

UFO

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CITY LIMITS

"I wish I knew
what I saw. It
wasn't a balloon.
It wasn't a plane
or Superman or
Underdog."

The Truth Is Almost Out Here

**A UFO museum may blast
off in Denver.**

BY KAREN BOWERS

In the world of Ufology, it's tough to be taken seriously.

"There'll be a sighting somewhere, and it'll be a fantastic sighting," says Mike Curta, state director of the Colorado Chapter of the Mutual UFO Network (MUFON). "Five hundred people saw it, and there'll be an interview with a doctor, and they'll talk to the local fire chief, and they'll always put in a woman in a muumuu with curlers in her hair and missing three-quarters of her teeth, and she'll say how she's been abducted 27 times and that the last time they let her pilot the craft to Jupiter and back. And that blows the credibility. It seems like a losing battle."

But establishing credibility and rapport — particularly with the FAA, the Air Force and NORAD — is high on the agenda for Curta and for MUFON's recently appointed international director, John Schuessler, who hopes that moving the group's headquarters from tiny Seguin, Texas, to the Denver area will help.

A founding member of MUFON, Schuessler is a mechanical engineer and the former director of engineering for McDonnell Douglas in Houston. He was responsible for designing the life-support systems on the Gemini spacecraft, and he worked on the space shuttle program and on the design of the not-yet-completed international space station before his retirement two years ago. He's about as far from a muumuu-clad space abductee as one can imagine.

Schuessler, who now lives in Littleton, became interested in UFOs in the mid-'60s while working on the Gemini Missions, which used two-man capsules to test long-duration flights, docking techniques and space walking. "I heard reports from astronauts who'd seen things, and they didn't know what they were — cylindrical-shaped things passing by the spacecraft at some distance. There was

something up there that we didn't put up there that they didn't understand. It was really tough to build spacecraft in those days, and if they'd seen something...it really pushed my interest. So I began looking into it, and the more I looked, the more I found."

In 1969, Schuessler — who was based in St. Louis at the time — teamed up with other UFO enthusiasts to form what was then called the Midwest UFO Network. The first director was a chemistry professor at Wisconsin State University in Oshkosh. He was followed by Walt Andrus, who worked as a consumer-products manager for Motorola. Under their leadership, MUFON grew to include a magazine, *Skylook*, and as many as 5,000 members. (Its roster is now down to 3,000, Andrus says, a fact he attributes to competition from the Internet and other magazines.)

Since the beginning, MUFON members have devoted themselves to the scientific research of UFO phenomena. They sponsor international symposiums presided over by scientists, engineers and university professors. They teach their members how to document sightings and how to investigate sighting reports, and they're aided in their investigations by a board whose members represent 45 areas of science and technology.

Andrus, who is 79, took over as director in 1970 and moved MUFON headquarters to Seguin five years later; the group opened the MUFON museum there in 1994 in a strip-mall storefront.

With 500 square feet of memorabilia, the museum's collection includes photos of UFOs and other phenomena such as crop circles; an art exhibit of drawings and paintings of aliens created by people who say they've seen the visitors; life-sized alien models; and assorted space debris from the days of the U.S./U.S.S.R. space race. The museum also contains a library of UFO- and space-related books, as well as a catalogue of sightings reports.

And it could all be in the Denver area as soon as next month.

The museum hasn't been a big draw in Seguin, says Andrus, in part because of the town's location — about twenty miles northwest of San Antonio — and because it's usually closed during the school year.

Andrus, who stepped down as international director earlier this month, developed his interest in UFOs in 1948 when he spotted four unidentified objects flying over downtown Phoenix. It's a story he relates with precision, fit for the pages of MUFON's own *Field Investigator's Manual*. "It was one in the afternoon," he says. "A perfectly blue sky. A typical August day in Phoenix — 117 degrees. There were four objects flying in formation. They looked like silver balloons. I saw the first one in the northeast sky. It moved slowly west. It was a dull aluminum

color and didn't reflect the sunlight. The first one simply disappeared, like someone had stuck a pin in the balloon. Then the second disappeared, then the third, and eventually the straggler disappeared."

Unfortunately — or perhaps fortunately — the vast majority of sightings MUFON investigates aren't considered UFOs. "We get somewhere between 50,000 to 80,000

reports from some kind of official organization every year," Curta says. "It might be a police department, or SETI [Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence] folks in North Carolina. Of those reports, 90 percent can be explained as normal, everyday — a planet, an airplane, a meteorite. Just slightly over 1 percent are found to be hoaxes. The other 8 or

9 percent go unexplained. Those are the ones we take a serious interest in."

Colorado is considered a hotbed of UFO activity. "Generally we get, I would say, a call a week out of the San Luis Valley. Cattle mutilations, too," Curta says. "They dropped off the last couple years, but we've had more in the last couple weeks than in the last year all together. Why, nobody seems to know. The San Luis Valley is just a strange place, anyway. The newspaper in Salida had an article in 1894 about a bunch of town residents who saw a cigar-shaped object hanging over the city. We still get a lot of that today."

The sightings that can be classified as UFOs are dissected by as many volunteer/experts as MUFON can round up. Copies of the photos are sent to MUFON headquarters and may appear in the museum. The organization also maintains a UFO hotline and distributes "What to Do If You See a UFO" lists. ("The number one thing to remember is REMAIN CALM!" one reads.) Its Web site contains detailed UFO-sighting report forms asking for information such as environmental factors, terrain and elevation, and providing space for sketches.

"I'm very much a skeptic and a cynic," Curta says. "I take it all with a grain of salt. No doubt there is something going on, but what it is, I wouldn't venture to guess."

John Schuessler has never even seen a UFO. "I'm not a sighter," he says. "I keep going where people see things, and I never get there in time."

For now, though, he's watching the real estate ads, not the sky, trying to find office/display space for the headquarters and museum. He's hoping to find something in southwest Denver, preferably with a storefront so MUFON can show off some of the museum's artifacts. With luck, the museum, which will be free and open to the public, will be unveiled by the end of the year. (For updates, check MUFON's Colorado Web site at comufon.org.)

Contact the author or discuss the story with other readers at westword.com

EXTRA



The truth is out there

Lake Norman area a haven for UFOs, investigator says

By JAIME GATTON

Has your power ever zapped off suddenly? Has your pet dog reacted to something unseen in the middle of the night? Ever wonder why the water level of Lake Norman sometimes seems to mysteriously go down overnight?

Well, it could've been a trip in your circuit breaker. Your dog could have seen a wild animal outside. And the low water level could be due to a lack of rain.

On the other hand, it might be traces of extraterrestrial life, says George Fawcett, an internationally-known investigator and researcher of unidentified flying objects.

"Mooresville is a good place to see UFOs; Lake Norman is even better," Fawcett, a resident of Lincolnton, told members of the Lake Norman Rotary Club on Wednesday, when he opened many eyes to at least the possibility of life on other planets.

Fawcett says UFOs are usually seen around electrical substations, power lines and large masses of water. "It seems they draw (power) off power and water," Fawcett says. That's why he says reports of UFOs around Lake Norman aren't rare.

According to Fawcett, sighting reports indicate UFOs clamp onto power lines, seemingly extracting power. Over water, tubes protrude from the bottom of UFOs and suck water back into the vessel. Fawcett says that's why several UFO sightings have also been reported near Lake Norman's McGuire Nuclear Station.

Fawcett just finished reading his 1,015th book on the topic of UFOs. He has investigated more than 1,700 UFO sighting reports — 22 percent of which remain unexplained — and has written and published more than 100 UFO investigative and research articles, dozens of which were listed in the 1969 Library of Congress book, "UFOs and Related Subjects: An Annotated Bibliography," published under contract with the Air Force Office of Scientific Research.

In 1975, Fawcett authored the book, "Quarter Century Studies of UFOs in Florida, North Carolina and Tennessee." His efforts in the UFO field were included in various UFO encyclopedias. His achievements were also listed in "The International Who's Who in UFOlogy Directory."

Fawcett served as the founder and chief advisor to five civilian UFO study groups:

New England (1957), Pennsylvania and New Jersey Two-State (1965), Florida (1968), Tar Heel (1973) and the Mutual UFO Network of North Carolina, Inc. (1989).

Fawcett also helped organize seven UFO symposiums in eight years. From 1979-82, he taught a 30-hour accredited college UFO course titled, "UFOs: A New Frontier of Science" at the Lincoln County Campus of Gaston College. He was also a consultant to the movie, "UFO's — Target Earth."

Just recently, Fawcett donated thousands of artifacts to the International Unidentified Flying Object Museum Research Center in Roswell, N.M., of which he is a member of the advisory board.

Fawcett has been a member or field investigator for the Aerial Phenomena Research Organization in Arizona, the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena in Washington, D.C., the Scientific Bureau of Investigations in New York, the J. Allen Hynek Center for UFO Studies in Illinois, the Fund for UFO Research, Inc. in Maryland, and the Mutual UFO Network, Inc. in Texas.

All the while, Fawcett has presented illustrated lectures to nearly 600 different colleges and universities, service clubs, military and scientific organizations, and technical and special interest groups in the United States and overseas. He is currently working on a UFO Museum project to serve as both a major tourist attraction and research center.

Mooresville lawyer and Rotary member Walter Jones introduced Fawcett at the recent club meeting, saying, "When you tell people you're going to have a program on UFOs, invariably the first thing they do is smile."

But Fawcett's used to that. "Having started (studying UFOs) 55 years ago, you had to have a sense of humor," he says with a grin.

However, he adds, it's really no laughing matter. He told the Rotary Club about 25 aspects of UFO sightings that have been repeated time and again over the past 47 years — "aspects which have proven themselves to be persistent and consistent on a global basis, among more than 140 world nations."

Fawcett says aspects that seem to be consistent in every report include, but are certainly not limited to, severe animal reactions, power failures, electric shock, radiation burns, dimming of vision, blackouts, temporary paralysis, headaches, blood disor-

ders, nightmares and dreams, etc. Also, increases of background radiation, ground markings, changes in soil samples and deposits of both metallic and non-metallic residues, especially magnesium, aluminum, silicon, boron and calcium.

An enormous challenge to scientific investigations, Fawcett says the physical and psychological traces left behind by UFOs are a threat to national security, the human environment and public safety.

North Carolina ranks fifth in the U.S. for reports of UFOs, surpassed only by California, New Mexico, Ohio and Pennsylvania. Florida ranks sixth in the nation, while South Carolina is 12th.

Only 10 percent of people who see UFOs actually report the sightings, Fawcett explains. About 65 percent of all sightings are reported at night, while 35 percent are reported in broad daylight. Reports are made by people from all walks of life, including scientists, astronauts, engineers, astronomers and pilots.

Fawcett says even former presidents Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter reported seeing UFOs. He says President Clinton just hasn't "come out yet," despite issuing an executive order to release all national security documents in relation to UFO sightings by the year 2000. Those documents, Fawcett says, have not yet been released. And the U.S. Air Force, he adds, is still extensively investigating UFOs.

"These things are just as real as the Apollo astronauts," says Fawcett, referring to UFOs and their inhabitants, "humanoids" or "UFOonauts," as he calls them. "The term 'alien' alienates them too much."

He continues, "I can attest to the fact that (people who report seeing UFOs) are not lying." Fawcett says those folks go through psychological evaluations and sometimes hypnosis after reporting seeing UFOs. "Those people didn't have those experiences because they wanted to," he assures.

Following the program, Town Manager and Rotary member Rick McLean had his own thoughts about UFOs and UFOonauts. "I've never seen one," he admits. "But I can't prove that it's not true. There are an awful lot of things in this world we don't know about and don't understand. This seems to be one of them."

"It's pretty arrogant of us to believe that out of the whole universe, we're the only planet that has life."

TRIBUNE-REVIEW, Greensburg, PA - Aug. 11, 2000 CR: S. Gordon

Greensburg man's exhibit part of UFO week

By Maryann G. Eldemiller
FOR THE TRIBUNE-REVIEW

Something made a 30-foot-wide indentation in a field near Delmont this summer, and in June, a big hairy creature was spotted on a back road between Jeannette and Greensburg.

Last October, a family reported that a "large hairy man-like creature" walked in front of their car near Pleasant Unity.

UFOs? Bigfoot creatures? What's going on here?

Stan Gordon of Greensburg would like to know, and so would the people who reported the incidents to him.

Gordon, who has been researching the unexplained since 1959, will be at Westmoreland Mall, Route 30, east of Greensburg, on Saturday with an exhibit on local and other reports of the unexplained. The display coincides with National UFO Information Week.

Visitors will see documents, photographs and footprint casts from local Bigfoot sightings. Gordon also

has "space grass" — a metallic material similar, but not identical, to Air Force radar chaff. There will be information about the "Kecksburg crash" and the "Roswell incident," and two internationally known investigators will be on hand.

"We want the public to be aware that UFO sightings continue to be reported and that there's a serious interest and study of what might be going on," said Gordon.

Since 1993, he's been an independent investigator into incidents that defy natural explanations. Although he's never witnessed any, there are many people who claim they have. One happened on June 20 in the South Hills of Pittsburgh.

"A man was watching TV at about 2:30 a.m. when he suddenly noticed that his back yard was bright like daylight," Gordon said. "He went out and looked up, and he saw an unusual sight that he estimated was about 2,500 feet above the ground. There were eight groups of lights, grouped in threes to form triangles."

He didn't get any pictures, but the display has photos of other sightings that are still being probed.

Gordon acknowledges that the majority of reports are natural or manmade events such as aircraft viewed from a peculiar angle, or stars and planets in unusual alignment.

"But there are still many incidents locally and throughout the country, probably hundreds in Pennsylvania alone, that can't easily be explained," he said.

One happened on Dec. 9, 1965, when witnesses in the Northeast tracked a flying object that allegedly landed in Kecksburg. Many people claim military personnel recovered something from the woods, and Gordon has copies of documents verifying that the government sent a team of investigators. But others insist that nothing happened.

Gordon's film of the incident won an award from the International UFO Congress for the best UFO documentary film in 1998. It

will be shown during Saturday's exhibit.

Tom Carey of Huntingdon Valley, Pa., will be available with information on the incident in Roswell, N.M., which he's been investigating since 1991. In that case, people allegedly saw alien beings recovered from a UFO crash. Gordon also invited Scott Corrales of Bradford, a writer and researcher of paranormal events in Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking countries.

"At past exhibits, people have come forth with information about sightings that they didn't previously report," Gordon said. "We want everyone to know that they can contact us and that everything will remain confidential."

Stan Gordon's hotline for reports of the abnormal is (724) 838-7768. His Web site, www.westol.com/paufo, has information on local cases and links to national and worldwide UFO and Bigfoot information.

LOOK! UP IN THE SKY...

Some of the most momentous events in the history of Unidentified Flying Objects (UFO's) have occurred in the month of July. The Roswell Incident of 1947 is the most famous, and most controversial. However, an incident in July 1952 also ranks among the most prominent. That's when UFO's invaded Washington, D.C., and Delaware played a part.

By Steven Leech
Illustration by Steve Cobb

There was an oppressive heat wave that July, and the war in Korea was grinding away. Adlai Stevenson had just sweated out a gritty third-ballot victory to gain the Democratic Party nomination for President. The specter of domestic political subversion gripped the land. On the other side of the world, the Soviet Union had "the bomb" and some thought they might use it on us; America's "atomic bomb monopoly" was over.

In the late-evening hours of July 26, 1952, when Air Force F-94C's from the 142nd Interceptor Squadron based at the New Castle County Air Base took to the air, people took notice. The droning of jet aircraft around midnight on a Saturday was highly unusual.

It was only a week earlier, on July 19 at 11:40 p.m., that seven UFO's were caught on radar flying over Washington, D.C., at speeds from 100 mph to 7,000 mph! The immediate response was to dispatch an interceptor from one of the bases assigned to protect the restricted airspace above the nation's capitol. But the UFO's disappeared before contact was made.

Back and forth they went, but nothing unusual appeared on the screen. By the time they were ordered to fly patterns at 500 feet, Sabatino realized the Washington Monument was 550 feet tall and he consequently became concerned about crashing into it.

Patterson, who was in a better position to make visual contact, claimed to have seen four lights about 10 miles ahead; but they disappeared before he could overtake them. He was quoted in the July 28 edition of *The Wilmington Morning News* as saying the UFO's, "...were really moving"—faster than the 600 mph top speed of his F-94C.

THE PROOF IS IN THE TECHNOLOGY

History records that the years 1947 and 1952 were two of the busiest for UFO sightings in the United States. By August 1952, more than 900 had been recorded nationwide. But the wave of sightings in July would prove to be the most dramatic, including those in the restricted airspace over Washington, D.C.

The other momentous event in UFO history also took place in July. This time the year was 1947. The skies all over the United States had experienced large numbers of sightings. On the same day independent witnesses reported seeing five UFO's over St. Georges and Wilmington, additional UFO sightings were reported in at least 10 other states and Eastern Canada. All of them took place within

Andrew J. Sabatino remembers the night New Castle County Air Base got the call to action, that night when the base's F-94C interceptors were scrambled. He was the radar operator in one of those F-94C's, but by the time they got to the site, nothing appeared on his radar screen.

"I had no idea what we were chasing," he says. Sabatino, who remained a resident in Delaware until retiring to Florida in May, admits he doesn't believe in the existence of UFO's. However, he was willing to relate some details of the mission.

Over the course of that Saturday night, four to 12 UFO's had been picked up on radar at Washington National Airport and at nearby Andrews Air Force Base. At 11:25 p.m., the F-94C's were dispatched. According to Sabatino, his pilot, Lieutenant William L. Patterson, was ordered to fly patterns at incrementally lower altitudes from their initial altitude of about 10,000 feet. Their mission: to search for targets.

"The lower I got," Sabatino says, referring to his radar scope, "the less I could see because of the ground clutter." Radar installed in fighter aircraft works best at high altitudes, he explains.

days, if not within hours, of the infamous Roswell Incident in New Mexico.

The Roswell Incident is a UFO story that refuses to die, in spite of two separate, official U.S. Government attempts to explain it away.

The Roswell Incident is a UFO story that refuses to die, in spite of two separate, official U.S. Government attempts to explain it away. Briefly, in early July 1947, a UFO was reported to have crashed in Roswell, New Mexico. According to numerous reports, the wreckage was recovered by the U.S. Army, along with the bodies of the craft's extra terrestrial crew of four—one of them possibly still alive. In an ultra secret operation carried on by the U.S. government since the time of that event, efforts have been made to "back engineer" the technology from the crash.

The notorious "Area 51" in Nevada has reportedly played a major part in the effort. In fact, retired U.S. Army Colonel Philip J. Corso, who once was on President Eisenhower's Security Council and who claims to have seen the crated-up dead aliens from the Roswell crash after they were shipped to the Wright-Patterson Air Base in Ohio, says in his

book, *The Day After Roswell* (pub. 1997) that alien technology has already been "seeded" into the development of current technologies. He cites as examples: integrated circuit chips, fiber optics, lasers and night-vision technology.

According to George Reynolds, of Elk Mills, Maryland, director of Northeast Maryland MUFON (Mutual UFO Network), an independent UFO investigative organization, the proliferation of UFO sightings since the end of World War II can be attributed to the use of nuclear bombs that began in 1945.

Reynolds saw his first UFO in September 1945, while serving in the U.S. Navy aboard the USS Beaver, a submarine tender based in Okinawa at the end of World War II. He says the UFO looked like a diamond. It was blue-white in color, made an abrupt turn to the right during its flight path, then stopped on a dime in mid air. Reynolds believes it was responding to the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in nearby Japan about a month earlier.

He points out that the UFO crash in Roswell, New Mexico occurred near an Army Air Force base where the 509th Bomb Group was stationed after the war. The 509th was the one assigned to deliver the atomic bomb. He also points out that the Los Alamos National Laboratory, where the atomic bomb was developed, and the Alamogordo Test Range, the site of the first atomic bomb detonation, are nearby.

In 1995, the U.S. Air Force published *The Roswell Report: Fact versus Fiction* in the New Mexico Desert. But inconsistencies in this official report, substantiated by still-missing official documents and new and unassailed witness reports to the actual event, prevent the official story from holding much credibility. The crucial points supporting a UFO crash remain either credible or unexplained.

Reynolds says this about the report: "It's a lie to cover a lie. Each lie they make is more ridiculous than the last one."

In fact, more witnesses to what happened in Roswell are coming forward. These new witnesses, many of them former military personnel from units closely associated with those involved with the incident, are providing details that shed new light or corroborate claims that have already been made.

NOW YOU SEE THEM, NOW YOU DON'T

Places like the American Southwest are what UFO investigators call "hot spots." UFO sightings are more frequent in these place than in other locations. Admittedly, Delaware is not considered a hot spot. But it still has a rich history of credible UFO sightings.

Claymont resident Carl Feindt is assistant state director for Delaware MUFON. He recently completed a survey of UFO sightings gleaned from local newspaper reports. While most of the sightings were made after World War II, two of them date from the early 20th century.

In July of 1909, as reported in the August 2, 1909 edition of *The Wilmington Morning News*, a UFO was seen at night, flying around the area at a high rate of speed. Observers reported it was "shaped like a balloon and has wings on each side and a cigar-shaped car underneath." The event occurred less than six years after the first flight by the Wright Brothers at Kitty Hawk, and long before jet planes were imagined.

According to a front page story in the February 3, 1916 edition of *The Wilmington Journal Every Evening*, a mysterious craft was spotted circling Carney's Point, New Jersey, site of a DuPont Company powder plant. The craft was reported to have hovered over the plant for 15 minutes before it "soared off" in the direction of Atlantic City. The same newspaper article also reported that a similar strange craft had been seen "flitting" over Coatesville, Pennsylvania, the same night.

After that UFO sighting in Wilmington and St. Georges in July 1947, reports became more frequent. In August 1950, the crew of the *Marcala*, a ship docked at the Wilmington Marine Terminal, reported to have seen a diamond-shaped, white metallic object traveling at a high rate of speed about 70 feet above the water at the mouth of the Delaware Bay.

On September 10, 1951, U. S. Air Force pilot, Lt. Wilber R. Rogers, flying a T-33 out of Dover Air Base, reported seeing a UFO flying at 900 mph over the New Jersey coastline. Rogers was reported to have said, "I don't know whether it was a flying saucer. But it sure was something I've never seen before."

On the night of November 23, 1953, local radio stations reported receiving phone calls about a large, round greenish-blue object flying low and at a high rate of speed over Wilmington's northern suburbs. One witness said it had a "...terrific glow..." and made no sound.

On August 13, 1954 a white disc-like object was seen on three different occasions over Middletown. Several witnesses reported that the UFO streaked noiselessly across the sky, at one point flying straight up.

The most startling UFO event in recent years occurred in October 1973. A rash of sightings was reported in both New Castle and Kent Counties, between October 15 and 17, during a wave of UFO reports from all over the eastern United States. These reports included an abduction claim from two fishermen in Mississippi who said they had been taken aboard a UFO.

The 1973 UFO sightings in Delaware included an incident where State Police officers chased a UFO in their helicopter from the initial contact near Dover until the object disappeared 14 miles into Maryland. Other objects, which were picked up on radar at the Unidentified Object Reporting Center at the Philadelphia International Airport, were brilliant yellow-orange in color and exhibited strange flight patterns. One State Police officer who sighted a UFO from his helicopter used unequivocal terminology in his report, as quoted in the October 16, 1973 edition of *The Wilmington Morning News*, claiming that

the UFO descended very rapidly from about 30 degrees above the horizon, then stopped at about 10 degrees, where it remained motionless.

"At first we thought it was an optical illusion," he reported, speaking for himself and his pilot.

Ultimately, it is that July 1952 incident involving F-94C interceptors from New

(continued on page 4)

POP CULTURE

Agency's UFO plan backfires on Web

By LAURA SULLIVAN
Of The Baltimore Sun

Two years ago, the National Security Agency began posting previously classified documents on its Web site to deflect the growing number of requests each year for information about flying saucers and space aliens. But the plan backfired.

Rather than relieving suspicions that the agency is hiding information about unidentified flying objects, the result has been more people than ever demanding to see UFO documents. A record 36,000 people perused the UFO page last month.

What has piqued UFO believers' interest is not so much what the documents on the Web site say — often little or nothing between the blacked-out censored sections — but their extraordinary volume: thousands of pages of unofficial reports and antiquated radio interceptions from abroad.

Among the postings from the files of the nation's most-secret spy agency is a National Enquirer article with the headline, "Take UFOs Seriously or Be Prepared for Sneak Invasion By Space Aliens."

All of this is fueling speculation among believers who wonder why, for something that doesn't exist, the agency has collected a ton of records.

The NSA staff, burdened with hundreds of written requests under the Freedom of Information Act, is unamused. Staff members say the time required for the UFO requests slows down the response time for all requests.

The agency hasn't kept exact numbers about UFO requests. But Pamela Phillips, chief of FOIA/Privacy Act Services, said the increase in letters asking about UFOs has been "significant," forcing the office to hire several additional staff members.

Phillips said the "conspiracies" that believers are deriving from the postings can be easily explained.

"These documents contain the term UFO, but they are not necessarily about aliens," she said. "They just contain the term which

One batch of papers deals with an alleged "spotting" in Iran in the 1970s, which has captured the imaginations of many believers.

describes an object that was flying that was unidentified" at the time.

As for the Enquirer article — which one UFO enthusiast says proves the weekly tabloid known for its alien abduction stories has been right all along — Phillips says it's more likely that it was clipped for amusement and found on someone's desk after they retired.

"Some of these documents we collected from the desks of former employees who found them amusing or who had a personal outside interest in this area," Phillips said.

Much of the latest increase in requests is a result of better technology. In the past, people interested in viewing the agency's files would have to find its address and know whom to write to, then type and mail a letter. Now, people can use the agency's online request form to ask for documents, made even easier with a ready-made letter template. Visitors can send in multiple requests in seconds.

The agency hasn't added to the UFO page — at nsa.gov/docs/efoia/released/ufu.htm — since its first posting two years ago, but it plans to soon, Phillips said, especially for the most commonly requested items.

Agency officials said most of the UFO requests they receive ask for information about specific words pulled from the online documents. Enthusiasts believe the agency categorizes documents under keywords — and they just haven't hit on the right word yet.

In pre-Internet times, most requests for documents with a keyword would center on popular tales such as "Area 51," "Roswell," or "Philadelphia Experiment." Today, the requested keywords are more numerous, prompting agency officials to compile lists of

common ones — such as "snow-bird" and "sigma" — and the results of those searches, so they don't duplicate their efforts.

Even with lists and a stack of frequently requested documents close by, agency officials say it's hard to keep up with requests that are similar but change by a single word. Every request, no matter how similar to a previous one, must be queried again and given the same attention.

Requests for information on just plain "UFO" aren't slowing either. Last year, the agency received more than 150 such requests. Believers say what the documents don't say is most interesting.

"The fact that they're releasing this stuff and it's so blacked out, the theories just flurry," said John Greenwald, who has collected UFO documents from the NSA and other agencies for more than five years and posts them on his Web site, "The Black Vault."

"Maybe it has nothing to do with aliens, that's a possibility," said Greenwald, of California. "But I've never found so many documents this blacked out before, and that adds to the fascination."

To Greenwald and other enthusiasts, it comes as no surprise that so many people are perusing the security agency's UFO documents. One batch of papers deals with an alleged "spotting" in Iran in the 1970s, which has captured the imaginations of many believers.

The NSA apparently intercepted radio communications of an Iranian pilot who said he had temporarily lost control of his airplane when he encountered something in the air that he couldn't identify.

The documents on the Web shed no additional light on this situation, which only adds to viewers' curiosity.

"More people than ever are interested in this stuff," said Peter Gersten, an Arizona-based attorney and director of Citizens Against UFO Secrecy. "Each year you get more and more people, especially young people. With 'X-Files' and 'Star Wars,' it's exotic. It's entertaining. It's the greatest mystery of all time."

Ultimately, it is that July 1952 incident involving F-94C interceptors from New Castle County Air Base that has given Delaware a unique place in UFO history.

to *Men in Black*. The television series *The X-Files* owes much of its success to interest in UFO's, and exposes on UFOs regularly appear on networks such as The Discovery Channel.

Illusion or reality, UFOs are a significant part of post World War II American history. Local UFO investigator Carl Feindt would argue for the latter. As proof, he points to the sheer number of reports from around the world, as well as new revelations from witnesses who had initially kept quiet but are now telling their stories. In spite of a plethora of new video tapes capturing UFO's in the skies over places like Mexico City, Gulf Breeze, Florida and Phoenix, Arizona, the problem of authenticity persists. There's no smoking gun, no really conclusive evidence yet.

"We don't know where they come from, or how they got here, or who they are," says Feindt; "otherwise we're a wealth of information." ■

BREEZE, Costa Mesa, CA - July 6, 2000

IT'S OUT THERE

PEOPLE: County members of Mutual UFO Network meet regularly in a search for answers.

By LISA FAUGHT

The Costa Mesa Breeze

The last sighting in Costa Mesa triggered a flurry of phone calls.

Callers reported a hovering, shifting mass in skies above Harbor Boulevard one evening, prompting field investigators for the Mutual UFO Network to set about identifying the unidentified

flying object.

A string of interviews and a few phone calls later, investigators unearthed an explanation — the UFO was a cluster of black balloons, floating loose during a grand opening for a car dealership.

Members of MUFON Orange County say the incident is typical of the reports they receive — about 95 percent can be explained by the mundane.

"More often than not, they

turn out to be easily explained," said resident Stephen Gill, who is a board member of MUFON Orange County. "But the other 5 percent is what keeps the mystery alive."

And keeps members of MUFON tuning in for the latest developments in UFO research. Each month, the local chapter of MUFON meets at the Neighborhood Community Center in Costa Mesa for a lecture on UFOs, government conspir-

acies and alien abductions.

Members recently turned out for a talk with Dennis Balthaser, a civil engineer and a leading investigator of the notorious Roswell Incident. The incident is considered the grandfather of modern-day UFO field research, with a score of books documenting the strange turn of events on July 4, 1947, in Roswell, N.M.

The change in story spawned a generation of field investigators seeking to uncover the real story at Roswell, Balthaser among them.

"I've never seen a UFO, but that doesn't mean they don't exist," Balthaser said.

Balthaser can spout the names and dates, twists and turns of the incident with ease. He knows which witnesses are bunk and which documents to hunt down for some piece to the puzzle. The investigator

spent the last 25 years finding and interviewing witnesses with the hope of nailing down the story — alien life or secret government project?

"Some 50 years later they are still afraid to talk about it," Balthaser said. "Why? We are running out of time."

Sightings in Costa Mesa are a rarity, but incidents do crop up locally. Like the Rex Heflin photos snapped on Myford Road in what is now Irvine.

The photos, taken in 1965,

show an unidentified object hovering in the Orange County skies above a stretch of fields. Heflin maintains he snapped the photos while out on a routine maintenance call, thinking the hovering craft was a conventional airplane. Thirty years later, the photos are in still in dispute.

But many more sightings go unpublicized, because, well, tales of UFOs can sound a little outlandish. And some, after seeing a phenomenon they

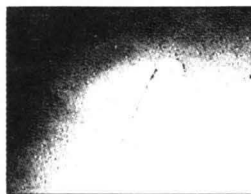
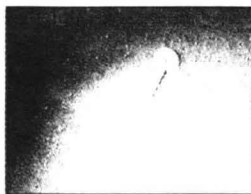
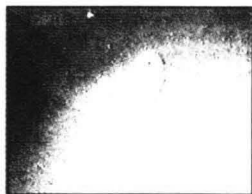
can't explain, tend to clam up about the incident.

"When people see these things, it tends to shatter their self-made concept of reality," Gill said.

Still, enough take an interest in the ongoing research to keep MUFON OC at the forefront of the UFO talk circuit.

They are seeking the truth, because, after all, the truth is out there.

Do new NASA tapes show UFOs?



COLUMBIA VIDEO footage of the severed Italian Space Tether, drifting some 80 nautical miles from the shuttle in 1996, appears to show a large spherical object passing behind the \$100 million experimental device.

Images from '90s missions set theorists speculating

By Billy Cox
FLORIDA TODAY

The authenticity of videos showing unidentified flying objects has been challenged since the advent of camcorders. But a new debate is unfolding over UFO images generated by NASA and marketed commercially in a video — "The Secret NASA Transmissions: The Smoking Gun."

It includes space-shuttle footage recorded above western North Africa on Feb. 26, 1996, that appears to show huge, distant spherical UFOs shadowing Columbia during mission STS-75.

This peculiar sequence is just a portion of the "Smoking Gun" tape, produced and edited by Quest Publications, a British outfit that publishes UFO Magazine. Viewers who buy the \$27.50 mail-order videotape also will see a number of other anomalous goings-on recorded by NASA cameras from various missions in the 1990s.

For UFO skeptic Jim Oberg, the "Smoking Gun" furor is a classic example of the misinterpretations that occur when human perception expands into the unknown. He likens it to the 15th-century Age of Exploration, when Old World mariners mapped uncharted oceans and returned with tales of sea serpents and mermaids. As Earthlings secure their foothold in space, Oberg predicts there'll be more fog to come.

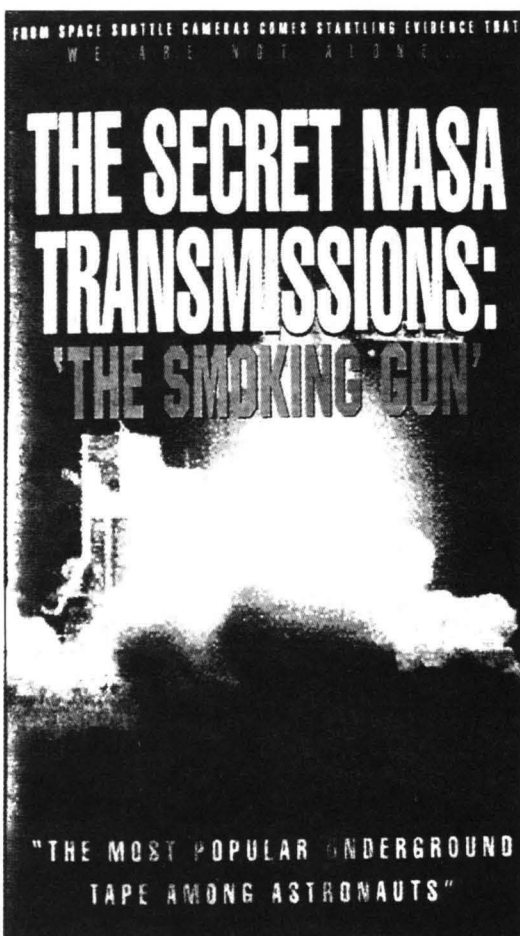
"When you're on the edge of the new frontier," said the former NASA mission control specialist, "your imagination fills in the details."

For the Canadian largely responsible for bringing the NASA images into the public domain, the possibilities are exhilarating.

"It's all out there," said Martyn Stubbs of Vancouver, "and I think NASA is challenging us to find it."

The STS-75 incident: In the winter of '96, Columbia was testing the \$100 million Italian Tethered Satellite System, a ball-shaped device linked to a rod-and-reel deployment spool by a cable stretching 12 miles at maximum extension. The experiment was designed to see how well tethers could generate electricity in space. But it ended abruptly when the cable snapped.

During shuttle video acquisition of the broken tether, the black void around the dismembered hardware began swarming with particles and beads of light, resembling an organic soup beneath a microscope. The tether appeared surrounded by the objects.



"SMOKING GUN" was produced and edited by Quest Publications in England.



"Since you know there are billions upon billions of intelligent civilizations out there somewhere, must we now, as a part of our Copernican evolution, make this great leap? The fact that I don't understand something doesn't mean that I should apply loose thinking, non-critical thinking, to the process. It does a disservice to the cause of exploration."

— Story Musgrave, former astronaut

And everyone was paying attention, as the communications chatter indicated:

"I've tried to adjust the focus but I can't get better than that."

"OK, Claude, thank you. Beautiful."

"This view is showing, uhh..." Eight second pause. Some of the objects, many of them spheres with a single dot in the center, appear to pass behind the tether. "... the satellite, just moving into sunrise."

"Eighty-one nautical miles now from Columbia."

Thirty-three second pause. The objects gather in force.

"You guys getting the image?"

"Franklin, we see a long line, a couple of starlike things, and a lot of things swimming in the foreground. Can you describe what you're seeing?"

"Well, the long line is a tether. Um, there's a little bit of debris that, uh, kinda flies with us and, uh, it's illuminated by the sun at such low angles. There's a lotta stray light and it's getting washed out quickly, but Claude is doing a good job trying to adjust the camera."

Then a manager of community-access cable stations in British Columbia, Stubbs decided to record every minute of every manned mission via live downlink feeds in the mid-1990s, following the famous STS-48 controversy.

In October 1991, STS-48 beamed back images that wound up in national debates, largely on tabloid TV shows. While passing over western Australia, one of shuttle Discovery's cameras recorded white blips that appeared to stop and change direction when a pulse of light raced toward them.

Informally, NASA consultants agreed the camera had photographed ice crystals repulsed during a thruster jet firing, which accounted for the light flash. The only formal analysis of the footage was written by University of Nebraska-Omaha physics professor Dr. Jack Kasher. Using geometry and physics, Kasher eliminated near-foreground ice crystals and thruster-jet explanations, then concluded STS-48 had captured independently operated spacecraft.

"The Journal for UFO Studies is a refereed, academic journal," says Kasher on the magazine that published his conclusions. "I keep hoping for an official response from NASA, but of course that hasn't happened."

Stubbs is waiting for NASA to weigh in on the STS-75 footage; the video wasn't made public until March. He discounts ice crystals and other forms of near-foreground "shuttle dandruff."

"These objects, particularly the spheres, are clearly going behind the tether," he insists. "And the tether is what, 70, 80 miles away? I've heard the argument that, well, surely if things that big could be seen from that far away, they should be visible here on Earth as well. But how can we know what an unknown phenomenon in space looks like from our perspective here on the ground?"

But that's exactly what you could expect to see, argues Dr. Joseph Nuth, head of the Astrochemistry Branch Lab for Extraterrestrial Physics at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Md.

"If you've got mile-wide flying saucers — which they'd probably have to be, to be seen at that distance from the shuttle — and six or eight of 'em at least, according to (Stubbs' interpretation), I can't imagine somebody on the ground not seeing it," said Nuth, who watched the "Smoking Gun" video.

Furthermore, Nuth said space isn't a pristine environment.

"When you're in a vacuum, things just de-gas and pop out," he said. "All the stuff comes out of little cracks and it does it the entire time it's up there, because the shuttle basically carries an atmosphere with it. Personally, I think Oberg's explanation is perfectly reasonable."

Oberg, a 20-year veteran of mission-control operations at Johnson Space Center, said some of the images are, in fact, near-foreground objects exaggerated by the shuttle's camera system.

"If you look at enough video, you see this as a standard out-of-focus effect," he said. "This particular camera system isn't designed for low light levels, and it's being pushed beyond its specifications in order to zoom in on the tether. Under these conditions, the tether itself looks bizarre, because it's only as thick as a phone cord, maybe an eighth of an inch. But because the image intensifier is turned all the way up, what we see is a phantom thickness that's not real."

"So, in addition to recording all the debris floating around, we see all these discs out there, too. Big circles with dots in the middle and all of them notched at about 7 o'clock. These notched discs are a feature of the camera."

Consequently, Oberg said the discs passing behind the tether are an illusion blooming in an extreme environment. As for the sudden light flashes and streaks that Stubbs said are visible at some point on every mission,

Oberg is less certain. "It's very interesting," he said. "Streaks probably occur when you're out there in the radiation belts."

As he reviewed the voluminous mission tapes, Stubbs kept seeing orange streaking action, captured by payload bay cameras and interior cams as well. Freezing the images took some effort; Stubbs said they flashed at one-thirtieth of a second.

On one "Smoking Gun" sequence, shuttle astronauts preparing to leave the orbiter for a spacewalk are clearly perplexed. The streaking is visible on tape:

"What was that flash?"

"What, Max?"

"I saw a light flash past me just here. Did you see it?"

"I thought it must've been me." Chuckle.

"What?"

"I thought it was my imagination."

"I saw it, too, so it's not. There (were) two of them. There's another one. What are they?"

"I thought I saw the lights flickering in here. Who'd be taking pictures?"

"What is this? It's just gone past in front of us."

Stubbs said he didn't mean for the video title — "The Secret NASA Transmissions" — to imply a coverup, or that the mission downlinks were surreptitiously channeled.

"The images were all readily available," he said. "But I think they have a double or hidden meaning. You don't see it unless (you) make time to look at literally everything, like I've done. And then patterns emerge. It's like the O.J. trials, reasonable doubt versus a preponderance of evidence. To me, there's a preponderance of evidence that something very strange is going on."

One of his many challenges on tape is to debate former astronaut Story Musgrave, a veteran of six shuttle missions. In the "Smoking Gun" video, Musgrave is heard saying, "That's really interesting" during the appearance of an ostensible plasma blob that emerges against an Earth background during STS-80 in December 1996.

"I believe Story's playing both sides of the fence," Stubbs said. "He's always talking about life out there, and he's taped some unusual things. I think he knows more than he's saying."

Now living in Kissimmee, Musgrave insists the astronaut corps he flew with before retiring in 1996 has no evidence of extraterrestrial activity.

Objects in space, particularly near-foreground objects, do weird things, he said. They are ubiquitous. They break apart. They move independently. They bump into each other and make right-angle maneuvers. They change velocity.

"I've seen what looks like a little snake swimming along on its own internal motions. I've got it on videotape," he said. "I come back to KSC and I ask the guys on the ground, are you missing something, a sealed rubber hose? They say no, there are no post-flight anomalies. I go up again and there it is, swimming along in the sunlight, internal motion. Yeah, they're curious about it, but OK, so what?"

"Since you know there are billions upon billions of intelligent civilizations out there somewhere, must we now, as a part of our Copernican evolution, make this great leap? The fact that I don't understand something doesn't mean that I should apply loose thinking, noncritical thinking, to the process. It does a disservice to the cause of exploration."

Jack Kasher hasn't reviewed the entire "Smoking Gun" video — only a snippet featured in a recent Fox TV special. Without knowing the camera's capabilities, Kasher said Oberg's explanation sounds valid. But a prosaic solution to the STS-75 images doesn't alter his contention that STS-48 photographed spacecraft making evasive maneuvers.

"I worked a summer at Marshall Space Flight Center in 1991, and there are a lot of really smart people there," Kasher said. "But they're not at all interested in UFOs and it never comes up. I wish they would seize an opportu-

restrial undertones, given the subject's visibility level. "These are definitely striking images," Oberg said. "I think it's a legitimate subject in our popular culture."

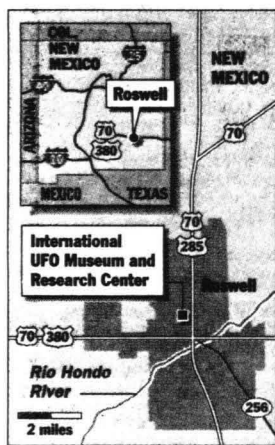


Photo by Joe Reagle/Newsweek

"Aliens" ride through downtown Roswell this summer as part of the annual festival marking the supposed crash of a UFO northwest of the city in 1947. In recent years, Roswell has become a major tourist attraction, generating an estimated \$19 million annually.

In Roswell, those flying objects likely are tourists

By Judith Graham
TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

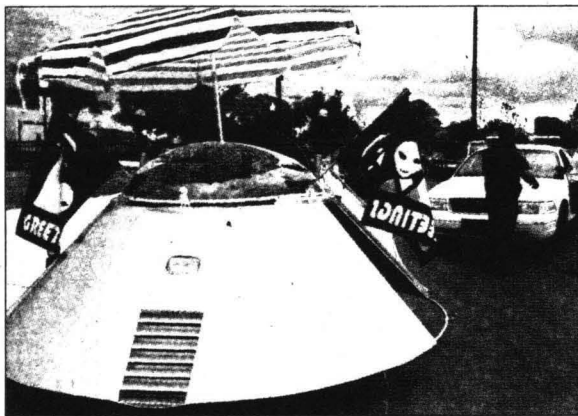


Chicago Tribune

ROSWELL, N.M.—Ten years ago, a handful of visitors walking along Main Street would have attracted stares in this out-of-the-way Southwestern town surrounded by miles of scrub brush. Today, the sight of hundreds of tourists from as far away as Australia, Africa or Japan doesn't even turn a head.

Debate still rages over whether an alien spacecraft crashed on a sheep ranch outside Roswell more than a half-century ago in what is known as "the Roswell incident." But one thing is clear: Notoriety has put Roswell on the map.

For the past three years, the world has beaten a path to this town, made famous in books, movies and on television as the epicenter of everything having to do



AP photo by Neal Ulevich

The owner of a flying-saucer-like all-terrain vehicle is told by a Roswell police officer this summer to get it off the street.

with UFOs. Little green aliens decorate many of the storefronts in town, including the Wal-Mart.

Listen to Charlie Walker, the earnest head of the Chamber of Commerce, who looks a visitor straight in the eye while explain-

ing what spurs economic development:

"The Lord gave us an opportunity. Roswell was a slow-growth town, and all of a sudden we had

and if we want to keep growing the way we should," he says emphatically. "You either go up or you go down. You can't sit still, or you get old real fast."

As for museumco-founders Dennis and Haut, who oppose a move, Littell said, "I'm not looking to pick a fight, but they're not capable of what I'll call development thinking. ... We could grow this thing five times its current size, if we go about it the right way."

With a push from Littell, the UFO museum has drawn up plans for an enormous \$10 million, pyramid-shaped building that would tower above the highway and draw attention from miles away.

A slightly tattered model is displayed in the old downtown theater that houses the current museum, next to a sign reading "The Truth is Here," a play off the line in "The X-Files" show that "the truth is out there." A plastic donation box is stuffed with dollar bills. A helpful board member arranged an option on land 10 miles outside of town, which his family owns and was willing to make available at a reasonable price.

A description of the proposed expansion on the museum's Web site talks of plans for a children's wing, an expanded library, a larger gift shop and even a landing pad. Officials say that could also be a launch site for people wanting to take vacations in outer space some day.

At least one Las Vegas entrepreneur already has proposed the concept. So why not in Roswell, asks Carol Syska, the museum's volunteer director, with a laugh. But the museum's first priority, she adds, is serious research and education.

Not surprisingly, Roswell merchants around the museum don't want to see it leave downtown. Some 90 percent of the customers at Apache Gallery, a few doors down, are visitors to the museum, owner Connie Amador estimates.

"People from all over the world walk up and down the street here, and all these little stores benefit," she said. "I think they should stay right where they are."

For the past three years, the gallery, which once featured Southwest and Indian wares, has stocked up on anything and everything having to do with supposed creatures from outer space. Alien gumballs, necklaces, key chains, Frisbees and blow-up figures are available, and now make up the bulk of the store's sales.

Across the street, at Cowtown Boots, manager Barbara Hedrick, agrees her shop would be hurt if the museum left. But she'd miss the people most of all. Turning to a bulletin board behind her, Hedrick points to a picture of a smiling Japanese family: "They come back here every year, they like it so much." She takes down a letter from an Italian customer to show a visitor.

"It used to be nobody came through here, and people didn't know about the different cultures. Now, everything has changed. It's sparked up the town; it's a lot more fun now. I hope it stays that way," she says.

people wanting to come here. It's money our economy never would have had. If aliens are what brings people, if that's where we can make our mark, there's nothing wrong with that."

This year, the attraction that draws almost all the attention, the International UFO Museum and Research Center, is expecting 200,000 visitors, four times Roswell's population. Three new hotels have sprung up, and a fourth is in the works. The Chamber of Commerce estimates the town is taking in as much as \$19 million a year in tourist spending that didn't exist five years ago.

The boom has old-timers shaking their heads. They remember all too well the years when no one in this conservative, staunchly religious town would even talk about the alleged UFO crash that made headlines worldwide in the summer of 1947. When the UFO Museum was first proposed a decade ago, its founders say, local folks thought it would mar Roswell's image or go against the teachings of the Bible.

When the museum opened in 1992, it was mostly ignored except by UFO die-hards. Then came the summer of 1997 when the 50th anniversary of the "Roswell Incident" made the cover of Time magazine and attracted coverage from news outlets

around the world, drawing huge throngs to Roswell's kitschy celebration. The hot show on television was "The X-Files," which mingles sci-fi futurism with mistrust of the government; Roswell became a symbol of the spirit of the times.

And the tourists have just kept coming. "This museum has brought more people to Roswell than anything else that has ever happened," said Glenn Dennis, 75, one of the institution's founders and a mortician who claims he was contacted by the Air Force for information about embalming small bodies after the 1947 crash. "We never dreamed it would be this way."

Dennis spends his afternoons at the museum happily retelling stories about strange goings-on at the Roswell Air Force Base hospital in the summer of 1947 to anyone who wants to hear them.

"It's hard to believe, but it's very interesting," said Petra Schoenig of Germany, who stopped in Roswell with her husband and three teenagers on a five-week trek from Las Vegas to Jacksonville, Fla.

"My feeling when we opened this thing up was, if we had 10 people a day, I'd be jumping up and down with joy," said Walter Haut, 78, the Air Force officer who wrote an infamous press release in July 1947 announcing that the U.S. military had

seized an alien craft. It was retracted by military officials the next day, but Haut became a believer in UFOs and something of a celebrity after he retired and started talking about his experience.

"People are thrilled to death if I give them my time, which believe you me, is not worth anything," he confessed.

What lays ahead for the museum is stirring up heated talk this summer, one of the most blistering in years. The key question is how it should handle the ever-growing crowds of the curious, the true UFO believers, elder hostel adventurers, tourists and schoolchildren on day trips from Texas.

The museum's library of 55,000 documents, tapes, news clips, UFO sighting reports, letters and UFO artwork—the largest such collection in the world—is overflowing, and there's no storage space for the items that UFO-ologists want to donate.

Some officials think the museum should build a fancy new building off the highway outside of town, a destination center that would mix education about UFOs with, perhaps, a dose of Disney-esque entertainment. That has riled up local merchants and the Chamber of Commerce, who want the museum to stay on Main Street, where it has

become a cornerstone of the downtown economy.

Max Littell, 83, a shopping center developer who helped found the museum, thinks moving it is the only realistic option. "We don't have enough room, enough parking, enough storage space. We need to ex-



AP photo

Dan Winters of Vacaville, Calif., looks over one of the displays at the International UFO Museum and Research Center in Roswell, N.M.

The "Flying Saucer" and the Pacific Northwest connection

BY GARY VAL TENUTA

June, 2000 marked the anniversary of what is generally recognized as the birth of the term "Flying Saucer." Nearly everyone is familiar with the phrase but few realize it was born right here in the Pacific Northwest in June, 1947, just a few days prior to the crash of an Unidentified Flying Object in early July of that year near Roswell, New Mexico.

A businessman by the name of Kenneth Arnold was flying his small plane near Mount Rainier, in Washington State, when he witnessed nine Unidentified Flying Objects streaking across our clear blue skies. He radioed his report to the landing field in Pendleton, Oregon, where he was planning to land. Reporters converged upon him when he arrived at the field. When he was asked to describe what he'd seen he said the movement of the objects reminded him of how a saucer might look if skipped across the water. That description stuck in the mind of reporter, Bill Bequette of the *East Oregonian* newspaper and in his article he coined the term "Flying Saucer." The story was picked up by the news wires and within 24 hours nearly every major paper in the country was running the article.

Those words, "Flying Saucer," formed a mental image in the minds of Americans across the country. Almost immediately, reports of disk-shaped UFOs were coming in from everywhere. Curiously, however, Arnold never described the physical shape of the objects as being like a saucer. He only described their motion as being like a saucer might look if it were skipped across the water. His description of their physical shape was a bit different. He made sketches of the objects which pictured them as being more like boomerangs or "bat winged" with no tail. Nevertheless, the reports of saucer-shaped UFOs continued to come in and still do to this day. A number of photographs, film footage and videos of saucer-shaped UFOs have been studied by civilian and military photo analysts. Some of the photos have been shown to be hoaxes. Others appear to be genuine.

While Arnold's sighting may be recognized as the beginning of what ufologists call the "modern age" of the UFO, there were other unusual sightings reported in the weeks and months leading up to that fateful day of June 24, 1947. The reports came from various locations around the country but, like Arnold's, many came from here in the Pacific

Northwest. On the 5th of May, for example, an unidentified silvery object reportedly fell from the sky and disintegrated somewhere over Washington State. On the 21st of June, just days prior to the Arnold sighting, eight disk-shaped objects, said to be as "big as a house," were reportedly seen near Spokane. In one case, verified by the government's own Project Sign (an air force UFO investigation project) there seems to have been an independent witness to the Arnold sighting on June 24. This eyewitness was in the Cascade mountains at the same time and reported seeing several unidentified flying objects. The witness claimed the

needle on his compass "weaved wildly."

The summer of 1947 saw one of the biggest sightings "waves" in UFO history. The infamous Roswell incident of July 2nd of that year, of course, remains a mystery to this day. But there were countless others which never made the big headlines. The reports came from across the nation; from farms and from cities; from police officers and housewives; from scientists and from pilots; from bus drivers and government intelligence officers. All over the world these objects are referred to as "Flying Saucers" and now you know - as Paul Harvey says - the rest of the story.

VOICE, San Francisco, CA - Aug. 8, 2000

Net-O-Matic ALIENZOO.COM

At last, a UFO site that captures the complexity, enthusiasm, and spookiness of its subject. AlienZoo (alienzoo.com) has spiffy design and the obligatory "community" features—e-mail, chat, message boards, e-postcards (yawn)—plus some neat bells and whistles (Net-O-Matic is particularly fond of the interactive Flash animation that lets you try your hand at an alien autopsy). But the real draws are the Zoo's research center, newfeed, and columnist.

In the research center, you can trawl through photos of UFOs and crop circles, hundreds upon hundreds of eyewitness accounts arranged by location and date, and opinionated listings of important Web sites. AlienZoo's newfeed is a smorgasbord of articles about UFOs, science fiction, and aerospace. The latest *Star Wars* casting from *Daily Variety*, a UFO sighting in a Russian village from Tass, and the discovery of sugar molecules in space from *The Hindu* are all fodder for the site's eclectic news mill.

The regular contributors are drawn from the A-list of *The X-Files*. Paul Davids—director of the Showtime movie *Roswell* and the cult classic *Timothy Leary's Dead*—keeps an eye on pop culture in *Flying Saucers Over Hollywood!*, attorney Peter Gersten updates us on the struggle to pry UFO information loose from the government, and astrophysicist Dr. Jean-Marc Perelmuter makes astronomy accessible to ordinary earthlings.

Jim Marrs—who has penned two classic books, including the JFK tome *Crossfire*—shakes things up by looking at incidents that have been swept under the rug of our collective memory. Do you have a logical explanation for the objects that buzzed the White House and other parts of D.C. in July 1952? Not only were they seen by thousands of citizens, including pilots and air traffic controllers, but they showed up on the radar at Andrews Air Force Base and Washington National Airport.

Such undeniable events provide evidence that something weird is going on, and luckily AlienZoo is there to cover it from all angles. —Russ Kick

NEWS DEMOCRAT, Belleville, IL - Aug. 9, 2000

UFO sighting hard to shake for Highland man



Wally Spiers

ON JAN. 5, Melvern Noll inadvertently became a media star.

"I opened up a can of worms," he said, and some of those worms are still wriggling.

The Highland man was the first to spot what has become one of the more publicized UFOs in the Midwest. His report of what he thought looked like an enormous flying house led to police officers across the metro-east seeing the object.

"People still come in and talk

about it," Noll said.

That is good for business at Furl Land, 140 Woodcrest Drive in Highland, where Noll presides over his miniature golf course, go-karts, games, snacks and sandwiches.

Noll, a retired truck driver, still works occasionally and was driving that week in January.

"I got in around 3:30 (a.m.) in Pocahontas," he said. "The door locks on my pickup were frozen. That had never happened before, and it took, oh, maybe 15 minutes to get the door open."

That delay put him in Highland, checking on

his business, just in time to see the UFO. He said he stood at the back door and watched strange lights coming in lower and lower.

"It looked like a two-story house," Noll said. "You could see little windows. There wasn't a sound. The trees didn't move. It slowed almost to a stop."

"That's when I got scared," Noll said. "I thought it had seen me. I didn't know what to do."

He went to the Highland Police station and reported the incident. Noll was worried about being branded a nut, but he wanted to see if anyone else would spot it.

"An officer came and told me a St. Clair County Sheriff's deputy around Summerfield had seen it," Noll said. "I relaxed and went to bed."

But he was far from through with the episode. He spent hours on radio and television shows, and the Discovery Channel and The Learning Channel both came calling.

Noll said he is leaning toward believing the object was from another planet, although UFO enthusiasts tend to lump the sighting in with other sightings of a mysterious black flying triangle they think is a secret project of the U.S. government.

Oddly enough, no one at Scott Air Force Base noticed the object, which Noll said must have passed nearby. A Scott spokesman said in January the base radar was down for routine maintenance at the time.

Wally Spiers column runs six days a week. Have a column idea? Call Wally at 239-2506 or (800) 642-3878; or e-mail: wspi@bnd.com



Photo by Chris Polk, for The Press

Dorothy Lambourne stands near the crushed corn in her field.

matter, I have no idea," he said. "But what probably happened was a strong finger of wind, a microburst, came through and knocked them down. That does happen."

The Lambournes will soon harvest the rest of a crop that promised to be among Harold's best ever, something he was sure

to tell friends. Other explanations aside, Harold offered one last potential cause: Perhaps he had a bit too much pride in his gardening skills.

"Maybe I shouldn't have been bragging on the corn so much," he said. "I don't know if I'll ever figure it out but it sure is interesting, huh?"

ATLANTIC CITY PRESS, Pleasantville, NJ - Aug. 4, 2000

In search of the kernel of truth

■ Part of a Galloway Township couple's corn crop was pressed into the ground by — take your pick — a spaceship, hedgehogs, God, children or a stiff wind.

By BRIAN HICKEY
Staff Writer, (609) 569-7483

GALLOWAY TOWNSHIP — Harold Lambourne doesn't have answers, just a couple of peculiar hunches and an extraordinary theory or two.

You see, Harold grows corn on a quarter-acre plot of his South Pitney Road back yard. He and his wife, Dorothy, eat some of it, give a bunch away and store a stockpile of ears in their freezer for wintertime meals.

left with no answers and still can't quite figure out whether they're in a reality-television version of the X-Files.

"I don't think it's anything from the 'other side' like some people we told," Dorothy said Thursday while looking at the phenomenon, "but something happened here. I haven't the slightest idea what though."

Harold — he didn't call the police because he's "quite sure they'd laugh at me" — also has no concrete explanation but will tell you what he thinks after a little prodding.

"Well, it's confusing," he comments, prefacing his thoughts. "I had a passing thought that it could be that we're being judged (from above). A lot of members of my church said they have had some pretty weird things going on, little things that are out of the ordinary, I guess you could say."

"It's a pretty known fact if you understand the Bible that these

Earlier this week, the crop was about three weeks away from maturity when — cue the "Twilight Zone" theme song — Harold walked out back. He tended to some tomatoes and noticed sunlight coming through his corn stalks.

Unusual, he thought, the sun normally doesn't shine there.

Harold took a closer look and — increase the Twilight volume — saw a 10-yard by 8-yard area of stalks pressed into the ground like a maize pancake. Ten-foot stalks all pushed in the same direction (north) making a natural-looking formation (an oval, rectangle hybrid perfectly centered in the square plot). No stalks were broken, no clues left behind.

The 74-year-old boiler-room engineer called for his wife of four decades, who first put the blame on mischievous kids. And the helicopter explanation toward which Harold leaned evaporated when Dorothy pointed out that the noise would surely have woken them up.

So Harold and Dorothy were

things will happen. I haven't talked to my minister about it yet."

He was unwilling to get more specific than saying he's a member of "God's Church." Non-member Dorothy said — kidding — he hope — that she'd "turn the dogs" on a reporter for mentioning her husband's faith.

"Is it interplanetary? Well I don't think that. And it wasn't kids either. I have no idea."

When told of the field, Bobbie Davis offered a hypothesis of her own. Librarian at the International UFO Museum and Research Center in Roswell, NM — a city which serves as Earth's epicenter of ET-knowledge — Davis said the details match those of "crop circles" reported around the world, potential evidence of an alien landing.

"People give so many explanations. But it can't be a wind vortex since they're usually perfect geometric patterns. People run-

ning around with boards and strings, pressing into the ground? Not likely. Some people think they're the work of sex-crazed hedgehogs, but I don't think the folks in New Jersey have hedgehogs," she said. "There's not a real natural cause for them. It's just not natural."

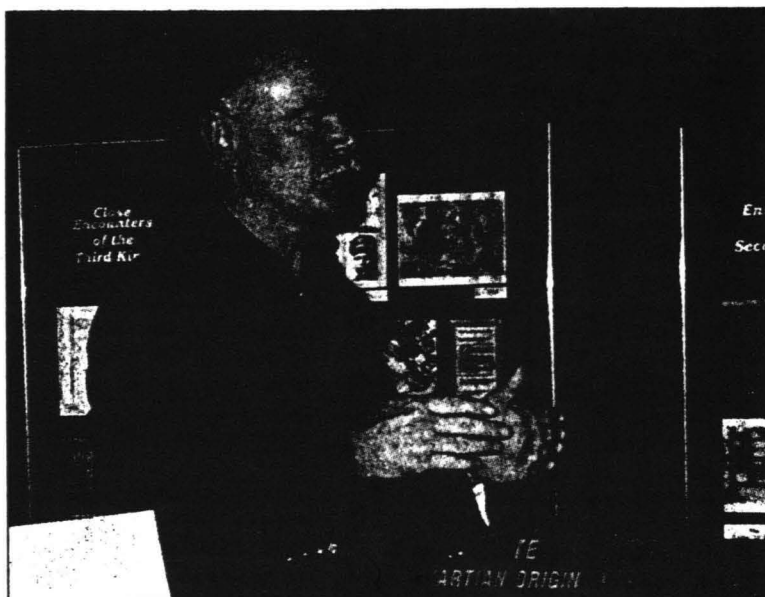
(Fear not Earth people of southern New Jersey, there have been no reports of little green men this week ... or at least that's what the officials said Thursday).

Over at the National Weather Service in Mt. Holly, however, meteorologist Joe Miketta had some ideas of his own.

Neither a tornado nor a hailstorm was to blame since none were reported Sunday or Monday. He hypothesized, however, that rainy conditions could have weakened the stalks, leaving them ripe to be bowled over by a gusty wind.

"Whether or not this is a divine

Speaker details views of aliens and mankind



Daily Record • Tom Moran

Journalist Peter Farley addresses a rapt audience at the International UFO Museum and Research Monday night. Farley expounded upon his complex theories of alien life and human history in the lecture, titled "Alien Visitation and the New World Order."

TOM MORAN
RECORD STAFF WRITER

"Who are our real ancestors?", asked journalist Peter Farley at the beginning of his lecture, "Alien Visitation and the New World Order," held Monday evening at the International UFO Museum and Research Center.

Farley's detailed answer is that we were planted on earth by extraterrestrial "star-seeders."

"It's the history that has been stolen from you ... denied to you," Farley related emphatically.

According to Farley's intricate and complex theory of intergalactic relations, the Earth has served as a sort of proving ground whereby a consortium of alien races, "The Twenty-four," have attempted to combine their various species into one

descendant race.

"The whole idea of this planet was to mix races," he expounded.

Our history, explained Farley, is littered with failed genetic experiments by these colonizers: unique species such as ramapithecus and homo neanderthalus that have appeared out of nowhere, then vanished without a trace.

"The whole history of our planet is beings coming and going with no excuses," he said.

He explained that the many different races of the earth directly correlate to the different alien races that attempted to breed our species. Modern-day racism, he added, is the result of irreconcilable differences between the different groups involved in our creation.

Farley also noted that the evils of racism and warfare are what motivate many present-day extraterrestrial visitors to interact with us.

"We are the only planet in existence that treats our own so badly," he said, adding that "(aliens) either want to help us or control us."

Farley's far-reaching alien hierarchy includes dozens of races from throughout the universe. Referring to the diversity of extraterrestrial life, he joked that "it looks like a Star Wars bar out there."

This was an apt statement, as he earlier described his belief that George Lucas's vision for the "Star Wars" films was in all probability the result of flashbacks to a former life Lucas had led in an ancient, now-destroyed universe.

Farley explained that aliens visit the earth not by crossing vast reaches of space, but through alternate dimensions.

"They're all interconnected by wormholes, by stargates," he expounded.

Pointing to incidents of alien contact throughout human history, Farley noted that the sun gods worshipped by ancient Egyptians were in fact extraterrestrial visitors. He enhanced his claim with a short film clip showing a purported hidden chamber of one of the Pyramids containing Hieroglyphic representations of helicopters, airplanes and flying saucers.

New Mexico's own

Anasazi, he added, were in fact an alien race that transmitted many of its characteristics and traditions to the Hopi Indians before departing the planet. Modern-day Hebrews, he also mentioned, are the descendants of an alien race called the Hoovids, who settled on Mars and a nearby now-vanished planet before migrating to the lost continent of Atlantis, ultimately arriving on our present-day land mass.

"The Grays," the ubiquitous little green men that have become Roswell's tourism stock-in-trade, were also addressed. Farley explained that they are "a dying race trying to hybridize us ... They have a very negative agenda." It was thus with dismay that he related the fact that the U.S. government has been engaged in a secret alliance with the Grays for the past half-century.

Farley believes aliens are in regular contact with humanity, and their presence will continue well into the future.

"Everyone in this room will one day be dealing with aliens," he stated. "They're coming back."

Farley, an Australian-born journalist, writer and metaphysical researcher, has condensed his theories into a 1,000-page, three-volume book for which he is currently seeking a publisher.

"It's so controversial, most of them don't even want to go near it," he lamented.

ARCTIC SOUNDER, Anchorage, AK - June 22, 2000

Aliens anyone?

Amy Miller
Arctic Sounder

Commentary

Good news, Kotzebue. Thanks to a letter I received this week from the National Institute for Discovery Science, you need not keep your UFO sightings to yourself any longer.

The NIDS letter invited me — as the editor of a newspaper who must surely field dozens of calls reporting extraterrestrial sightings — to refer those reports to the Institute.

"Our research indicates that thousands of people in the United States witness UFOs and other unusual phenomena every year," the NIDS pamphlet reads.

However, the sympathetic scientists at NIDS recognize there may be some stigma attached to such sightings: "Many people do not wish to report their experiences because they worry they will not be taken seriously ... NIDS is the ONLY organization in the country with the personnel, the expertise, the budget and the resources to fully investigate what you report to us.

"Where other UFO organizations end their work, we begin."

Actually, according to an Alaska Magazine article from October 1999 titled "The Alaska X-Files," some Nome residents claimed to have seen

what they thought were aliens near town in late August 1988.

Considering the reception they were given, according to the article, I'd be surprised if the aliens return. Apparently the teens that made the initial sighting in Nome tried to run the little guy over with their car.

I don't think aliens would like Alaska all that much anyway. The population density is such that they could outdo themselves making spooky crop circles — or tundra circles, rather — and chances are good no one would even notice.

People up here are used to seeing lights in the sky during the winter, so they might not even notice UFOs if they were hanging around.

Perhaps those intrepid scientists in Las Vegas — no surprise they're located in the home state of Area 54 — haven't heard that the sun doesn't go down up here until mid-July, making it difficult to spot UFOs unless their little green pilots were mutilating animals on the ground.

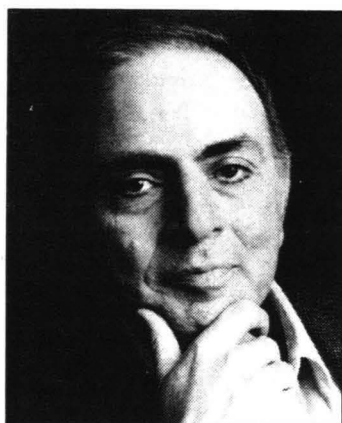
Speaking of which, I think I just figured out what killed all those caribou by Cape Thompson ...

Amy Miller is the Arctic Sounder interim managing editor.

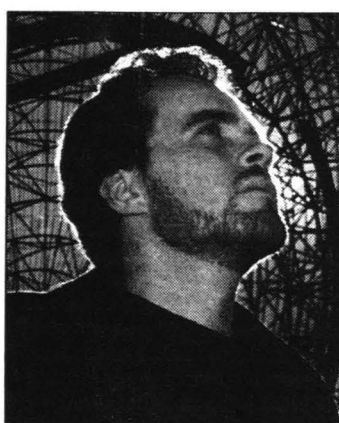
Rough Draft

A UFO Guru Light-Years Away From Carl Sagan

By JOEL ACHENBACH
Washington Post Staff Writer



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FILE PHOTO—SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

UFO guru Joe Firmage, right, and the late Carl Sagan.

Carl Sagan is a modern-day hero of science. He inspired millions of people to ponder the beauty of the universe, and to understand that we are a tiny, precious fragment of the cosmos. But he also implored them to be skeptical, to resist superstition and pseudo-science. Sagan told everyone to keep an open mind, but not so open that your brains fall out.

Now comes a bit of news that just about knocked me out of my chair. Joe Firmage, a Silicon Valley millionaire who became a highbrow UFO guru after he was visited in his bedroom by "a remarkable being clothed in brilliant white light," has signed a deal with Ann Druyan, head of Carl Sagan Productions—and Sagan's widow—to start a new company that will have a Web portal and produce science-based entertainment.

I want to resist the urge to start babbling hysterically about how wrong this is. But I do think the name "Firmage" does not belong in the same sentence as the name "Sagan" unless separated by an extremely elaborate clause. Sagan, who died in 1996, promoted science and scientific thinking. Firmage talks about a bunch of bizarre stuff that Sagan would have rejected in a heartbeat.

Sagan said aliens probably aren't here. Firmage says they probably are. It's not a trivial philosophical distinction.

To be fair, the 29-year-old Firmage is a cut above 90 percent of the folks who work in the field of "anomalies." He's incredibly smart. He's successful, having started the Internet services firm USWeb before leaving to pursue his UFO interests. He's not crazy. He doesn't scream or rant. He's a perfectly genial fellow.

He's also ambitious. Firmage has said he wants to start a movement. Two years ago he pounded out a rambling book, modestly called "The Truth," and put it up on the Internet, but he has since taken it down, which means we can't link to the part where the mysterious entity in his bedroom emits an electric blue sphere that enters Firmage's body and triggers "the most unimaginable ecstasy I have ever experienced, a pleasure vastly beyond orgasm."

Druyan has been a fierce defender of her husband's legacy. She's passionate about scientific reasoning. Why would she go into business with Firmage? How could she do it?

Her answer: The new venture will not allow Firmage to advance his fringe theories. There is a specific legal agreement that prevents Firmage from doing so, she said.

"It unequivocally states that if I feel that Carl's legacy has in any way

been besmirched by any statement made in the name of our company, then I walk and I'll take everything with me. Nothing less than that can protect the legacy," Druyan told me.

I asked her if this was an unholy alliance. She said no.

"Carl and I worked with a lot of people over the last few decades who had conventional religious beliefs that in some ways are as remote from what I believe as what Joe Firmage believes," she said. "I think we should give Joe Firmage a chance. That's what I'm going to do."

Firmage said, "I want to tread lightly." But he made clear that his new media company—he'll run the Web portal and Druyan will head the production studio—will deal with the kinds of theories that interest him.

"Will I use this media company to inequitably promote my view? No," he said. But he said it would "absolutely" deal, responsibly, with "science anomalies."

The "historic joint venture," as the press release puts it, is code-named Project Voyager. It has \$23 million in venture capital behind it. I will admit that, despite reading the press release and talking to Firmage and Druyan, I remain a bit fuzzy on what this company will actually do. The press release calls it "a new kind of media network that intends to transform entertainment and learning drawn from the rapidly expanding knowledge base of science." The production studio will make TV shows and movies, which will be promoted on the Web site alongside news articles and other educational material. In the press release, Druyan says, "There is a hunger for myths, images and dreams that do justice to our radically altered sense of who, where and when we are . . . and where we might go and who we might become."

Right.

Firmage will be tempted to use his new company to promote his theories about breakthrough physics. He appears to believe that a small group of scientists has discovered a secret property of the universe that will someday allow us to extract limitless energy from the "vacuum" of space, build faster-than-light spaceships, and zip around the cosmos at the snap of a finger.

That imminent breakthrough could explain why aliens are here, snooping around, checking us out. They know we're about to go galactic. They want to give us the ground rules, maybe.

It's hard to know how much of this Firmage really believes and how much of it he is merely entertaining with his very open mind. But if humans and aliens get together soon in

a formal way, Firmage wants to be at the table.

"I believe that the most economical explanation for some number of UFOs is extraterrestrial visitation," he said. "Ann disagrees with that view. Both of us agree to let science arbitrate."

Firmage has also been talking with the Planetary Society, which was founded by Sagan in 1980 to increase public support for space science. Some kind of business deal could be announced at any time. Firmage offers one thing to the keepers of the Sagan flame: money. He has been able to raise tens of millions of dollars in venture capital. What they offer Firmage, in turn, is a big shot of credibility.

The SETI Institute, meanwhile, said no to Firmage. All these groups need the kind of money Firmage has, but they need their good reputations, too, and SETI, which takes on the already rather spectacular goal of detecting alien civilizations through scientific techniques, doesn't need to get mixed up with a UFO person.

Sagan's longtime friend and colleague Frank Drake, head of the SETI Institute, told me that a deal with Firmage's firm could have meant sizable streams of revenue coming into his organization. But it wasn't the right thing to do.

"Any connection with Firmage, no matter what disclaimers you put on your site, people will take this as an endorsement of the views of Firmage. This would damage our image in the minds of many of our scientific colleagues and members of the general public, including major donors who support us," Drake said.

There is a thought I've clung to as I've ruminated about this latest move by Firmage. It is that Sagan's legacy isn't up for grabs, no matter who strikes what deal. Sagan's name can't be bought. He put his ideas on the record. He wrote books. The books had readers, and those readers are not stupid.

We know the difference between Carl Sagan and Joe Firmage.

Rough Draft appears Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at washingtonpost.com and would very much like to find a way to cancel its inertial mass.

Roswell story favorably received

I want to thank you for the excellent job you did in editing the story I submitted, "Nine Days at Roswell," (Lincoln Times-News, July 31). It drew the most favorable reactions by readers of any story run on my UFO pursuits in the past 25 years or before.

I did want to mention that the facility at Roswell has proven to be both a major tourist attraction as well as a major research center. The International UFO Museum and Research Center (IUFOMRC) is a non-profit educational IRS approved corporation.

It is opened everyday, except Thanksgiving and Christmas and there is no admission charge. Exhibits, crash site bus tours, memberships, research library archives, UFO photo gallery can easily take two days to examine in full.

The 50,000 UFO items donated by Bob Sabo of St. Petersburg, Florida and myself are valued at \$250,000. I will be flying to Florida Aug. 8 to help him celebrate his birthday. Sabo's health has deteriorated recently so that he will likely never see the fruits of his labors and major contribution to the UFO community.

I ask the prayers of the Times-News readers at this time. And again, thanks from the both of us for your excellent coverage of many of the UFO museum projects at Roswell.

In closing, I would like to mention that we both are sponsoring a UFO exhibit for the MUFON annual National UFO Awareness Month at the Lincoln County Public Library during the month of August.

GEORGE D. FAWCETT
Lincolnton

GASTON GAZETTE, Gastonia, NC

Aug. 2, 2000 CR:: G. Fawcett

Thanks for coverage

I want to thank *The Gazette* for publishing "An update on UFO pursuits" that appeared in Lincoln Voices and the community news section in the July 16 issue.

It drew a good response from both Lincolnton and Gastonia readers. For those historians, there was only one error published and that was mine. President Bill Clinton recently signed Executive Order No. 12958 rather than Number 1298.

Thanks for such excellent treatment of the complex issues surrounding the UFO enigma on a global basis.

GEORGE D. FAWCETT
Lincolnton

County Fair putting up hard cash to residents who divulge their UFO secrets

The Sonoma County Fair is putting big money on the table this summer if local residents are willing to divulge their deepest, most closely guarded secrets. You know the secrets they're talking about - alien abductions, UFO sightings, the really big secrets. "We know it's asking a lot, but

this is a perfect time to come forward," said Jane Engdahl, special events coordinator for the Sonoma County Fair. "People need to remember that they're not alone. We're hoping to begin the healing process for all those people who have encountered aliens."

Aliens, futuristic activities, and out-of-this-world garden designs are expected at "Fairly Close Encounters," the first Sonoma County Fair of the new millennium's scheduled for July 26-Aug. 7. The fair is offering residents a chance to join the fun with several

alien-themed contests, including Tales of Alien Abduction, Recycled Robots, Do-It-Yourself UFOs and Alien Sightings.

"We all know the truth about aliens, but sometimes it's difficult to talk about it. Well, the Sonoma County Fair is here to help. Remember, you can trust the

Sonoma County Fair. There is no reason to be afraid of talking your story to the world," Engdahl said.

While fairgoers face a deadline of Friday, July 7 to enter the alien contests, an assortment of futuristic activities are planned during the fair, from Space Cadet Training Camp and Extra-

Terrestrial Searches for kids to Alien Imitation and Mashed Potato Sculpture contests for kids of all ages.

- Alien Sightings, open to all Sonoma County residents. Entry deadline: Friday, July 7. Prizes include \$1000 in cash, fair passes, alien stuff and ribbons

If you can get your alien sighting on video or photograph - UFO, alien being or both - you can win big money. The fair has reserved \$1,000 in prize money. To enter, mail entry to Alien Sightings, Sonoma County Fair, P.O. Box 1536, Santa Rosa, CA 95404. Please include name, address, and day/night phone numbers.

- Do-It-Yourself UFOs & Signs of Visitations, Flying Objects, Crash Sites, Crop Circles. Open to anyone and everyone. Entry Deadline is Friday, July 7. Awards include \$1,500 in cash, fair passes, alien stuff. Entries must be created (or sited) in Sonoma County. Again, big prize money is up for grabs. To enter, attach a letter than tells about your creation and mail to: Alien Visitations, Sonoma County Fair, P.O. Box 1536, Santa Rosa, CA 95404. Judges will be visiting you between July 10-20.

COLUMBIAN, Vancouver, WA - June 13, 2000

Beam us up; UFOs won't get the votes

So we know where the two leading presidential candidates stand on Social Security. We've seen their respective education and health care plans, heard their ideas about campaign finance reform and gun control, learned what they think about everything from Elian Gonzalez to Regis Philbin.

There seems to be almost no question remaining except whether they dress right or dress left - and their tailors already have that answer, too.

Yet it has come to my attention that there's one issue about which both George W. Bush and Al Gore have been strangely - nay, one might even say eerily - silent:

UFOs.

Yes, believe it or not, both major-party White House wannabes have been dodging the question of alien visitation. You'd think that, at some point during the months-long primary season, or in the general election campaign now under way, Bush and Gore would have been pinned down. You'd think that somewhere in their campaign literature or on their respective Web sites, the candidates would have given voters at least a hint as to what they think about unidentified flying objects.

You'd be wrong. So was I. We've been fools, all of us.

No, not all; not Peter Robbins. He's the editor of UFOcity.com, which Robbins proclaims is "at the vanguard of the effort to insist that the scientific and political community respond in a professional manner to the information already gathered (about UFOs) and to the demands of the public for honest investigation into this issue."

Robbins wrote to me (and, I presume, a lot of other journalists) this week, filling me in on his efforts. As detailed on his Web site (www.ufocity.com/campaign2000.cfm), Robbins has tried repeatedly to get the candidates to come clean on the UFO question. In letters, faxes, e-mails and phone calls to Bush and Gore and their respective campaign headquarters, he has asked:

■ "As president, would you be willing to offer executive amnesty for credible UFO

witnesses in our military and intelligence communities, so they can freely make available their knowledge on this matter without fear of legal reprisal?"

■ "As president, would you be willing to order the declassification of UFO-related records and documents held by the government?"

■ "As presidential candidate, what statement will you issue concerning the American public's right to access whatever information the American government currently has available on this topic?"

The response to these perfectly reasonable inquiries? A big fat zilch, Robbins says. In April, he even went so far as to send the questions to both Bush and Gore via certified mail, which requires the recipient to sign for the letter. Yet strangely, Robbins never got a return receipt from either of them.

"Both parcels seem to have gotten caught between the postal and political twilight zones," Robbins says.

The truth is out there

Far from being a subject of interest only to social misfits and "X-Files" fans, UFOs are a mainstream issue, Robbins contends.

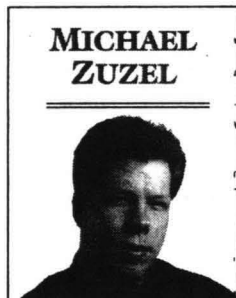
He notes public opinion polls that show 64 percent of Americans believe that beings from other planets have already contacted us and that 80 percent believe the government is hiding information about ETs. He cites the fact that more than 1.6 million people across the nation are participating in a voluntary computer project to detect possible alien radio signals. He points proudly to a 1998 panel discussion in which U.S. Sens. Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York and Bob Kerrey of Nebraska - two of the more serious and sober minds in Congress - both expressed support for extending congressional immunity to credible officials with knowledge of UFO matters. (Robbins doesn't point this out, however: Both Moynihan and Kerrey, shoo-ins for re-election this year, have decided to retire. Coincidence?)

Against that backdrop, the silence of the major presidential candidates is certainly interesting. Are they afraid of something? Or do they know something the rest of us don't?

Robbins knows his beliefs invite ridicule. He pleaded with me to "consider, perhaps for the first time in your journalistic career, taking a serious look at perhaps the most distorted yet significant story of the past and future century."

No problem, Peter. I'm not a big believer in UFOs, but I believe even less in Bush and Gore.

MICHAEL ZUZEL's column of personal opinion appears on the Other Opinions page each Tuesday. His e-mail address: mike.zuzel@columbian.com.



MICHAEL ZUZEL



FOREIGN NEWS

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

EXCLAIM!, Toronto, Ontario, Canada - Aug. 2000 CR: G. Duplantier



By Bruce LaBruce

Nothing particularly captivating has happened in my humdrum little life lately, so I suppose I'm going to be forced to dredge up some ancient anecdote from way back in the last century for your amusement and edification. Did I ever tell you about the time I was abducted by aliens? Why don't we start with that.

Imagine a time long, long ago, years before *The X-Files*, before *E.T.*, even before *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*: an era that predated the widespread dissemination of stories about the abduction of humans by extraterrestrial beings, or vice versa. Nevertheless, living on a farm in the middle of nowhere, with a night sky thick with stars, it often occurred to me that there must be someone out there looking down at me.

I didn't exactly come from the most forthcoming of families. I only found out recently, for example, that one of my uncles had been in jail several years for robbing a bank before I was born, and it took me forever to figure out that my grandmother was a clandestine alcoholic. So it wasn't surprising that once when I was eight or nine, when my eldest sister was hospitalised for some mysterious, undisclosed reason, I was not informed of the precise nature of her illness. I knew there had been several nights of blood-curdling screaming and wailing coming from her room, as if she had been possessed by the devil himself — my parents couldn't keep that from me — but that's all I knew. I mention this because I ended up sleeping in my sister's bed during her absence (partly because we were very close and it was a way of staying near to her, and partly for the pure novelty of spending the night in someone else's bed) and that's when the abduction took place.

Now for those of you who are sceptical of such outlandish claims, let me be the first to psychologise away the experience for you. When I was three or four years old, I had a history of experiencing the worst sort of nightmares imaginable. So severe were they that I once insisted on sleeping with the light on every night for six months. From out of the closets, up from the basement, and down from the attic came every sort of creature a kid could conjure. In the most terrifying one I can remember, a skeleton with racking bones and chattering teeth came careening down the hall toward the bathroom door behind which I sat on the toilet. One by one my family members tried to stop the evil dead from killing me, but each time it threw them down the stairs. Only my mother could save me from the monster, and she was away in town buying the week's supply of groceries. For months afterward my mother had to stand at the bottom of the stairs when I had to go to the bathroom, the door left ajar for a quick escape. It was only years later, when I was in the third grade, that I begin to understand the Oedipal implications, and by then I was already gay. A shrink I saw once had me convinced that a boy who experienced that much terror at such an early age must have been severely traumatised in some way, perhaps even abused or molested, and that I'd suppressed the memory. I didn't make a second appointment. And even if it were true, I would have to take the advice that Chris Rock's mother gave him when he complained about being diddled by a bent uncle: "Walk it off."

Suffice to say I had a history of intense dreams. So as I lay that night in my sister's bed, probably somewhat anxious about her unexplained absence, this is what happened: I woke up in the middle of the night to the sound of a high-pitched, three-tone sound, which was sustained and uninterrupted. Through the open bedroom door I could see that a very intense source of light had entered the house downstairs. As the light became brighter and the sound more intense, I realised that something was making its way up the stairs. I could feel it rounding the banister and coming down the hall toward the room where I sat frozen on the

bed. Then it slowly floated into view, hovering in the doorway: a round, glowing orb about the size of a large beach ball emitting a dazzling yellow light. I don't remember being particularly frightened, but rather hypnotised by its brilliance. After a while it moved forward towards me until it enveloped me completely.

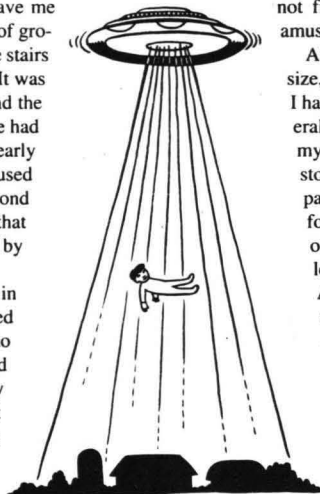
I don't know if you've ever put your head down on the pillow at night and opened your eyes only a second later to discover that you've had a full eight hours sleep, but after the orb enveloped me, I woke up in the morning with that feeling intensified a hundred fold. I felt as if I'd had a chunk of my life cut out that I couldn't remember. I told my mother about the incident, but she replied that it was just a dream, that if the sound was so loud and the light so bright, why didn't it wake up the other members of the family? I knew of course she was right. It was only years later that I discovered that the details of my dream were textbook alien abduction material. The only thing that was missing was the unexplained marks and scars left over from the operations the aliens performed on me, the signifiers of abuse.

Years later, when I was 16, I was drinking one weekend night at the home of one of my town friends. I had just obtained my driver's license after two failed attempts, which had devastated me, so I was in the mood to celebrate. Living on a farm 13 miles away from the small town in which I attended high school, being able to drive meant no more humiliating pick-ups by my parents after movies and dances, no more pretending not to be stoned on the long ride home. The friend whose house I was drinking at was 18, and his parents were out of town for the weekend, so we had unlimited access to alcohol of every stripe. We started drinking right after school on this particular Friday, and continued into the evening. My older friend, who was actually my best friend's best friend, was a mischievous rich kid who was determined to get me as drunk as he could just for the hell of it.

The last thing I remember was looking at the clock in the kitchen. It read 10:10 p.m. When I opened my eyes a second later, I had no idea where I was. I was in an entirely alien environment. I was laying in the front seat of a car being awakened by my father. The car, as it turned out, was parked in front of my grandmother's house (you remember, the secret alcoholic) which was about a quarter of a mile away from my parents' house. I was covered in mud and had a bruise on my forehead. My father was laughing gently. Apparently in his day, he and his brother had been two of the most notorious lads in the county, which I did not find out until much later. My mother, when she found out, was less amused.

After a deadly two-day hangover and enough guilt to kill a man twice my size, I found out from my friends at school on Monday what had happened. I had snapped into a blackout, and was fully conscious and coherent for several hours after my last glimpse of the clock. They had driven me back to my car, which I had left parked near the high school, but when they stopped I escaped, running and laughing through the town, yelling comparisons about my car, a Valiant, and my own character. They chased me for a long time, but I proved elusive. After they finally caught up with me, one of them drove me in my car back to my house while the other followed in his car so that he could drive the one driving me back to town. Apparently at one point I told my driver I was going to throw up, so he stopped the car and let me out. I stumbled to the side of the gravel road and tumbled down a 20-foot embankment, almost splitting my head open on a rock. When they got back to my neck of the woods, they weren't sure which house I lived in, so they took a chance and left me in front of the one they thought it might be, which was my grandmother's.

It was my first blackout, but by no means my last. It felt just like the time I had been abducted by aliens.



EVENING NEWS, Bolton, England - Jan. 27, 2000

The Bolton Files -



Peter Hough is the author and co-author of 16 books on the unexplained and many magazine and newspaper features. He was consultant on Michael Aspell's TV series 'Strange But True' and co-wrote the book of the same title. He also wrote 'One In A Million', based on Phillip Schofield's series. His other books include 'The Afterlife', 'Alien Abductions' and 'The Certainty Of Alien Activity'. His new book, written with Jenny Randles, called 'Supernatural Causes', will be published later this year. Here he takes a look at mysteries closer to home.



DURING my many years of investigation into the unexplained, one of the most intriguing incidents happened in the back streets of Farnworth - in 1926!

Professional oil painter Henry Thomson contacted me after reading one of my books, and recounted the story.

The elderly man was five at the time.

Just a few days after Bonfire Night, he had slipped unnoticed from the house to play hide-and-seek with his pals.

The youngsters split into two groups, and Henry was one of the seekers. He agreed to search the backs of Eustace Street.

As he walked past the dark backyards of the terraced houses, something strange caught his eye at Number 21.

Light spilling out from the scullery window illuminated three figures

who were staring into the house - and they did not look human.

Two of them were of medium height, but the third was several inches taller. They wore helmets and silver-grey suits ridged in thick, padded horizontal bands, with black boots. Tubes from a box mounted on each figure's back fed into the neck of the helmet.

Suddenly the beings turned round and three owl-like faces peered down at the terrified boy.

A loud gurgling or mumbling sound came from the tall one, and the three advanced towards Henry.

The youngster ran all the way home into the arms of his parents - who thought he was safely tucked up in bed!

In time they believed his story, and his mother referred to his encounter as a visitation from the Three Wise Men - which Henry Thomson feels is a million miles away the truth!

LEFT: Henry Thomson spies the Three Wise Men outside a Bolton house and is terrified

Tony Downing claims to have seen at least nine UFOs in the last 25 years, all above Grimsby. One was a dark shape which made no sound and emitted a beam of light. Do UFOs exist? We have received many messages (earthly ones) which support the views that they do...



Great balls of fire — we may not be alone

UFO MANIA has hit North East Lincolnshire as readers have flooded the telephone lines of the Grimsby Telegraph with sightings of strange and unexplainable phenomena.

Writer Tony Downing claims to have seen at least nine UFOs in the last 25 years, all above Grimsby.

One was a dark shape which made no sound and emitted a beam of light at Mr Downing and his wife before vanishing.

Cliff and Margaret Blyth, of Corn Mews, Cleethorpes, got the shock of their lives when an unidentified red ball hurtled towards their house and passed through Mr Blyth's body.

Mrs Blyth was on the telephone when her husband shouted to at her to look through the window.

"I left the phone dangling as I saw a two-inch red ball of fire come through the window and pass through my husband's chest."

"We immediately lifted his shirt to see if it had left a mark, but there was nothing there — we weren't tell anyone at first, it was very frightening. People will think we're mad but there was nothing in the sky and not a soul around." Mr Blyth (68) said: "I'm too old to be scared, it didn't hurt but we both saw it and my wife never drinks."

Elaine Reid's husband thought she was "cuckoo" after she told him she had seen a "bright light

By Joe Lumley

travelling really slowly across the sky down the Humber" when she put her washing out last Friday.

Elaine, of Princes Road, Cleethorpes, described the object as "round and as big as an aerosol".

She said: "My husband told me I was seeing things and that I should forget about it. At first I thought it was a helicopter but it vanished so quickly that it couldn't have been."

Another reader, who wanted to remain anonymous, saw a "really bright light" hovering above Blundell Park.

He said: "It was like a comet, it was so quick it couldn't have been an aeroplane or a helicopter. It vanished in a split second. It was travelling at a height between 3,000 to 5,000 feet — I can't describe it, I've never seen anything like it."

■ On September 22, 1956, the RAF station in Manby logged and observed — through telescope and radar — an 80ft in diameter UFO hovering at 54,000 ft over Cleethorpes.

Hundreds of strollers also witnessed the alien presence in the resort for over an hour before jet fighters went to investigate.

joe.lumley@grimsbytelegraph.co.uk



WHO CAN SAY WHAT IT WAS? John Ramsden, convinced he spotted a UFO. G050400C

'Us mad? People once thought the world was flat'

A GRANDMOTHER from Humberston who first saw a UFO 40 years ago thought her husband was "Havana" laugh when he claimed to have seen an alien presence in the form of a giant silver cigar.

The couple, both aged 63, of Lidgard Road, were leaving the Leas of Waltham School at 7.30pm, when John Ramsden spotted something spooky in the sky above the fishermen's cottages last Thursday.

Dorothy Ramsden, who saw a UFO in Daubney Street 40 years ago, said: "We were just about to get into the car when my husband said he'd seen an Unidentified Flying Object. At first I thought he was pulling my leg but then I saw this lovely silver object with a pinky glow hovering in the sky."

John Ramsden, a self proclaimed sceptic who refuses to watch sci-fi on television, said: "When I first spotted it I thought what the hell is that? It was fascinating, we just stared at it in amazement for around six minutes and I could see it from as far away as Toll Bar School."

The couple, who were not frightened by the experience, described the object as hovering at an angle without moving.

"I used to laugh about people claiming to have seen UFO's but its different when you see one yourself", said Mr Ramsden. "Who can say what it was?" A former production supervisor at Faroe Seafoods, Mr Ramsden added: "I don't see why we should be the only species — people used to think the world was flat."

UFO's?

From Mr. John Hanson (ex-police officer, retired) and Dawn Holloway (researcher)

Sir, — Recently we enlisted the readers of your publication, with regard to any UFO sightings in the Worcestershire/Herefordshire areas, having already investigated cases involving motorists 'pursued by UFOs, the last one being on December 31st, 1999, when a mother and daughter were 'chased' along the Wigmore Road, Herefordshire.

Considerable publicity was given to this particular case and interview granted to the lady concerned on the local BBC Hereford and Worcester Radio Station.

Our Unidentified Object has come once again to notice, during the mid-evening of Tuesday, April 11th, 2000, when a Mrs. Mandy Powis from Kington, reported being 'chased,' a matter of some concern, prompting her to contact the BBC Hereford and Worcester Radio station, reporting what had happened on the air.

Bearing in mind that we already have a number of similar cases under investigation, and that there are a number of questions we would like to put to this lady, can any of the readers help us to be put in touch with Mrs. Powis, who we believe will appreciate the benefit of our experience into sightings of this nature?

We look forward to hearing from any readers.

JOHN HANSON
DAWN HOLLOWAY
PO Box 6371,
Birmingham,
B48 7RW.

Guard Jim gets an eyeful of UFO

Sky-gazing security guard Jim Brace is convinced he saw an enormous UFO and will not change his mind even if people make fun of him.

The 29-year-old was on patrol at the Unipat depot in South Littleton, near Evesham, just before midnight on Monday when he saw a huge object in the sky.

He then watched it for the best part of an hour.

Mr Brace, who said he did not believe in UFOs until the incident, said: "It was partly cloudy and partly clear. This thing just gradually appeared. It looked like a plate, with small domes dotted all over it."

"Apart from ringing the police and my firm about it, I watched it the whole time."

"It was going round in circles every five minutes, although you could only see it clearly for 20 seconds each time."

PC Tom Iddon said Evesham police would look into the matter.

He said: "We will keep an open mind but it may have been an advertising air balloon which I believe was in the area at the time."

Mr Brace said he was sure it was nothing like a balloon, lights from a laser show or a plane.

He said: "I've never seen anything like it and probably never will again."

"They could put me in a strait-jacket but I know what I believe was in the area at the time."

"It was massive and impossible to put a size on it. There was also no noise coming from it."

12

GLoucester Echo, Cheltenham, England - June 7, 2000



THE TRUTH IS OUT THERE: Cleethorpes landlady Elaine Reid who spotted the UFO while hanging out her washing. G080400C

What's spherical and yellow and vanishes?

ANSWER: Kathryn doesn't know – but at least three other people saw it too

by Paul Tetley

MULDER and Scully watch out — Stockport people are claiming to have had a close encounter with aliens.

Mum Kathryn Wales, 44, nearly jumped out of her skin when she caught sight of a huge, yellow, spherical object floating past her lounge window on the first Sunday night of the new year.

And the weird phenomenon – which suddenly vanished out of the sky – was also witnessed by care worker Kathryn's daughter and her daughter's boyfriend.

When she saw the mystery sphere, just after midnight, Kathryn immediately shouted and beckoned over to British

Aerospace worker Louise, 22, and painter and decorator Stewart, 20. "It wasn't a firework and it wasn't an aeroplane. I know because we live on the flightpath here," said Kathryn, of Compstall Road.

"It was weird and I haven't been able to get it out of my mind. We all saw it and it lasted for around ten seconds before it disappeared.

"It was like switching a light out. I'd been drinking Diet Coke all night so I was completely sober."

Another to see the yellow sphere was Ada Callaghan, 87, from Offerton.

Ada, of Marple Road, said: "I don't know what the heck it was and I immediately got out of bed to have a closer look.

"It was a deep yellow colour but then it disappeared. It was unbelievable and I certainly didn't imagine it. I definitely saw it too."

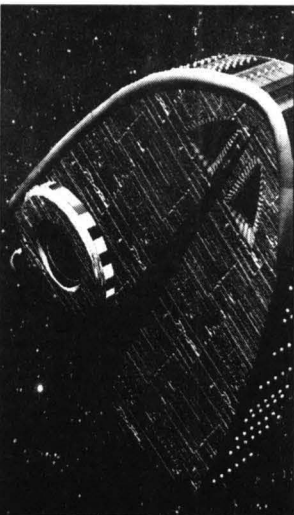
Stockport UFO expert David Cayton said: "It sounds very interesting and I think there may have been similar sightings over Knutsford," said David. "It's a real mystery but it sounds promising."

Terrified

Stockport has had several suspicious sightings in recent years. Two years ago on Valentine's Day, a teenage cyclist reported a large craft which hovered above Roman Lakes – one mile away from last week's sighting.

The terrified youngster said it was triangular and gun-metal coloured. A week later, two pilots said they had seen a similar object after taking off from Barton Aerodrome.

One of Stockport's strangest occurrences came in



TRIANGLE: a computer impression of the object seen by a teenage cyclist and two pilots



SPHERE: photographer Tony Carter stunts up a picture of Kathryn Wales and an object similar to the one she and Louise and Stewart, inset, saw.

November 1982, when Damien Hulme, then just 11, was treated for shock when he saw a craft the size of two houses in Hazel Grove.

He drew a sketch of his sighting – kite-shaped with blue and orange beams and a band of flashing lights in the centre. Described by his father as "a sensible lad", Damien was in such a frenzy that he tried to run into the house without opening the front door.

In September, 1987, Alicia Trevor, 16, from Woodford could-

n't stop laughing at Fallon's UFO abduction in the TV soap opera Dynasty. But the smile was wiped off her face when she and her mother saw a star-shaped object hovering for about 20 minutes.

Brinnington sunbather Jean Dean, of Nottingham Avenue, also witnessed a bizarre triangular object in the sky – and initially thought it was a paper bag.

She said: "I was a sceptic before, but now I honestly do think UFOs exist."

But when two policeman saw a battery of lights coming from a mystery object above Ladybridge Road in Cheadle Heath, that was one mystery which was solved.

The story of PC Ian Walmsley and his colleague, Chris Evans, hit the national press but further inquiries concluded that they had seen a BA Tristar from New York arriving at Manchester Airport.

●If you have witnessed a UFO call Paul Tetley at the Stockport Express on 480 4491.

Lawmen encounter the space patrol

TIMES, London, England - Jan. 24, 2000

of Millisat Police Department, Illinois, noted in his patrol report for January 5: "I drove to the north end of town. While I was sitting there I observed a large flying object coming from a southward direction."

Officer Stevens was not the only policeman to see the vast UFO that night. Police departments in Highland, Lebanon and Shiloh, all east of St. Louis, tracked the craft that night. One Lebanon officer called the National UFO Reporting

Center hours later and said he had pursued the object at high speed, with his flashers blazing, until the unknown craft changed course to meet him. The noiseless, dark triangle hovered above his car at 1,000-1,500ft, as though studying him, before streaking away to the west, seeming to cover several miles in just a few seconds.

Many UFO experts believe that the silent triangles are part of a secret US military project. This one was certainly sighted

within two or three miles of Scott Air Force Base. But why a secret aircraft would fly low over built-up zones with all its lights burning is a tough question.

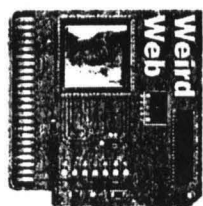
Officer Stevens's priceless report is online at the Millisat station site. He added a sketch to his report, showing a boomerang shape with big headlamps, and also attached a Polaroid that reveals a scattering of yellow lights in a mottled sky. The morning was bitterly cold. Ste-

vens reports, and "the picture did not seem to exit the camera properly."

The object was flying very low, "he records, "from 500ft to 1,000ft, and was flying very slowly. The object was making no noise. I could only hear a very low-decibel buzzing sound. Then the object began banking to the northeast, and continued to cruise away from me."

A local newspaper reporter, Heather Ratcliffe, says: "The police don't believe the sighting was a visitor from outer space. But they won't make any assumptions about what it is." One thing must be certain – Officer Stevens would not threaten his own career and expose himself to ridicule by filing such a report unless he was sure it was accurate.

● www.millisatpolice.com/homepage.com/atrcr/f.html



Web

url:celler@compuserve.com

Police talk like police when they meet aliens from outer space. Officer Craig Stevens

Public interest in UFO experience grows

By Ruth Keskinen

Sam Nazaruk of Sorrento doesn't care what people think or believe of the UFO experience he had on May 18, 2000. He saw the object so clearly. "I know what I saw," he says.

Sam comes across as being straight-forward and honest. He and his wife Anita have lived in Sorrento for about three years and are completely happy with their life there.

As for his UFO experience, Sam recounted how he was walking his dog, Ruff, a nine-year-old poodle-cross, around 10:30 p.m., on May 18. He normally picks up his mail when he takes Ruff for a walk, but because he had picked it up earlier, he walked up nearby McKenzie Road instead.

As he approached, he noticed an orange-red glow just at the bend in the road about 300 feet away. He never once took his eyes off it and for at least two to three minutes it rose. The object did not turn, only went up at an angle, towards the full moon which was behind him and a bit to his right. When it was about 300 to 400 feet above him, he shone his flashlight on it to try to get a better look, but when the light hit it, it disappeared. Ruff didn't seem to notice or care.

"On first impression the object appeared to be spherical, about two feet across and close to two feet high," said Sam. "I have gone over that in my mind, and I realize that size was just my impression at the time. I realize now it was bigger, because when I looked at it, I couldn't see the other side of the road. I think someone tiny like my wife who is 110 pounds could have fit inside it."

Sam described the sphere as being like two half moons separated by a band around the middle. The centre ring glowed orange-red with two vertical bars some

feet apart with no bars on the outside edges.

Sam cut his walk short and hurried home to tell his wife Anita. After telling her about the experience, Sam took his other dog AJ outside for a moment. AJ is a standard poodle just over a year old. He doesn't go on the road yet as he is untrained for walking to voice commands.

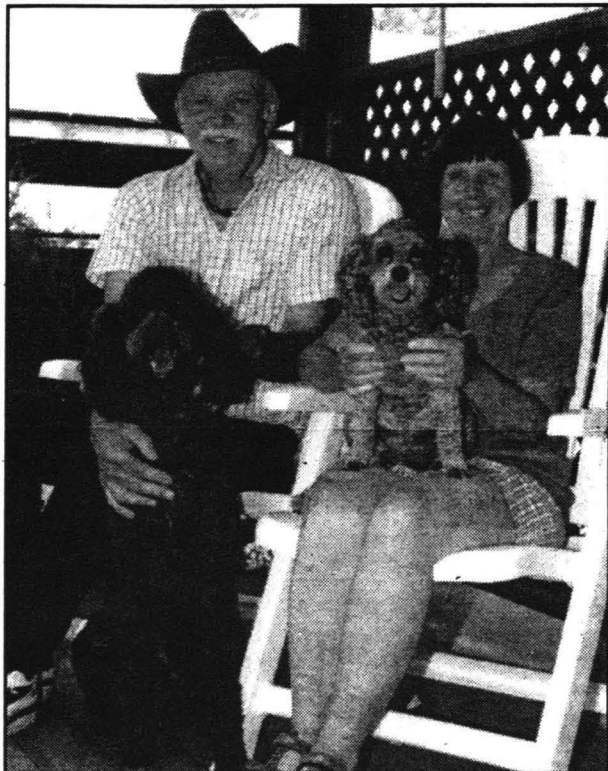
"The moment AJ was outside he went haywire," said Sam. "He ran to the driveway entrance, barked like mad, and kept running back and forth. I shone the flashlight around but couldn't see anything. He finally calmed down and I took him inside."

Strangely, for the next two days Sam felt like he was in a fog. Then he had a flashback. He started to remember other details that he somehow seemed to have forgotten during those two days.

In the back of his mind he remembered that when he shone the flashlight on the object, he had seen a pair of green eyes flash for a moment. They were fairly far apart and beneath the sphere. It came to him also that he had seen what appeared to be a creature, or what he later deemed to be an extra-terrestrial figure, crawling away from beneath the sphere.

"It seemed to have difficulty moving as it was on what one might call its knees and elbows. I had the impression it was in trouble because it had difficulty moving, almost dragging its lower portion or what I will call feet. I did not see features even though it seemed the head portion was above what I would call its arms."

Sam also recalled a moment in time when he shone the light on the object, and the orange-red light went out. He momentarily saw a silver-gray object before it disappeared. There was no trace of anything when he tried to re-enact the scene, but the grass on the



Ruth Keskinen

Sam and Anita Nazaruk and their dogs, AJ and Ruff.

side of the road where he recalled seeing the creature was bent as though something had gone through it. He says it took two weeks until the fog in his head lifted completely.

Since his experience was outlined in the Shuswap Market, and Sally Scales, publisher of the Lakeshore News mentioned it in her column, Sam has had between 15 or 20 e-mails, and over 40 phone calls.

"Most people who have had an experience don't want to use their names for fear of what people might think," said Sam, "but I think it's important to talk about it to make people aware just in case they ever have something like that happen to them."

A few unusual things have happened since the event.

"One day I was putting on my cowboy boots and I brushed against a scab on the back of my leg. It seemed to be a puncture wound of some kind," said Sam. "I have no recollection of ever hurting myself, but I'm sure I would have felt it if I did because it was big enough and deep enough to have caused pain. When the scab came off, it bled. I showed my wife and she was just a puzzled as I was. It has healed now, but there is a scar."

The second thing that happened was that Ruff, his dog, developed black patches in its gray fur. The dog also had a pointed black growth or something under its chin, but that seems to have gone away on its own.

One of the many callers

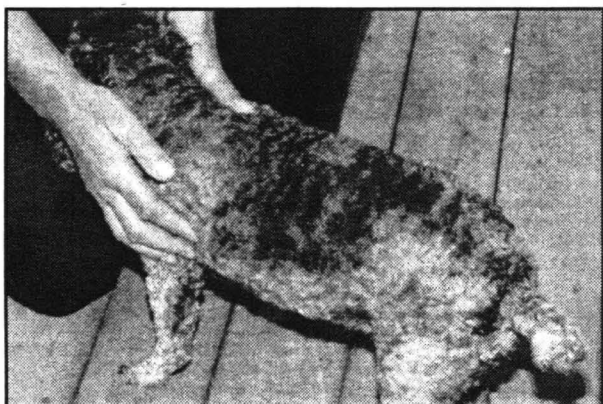
has suggested the spot on the back of Sam's calf could have been in implant of some kind. Someone else suggested that animal fur has been known to change colour after a visit from extra-terrestrials.

Whether or not those things are true, Sam has developed a deep interest in the subject and plans to find out all he can about other people's experiences.

"I really would like to see it again," said Sam, "but this time I will have my camera handy. I have gone back over and over again hoping to see it again, but nothing has happened."

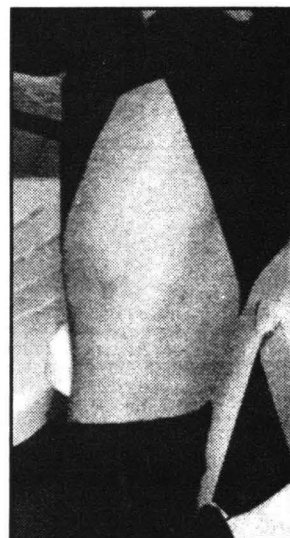
Sam went back again on June 16, the night of the full moon, because there was a full moon the night he saw the object, but again, nothing transpired.

"My wife and I will always be on the lookout now that this has happened," said Sam.



Ruth Keskinen

Ruff has suddenly developed black sections on his normally gray fur.



Ruth Keskinen

The back of Sam's leg clearly shows a scar from a rather large puncture wound.

As a new study dismisses the idea that visitors from space are the culprits...

Why I still believe that aliens created crop circles

THE MYSTERY of crop circles is now solved, according to Colin Andrews, the electrical engineer whose investigations first made the British public aware of this bizarre phenomenon.

In 1989, his book *Circular Evidence* (co-authored with Pat Delgado) became an unexpected bestseller, partly because it contained dozens of beautiful photographs of crop circles taken from the air.

In conclusion, the authors admitted that there was a strong possibility that crop circles were connected with flying saucers, which had often been seen in fields where circles had appeared.

Now, it seems, Andrews has changed his mind. After 11 years of research, funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, he has come to the conclusion that the circles are 'simply formed by the earth's magnetic field'.

This magnetism somehow 'electrocutes' the wheat, causing it to lie down in a neat circle.

But what about the elaborate patterns that have been appearing during the past few years: the triangles, concentric circles, the exotic spirals, or even the enormous key shapes?

These, says Andrews, are all fakes, made by hoaxers who use short planks to flatten the corn and create the pattern. Only one fifth of all the crop formations — the perfect circles — are, he says, genuine.

If he is correct, millions of people are going to be disappointed. In the past 20 years, crop circles have become one of the earth's great mysteries — like the lost city of Atlantis, the Loch Ness monster and the curse of Tutankhamen.

They seem to hint that we are living in a stranger and more mysterious universe than scientists and cynics believe, and that tomorrow our lives might be transformed by some discovery that will astound us all.

I believe that our instinct is right. Scientists seem to be possessed by an urge to short-change us, and to reduce all mysteries to the level of the commonplace. And I am pretty certain that, whatever the final explanation of crop



by **Colin Wilson**

circles, it is not going to be commonplace.

There is one simple and obvious objection to Andrews' theory about earth magnetism. If crop circles really are caused by some form of electricity, then why have they appeared only in the past 20 years or so?

England, Canada, America, Australia, have been full of gigantic cornfields for centuries, and there have always been chroniclers to record strange events.

Why do we not hear about crop circles in the time of Chaucer or Shakespeare? Because, I am fairly certain, they did not exist. Whatever is happening began in the mid-20th century.

On September 1, 1974, long before anyone had heard of the crop circle phenomenon, a Canadian farmer named Edwin Fuhr, who lived near Langenburg, Saskatchewan, was driving his tractor in a field of rapeseed when he saw a round, shiny disc, about 11-ft across, whirling above the crop and causing it to sway.

Then he saw four more in different parts of the field. For 15 minutes he sat frozen with fear, until suddenly the discs took off, rising in a kind of grey vapour. There in the rapeseed were five circles, 11ft across. Hoards of journalists rushed to photograph and report on them.

OTHER circles began to be reported: from Manitoba, Canada, from Victoria and Queensland, Australia, from Ibiuna, Brazil, from New Zealand, the Soviet Union, France and Switzerland.

It was not until 1980 that the first crop circles were reported in England. A Wiltshire farmer, John Scull, found three of them, each 60ft wide, in his oat field near the famous White Horse landmark at Uffington.

A meteorologist named Terence Meaden lost no time in providing a commonsense explanation. The circles, he

said, were made by summer whirlwinds.

But Farmer Scull's circles would have needed three whirlwinds, each 60ft across. In fact, they would have to have been tornadoes.

In August the following year, crop circles near the Cheese-foot Head beauty spot in Hampshire refuted Meaden's theory. There were three of them, one 60ft across, and the other two, placed symmetrically on either side of it, 25ft across.

They were far too neat to have been made by a whirlwind — it was as if some gigantic pastry cook had leaned down from the sky with one of those metal cutters for stamping out biscuits. And the corn around them had not been broken or trampled.

So it went on for year after year, with the British press growing more and more excited. Then, in 1991, two Southampton artists named Doug Bower and Dave Chorley announced that they had made all the crop circles, using a short plank.

They obligingly demonstrated their technique for photographers by making a pattern like a dumbbell in an hour and a half. But they also trampled down the wheat, and left broken stalks all over the place. Genuine circles had bent stalks that were unbroken, and no trampled wheat.

And although Doug and Dave claimed they had made all the British crop circles, even they admitted they had not travelled to Canada, Australia or the Soviet Union.

Again and again, observers noticed odd phenomena associated with the circles. In June 1990, six observers at Wansdyke, near Silbury Hill in Wiltshire, heard a high pitched trilling, and saw 'black rods jumping up and down' among the wheat; next day there were crop circles.

A radio ham in Devon had his listening spoilt in June 1991 by a series of high-pitched blips and clicks; the next day, a 70ft circle was found nearby.

Astronomer, Gerald Hawkins

was so fascinated by Colin Andrews' book that he began to study the precise measurements of all the circles in it.

He soon noticed that these circles — often with patterns inside them — had been constructed very precisely according to the geometry of Euclid, the Greek mathematician who lived around 300BC and compiled what was the standard text on geometry until the 19th century.

So if the 'circle makers' were hoaxers, they must also be first-class geometers too.

Then Hawkins noticed something even odder — that a large number of the circles also had complex musical ratios, rather like the simple fractional relationship that exists between the pitch of different notes on a keyboard.

None of the circles made by Doug and Dave, or other self-confessed hoaxers, had been made with this musical code.

AS A scientist, Hawkins was naturally cautious in announcing his conclusions. But he admitted to me that he believed that these complex patterns were made by extra-human intelligence.

Their purpose was not to convince the whole human race of the reality of extraterrestrials, but simply to convince a few intelligent scientists and philosophers that there are intelligences apart from our own, and that they are attempting to make a breakthrough in communication.

When I started to study crop circles and UFOs in the mid-Nineties, I was convinced that they were due either to hoaxers or to over-heated imaginations.

It took less than six months to leave me in no doubt: that something or someone is trying to communicate with us, but with the exaggerated caution of beings trying to get us slowly and gradually accustomed to the idea.

That is why I am convinced that Colin Andrews will fail in his attempts to provide a neat and down-to-earth explanation of crop circles.

So far the circle makers have managed to keep one step ahead of the 'explainers', and I strongly suspect that they will continue to do so.

■ COLIN WILSON is author of *Alien Dawn* (Virgin, £7.50)

Are crop circles a message from an alien world — or just a hoax?



Crop circle guru confronts critics

CROP circle investigator Colin Andrews entered the lion's den to question many people's beliefs about the phenomenon.

He addressed an audience of some 200 at a conference held in Andover last weekend.

His theory that shifts in the earth's magnetic field electrocute the crops to create the circles has aroused much controversy.

Fanning the flames has been the claim by Mr Andrews that 80 per cent of the circles and all the complex-looking ones are hoaxes. Only the simple circles are genuine, he believes.

Mr Andrews, a former electrical engineer with Test Valley Borough Council now living and working in the USA, said: "The theory has rattled a lot of cages. It has upset a growing industry, a growing religion. I felt an onerous responsibility to say all this. There was some aggression and some hostility."

Mr Andrews said crop circles had become big business and his theory might appear to threaten that. "The Wiltshire tourist board uses crop circles in its brochures. You can't get a B&B between June and August and helicopters run daily trips."

But he said there was still the other 20 per cent of circles that remain genuine mysteries. "I stood in front of the audience and said 'I'm on your side' but they wouldn't hear me. Everybody was hearing 80 per cent are hoaxes, so 'it's all over'."

Long-time researcher Lucy Pringle said Mr Andrews' research was not subjected to the usual scientific practice of peer analysis before publication.

But Reg Presley, lead singer of the Troggs rock group and crop circle enthusiast, gave Mr Andrews his support. The Andover resident added: "There are lot of people get so much feeling from crop circles that they can't listen to people like Colin who they think are saying things against them."



DAILY ECHO, Southampton, England - Aug. 17, 2000 CR: S. Gerrard

EVENING NEWS, Worcester, England - Feb. 11, 2000

More see strange lights in the night sky

READERS have reported strange goings-on in the skies above Worcester after the *Evening News* revealed a city woman claimed she saw a UFO land.

Twenty-year-old Georgina Wells said she watched an extremely bright, egg-shaped object from her bedroom window early last Thursday.

She watched the strange object from the third storey window of her home in St John's, for more than an hour as it dropped lower and lower, until disappearing behind buildings.

But Miss Wells was not the only person to see the strange apparition.

An Alfrick resident, who said she did not want to be named, claimed to have

seen the glowing oval shape at the same time.

"It definitely wasn't a helicopter or plane," she said. "It was very bright and oval and seemed to move very slowly. But I turned away for a moment and it suddenly vanished."

A Barbourne woman, who also did not want to be identified, said her nine-year-old son spotted an

object last October.

"My son was playing on his computer one night, about 6.30pm, when he said he could see a spaceship," she said.

"I thought he was just getting excited about something so I didn't rush. But when I saw it, it really took my breath away."

"There was a bright, white disc hovering outside

his window. When it manoeuvred it turned up on its side and looked egg-shaped."

"It wasn't a light, nor was it a plane or helicopter," she said.

"The window was open but it was silent. I never believed in this sort of thing myself until this, it really did spook me at the time."

Hoaxers steal mystery crown from 'alien visitors'



Going round in crop circles . . .

THEORIES abound about what causes crop circles such as these giant examples near Alresford.

Many say hoaxers, some blame aliens, some the weather, but others blame it on shifts in the Earth's magnetic field.

The last theory is being put forward by researcher Colin Andrews, a former Andover-based electrical engineer.

It is a return to the spotlight for Mr Andrews whose book *Circular Evidence* was a best-seller in 1989 co-authored with Alresford man Pat Delgado.

The book helped spark the worldwide interest in the phenomenon and, with follow-ups, has sold some 250,000 copies.

Mr Andrews once argued that some form of extra-terrestrial intelligence must be respon-

By **Andrew Napier**

sible for the circles. Now, after years of research, funded by the Rockefeller Foundation in the USA, he argues most of the circles and particularly the complex ones are hoaxes.

That means disappointment for UFO-watchers who have been excited by the recent arrival of these two just south of the A31 Alresford bypass near Bishop's Sutton. Mr Andrews believes they are almost certainly man-made.

But the genuine circles are the result of crops being electrocuted into the distinctive circular patterns, he says.

He was due to speak today at a three-day convention which started yesterday in Andover. Organised by the Centre for Crop Circle Studies, it features 20 speakers from

across the world. Mr Delgado, of Arle Close, Alresford, told the Daily Echo yesterday: "In *Circular Evidence* in 1989, I mentioned magnetic theory. It is a possibility. But this type of mystery can stand up and slap you in the face.

"It is a mystery within a mystery within a mystery. There is something there that is inexplicable. It would be arrogant of us to say we know the answer."

Mr Delgado said of the enduring interest: "People love to feel involved in a mystery. This is their way of being involved."

He said many hoaxers now used computers to generate their images. He said he had inspected the two circles at Bishop's Sutton and labelled them hoaxes.

Among those not welcoming the two circles is the farmer. A polite notice at the field gate says, optimistically: "Please keep out."

SCOTTISH X Files

BY RON HALLIDAY

Regular sightings of bizarre objects

DOES the area around Wishaw have a history as a UFO hot spot? That's the question from local man Robert Hutton.

Robert (50), a retired local government officer, has not only witnessed several bizarre objects but has received confirmation of his sightings through a spiritualist medium.

Robert said: "My most recent encounter happened when I was walking with my daughter along a local country track. My attention was drawn to houses a short distance away across a field.

"Above one house was a black triangular shaped UFO. It looked like a wedge of cheese. It was only six feet above the rooftop and about the same size as the house. My daughter also saw the object. The UFO moved very slowly.

"Once it got past the houses it turned and I saw the back of the object. There were no lights. No markings, and nothing sticking out from it. It looked quite smooth. I have lived around here most of my life and I have had a number of weird experiences.

"In 1965 I was travelling to work in a car along the A721 with four others at

I saw an object like two pudding bowls on top of each other

8.15am. Outside Wishaw at the Waterloo crossroads our driver shouted 'I've just seen a flying saucer'.

"I was in the back of the car at the time so I looked out and over a field about half a mile away I saw an object shaped like two pudding bowls on top of each other. It was a metallic and hovering in the sky."

Robert went on: "In 1982 I had another experience after I left my house in Wishaw to take the dog for a walk around 10pm. At an area of wooded ground I spotted a strange orange red ball above the trees.

"The object was about half a metre across. I could hardly take my eyes off it as it had such an odd appearance. The outside looked as if it was a gauze like material. Criss crosses, with squares. And it was a perfect circle with no jagged edges.

"I wasn't the only witness. A young couple standing at the bus stop looked up and saw it. They couldn't explain it either and asked me what it was. I told them that I had no idea but was going to follow it. So I walked towards it into the woods for about 50ft until I came to a clearing.

"The light from the UFO was shining through the trees and then suddenly a hazy black object about the size of a car appeared. The shape then faded or de-materialised and the red ball reappeared. It headed towards St Aidan's Primary School and that's the last I saw of it."

Robert told me of the psychic evidence he'd received.

"One night at the Spiritualist Church the medium pointed to me and said 'I've got three spacemen here with black coloured eyes. They've come to say hello. They want to let you know that the things you have seen were not your imagination.

"Everyone at the church was amazed because nothing like it had been heard there before and the medium didn't know me."

Crop circles attract crowds

ORO-MEDONTE TOWNSHIP, Ont. (CP) — Three circles in a farmer's field have drawn spiritualists, clairvoyants, and faith healers to this central Ontario community.

"They're coming by the droves," Garnet Horne, who spotted the mysterious circles in a field of oats and barley Thursday evening, said Monday.

"It's like a side show," Horne's sister-in-law Phyllis Horne said. Stories and photos appeared in newspapers on Saturday, and by Sunday morning carloads of people from as far away as Ottawa and London, Ont., started showing up at the family farm.

"The first thing at daylight, they were here," Garnet Horne said.

Among dozens of strangers who tramped a path through the waist-high oats on Sunday were three women from Ottawa. "They said they were 'visionaries,'" the farmer said.

At dusk, the three women sat cross-legged in the centre of the largest circle of flattened grain and performed a ritual.

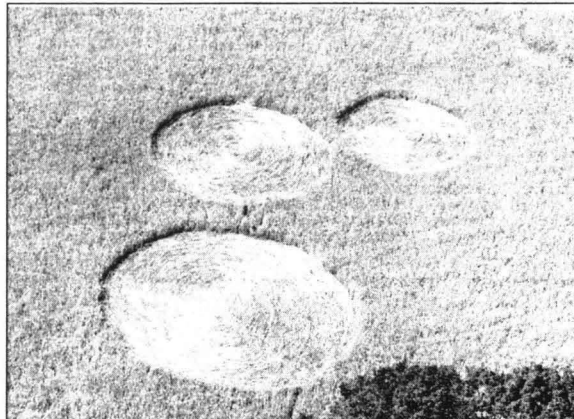
"They sat facing each other and chanted something. I couldn't make out the words. It was pretty near dark when they left," Horne said.

People claiming to be faith healers and aura readers also walked around the circles, seeking energy hot spots, he said.

"They were holding these metal things, like divining rods, one in each hand, looking for the focal point. Where the rods came together, that was where the force was concentrated."

Another visitor brought a heart-shaped pendant and dangled it above the ground as she crunched over the brown kernels of oats and barley. By Monday visits to the circles — 23, 15 and 12 metres in diameter — had tapered off.

Among the latecomers was June Mewhort, a high school teacher and spiritual philosopher from Woodville, Ont., who claimed her physical strength increases when she spends time in crop circles. "If there is unusual energy here, I want it," said Mewhort, who was sitting alone in



Three crop circles are seen in an oat field just west of Orillia, Ont. The circles were discovered Thursday night.

the centre of one of the circles at noon on Monday. The mystical energy in a crop circle can give her a boost that lasts six weeks, said Mewhort.

Phyllis Horne doesn't suspect there's anything supernatural about the circles. It's more likely the work of a whirlwind, generated by one of the fierce thunderstorms that have pounded the area this summer, she said.



ADVOCATE, Baton Rouge, LA - Aug. 29, 2000 CR: W. Theriot

Bigfoot sighting in La.?



Advocate staff photo by Kevin Blanchard

Mary Ward holds a plaster cast of what some say is a footprint made by Bigfoot. Ward owns a bait shop and surrounding property in Rapides Parish, where a sighting of the creature was reported.

Logger reports seeing creature in Rapides

By KEVIN BLANCHARD
Acadiana bureau

COTTON ISLAND — It makes for a mighty tall tale — maybe in more ways than one.

Bigfoot, the fur-covered, 7-foot-tall creature of legend has set up camp in the shadows of these thick pine woods that blanket hundreds of square miles in the northeast corner of Rapides Parish.

At least, that's what some residents say.

Sixteen oversized, four-toed footprints left in a muddy, dried out creek bed have been roped off and analyzed like a crime scene. Two eyewitnesses have come forward. More have followed. A couple of hundred of the curious have gone to see the sight.

But memories of a similar Bigfoot "sighting" 25 years ago have given pause to detectives at the Rapides Parish Sheriff's Office, who worry this tall tale may be only that. If so, they say, the folks responsible for its telling might face some trouble.

The story started Aug. 22 near Cotton Island, which is at the end of miles of dirt roads about 20 miles east of Pineville.

The dirt roads are the only gaps in the trees, which cover the hilly ground, south of Catahoula Lake.

Logger Earl Whitstine sat in the cabin of his sheer tree cutter — a large, noisy device that hugs trees with large metallic arms while it cuts them at the stump.

Whitstine said he looked a few yards out under the trees and saw something hairy.

"I thought it was the rear-end of a horse," he said.

He rattled the arms of the tree cutter to scare the creature away. If there was a horse out there, he didn't want a tree to fall on it.

The shape stood up. It had arms and legs, Whitstine said. The thing walked away, turning its furry head at Whitstine, who turned his head to some fellow loggers nearby.

"Did y'all see what I just saw?" the 30-year veteran of the logging business asked.

No one had noticed, he said. They viewed his story with doubt.

"It's hard to believe, I know it, but I saw what I saw," he said.

Two days later, Thursday, Whitstine and logger Carl Dubois walked the line of the property they were working. The light of dawn peeped through the trees as the pair walked along the bank of a dried out creek.

Suddenly, about 50 yards up ahead, Whitstine said he made out a large, manlike shape half-crouching, half-hiding near a bush bordering the creek bed on the left.

"Hey!" Whitstine yelled.

Startled, the shape turned around and took a few large steps up the thickened bank, through some trees and into Cotton Island lore. Whitstine and Dubois decided to take another route back to their equipment.

"If I wouldn't have seen it with my own two eyes, I wouldn't have believed it," Dubois said Monday. Whitstine agreed that he's also a skeptic who normally scoffs at such stories.

"I thought they actually exaggerated, because they get so excited," he said. "Why would anything that hairy live in a place this hot?"

At a grocery store this weekend, a man ahead of Whitstine in line plopped down a copy of the Alexandria Town Talk. "I don't believe this crap," the man told the clerk. She pointed down the line and pointed out Whitstine.

"I told him, 'Buddy I don't blame you. If I were you, I'd feel the same,'" Whitstine said.

Whitstine admits the story is difficult to believe. He had a hard time winning over his wife and family.

That opens the next chapter — Whitstine's family. Seems that 25 years ago, Roy Whitstine, Earl's father, took part in a prank with some friends by helping saw big-foot shapes out of plywood and place the tracks in the woods of nearby Grant Parish.

The elder Whitstine, now 76, confessed to the prank in Monday's Alexandria's The Town Talk. But the younger Whitstine insists that the newspaper overstated his father's role in the prank. Even so, why would he — 25 years later — try to do the same thing?

Deputies at the Rapides Parish Sheriff's Office poured plaster of Paris into the 16 prints and collected some hair on a nearby log.

Scott Kessler, a Pineville firefighter who investigates Bigfoot sightings for the California-based Bigfoot

Field Research Organization also poured molds.

Capt. Ronnie Wagner of the Rapides Parish Sheriff's Office said investigators drove to LSU's Veterinary Science Department with a sample of the coarse dark hair to see if it came from a recognizable animal. The results should be in by week's end, he said.

Wagner said this is the first Bigfoot sighting he's ever helped investigate.

"It's a strange one," he said.

It became stranger still after investigators read about Whitstine's father's history in Monday's newspapers.

"That's something for us to look at," Wagner said. "If this is a hoax, then we'll find out where it came from."

Dubois said all he's doing is telling the truth about what he saw.

"The laws can come ask me whatever, it doesn't matter to me," Dubois said.

Dubois and Whitstine said agents from the state Wildlife and Fisheries Department told them the prints and

Bigfoot were probably the work of a prankster trying to scare people from hunting in the area.

"They can tell me I saw a camel riding an elephant," Whitstine said. "I know what I saw."

Kessler said the men's stories haven't wavered in numerous tellings and the physical evidence seems to match with earlier sightings.

"You got something creeping around in those woods out there," Kessler said. "If it is a hoax, they ought to be working in Hollywood."

Kessler said he's investigated two previous sightings — in 1996 and 1997 — about two miles from the bait shop.

Mary Ward owns the 140 acres near the sighting. She'd hired the loggers to cut timber from her land.

She says she doesn't allow hunting on her property, though there are hunting camps nearby. She's afraid someone will try to hunt for the supposed Bigfoot and take a shot at it.

A sign hangs outside her small bait shop that reads in bold red letters "Big Foot Protection Area."

Ward operates the tin-roofed bait shop at the end of a long dirt road, where she also rents out boats for fishing on a nearby lake.

"Fishermen have come by and said 'We saw something strange, but we really don't know what it is,'" Ward said.

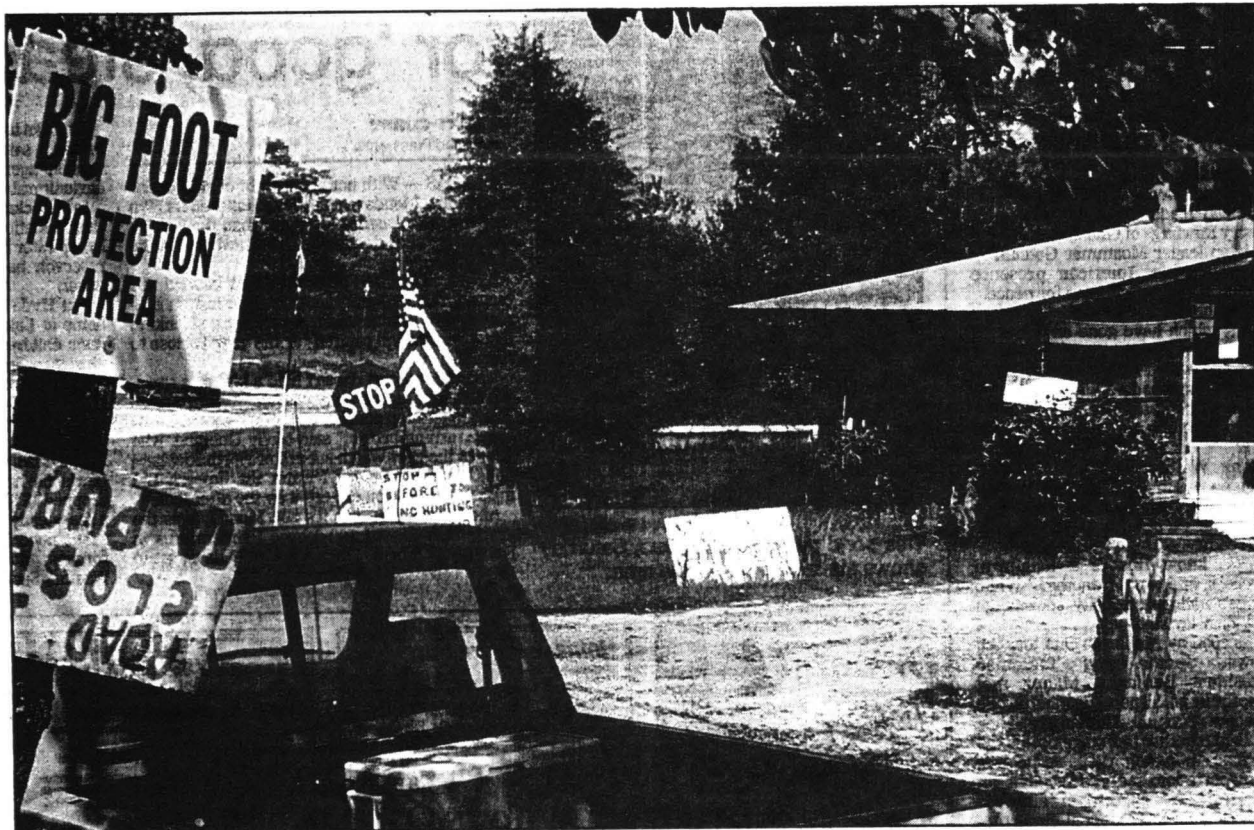
Her own son, Joe Ward, said he saw a furry face peek into his deer stand about 4 a.m. one morning last year.

Ward worked the phones Monday, fielding calls from as far away as New York, where a television show producer wanted the scoop. She said she's waiting for the lab results before scheduling any television shows. She said nearly 200 people visited the out-of-the-way bait shop this weekend, wanting to see the Bigfoot prints.

"We've never had that many people down here before," she said.

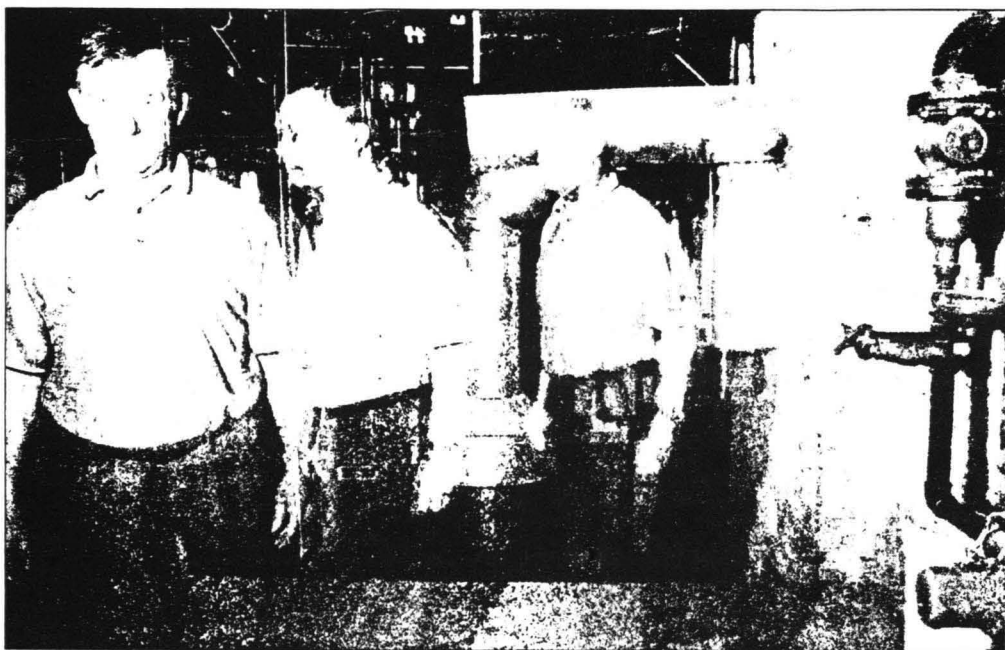
The shop has been thrust into the spotlight, with visiting reporters, photographers and curious sightseers. She sat with each of them Monday inside the air-conditioned bait shop where she sometimes spends the night. Two left-foot castings sit among the pictures and news stories she's spread out on the top of a freezer.

Nothing to hide, just telling the tale.



Advocate staff photo by Kevin Blanchard

A sign that reads 'Big Foot Protection Area' is posted outside Mary Ward's bait shop in rural Rapides Parish.



Brian Harris, chief financial officer for the Calgary Chamber of Commerce, searches basement for a ghost. Ted Jacob, Calgary Herald

Bill the friendly ghost haunts downtown office

Flickering lights, strange noises all in a day's work

MICHELLE SIMICK
CALGARY HERALD

It was one of those winter evenings when the sun sets early and settles a chill on the city when Nancy Sterling, working late in her office, first met Bill.

Their meeting would not have been unusual, except that Bill had been dead for about five years.

Sterling's office was at the back of her department on the third floor of the Chamber of Commerce building in downtown Calgary where she worked as the manager of membership services for six years.

On this particular evening, she had long ago said good night to her co-workers, opting to stay and catch up on some work for the next day.

From her office door, a narrow hall led to a room with some filing cabinets.

"All of a sudden, I heard filing cabinet doors open and close, even though I knew no one was there. Then when I went out, the drawers were open. When that happened, I just packed up and went home," Sterling said.

The spookiest part, she added, was that two drawers of the cabinet were open at one time.

"I had a wide filing cabinet with five drawers. And the thing is with those, only one drawer can be opened at a time. But when I'd go check, the top one and the third one would be open."

She said other strange things, such as lights flickering off and on, would happen in the middle of the day.

"It was just so creepy," she said, and laughingly admits to speaking out loud to the ghost to make herself feel less spooked, especially since the strange occurrences happened on more than one occasion.

"When I'd see the drawers open I'd say 'Hey, Bill, how's it going?' I was so scared, I'd probably say anything."

Sterling is not alone. Other staff members at the Calgary Chamber of Commerce, 517 Centre St. S., have told of flickering lights, tapping sounds and doors suddenly closing.

"There are a few things here that are perhaps a little unusual," said Brian Harris, the chamber's chief financial officer for the past 12 years.

"A number of the doors close on their own. We've had them re-hung, so they sit square in the frame, but they're still closing unless you put a wooden stop under the door."

Many of the staff, he said, are afraid to go into the basement by themselves.

"It looks like a set from a universal studios horror movie scene — boxes, stairwells that don't go anywhere. It's a creepy place."

Sterling said going into the basement, which sprawls across 7,500 square feet with a patchy uneven floor below, a maze of piping overhead and what appears to be old doorways cemented over with bricks, made the hair on her arms stand up.

"I only went down to the basement once or twice and I had to convince someone to go with me. Nobody wanted to go down there. We called it the dungeon for a reason."

As for the ghost's identity, Harris traces that back to the chamber's security system.

The system, which included cameras at every door and black and white monitors, would repeatedly break down over the years.

Bill, by all accounts an amiable man of about 35, would be sent in to fix the system. Unfortunately, no one at the chamber knew too much about Bill — not his last name, his wife's name, or if he even had a wife.

But they do know that after Bill died of a heart attack, they rarely had problems with the security system.

In fact, many at the chamber think there is an original ghost that caused the equipment to malfunction and that Bill has come back to protect them from the first ghost.

Neither Harris nor anyone else has

any idea who the original ghost may be, though all agree the answer may lie in the building's long history and often secretive tenants.

"It does seem that older buildings are a magnet for this type of thing," said Calgary resident W. Ritchie Benedict, a writer and researcher who has studied and lectured on paranormal occurrences for 30 years. "Plus, anything to do with secret societies has a connection as well."

The four-storey red brick and sandstone building, completed in 1912, was originally inhabited by the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, a secret fraternal organization with chapters in dozens of countries around the world dedicated to philanthropic goals.

The fourth floor of the building, then known as the Odd Fellows Temple, consisted of an elaborately furnished lodge room, a reading room and a smoking room.

It was here that new members were initiated in a ceremony that involved placing the blindfolded candidate in chains and then leading him into the room in the form of a funeral procession, complete with a coffin.

In fact, one man who didn't want to be identified, said he had toured the building just before the Odd Fellows vacated it in 1971 and saw a coffin — an empty coffin — lying in the basement.

"That's really just part of the ceremony. We teach about life and death and (the coffin) is brought in," said Wes

Nelson, the grand secretary for the Grand Lodge of Odd Fellows in Alberta.

Nonetheless, an object like a coffin may be a magnet for the spirit world, said Benedict.

At the chamber, staff who have had run-ins with Bill, whom they refer to as a friendly ghost, have never actually seen him. They only hear him.

Sho-ton Yee, the chamber's event and catering co-ordinator for the past three years, said she's sure there's a ghost around even as recently as last weekend.

"When I was working here on Sunday, and I was by myself, I could hear the elevator door opening and closing and it sounded like someone was getting on and off. But I looked and no one was there."

Then there's the strange sliding wall, much like a sliding glass door, in front of the reception area on the third floor. No one is sure why the wooden wall, which sits wedged inside the main wall, is there. Staff say it's called the fire wall and is supposed to be released only when a fire alarm rings.

Yet, on more than one occasion, it has rapidly slid out, shutting people inside the office area. The fire department, said Harris, does not have an explanation, either.

Johnny Walker, the chamber's chef for 22 years, said kitchen staff can constantly hear tapping sounds coming from the basement on any given weekend morning.

ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE, Little Rock, AR - July 12, 2000

Energy just changes forms

The laws of thermodynamics tell us that energy never ceases to exist, it merely changes form. The laws of chemistry and physics tell us that matter never ceases to exist, either; it merely changes form.

Einstein's theory of relativity adequately proves that matter and energy are interchangeable and that said interchange can be quantified; therefore, prior to the existence of matter, there existed the primary energy, which is eternal. Physics further provides that all matter is created by, and is therefore a manifestation of, the primary energy. This is known as *a priori* existence.

Scientific observation of the human animal reveals that there exists an *a priori* understanding. The universal concepts of right and wrong and good and evil are examples of *a priori* understanding that exist spontaneously in human culture, no matter how remote from external influences; therefore, these innate ideals must have existed prior to the existence of man.

In fact, these ideals must have existed prior to the existence of matter and must reside in the eternal continuance of the primary energy. *Ergo*, the primary energy is sentient, and the principles thereof are the standard by which our integrity is ultimately compared. We call this primary energy God.

Debate between evolution and creationism is irrelevant, because the primary energy is dynamic and the manifestations thereof are equally dynamic. God, in short, created the universe to evolve in his own image. Adequate proof of the nature of the primary energy and its manifestations can be found in the Bible, the Koran, the Bhagavad-Gita, the Tao and the scientific writings of Charles Darwin.

TIMOTHY WAYNE BURFORD
Jacksonville

NATIONAL POST, Toronto, Ontario, Canada - Aug. 14, 2000 CR: G. Duplantier

\$2M REWARD FOR PROOF OF OGOPOGO

MONSTER SEARCH IN B.C.

BY SUZANNE WILTON

KELOWNA B.C. • A British Columbia tourism board has offered a \$2-million reward for proof that Canada's version of the Loch Ness Monster exists.

A three-week search for the elusive Ogoopogo lake monster began this weekend in Kelowna.

The tourism board is offering the reward for indisputable proof, which must include photographic evidence and an original negative showing the suspected Ogoopogo as a minimum of seven metres long.

All evidence, which must be submitted before the contest ends on Sept. 1, 2001, will be reviewed and verified by a group of cryptozoologists.

In 1978, Bill Steciuk was on his way to work when he glanced to the right and saw something emerge from the crystal waters of Lake Okanagan.

"I distinctly saw three humps and what I thought was a head coming out of the water," said Mr. Steciuk.

He says he wants to prove what he saw was the serpent-like creature fabled to have lurked beneath Lake Okanagan for more than 100 years.

The local realtor launched his lifelong dream on Saturday — a scientific expedition to find the beast using three different kinds of sonar and an underwater camera called a remote operating vehicle, similar, though smaller, to the one used to scope the Titanic.

The mysterious creature has drawn monster seekers from around the world to the shores of this popular B.C. lake.

Calgary Herald

Talking to the ghost as Sterling did, experts say, is actually quite common.

Sterling has since moved on to a ghost-free job though she didn't leave the chamber because of Bill.

Interestingly enough, however, her new position is executive administrator for the Alberta Funeral Service Association.

The Bigfoot myth-tery adds color to Peninsula

So — is it Bigfoot, or just a big hoax?

A researcher, Cliff Crook of Bothell, is at the Hoh tribal reservation this week, looking into reports that there may be a Mr. or Ms. Bigfoot in the area leaving huge footprints, breaking branches off trees and making sounds described by a reservation resident, Gene Sampson, as "bam, bam, bam, stop, bam, bam, bam, stop, bam, bam, bam." (PDN, June 29 and July 6).

"This was for sure a Bigfoot," says Crook. He should know, being co-editor of the *Bigfoot Trails* journal, Bigfoot tracker and all-around longtime Sasquatch groupie.

Crook figures he's looking for a hairy, 600-pound, 8-foot-tall creature.

But how could such a huge creature keep eluding humans in the most industrialized country in the world?

Bigfootologists like Crook say the answer rests in Bigfoot habits. Bigfoot is a gentle, nocturnal animal who avoids people.

In addition, forests in Olympic National Park are so densely wooded and sparsely populated that some planes that crash are never found.

Some think Bigfoot is descended from the

extinct *gigantopithecus*, the largest ape that ever lived. They theorize the ape crossed over to North America and survived here in small numbers before dying off in its native Asia. Others think Bigfoot is a much closer cousin to humans.

Many people, of course, suggest that Crook look for a couple of guys giggling behind a tree and holding a big, foot-shaped object.

Hoax or no hoax, these nay-sayers would do us all a favor by just sticking their big feet in their big mouths.

For those of us on the North Olympic Peninsula, the tale of Bigfoot is just too mysterious, too curious and too enjoyable to be tossed aside as so much big hooley.

Is Bigfoot real?

Does it really matter?

It's the myth that's important. The legend.

The S'Klallam Indians used to tell stories about a tribe of Bigfoot, who they called "Seeahtiks," living in the Olympic Mountains.

Almost 8 feet tall, with bodies as hairy as black bears, they could push over huge hemlocks and use their voices to imitate almost any bird or animal in the forest.

As late as the mid-1920s, according to the *Olympic Tribune*, the Seeahtiks held the Indians in such a "grip of superstition" that they refused to "proceed up the Elwha River trail to hunt elk or smoke their meat for win-

ter unless many white men were with them."

It's stories like this that keep the Peninsula forever fascinating and allows our imaginations to run free.

Sure, the beauty of this area lies in its forests, its mountains, its streams. But the region's attraction also lies in mysteries in the wildness of nature just beyond the Peninsula's urban fringe.

Most of us came here because of our love of the outdoors and the opportunity to live among something more than manicured lawns.

A powerful draw is the untamed and the unknown.

That's what Sasquatch represents, the idea that something beyond our comprehension might be right around the corner on the path to Sol Duc Falls, or behind a boulder along the steep hiking trails north of Quilcene, or lurking in the distance on a drive to Hurricane Ridge.

Without Bigfoot, the Peninsula is Loch Ness without the monster, Bermuda without the triangle.

In short, we'd be a much less interesting place without Bigfoot.

Just ask any kid who stumbles across a footprint made huge by melting snow.

John Brewer is editor and publisher of the Peninsula Daily News.

John Brewer



A Yakima man in 1999 said he wore a fur suit and posed as Sasquatch, above, in a grainy, one-minute 1967 film segment that showed an ape-like creature retreating across a stream into the Northern California woods.

Path to Big Tree leads to bigfoot

GP man claims he saw mythic creature

By Barbara Hahn
of the Daily Courier

CAVE JUNCTION — They came to see the Big Tree and instead saw bigfoot.

Matthew Johnson, his wife Rochelle and their three children, had just finished up a tour of the Oregon Caves Saturday afternoon. Instead of returning to the gift shop and lodge with the rest of the tour group, they opted to hike up the mountain to see what's known as the Big Tree, a 1,500 year old Douglas fir, 12-1/2 feet across.

According to Johnson, in an e-mail communication with the Daily Courier, they'd hiked about two miles when they smelled a pungent, skunk-like odor. But it definitely wasn't a skunk, he added.

Repeated calls to Johnson today were not returned.

According to Johnson's letter, the family continued up the trail and he heard a faint noise, sort of a "whoa, whoa, whoa," sound.

"At first I thought it was the blood vessels pounding in my head because it was a constant sound-rhythm and I'm out of shape," he said.

As they continued to hike up the trail, though, the sound got louder. This time, he asked his wife and children if they also heard the noise, and they said they had. The rhythmic noise continued in cycles of five to six repetitions as they proceeded further.

Johnson stopped his family, told them to stay quiet and he hike up the hill to the left of the trail. He squatted and scanned the forest down the mountain and to the other side of the trail. That's when he saw it.

"I saw it come out from behind one tree to the left and walk to another tree to the right," he said. Then it looked back and was watching my family while they were standing on the trail."

Johnson, a licensed psychologist, moved to Grants Pass earlier this year from Alaska. He says he has seen bears — both grizzly and black bears — before. This wasn't a bear, he said.

"What I saw walked upright on two legs like a human and it was much taller than a grizzly bear or a black bear," he said.

Johnson quickly returned to his family and hustled them farther

(continued on page 20)

up the mountain trail. He certainly wasn't going to take his wife and children past the creature, he says. The sounds stopped, and they continued on, returning to the monument gift shop about an hour later.

Johnson and his wife talked about whether they should report what had happened.

"Rochelle said it was up to me. I decided that I wasn't going to keep this a secret because it was real and I know I'm sane," Johnson said. "I remembered reading about how the albino gorilla was a myth/legend in Africa for quite some time until someone finally captured one. Well I'm here to tell you that bigfoot/sasquatch is not a myth/legend. The creature/animal really and truly does exist."

After Johnson reported his sighting, a national monument ranger checked the area.

"Our initial investigation indicated nothing out of the ordinary occurred," said Craig Ackerman, monument superintendent.

"Whether it means that this occurred or not is irrelevant."

Checking out such reports — even usual ones — is required.

"We investigated in the same manner as if someone had reported a mountain lion or a black bear," Ackerman said today. "We go up and investigate so we can take any precautions for our visi-

tors."

For example, he said, when there was information that a mountain lion had been seen on one of the trails last year, warnings were posted to warn visitors.

“

Well I'm here to tell you that bigfoot/sasquatch is not a myth/legend

Matthew Johnson

hiker

”

On Monday, two members of the Bigfoot Research Organization based in Crescent City, Calif., returned to the national monument with Johnson to do their own investigation.

"I showed them where I saw the sasquatch walk between the two trees (from left to right)," Johnson said. "In the area where I saw the sasquatch was an animal trail that paralleled the main trail that we were walking on...Along this trail, we found two possible partial footprints and one more solid footprint."

But Ackerman says that noth-

ing unusual was confirmed.

"They did not find anything, to my knowledge," he said. "They did find footprints which were from the ranger who did the initial investigation."

Black bears aren't uncommon at the monument. Already this year, Ackerman has seen one himself.

This is the first time a sasquatch sighting has been reported at the monument, although about 10 years ago, an employee noted an unusually large footprint in the snow, Ackerman said. "It turned out to be from the chief of maintenance's Alaskan malamute," he added. As the snow had melted, the print had enlarged to distort it into the unusual shape

Bigfoot, or sasquatch, is the name given to a large, hairy, ape-like creature reportedly living clandestinely in the woods of the Pacific Northwest.

A 1997 display at the now-defunct Pacific Northwest Museum of Natural History in Ashland featured eyewitness accounts from those who'd observed a bigfoot, displayed footprint casts and fossils of suspected bigfoot ancestors. Also, an old bigfoot trap, set up in the 1970s, still stands in the Applegate Ranger District of the Rogue River National Forest, though it's been disengaged for safety reasons.

REGISTER-GUARD, Eugene, OR - July 23, 2000 CR: D. Smith

BOB WELCH

I do believe in Sasquatch

YOU'VE PROBABLY heard that a man with the Sasquatch Research Project believes that computer-enhanced 1967 film footage of a sighting shows a metal cylinder — "roughly the size of a 16-ounce beer can," according to the Yakima Herald-Republic — on Sas's right arm, meaning Bigfoot might have come from outer space, according to the man.

"An ape doesn't have a cylinder on its arm unless it's an experimental creature," Eric Beckjord told the Washington newspaper.

Well, *duh*. Tell us something we don't already know, Eric. Of course it's an experimental creature if it has a metal cylinder on its arm.

I know this because I live in the Northwest, where Bigfoot lore is as much a part of summer campfires as s'mores. And I believe every word of it.

I believe the report (British Columbia, 1924) about the man being kidnapped by a family of Sasquatches and escaping only when he got his captors high on chewing tobacco.

I believe the story (Wilsonville, 1970) about the woman being thrown

over a fence by Bigfoot and the one (Maple Valley, Wash., 1974) about the man claiming

that he not only saw a Sasquatch, but knows of a San Diego-to-Seattle underground tunnel in which they travel.

(Complete, I suppose, with a Eugene-Springfield exit.)

I believe the "Legend of Bigfoot" movie that suggests Sasquatches drag their dead thousands of miles north to the Yukon and deposit them in mountain crevices.

(Take that, all you who discount their existence because nobody's ever found a body.)

I believe the guy in Kirkland, Wash., I interviewed in 1988 who told me that he was sitting with his girlfriend in a VW bug on a suburban street late one night when they saw — "no doubt" — a Sasquatch lumber across a two-lane street, headed toward a Burger King.

I BELIEVE THE Renton, Wash., woman who told me a Bigfoot-like creature came up to her back window and stared at her "eyeball to eyeball."

"I shook my fist and said, 'Get out of here!'" she said. It shook a fist back at her, then ran away.

(When suburban neighbors get ugly ...)

I believe the Bellevue, Wash., man who said he saw two Bigfoot-like creatures in his neighbor's back yard and one of them "lifted its head at an angle, opened its mouth and made a sound almost like a wolf. It was long and mournful."

(You'd cry out, too, if you couldn't get the cover off the hot tub.)

So, anyway, that's what I believe. Now here's what I do not believe. I do not believe these people who chalk up Bigfoot sightings to hoaxes.

I do not believe Cliff Crook, the Bothell, Wash., Bigfoot expert who claims that the 1967 film was a hoax because four computer-enhanced frames showed what appeared to be a "bell-shaped fastener" at the creature's waist.

(Cliff, I've sat in your living room; I know you believe. So what's with this turncoat stuff

suggesting that it was a guy in a monkey suit?)

I do not believe the one about the supposed Bigfoot blood samples that turned out to consist of transmission fluid and cat blood.

(And, anyway, who's to say an experimental creature from outer space couldn't have autocratic blood?)

I do not believe that old codger in Toledo, Wash., who claimed that he started the 1924 Mount St. Helens Bigfoot scare by rolling rocks down a hill onto miners who later claimed the rocks were tossed by "giant apes" who were holding the men hostage.

Instead — despite his sense that the rest of us are Bigfoot-illiterate — I believe Eric Beckjord, the Sasquatch Research Project dude. Not because he has a master's degree in business from Cal-Berkeley — though that certainly gives him a certain credibility on Bigfoot matters — but because his theory that Bigfoot might be some sort of experimental android is such a no-brainer.

"It would be the perfect spy for wilderness warfare," Beckjord told the Herald-Republic.

(Right, a variation of the "Men in Black" sci-fi movie about aliens come to Earth in highly unlikely forms. Call it "Beasts in Brown.")

You see, I also believe the guy I once interviewed who claimed he was taken aboard an alien spacecraft on Washington's Crystal Mountain and examined with a three-pronged "plug" that was affixed to his back, apparently turning him into sort of a human Zip Drive from which information he had about flying saucers was downloaded to the mother ship.

So, no, I'm not about to be part of this silly water-cooler buzz suggesting that that 16-ounce "cylinder" in the grainy film might have been a can of Bud. How stupid do you think I am? Look at the evidence, people: The guy in Kirkland saw him headed for a Burger King, not the Bottoms Up Tavern.

Get real, folks. They've landed. And they want our Whoppers.

