington of Walla Walla uses a motorized vehicle to reach some of her Bigfoot prowling but she is the only one around here who uses pack goats.

That's right ... the trained goat you own or rent to do your gear packing when you want to hike the woodsy trails but not be burdened by a pack on your back. The goat

does it for you and those who have turned to this animal say it's a lot better than a horse, llama or whatever.

Oh, oh! I'm sure to hear from a couple of those.

Dar and her husband, Mark, got into this goat thing about 10-12 years ago but it was before that that Dar got interested when on a trip to Switzerland. Now, the Addingtons are recognized with highest marks in the goat-breeding world. They train the goats and rent or sell them to the hikers.

And, maybe to some who believe they too can track down the elusive Bigfoot!

A few lines about this unique pack animal, then we'll get into

the Bigfoot stuff.

The goats Dar raises can easily pack 40-50 pounds (the bucks, that is) and will browse on a wide variety of plant life in the hills, so

the late Bigfoot tracker. "While the Alpine will be ahead of a string on the trail, the Saanen will be bringing up the rear, plodding along."

Sumerlin, it might be noted here too, was owner of several horses and used them for his packing business. But, he admired the abilities of the goats of Dar.

A Bigfoot enthusiast almost since she got into the pack goat business, Dar says that whenever a sighting of Bigfoot tracks is heard of, she and Mark will head for the site.

"Mark's regular week-day job is pretty demanding and he isn't a hiker much, so I usually head out with a goat and

my Sasquatch kit, while Mark stays at the truck," Dar says.

Besides food and cameras, the goats also pack the "Sasquatch kit," something no serious Bigfooter should be without, it might be noted.

"The goat is the best way to go looking for a Bigfoot or tracks," Dar says. "At least it sure is for me, because I always want my Sasquatch kit with me...plaster, water, towels to wrap the cast in later, kneeling pads (like women use in the garden) a garden trowel and a steel stake to tie up my goat.

"Once a goat stepped right in a fresh plaster cast I'd made of a footprint."

How often does Dar get out to

look for Bigfoots?

"We go all the time," she quickly responded. "Two or three times a week we might be up touring Blacksnake and Biscuit ridges in the summer and hit the Five Points region a couple times a week."

For you who seek the Bigfoot, or just want a good mountain outing, these sites are good suggestions to seek out. Take the Biscuit Ridge Road past the school at Dixie and head upstream along Dry Creek to the top.

Dar has accompanied her male Bigfoot buffs on several joint jaunts to the hills ... and the side hills! And, she has learned well the techniques of tracking and making plaster casts of the tracks she finds. Besides Sumerlin, her teachers have included Paul Freeman, Bill Laughery, Dave Been and Roger Thornton. All are recognized for their contribution to the Bigfoot of the Blue Mountains experiences.

So, if you want to make your

next Bigfoot hunt (or other mountain trip) easier ... just take two goats.

And call Dar, not me!



Dar (Glasgow) Addington

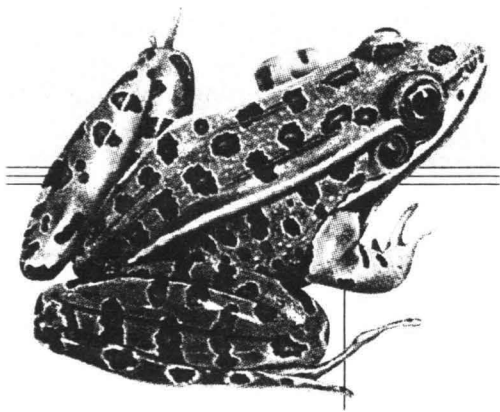
there's no need to pack in a lot of food for them. Besides, Dar says they'll go three days without food or water!

And, a goat will travel eight or ten miles a day in steep country but can do 15 or 20 miles in level going, or about what the human will want to do in ease. There's no problem here for an Addington goat as Dar breeds hers for long and stout legs.

Two people on a hike would likely want to take a couple of the goats, Dar says.

Dar says she likes the Alpine breed best but it's not the biggest of the goat breeds.

"Wes (Sumerlin) always liked the Saanen best," Dar recalled of



It's raining fish and frogs

Where would Oscar nominee P.T. Anderson be without Charles Fort?



ROBERT FULFORD
Notebook

Charles Fort was one of those dedicated screwballs who go down in history as minor gurus, their reputations kept alive for generations by loyal followers. Fort was never famous in his lifetime (1874-1932) and even today he seldom pops into public view. But *Magnolia*, a movie in which his thinking plays an off-screen role, has recently strengthened Fortean devotees in the belief that their hero remains influential.

He made his reputation by defying science just when it was becoming the dominant force in civilization. He believed scientists ignored whatever facts they could not understand, so he tried to uncover inexplicable incidents that he hoped would shake their confidence. He spent his life digging up stories about ghostly apparitions, sea monsters and mysterious lights indicating interplanetary travel. He specialized in live creatures falling from the sky. By the end of his life he had collected "294 records of showers of living things," newspaper accounts of sudden inundations of fish, spiders, worms, crabs — or frogs. Frogs were his favourites. Reading Fort, you might imagine that there are few villages anywhere that have never experienced a rain of frogs.

He believed they all came from what he called the Super-Sargasso Sea, a region in the air above us cluttered with abandoned car-

goes from old interplanetary wrecks, junk left over from earlier centuries on Earth and objects plucked from our midst by cyclones. He invented the term "teleportation" to suggest how such objects were moved about.

Fort was born in Albany, N.Y., spent much of his time in England and died in New York. He was a newspaper reporter for a few years and an unsuccessful fiction writer. He had few friends and no collaborators. He was married for most of his life to a former maid in his father's house, who was said never to have read Fort's books or anyone else's.

They were poor for many years, but in 1916 a small inheritance freed him from money worries and he spent the rest of his life in libraries. At one point he read through 25 years of the London *Daily Mail* in search of paranormal incidents. He may have been intent on undermining conventional science, but he seems also to have been interested in oddity for oddity's sake. It didn't much matter whether he believed any given report. Once he came upon a Toronto *Globe* clipping from May 25, 1899, reporting that a cow had given birth to two lambs and a calf. He acknowledged that this was as likely as an elephant giving birth to two bicycles and a baby elephant, but he passed it on to his readers anyway. It was his kind of thing. Today he would be a star contributor to the weekly tabloids.

One of his admirers, Tiffany Thayer, the novelist, organized the Fortean Society in 1931, along with such literary figures as Alexander Woollcott and Ben Hecht. After Fort's death, Thayer founded the *Fortean Society Magazine*, which later changed its name to *Doubt*. It eventually vanished, but a successor, *The Fortean Times: The Journal of Strange Phenomena*, has been published monthly in London since 1973.

It follows Fort's methods and tone precisely: It makes no attempt to separate truth from fiction but passes on each reported phenomenon with blithe evenhandedness, apparently on the principle that mere weirdness validates anything. A recent issue reports that in the last 120 years there have been 70 reported fish-falls in Australia; in 1989, for instance, about 800 sardine-sized fish (sea bream, it turned out) fell from the sky on to the home of an astonished couple in Queensland, 60 kilometres from the sea, as the fish flies.

The Fortean Times welcomes new contributors and carries a little note that indicates the nature of its contents while warning writers against making common spelling mistakes: "millennium has two n's; prophesy is the verb and prophecy is the noun; occurred has two r's; phenomena, simulacra, bacteria and data are plural. The plural of UFO is UFOs, not UFO's."

Today there's a Charles Fort Institute, a Fortean Picture Library, an International Fortean Organization. Canadian Fortean include an anonymous gentleman in Kingston, Ont., described in the publications as "the diligent Canadian Fortean, Mr. X." He's particularly interested in Canadian lake monsters.

There's something weirdly anachronistic in the perpetuation of Fort-style reporting and thinking. His followers are caught in a time warp that Fort never anticipated; they're still worrying about sea monsters, human levitators and poltergeists while scientists are routinely turning up much more startling phenomena.

How could a dubious report of spontaneous human combustion be as interesting as, say, the mandibled leaf-cutting ants in the tropics (explored in books like *The Ants*, by Edward O. Wilson and Bert Hölldobler)? The leaf-cutters strip leaves from trees, drag them beneath the surface, feed them to farms of fungi and then distribute the nutrients from the fungi to their fellow ants, a system worked out over 50 million years. Newspaper science sections carry revelations far more wondrous than anything in Fort's clipping files.

Connoisseurs of the eccentric, the quaint and the charmingly pointless enjoy Fort without taking him seriously. Ben Hecht called all his work a "Gargantuan jest," and from time to time Fort himself claimed not to believe much of it. Perhaps this is the spirit in which Paul Thomas Anderson, the writer and director of *Magnolia*, approached him. At the climax of *Magnolia*, a multitude of huge frogs falls on the San Fernando Valley (they are animatronic dummies or computer simulations; no frog was harmed in the making of this film). If people leaving the theatre are asking where the hell those frogs came from, they now have an answer — from Charles Fort.

In the film, several signs read "Exodus," suggesting that this is a version of the Biblical plague, but Anderson recently told a *Variety* reporter, "I got it first from Charles Fort, then from the Bible." He's been reading Fort for five years. Sharp-eyed viewers of the film noticed that it shows a young quiz kid with a paperback copy of *Wild Talents*, one of Fort's books, which Anderson inserted as a clue and a tribute. If his script for *Magnolia* wins an Academy Award on Sunday night, will he thank Charles Fort and the Fortean for inspiring his most memorable scene?

■ robert.fulford@utoronto.ca
National Post



What hath he wrought?
Charles Fort

Falling ice balls have Spanish scientists baffled

MADRID • Spanish scientists are puzzled about a rain of melon-sized balls of ice over the country in recent days, discounting theories that they are bits of the tail of a comet, large hail stones or the frozen contents of an airliner's toilet tank.

The scientists are hoping tomorrow's results of a first analysis of the mystery ice will clear up the origin of the giant cubes, some as big as a football and weighing up to four kilograms.

Since Jan. 8, 18 of the ice meteorites have fallen over Spain, mainly in the Valencia region in the east, but also around Seville in the south and Saragossa and Soria in the northeast. The latest fell on Tuesday in a Madrid suburb.

Some explanations of the phenomenon, far from being extra-terrestrial, have turned out to be very down to earth. One "mysterious" object "found" by workers on a road turned out simply to be a block of ice they had used as a football.

But that hasn't cleared up questions about the other ice blocks.

The National Weather Forecasting Institute formally ruled out that the blocks were hail stones, saying the phenomena were unknown to meteorological science, and the weather was fine at the time and the skies were blue.

"There is no historic record of a hailstone weighing more than a kilo because updraughts holding up the hailstones in the clouds do not exceed 100 km/h and cannot support any greater weight," said Jeroni Lorente, a scientist at the University of Barcelona.

The first ice balls were blamed on

airliners, but the theory was weakened by the fact they fell to earth away from regular flight paths. Also, the ice is clean, cancelling the theory that airliners might have accidentally emptied their toilet tanks, as occurred over Galicia in 1996.

The respected Higher Centre for Scientific Research (CSCI) specu-

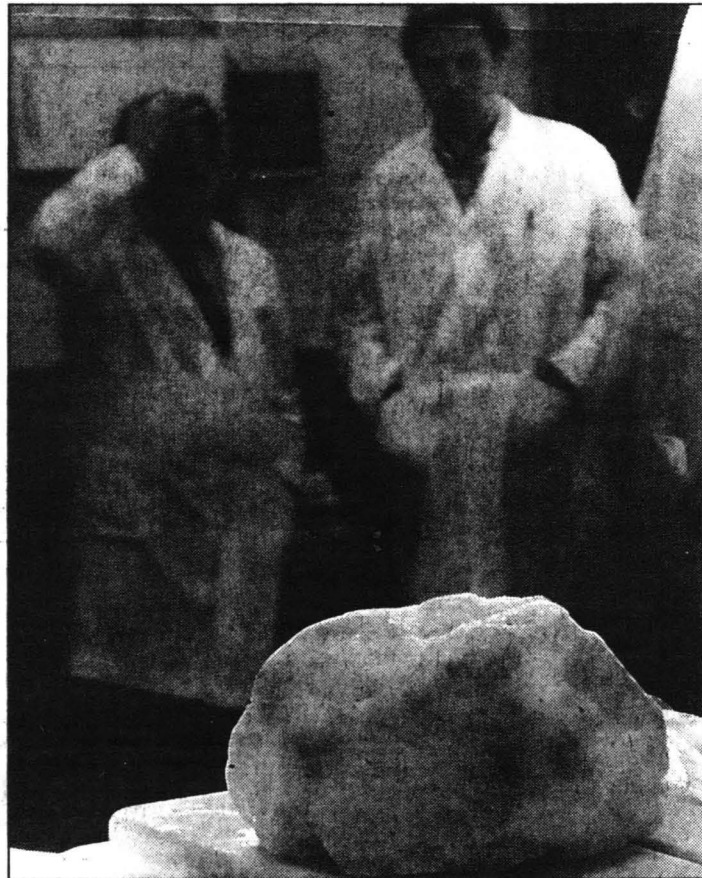
lated on Monday that the ice had dropped from the tail of a comet.

"You could have fooled me," said centre geologist Jesus Martinez Frias, who heads a team of experts from the environment ministry.

Mr. Martinez said it was dangerous to theorize, but contradicted himself by saying that everything seemed to indicate the ice lumps were the remains of a comet.

"Impossible!" retorted Marc Kidger of the Canaries Astrophysics Institute. "The pieces would have all fallen at the same time and not only over Spain."

Agence France-Presse



ANDREA COMAS / REUTERS

Scientists in Spain are still testing the ice balls to find out what they are.

Wanted, preferably alive: proof that Okanagan Lake's fabled Opopo monster really exists

SOME CALL IT PROGRESS

The elusive Opopo, a legendary monster in southern British Columbia's Okanagan Lake, has a \$2-million price on its head. The reward is being offered by the Chamber of Commerce in Penikese, B.C., a small community along the lake, to anyone with scientific proof that the monster exists. "There has to be something out there," said John

Singleton, the commerce manager. "There's too many people who have seen something." An insurance policy from Lloyds of London is underwriting the \$2-million prize. The insurance cost about \$2,500.

However, no one is taking the bounty seriously. "This initiative is meant to be a valley-wide one to create some fun for families and scientists alike," Mr. Singleton added. The contest, which grew out of millennium project discussions, runs for one year beginning on Labour Day. *The Canadian Press*

Bigfoot is big deal for group of Alabamians, Atlantans

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ashville, Ala. — Don't tell Hawk Spearman there's no such thing as Bigfoot.

The St. Clair County resident, whose organization searches for clues of the creature in north Alabama, said he saw his first Bigfoot in Ohio. Actually, he says, he saw a whole group of them.

"It was 7 to 9 feet high," he said. "One had a stone over his head and he threw it 50 feet. It was by no means a guy in a monkey suit. I saw its muscles flex."

Bigfoot is also known as Sasquatch, the Yeti and the Wildman. And Spearman, wife Karen and other members of the Alabama Bigfoot Seekers Research Group are looking for him.

"A lot of people are afraid to say, 'I saw Bigfoot,' because they can't explain it," said Spearman. "A lot of people get laughed at and ridiculed."

The organization's members believe every report of a Bigfoot sighting is true until proven otherwise, Spearman said.

The amateur zoologists use video cameras, tape recorders and the Internet to compile information on the creatures, thought by most people to be little more than a modern myth.

"There's a bunch of questions," Spearman, 27, concedes. "And the answers don't all piece together."

According to a 1978 book, "Sasquatch: The Apes Among Us," by John Green, Bigfoot sightings were reported in the mid-1970s in the Albertville and Guntersville areas. Other reports have been made in Dothan, Red Bay and Mobile.

"They're humanoid," said Spearman, who says he doesn't want to kill any Bigfeet, just capture one to study its diet and maybe the DNA structure.

"They have more cunning sens-

es. They can pick out scents. They're nocturnal. They come out at night and sleep during the day."

Spearman's group, which meets twice a month and goes on regular outings to search for the elusive creatures, has recently joined with an association in the Atlanta area to form the Southeastern Bigfoot Research Organization.

Spearman argues that as cities and urban areas push out farther into the nation's undeveloped areas, the chances of finding Bigfoot are getting better. But so far, the wily wild one has left only foot tracks and an occasional hair sample, he said.

"One day, Bigfoot will be known to man, and then they'll say, 'By golly, he was right,'" Spearman said.