

UFO

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IS SOMEONE THERE?

Chances are, you don't believe in aliens
— unless you've been taken by them

By KELLI LACKETT

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If you talked to Stan Romanek a few years ago about UFOs or aliens, he would have called you a fool.

"I was pretty aggressive about calling people (who believed in them) idiots and retards and nutcases," said the 40-year-old former Denver resident.

But on December 27, 2000, Romanek's life changed forever. When he was driving where Jewel Avenue meets Alameda Parkway in west Denver, he saw a flying object about twice the size of a van hovering over powerlines. At least a dozen other people witnessed it, too, he said.

That incredible sight started a series of strange events, including at least two instances where Romanek believes he was actually taken by aliens.

Romanek is one of hundreds of "experiencers" who have come to Fort Collins hypnotherapist Deborah Lindemann for help. Although Lindemann helps clients with a number of mainstream problems, she specializes in helping people with paranormal experiences.

Lindemann also conducts research on the encounters through her Center for Extraordinary Explorations and leads an invitation-only, confidential support group for those who believe they've had alien encounters.

"I have seen hundreds of cases that are potential encounter cases," Lindemann said. "If I had to wildly guess, I'd say about 35 percent of them turn out to have other explanations."

A much-cited Roper Poll in 1991 suggested that as many as 3.7 millions Americans have had encounters with aliens. But the methodology of the poll has proved to be dubious.

"I'd be surprised if the number were that high," Lindemann said. "The problem with the Roper poll is that the indicators (used in the poll) are not necessarily an indication of an encounter. They could be indicators of out-of-body experiences, angel encounters, even poltergeists."

Those who think they've had encounters with aliens often recall similar experiences. These include seeing UFO-like crafts, experiencing periods of missing time, discovering strange marks on their bodies, having uncomfortable flashback images and waking up in a different place than where they went to sleep.

Before Lindemann and her clients entertain

"These looked like human wannabes. They even had hair, except it was scraggly, like cancer patients'. They had eyes about three or four times bigger than average. Their pupils were huge. They had really skinny necks. In fact, I don't know how their heads stayed on their bodies. They were just really pale and their faces were super long."

Stan Romanek, former Denver resident

"The next thing I knew, I had opened my eyes. It was still sitting there and it zipped out really fast. ... She and I never spoke. We were in a daze. I had a feeling of looking out from portholes from my own body."

Susan, Estes Park resident

(continued on page 2)

the idea of an alien encounter, Lindemann tries to first help them find earthly explanations for the experiences. Hypnosis can be helpful in recovering memories of "missing time," she said.

"Hypnosis has been used for years by police departments in helping to get details of crimes to convict criminals in high-profile cases," Lindemann said.

Documentary filmmakers are interested in Romanek's case because it is one of the most well-documented encounters, it is rich in evidence, and there were numerous witnesses to many of his UFO sightings, Lindemann said.

While under hypnosis, Romanek recalled that during the night after one of the UFO sightings, three humanoid creatures — two men and a woman — came to the door of his sister's house, where he was staying, at 2 a.m.

"We went to the balcony and I grabbed the male," Romanek said. "The next thing I knew, I was in a room and I was stuck to the wall. I wasn't glued to the wall. It's like someone had turned the gravity on that wall. ... Then they were doing stuff to my back."

Romanek tried to convince himself that this was a dream, but wounds on his back wide enough to stick his little finger in made it hard to ignore it. His sister also remembers the humanoid creatures, he said.

"This wasn't a dream. This was real," Romanek said. "Being hyp-

Interested?

For more information about Deborah Lindemann or her work, call 494-1185, visit www.cfree.org or e-mail deborah@cfree.org

notized is not like you think it is. Stuff just comes out. I remembered it. ... I know for a fact that this is real. And they make sure they leave evidence."

The creatures revealed complex mathematical equations to him, Romanek said.

"I have a learning disability. I'm severely dyslexic. When I went through the regression and came out with these equations, I was floored," Romanek said. "All of the top scientists have looked at these."

At least twice, Romanek has awakened with rows and rows of equations he has written spread out in front of him. Mathematicians have said that the equations have to do with high-level concepts in quantum physics such as wormholes, zero point energy and element 115, Romanek said.

Romanek, who now lives out of state, prefers that his location not be revealed in order to protect his privacy.

"The fact that Romanek had no interest in aliens before his experiences is quite common among those who report encounters, Lin-

demann said. She said that people who have encounters are often skeptics, and they are reluctant to talk and open themselves up to ridicule.

"They have nothing to gain and everything to lose by coming forward with their experience. If they have to admit it, now what do they do? Many say, 'I would rather be diagnosed as crazy because I could simply take a pill and feel better,'" Lindemann said. "Most people have been quietly suffering with this for years. It's like they are leading a double life."

Susan, a 52-year-old Estes Park resident who asked that her last name not be published to protect her privacy, lived quietly with her paranormal experience for at least a decade before she talked about it.

In 1973, Susan and a friend were driving between Big Rapids and Ann Arbor, Mich., when they saw a flying disc hovering about 25 feet above the ground.

"It was like an electric shock of fear," Susan said. "I was out like a light. I had a mental blip. The next thing I knew, I opened my eyes and it was still sitting there. Then it zipped out really fast."

Years later, Susan's friend recounted an almost identical experience, Susan said. Since the event, she has had similar episodes of "missing time" and she even remembers having them during her childhood. Hypnosis didn't help her recover any memories from the "missing time."

"I don't know if this is from another planet or another dimension. All I know is that it hap-

pened," she said.

In the mid-1980s, Susan finally went to a psychologist who gave her a battery of psychological tests.

"His conclusion was that I was mentally stable, but something about the results of the test were similar to someone who has been raped," said Susan, who now participates in Lindemann's support group.

Over the years scientists have tried to explain such encounters with countless theories. Some say the people are mentally ill or that memories change during hypnotic regression.

Others have surmised that those who have encounters have labile, or changeable, temporal lobes in their brains, which makes them more prone to fantasy and visions. To date, however, there is no evidence that UFO reporters have more labile temporal lobes than others.

Another theory is that abduction narratives are caused by a sleep disorder called awareness of sleep paralysis. We are all temporarily paralyzed when we sleep so that we will not act out our dreams. But about 3 to 6 percent of the population routinely become aware of their paralysis, according to Susan Blackmore, a psychologist who has published an article on the subject in *Skeptical Inquirer*.

A common sleep-paralysis episode is when someone wakes up paralyzed, senses a presence in the room, feels terror and may see strange lights or even entities.

Lindemann thinks, however,

that although awareness of sleep paralysis can be mistaken for an abduction, it cannot explain all possible encounters.

If someone has had what seems like a dream concerning an alien encounter, Lindemann looks for other indicators such as marks on the body or unexplainable phobia.

"Generally speaking, memories surrounding abductions that are recalled in a dream state are repetitive. ... Also the intensity is really hard to forget. It can be quite emotional. ... The dream haunts you and you know at a deep level that it is not a dream."

Conducting research on possible alien encounters is a complicated business, she said.

"We are not always getting a fair representation of the visitors or encounters because it's usually only those who have had a negative or frightening experience who come forward," Lindemann said. "People who have had neutral or positive experiences are not the ones in the documentaries or the ones who seek professional help."

Although support groups like Lindemann's can help with the isolation and emotions of unexplainable experiences, most of those who have had encounters end up with more questions than answers.

And like Romanek and Susan, the questions never go away.

"I would like to see more people be more open-minded and search for the truth," Susan said. "I guess I'm convinced that more is known than is actually admitted by people. At the same time, I don't know what this means."

"There are probably a lot of people put there who are yanking chains. But there are a few people who are going through experiences," Romanek said. "I have to admit to the fact that I have to believe now. I can't be a skeptic anymore."

PRESS, Sheboygan, WI - July 22, 2002 CR: R. Heiden

Reporter not sure what to think

By Mary Ann Holley
Sheboygan Press staff

In the skewed words of Richard M. Nixon, "I am not a kook."

Saturday, after packing my skepticism in my back pocket, I covered UFO Daze anticipating far-fetched stories and tales of extraterrestrial beings.

But after arriving at the old country bar on the edge of Long Lake and seeing firsthand the amazing spheres of light hovering high over the hillsides, I began to think anything is possible.

What were the strange amber lights that so methodically made their appearance, lights that seemed to come by invitation to a waiting crowd pumped up by stories of UFOs and alien beings?

After ... seeing firsthand the amazing spheres of light hovering high over the hillsides, I began to think anything is possible.

As one observer said: If it was a hoax, it was a good one.

Fireworks don't hover for 15 minutes. Planes and helicopters make noise. The lights were too high and too sporadic to be part of the old lanterns-on-a-clothesline theory.

I've always had an eye for the unusual and appreciate a good story, but when I see things that have no real explanation, it's a strange twist. I attended the event with an editor and a former editor of The

Press — which should verify my sanity. They, too, saw the glowing lights.

After the sighting, one woman was weakened by the experience. Another sobbed for more than an hour, lamenting that the UFOs had come for her. Another said she was having a flashback from an earlier abduction.

Most of all, everyone questioned who, what, where and why — the basics of good journalism.

But there were no answers.

These were people of all ages and all walks of life — Sharon Moilanen of Sheboygan Falls, an employee at the Kohler Police Department, writers of books and Heather O'Grady of Sheboygan, a certified massage therapist.

John Hoppe of Sheboygan, director of UFO Wisconsin, investigated the incident, taking off in his car to try to find the source of the lights. He, too, questioned the incident, but too had no definitive answers.

Sgt. Nick Evans of the Fond du Lac Sheriff's Department said there were no reports of strange lights Saturday night.

What's your theory? Do you think there are extraterrestrial beings flying in our night skies? Are they living among us? Are there people with such skill and money to pull off such an amazing prank? Just what were the six strange lights in the sky?

Send your comments to me at 632 Center Ave., Sheboygan WI 53081; or e-mail to Mholley@smgpo.gannett.com.

JOURNAL, St. Charles, MO - May 14, 2003

College offers courses on paranormal topics

By Raymond Castile
Staff writer

"If the truth is out there, we will find it."

So reads the course description for "Flying Saucers 101," a three-week class offered next month at St. Charles Community College in Cottleville.

The noncredit "special interest" course is part of the college's continuing education program. It will be taught by Bruce

COTTLEVILLE

Widaman, state director for the Missouri chapter of the Mutual UFO

Network, an international organization of UFO investigators and enthusiasts.

The class runs 7 to 10 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday, June 3 through 19.

Widaman, of St. Charles, pitched the idea to college officials after reading Harold E. Burt's book, "Flying Saucers 101."

"The book was something I felt had been needed for years. It was so good, so

concise, that I was inspired to share the information," Widaman said.

With Burt's approval, Widaman designed a syllabus that provides an overview of UFO study through the centuries, beginning with reports in ancient texts and continuing through the famous Roswell incident and 20th Century investigations. Widaman said he will present evidence that the government has covered up facts, hindering the public's ability to unravel the UFO mystery.

"This class is no bunk," Widaman said. "It is not the muddled waters you see everywhere else. In this class I will give the evidence and bring forth as much truth as possible, then let people decide for themselves."

Each class period will include at least one video presentation, Widaman said.

"I'll show actual footage of crop circles being formed, NASA footage from the space shuttle, and footage of UFOs all over the world," he said.

Nancy Pittman, the college's associate dean of continuing education, said this is

not the "run of the mill kind of class."

"People are interested in the unusual, and this community college is on the cutting edge," she said. "Major universities have had great success in promoting these kinds of classes. We'll hold it and see what we have."

Widaman and Pittman said they think this is the first time a UFO course has been offered by a college or university in the metropolitan area.

"You will see courses like this offered on the West Coast and East Coast, but not the Midwest," Pittman said. "With the influx of new people moving into St. Charles County, we are offering a broader range of special interest classes."

Pittman said the UFO class will be science-based.

"This is not a Ouija board kind of class," she said. "It's educational, and the instructor has expertise in the subject. Plus it sounds interesting."

Widaman will follow the June UFO class with another paranormal course offering in July.

"Phenomenology" will examine topics such as Atlantis, the pyramids, cryptozoology, time travel and "impossible archaeology."

"These are ancient artifacts that don't make any sense," he said. "Like when they find human footprints in the same rock as prehistoric animals."

The "Phenomenology" course runs 7 to 10 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday, July 15 through 24. The class plan is more loosely structured than "Flying Saucers 101."

"I'll talk to the class the first night and find out what they are interested in, then guide the class that way. I want people to feel they are getting their money's worth," Widaman said.

The tuition fee for the six-session "Flying Saucers 101" is \$60. The "Phenomenology" course lasts four sessions and costs \$48. The classes are limited to 30 students each. Enrollment is open until the class begins, or until it fills up. For more information call St. Charles Community College at (636) 922-8310, or visit www.stchas.edu.

A Trip as Far Away as Space-Time Will Allow

Scientists Contemplate Ideas, Impossibilities of Interstellar Transit

By GUY GUGLIOTTA
Washington Post Staff Writer

So: It's about 7:45 p.m. in Council Bluffs, Iowa, on a chill, blustery December night, when this "big round thing" with flashing red lights suddenly crashes in Big Lake Park, just off North Eighth Street.

Eleven witnesses, including cops and firefighters, either see the crash or rush to the scene within 15 minutes to watch the flames from the molten metal—mostly carbon steel—that covers the ground.

It happened on Dec. 17, 1977. The "big round thing" that local resident Criss Moore saw hovering in the air 25 years ago has never been explained.

No one knows if aliens are really blowing up their starships over Council Bluffs. But if extraterrestrial life forms are visiting from time to time, somewhere some sentient beings must have figured out a way to transit interstellar space. Discussions about unidentified flying objects march hand in hand with the feasibility of interstellar space travel.

Earlier this month, George Washington University and the Sci-Fi Channel sponsored a symposium at the university where serious people took up these two topics. Scientists agreed that we won't be doing star trips anytime soon, but "soon" may not mean much in the context of the cosmos.

"The universe is 14 billion years old," said symposium panelist Michio Kaku, a theoretical physicist from City University of New York. "Human civilization only began 5,000 years ago."

So give science a chance. The trick, of course, is to be able to travel faster than the speed of light—186,000 miles per second—which is as fast as anything travels in the world as we understand it, but not nearly fast enough to commute to stars. Our nearest stellar neighbor, Proxima Centauri, is 4.2 light years away.

There are glimmers about how this problem might be overcome. They involve bending space-time in such a way that one could scoot Enterprise-like through the cosmos.

One way is through "warp speed,"

implying that we can move faster than light through space-time by distorting space-time itself. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) likens warp drive to a moving sidewalk: A person walks at one speed but travels much faster because the sidewalk moves as well.

Another way to distort space-time is by harnessing an enormous amount of energy—like that of an entire star—to create a pathway, or "wormhole," connecting two points that used to be separated.

Suppose, Kaku said, "you wanted to get from one side of a rug to the other, and instead of walking across, you used a big hook to pull the other side of the rug close to you. Then you just stepped over." By crumpling the rug, you built the wormhole, Kaku said: "It's like Alice Through the Looking Glass—you start in Oxford, then step through the wormhole and you're in Wonderland."

Which is where all of this is right now. The theories are neither proven nor discounted, the science doesn't exist to describe these phe-

nomena with the necessary rigor, and the engineering needed to pull off the technological feats can't even as yet be contemplated.

"I like to speculate about this stuff as much as the next guy, but it's really hard to do," said Ralph L. McNutt Jr., chief scientist for the Space Department at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory. "There is no obvious way of getting to warp drive out there."

Instead, McNutt would test the limits of the real world. He is leading a team that has suggested to NASA's Institute for Advanced Concepts the possibility of sending a 340-pound probe powered by nuclear generators into interstellar space to a distance of 93 billion miles from Earth. "It's still not far away," McNutt said, noting that a light-year is more than 63 times farther, but it will test the current limits of technology.

At NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, scientists have moved a bit further with what the laboratory's Henry M. Harris calls the "proof of concept" for a "beamed energy sail" that could cut travel time to Proxima Centauri from 400 centuries (in a rocket) to a mere 40 years.

Using a lightweight, high-temperature-resistant, carbon-based sail material, the JPL proposal envisions a starship pushed deep into the solar system by a huge laser. "We could get to Jupiter in eight hours and be moving at a tenth of the speed of light," Harris said.

Harris said that JPL and the sailmaker, Energy Science Laboratories Inc. of San Diego, have accelerated small sails in vacuum chambers "at a few g's" and that "we can extrapolate that material for a spacecraft accelerating at 100 g's." One g is the measurement of the force of gravity on an object at rest on Earth.

But 10 percent of light speed still isn't very fast, and "we can't go much faster," Harris said, because even a speck of dust "could do serious damage in a high-speed interstellar collision."

So the message is that comfortable, interstellar space travel—at least by Earthlings—is not on for now. But will it ever be?

This is a hard question to get at, but what evidence there is suggests that thinking people believe it will. GWU panelist Peter Sturrock, an emeritus physicist from Stanford University, suggested that scientists tend to give credence to UFO reports—as long as they are polled by secret ballot.

Ted Roe, executive director of the privately funded National Aviation Reporting Center on Anomalous Phenomena, found in an aircrew survey of a major airline that 25 percent of the respondents had seen something they couldn't explain, but virtually no one had reported it. Aircrews, like untenured physicists, can get the sack for reporting a UFO sighting.

But if UFOs are real, then so is interstellar space travel, even though "when you talk about going faster than light speed, then you're talking about [harnessing] the energy of stars," Kaku said.

For Earth, this is probably attainable in "100,000 to 1 million years," Kaku added. "When I look at the age of the universe, I see that we've attained technology in the blink of an eye. There's plenty of time."

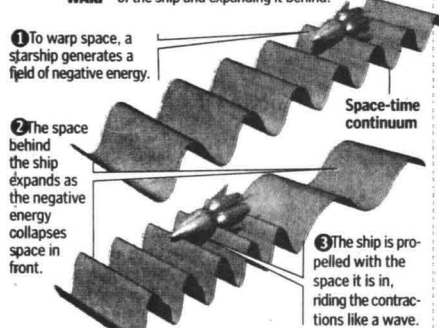
Others are not so sure. Princeton astrophysicist J. Richard Gott III invoked the Copernican Principle—a bedrock tenet of the scientific method—which holds that nothing is "special."

If interstellar space travel were common, then "the Earth would have been colonized by extraterrestrials a long time ago," Gott said. "The Copernican Principle tells us that a significant fraction of the intelligent observers in the universe must be sitting at home on their own planets, or they'd be special. If they aren't, then we're special."

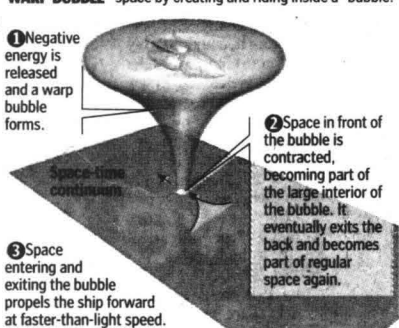
Warped Perspective

Some scientists believe that the only hope for interstellar travel lies in the science-fiction realm of "warp" power. Two theories of how warping space could propel us to the stars:

ALCUBIERRE'S SPACE-TIME WARP Physicist Miguel Alcubierre theorizes that a starship could warp space, shrinking it in front of the ship and expanding it behind.

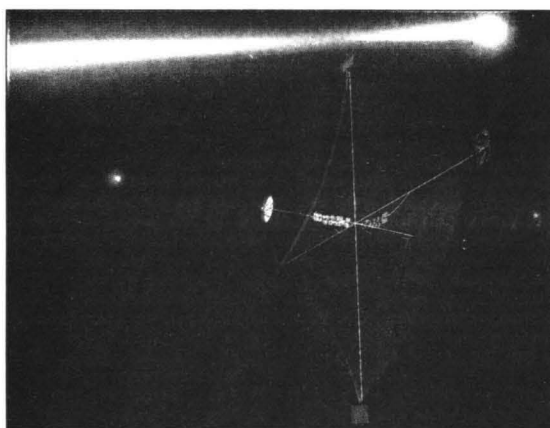


VAN DEN BROECK'S WARP BUBBLE Physicist Chris Van den Broeck expanded on Alcubierre's theory by saying a ship could warp space by creating and riding inside a "bubble."



SOURCES: General Relativity and Quantum Cosmology abstracts from Chris Van den Broeck and Miguel Alcubierre

BY CHRIS KIRKMAN—THE WASHINGTON POST



▲ A space sail powered by sunlight or laser beams could power interstellar missions beyond our solar system.

► Les Johnson, manager of interstellar propulsion research at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Ala., holds a rigid, lightweight carbon fiber material that could be used to build a giant space sail. Marshall engineers are conducting laboratory experiments to evaluate and characterize materials for space sails.



CHRONICLE, Crossville, TN - May 28, 2003 CR: M. McCormack

Was it the 'Boogey Man' or UFOs?

LILBURN, GA (AP) — UFO investigators Olivia Newton and Jim Clifford are trying to solve the case of the red dots at Booger Bottom.

Newton and Clifford work for the Mutual UFO Network of Georgia. They listen to the stories no one else will hear, and then they try to find an explanation.

A 50-year-old Tucker man, his brother and his 73-year-old sister-in-law from Warm Springs reported seeing round red objects the size of silver dollars inside their sport utility vehicle as they were driving home last month.

The three said about 50 red objects appeared inside the car as some sort of solid lights and seemed to scan them. Then the lights vanished.

Most seemingly extraordinary experiences have a reasonable cause, Newton said, pointing out that the planet Venus is often mistaken for a spaceship.

But she hadn't heard a story like this one.

None of the witnesses gave Newton any reason to doubt their account.

Newton and Clifford couldn't find any explanation. There were no trains, no airplanes, no close houses that could reflect light. Newton said there wasn't an area where practical jokes could have hidden and used red pointer lights, especially when the three were traveling at 35 mph.

Newton plans to look into why the area is called Booger Bottom, to see if maybe it was called that from a similar incident. Locals say the name may have come from the "Boogey Man."

If you're a believer in otherworldly possibilities, or maybe just a curious skeptic, you'll find kindred spirits at the Northwest UFO/Paranormal Conference

IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT... OR DID IT?

BY MARK RAHNER
Seattle Times staff reporter

Never let it be said that there isn't something for everyone around this town. Submitted for your approval, as Rod Serling would say: This weekend, you could go to a big film festival, hang out at a folk-music festival or get an alien implant removed.

Well, you might at least be able to get a consultation for that removal at the Northwest UFO/Paranormal Conference, now in its third year and running today through Monday. "Implant surgeon" Dr. Roger Leir is among the dozen expert speakers in a bizarre cornucopia that includes ghost hunters, remote viewing, crop circles, talking with the dead, various extraterrestrial subjects and lots more.

The event's host, the nonprofit Seattle UFO/Paranormal Group, originally was formed to appreciate now-retired late-night radio personality Art Bell. Its 25 or 30 current members still convene to ponder the unexplained (for club and conference info, see www.seattlechatclub.org).

Last year's conference drew upward of 250 attendees, says the group's "cosmic librarian," Philip Lipson. Not so much academics and researchers as "salt of the earth," Lipson says: "People who have beliefs and interests in the material, but they have ordinary lives, and they don't really share it with anybody outside their own circle."

There are plenty of those people around. Maybe one is standing behind you. A Harris Poll released Feb. 26 shows that 51 percent of Americans believe in ghosts; 31 percent believe in astrology; and 27 percent believe in reincarnation. (Although the reason why reincarnationists always figure they

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(continued from page 4 - TIMES, Seattle, WA - May 23, 2003)

were aristocrats in their past lives and never sewage workers also remains unaccounted for.)

For his part, Lipson believes UFOs exist, that there may be aliens among us and that our history is much older than we've been led to believe. "I think more and more people are interested in the possibility that things are not what they seem," he says.

So, for true believers, curious skeptics or those who just like to be tantalized by mysteries, here's a sampling of the weekend's featured guests — our cryptic trip-tych, if you will, all prefaced with "alleged."

Travis Walton is the granddaddy of alien abductees, best known because of the 1993 film "Fire in the Sky," which dramatized his account of what happened on a 1975 Arizona logging trip.

Now 50, Walton says the exposure didn't make him rich. He works in quality control at a paper mill, has four kids in college and periodically tells his story at events such as this weekend's conference.

"About every one of these I do, I think it's going to be the last one," he says by phone from his Snowflake, Ariz., home.

Decades and numerous debunkers later, the alleged incident is still clear in his mind.

"Too clear, you know. I do my best not to think about it too much."

Walton says fear of sensationalism had made him resist film offers at first, but he finally accepted so that people would understand what he — and the six other loggers who said they saw him zapped by a flying saucer — went through. The finished product, he says, "didn't really meet all those goals."

Meanwhile, Walton acknowledges that his infamous case opened the floodgates for other alien abduction claims.

"What happened to us is actually a rather rare thing, but people who say this is happening every day and that kind of stuff are the kind of people who generate the kind of skepticism that has caused me and my co-workers so much grief. We suffer by being lumped in with a lot of things that are, well, to put it kindly . . ." He trails off. The notion of being dismissed out of hand still agitates him.

"All I ask is that people, before they pass judgment, at least know what they're talking about."

Filmmaker **Robert Nichol** says last year's M. Night Shyamalan blockbuster, "Signs," awakened the public to the enigma of crop circles, but it got their message all wrong.

"Aliens are out to get us?" He follows up the question with an expletive from his Sunshine Coast home north of Vancouver. "It's a communiqué pure and simple."

So Nichol, 66, is presenting his documentary, "Star Dreams." It captures a selection of the enormous, astoundingly intricate pictograms and geometric patterns found in fields around the world.

However, a number of them have been revealed as pranks, and there's no conclusive positive evidence that others are non-human in origin.

Nichol admits that the hoaxes "muddy the waters," but he claims eyewitnesses have seen craft hovering over some circles, and argues there's a logistical improbability that they could all be phony.

"Think about it: 20 years, 10,000 circles. That means a team of really specialized individuals on the sly in all these countries under cover of darkness put down a completely sophisticated design . . . Who would pay them? It would cost tens of millions of dollars."

So what's in the communiqué?

"Crop circles are the realization of a higher consciousness. They're presented to humanity at this time to aid in a universal awakening of higher dimensions of being," he says. "I profoundly believe we are imminently facing contact with our brothers."

Nichol says his next film may be about alien abductions and hopes to hook up with Walton at the conference.

Skip and Sharon Leingang say they talk to dead people. Think another Shyamalan movie: "The Sixth Sense," and TV psychic John Edward.

Operating out of their Psychic Spectrum shop in Federal Way, the exceedingly friendly couple does readings in tandem, keying off of each other with the aid of tarot cards and runes.

Sharon, 53, claims she was born with intuitive skills, and has always known such things as when the phone was going to ring and who'd be on the other end.

Skip, 51, says he discovered an ability to communicate with those who have "passed over" after nearly doing so himself at age 24 when a pickup truck broad-sided his motorcycle.

Skeptics accuse Edward and others like him of fooling people with "cold reads" — that is, by asking probing questions vague enough that desperate clients are likely to have relevant experiences, then building inferences on the answers. The marks thereby believe the con artists have intuited truths about them.

Sharon's response is a familiar refrain in the paranormal community: "There are a lot of characters out there that give us a bad name." She says the only real way to tell who's legit is when psychics come up with information they couldn't have known otherwise.

So how about a demonstration by telephone? To cut down on potential fishing expeditions, I tell them nothing about me, and add almost no information to their statements.

Sharon thinks I had a little brown dog as a kid. Who didn't? For a short time, I had a little black one.

I work with a man who wears very strong cologne. True, but vague.

Also at work, she sees an "R" male — an initial. I don't bite. She says more: He likes to tax me, put me to the test, create situations where I need to play catch-up or prove things. Not bad: That's the first initial of my department head's last name. Could they have researched it? Conceivably, but I'm not sure how likely. Isn't R one of the frequent "Wheel of Fortune" letters?

She's seeing something stressing my left foot. I've had surgery on my right one.

Had a rough childhood, she says. Again, who hasn't? She's getting a feeling as if from a child who's been adopted. Skip pipes in: "Are you sure his mother's his mother? I'm getting an adoption feeling."

Now they've gotten my attention: my grandparents raised me.

Sharon tells me I long ago learned to control a bad temper, and don't vent much emotion in public. I guess so. But when I tell my girlfriend about this later, she lights up.

Other statements don't register: a "D" person from the other side, a pair of red socks, a childhood train set, a little tiger doll — although my grandpa did call me "Tiger."

They haven't scored a home run, but they're in the ballpark. If they're right about where Grandpa hid his dough, they get the pennant.

You'll find them at the conference all weekend. Maybe they'll find something for you.

Mark Rahner: 206-464-8259 or
mrahner@seattletimes.com

MILITARY COMMUNITY, Fort Myer, VA April 18, 2003 CR: L. Bryant

BLOW THE WHISTLE ON "HOSTILE AERIAL CRAFT"

A brand-new UFO-cover-up whistleblower has stepped forward to relay his account of having witnessed some "Smoking gun" telexes during his security-guard duty in 1975 at the U.S. embassy in Canberra, Australia. Emanating from the Tidbinbilla tracking range, these electronic messages reported hostile interference from UFOs with some of our super-secret military satellites. The reports characterized the interlopers as "hostile aerial craft." If you (or someone you know) have confirmatory evidence of those reports, please contact Larry W. Bryant at 703-931-3341 (e-mail: overeci@cavtel.net). Be assured that at least one congressional committee would be interested in evaluating and correlating any evidence you choose to share with us.

TIMES, Seattle, WA - May 26, 2003

Spirits soar at conclave on UFOs, paranormal

Large crowds materialize for
Bigfoot, extraterrestrial talks

BY JENNIFER SULLIVAN
Times Snohomish County bureau

Employees at the Radisson Hotel near Seattle-Tacoma International Airport have their own ghost stories.

A sudden gust of wind pushing a heavy chair across the lobby, visits from a longtime-but-now-dead guest, and maids hearing children giggling and running down the halls when no one is there.

All reasons for Ross Allison and his team of ghost experts to investigate.

Allison's group is among local and nationally renowned psychics, Bigfoot investigators and UFO experts at this weekend's Northwest UFO/Paranormal Conference at the Radisson.

For the past two years, Allison and other members of Amateur Ghost Hunters of Seattle, Tacoma — AGHOST — have hauled cameras, thermometers, motion sen-

sors, magnetic-field sensors and barometers into homes, cemeteries, historical sites and businesses looking for paranormal activity.

Late Saturday night, nearly two dozen people, some from AGHOST and some curious onlookers, crept down the Radisson's halls. While ghosts were nowhere to be found, a ball of paranormal energy was spotted, Allison said.

"We're not ghostbusters. We don't try to get rid of the spirits," Allison said yesterday.

Unlike the characters in the hit film "Ghostbusters," Allison said his group's mission is to investigate paranormal activity and "collect evidence that ghosts exist."

Allison said it's rare to hear about ghosts being violent or mischievous. Most clients just want confirmation they are indeed being haunted. The investigations are free.

Since the group formed two years ago, it has investigated the Maltby Cemetery in Snohomish County, the Snohomish Library and the Kalakala ferry, as well as scores of private homes.

Matt Luker, assistant front-office manager of Radisson Hotel Sea-Tac Airport, said he has never seen ghosts wandering the halls but said members of the paranormal group were allowed to interview hotel staff in detail.

"I'm kind of a skeptic," Luker said.

More so, perhaps, than the 300 or so people who have attended the third annual paranormal conference since it started Friday.

Local psychics Skip and Sharon Leingang, psychokinetic expert Lyn Buchanan and Brazilian UFO expert A.J. Gevaerd are to speak today.

West Seattle resident Matt Crowley and his girlfriend, Dana Foss, chatted excitedly yesterday with Loren Coleman, a Maine-based cryptozoologist who has written articles and books on lake monsters, Bigfoot, giant snakes, Mothman and thunderbirds.

Crowley said his interest in Bigfoot and abominable snowmen developed when he was young. "I think I was interested because they were frightening," said Crowley, who attended last year's conference.

Jillian Schuyler of Eatonville wandered around trying to learn more about psychic abilities and UFOs. She said she saw a flier in Eatonville advertising the conference. "I'm just curious what would be here," Schuyler said.

Schuyler seemed disappointed when she heard the Leingangs wouldn't speak on "Talking with the Dead," until today.

The husband and wife run Psychic Spectrum in Federal Way, which has 12 psychics, a day spa and gift shop. They often work together when doing psychic readings and contacting the dead.

"Everybody thinks we paint a third eye on our foreheads and wear pointed hats," Skip Leingang laughed. "But we're trying to help people on their spiritual path."

Charlette LeFevre, a director of the Seattle UFO/Paranormal Group, said only about half as many people pre-registered for the event as did last year, but more are showing up at the door.

Crowds have been especially heavy for the UFO and Bigfoot presentations. LeFevre expects a high turnout for mythologist William Henry's lecture on Iraq's ancient history and mythology.

Jennifer Sullivan: 425-783-0604 or jensullivan@seattletimes.com

Conference continues today

Northwest UFO/Paranormal Conference, today, Radisson Hotel-Seattle Airport, 17001 International Blvd. (Highway 99). Cost: Exhibits and displays free; \$25 for individual lectures. For more information, visit www.seattlechatclub.org or call the Psychic Spectrum Gift and Learning Center, 800-803-9690.



Cryptic Crops

The latest in an occasional series called Myths and Legends in Cecil County, today's story examines crop circles

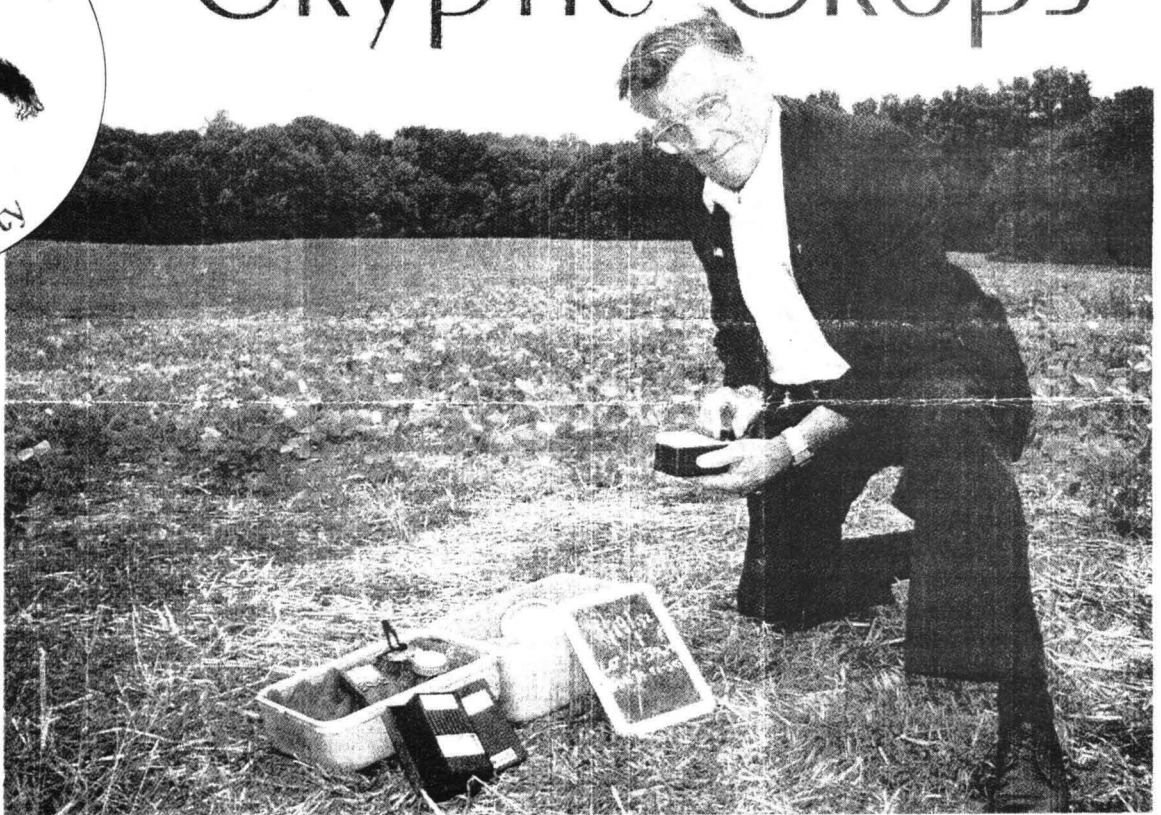
By Ed Okonowicz
Special to the Whig

I just saw "Signs," the new Mel Gibson movie about crop circles and alien visitors.

The film is set in Bucks County, Pa., outside Philadelphia, but the production could have been shot right here in Cecil County. And that might have been appropriate, since there were reports in 1996 that a number of "signs" were discovered in Cecil County grain fields.

To get the lowdown on ET drawings in our neck of the woods, I contacted my good friend George Reynolds, a well-known local personality with a number of interests — some of which might seem a bit "unusual." But who wants to read about the routine, commonplace and ordinary?

Reynolds' resume is all over the map, sort of like the result of a shotgun round hitting a bull's-eye target. He is a recognized archaeologist (was a founder of and served as president of the Maryland Archaeology Association), is an accomplished wood carver, a sought after speaker on local history, a retired Aberdeen Proving Ground electronics



CECIL WHIG/Adelma Gregory

George Reynolds takes measurements in the Cecil County spot where he once examined a crop circle.

development technician and — most relevant to our current topic — current director of the Northeast Maryland Chapter of the Mutual UFO Network (MUFON), an international organization of scientists and regular folks who study, among other things, the possibility of extraterrestrial life — aliens from outer space.

During a Saturday morning conversation in his Elk Mills home, I asked the 79-year-old MUFON field investigator his opinion of "Signs."

"I was disappointed," Reynolds said, explaining that he thought the flick was "slow-moving," featured very few high-tech props, "not even a spaceship," only showed one crop circle, and focused on "four people sitting in a farmhouse

talking."

"I expected to see more action, more alien spaceships, more crop circles," he said. "I left disappointed."

I agreed. About 40 minutes into my screening of the movie, I had wondered, "Where are we going, and are we ever going to get there?"

Then I asked George if the show's presentation of the worldwide puzzle was "accurate."

I had hit the right button. The county's resident expert in "cereology," the study of crop circle phenomenon, immediately began a detailed technical explanation of the ins and outs of the worldwide craze that has confused and intrigued both scientists and citizens.

He pointed out that designs

are not usually found in cornfields. The majority of discoveries are in areas growing wheat, barley and rye.

Many people, Reynolds

added, think the whole thing is a hoax. While he agreed that some of the designs have been

Author's note

The book "Unexplained," by Jerome Clark, has a chapter on crop circles and states the first recorded modern incident occurred in Wiltshire, England, in the summer of 1980. At that time, several circles were discovered in a field of oats. Clark states that by 1988, at least 112 circles were reported. That number increased to 305 in 1989 and approximately 1,000 by 1990. To date, there are thousands of crop signs recorded worldwide, and they sometimes are called "saucer nests." During earlier ages in history, unusual designs were referred to as "fairy rings."

Speculation about the causes has ranged from alien visitor landings, to atmospheric and weather conditions to practical jokes and elaborate hoaxes.

manmade, he said the increasing number of crop signs, the speed with which they are created and the physical changes in the crops affected cause him to believe otherwise.

His thinking was reinforced when, in 1996, he investigated two Cecil County locations that were intriguing enough to attract the attention of national experts Nancy Talbott, a researcher from Cambridge, Mass., and Linda Moulton Howe, an author and researcher from Philadelphia.

The Mt. Aviat area sight contained eight circles, the largest 20 feet in diameter, plus a "letter H" figure. The Blue Ball Road location had two very large circles, Reynolds recalled, each about 100 feet in diameter.

While checking unusual crop designs, Reynolds said, investigators look for other indicators, including:

- Bent, as opposed to broken, stalks,
- Particle expulsion or outgrowths, at the top of the stem near the grain,
- Indications of heat in soil samples,
- Lack of insect or animal life and

- Unusual compass and magnetic instrument readings.

Reynolds said cooking similar grain in a microwave has duplicated the changes found in grain discovered in crop circles. He added that even after the crops are cut in a field where a sign has been discovered, the outline of the design may be visible for weeks afterwards.

Examining a crop circle involves taking photographs, gathering soil samples and making detailed notes. A single investigation will keep Reynolds busy for several days. When completed, his findings — including the data collected in the two county fields in 1996 — is sent to Dr. W. C. Levengood, a national expert, at the Pine Landia Biophysical Laboratory in Grass Lake, Mich.

Reynolds said proper investigation and accurate research help separate a hoax from the real thing — whatever it is.

Finding out "whatever it is" keeps Reynolds going.

"Whenever a story like this hits the paper, I get calls from all over, and I get excited and run around," he said. "I have to tell the difference between

what's real and what isn't. I'm a crop circle Sherlock Holmes. I have my suitcase all packed. All I got to do is pick it up, get in the car and take off."

Reynolds' suitcase includes such items as light-intensity and wind-velocity meters, a tape measure, magnetometer, electromagnetic field meter, pencils, plastic bags for soil samples, indelible markers, string, chalk and a global positioning system (GPS) indicator.

There have been reports of signs in crops for centuries, Reynolds said, but in the last 15 years there has been an explosion of activity. He speculated that modern field designs might be caused by advanced satellite technology controlled by a secret worldwide agency, or the result of the U.S. government testing advanced weapons systems.

Whatever the answer, research and persistence are Reynolds' constant companions.

"It's a puzzle," he said. "The truth is out there, and I want to find it."

To provide information about strange events in Cecil County, or to ask questions about this topic, contact Ed Okonowicz through e-mail at edo@mystandlance.com or call him at 410-398 5013. If desired, the identity of the person giving the lead will remain anonymous. While any unusual topic or story is appropriate, of particular interest are stories about American Indian ghost sightings at the Cecil County Detention Facility, near Landing Lane; "Screaming Polly," in the Cecilton/Earleville area; and legends associated with the

[Original clipping incomplete]

UFO festival lands in McMinnville

The event features speakers, costumes and more with an extraterrestrial theme.

BY ANGELA YEAGER
Statesman Journal

Thousands will gather in McMinnville this weekend for the Fourth Annual UFO Festival.

And that's just from the known universe.

Some of the visitors will be wearing antennas. Others will come armed with "X-Files" DVDs and Area 51 maps.

The UFO Festival in McMinnville always has balanced a mix of light humor — i.e. costume ball and parade — with conspiracy theories and serious discussions about other-worldly beings.

This year is no exception.

The McMinnville-sponsored festival opens tonight with a dinner with Stanton Friedman, an internationally-renowned nuclear physicist and ufologist who also will appear Friday at the speaker's forum.

The UFO Festival ends Saturday with a full day of activities, including the annual downtown parade and a costume ball at the Hotel Oregon.

Amber Lindsey, of McMinnville's marketing department, said well-known speakers are a highlight of this year's event.

Along with Friedman, Peter Robbins will appear at the festival courtesy of the Sci-Fi Channel. Robbins is the co-author of the book, "Left at East Gate: A First-Hand Account of the Bentwaters-Woodbridge UFO Incident, Its Cover-up and Investigation."

"It's very exciting to have them on board," Lindsey said.

UFO exhibits will be at the Hotel Oregon's Mattie's Room from 4 to 9 p.m. on Friday and from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday.

About 10 exhibitors will display their wares, including the new Portland Alien Museum and the UfoStore.com, who will be selling anything and everything UFO-related. There even will be wine tastings by Marsh Lane Vineyard.

"It's a super eclectic group," Lindsey said. "Everybody comes out, from the real believers to the ones who are tongue-in-cheek about it."

One of the most popular parts of the UFO Festival is the annual



Schedule of events

All events are free and open to all ages unless otherwise noted.

TONIGHT

7 P.M.: Dinner with Stanton Friedman at Hotel Oregon, 310 NE Evans St. Cost: \$55, open to 21-and-older. Reservations required. Seats still are available. Call: (503) 472-8427.

FRIDAY

4 P.M.: UFO exhibits at the Hotel Oregon

6:30 P.M.: Speakers forum featuring Stanton Friedman, Peter Robbins and a special presentation by Oregon UFO Research. Cost: \$7. Reservations required, held at the Mack Theater, 510 NE Third St.

9:30 P.M.: Speaker reception and book signing featuring Friedman and Robbins, Hotel Oregon

SATURDAY

9 A.M.: UFO exhibits, Hotel Oregon; Peter Robbins' Alien Abduction Workshop, Mack Theater

1 P.M.: "War of the Worlds" radio theater performance by Willamette Radio Workshop, Mack Theater

3 P.M.: UFO Parade through downtown McMinnville

4 P.M.: TheUfoStore.com UFO Video Film Festival, at the Mack Theater; see schedule

8 P.M.: Alien Costume Ball featuring reggae music by Earth Force. Costumes will be judged and prizes will be awarded. Admission is free. Open to 21-and-older. At the Hotel Oregon.

Fourth Annual UFO Festival

WHAT: Three-day event featuring UFO and extraterrestrial-focused speakers, parade, costume party, film festival and more.

WHERE: Most events are at the Hotel Oregon, 310 NE Evans St., McMinnville. Other events are throughout downtown McMinnville.

WHEN: Dinner with Stanton Friedman at 7 p.m. today, other festival activities are 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. Friday and 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. Saturday

COST: Free, except for speaker's forum and dinner with Stanton Friedman.

CALL: (888) 472-8427 or www.ufofest.com

OUT OF THIS WORLD:

The three-day UFO festival in McMinnville will take place through Saturday. Events include a dinner tonight with expert Stanton Friedman, exhibits, speakers, a parade and a film festival.

Special to the Statesman Journal

parade, which is at 3 p.m. Saturday.

Families dressed in silver spacesuits and antennas will line the streets and cheer on the UFO-themed floats. The parade is organized by the McMinnville Downtown Association.

Floats at the parade will be judged in categories that include, "Best Alien Float," "Best Alien Pet" and "Best Alien Group."

The winning entries for "Best Individual Alien Male" and "Best Individual Alien Female" will ride in a car through downtown McMinnville as the crowned king and queen of the UFO parade.

Patti Webb, manager of the downtown association, said businesses got into the other-worldly spirit by organizing a weeklong event called Alien Daze, which started May 5 and runs through Saturday.

Merchants sporting alien T-shirts decorated their windows and created UFO-related specials. The downtown association also is holding an essay contest open to everyone titled, "Why I Think My Mother Is An Alien."

Essays can be submitted at the Hotel Oregon and other downtown McMinnville merchants by noon on Saturday.

Other popular events include the film festival at 4 p.m. Saturday at the Mack Theater and the costume ball Saturday night.

New this year is an Alien Abduction Workshop, hosted by Robbins at 9 a.m. Saturday. The event is done in a talk-show format in which participants talk about various abductions and coping strategies for people who are taken by aliens.

"Yeah, I think we're going to get a lot of 'X-Files' fans showing up for that one," Lindsey said.

Angela Yeager can be reached at (503) 399-6743 or ayeager@StatesmanJournal.com



Special to the Statesman Journal

DRESS UP: Many festival attendees will wear costumes.



Special to the Statesman Journal

ON PARADE: The UFO parade will occupy the streets of McMinnville at 3 p.m. Saturday as part of the town's Fourth Annual UFO Festival.

UFO Film Festival

The 2003 film fest lineup is:

"OUT OF THE BLUE": A documentary on the UFO phenomenon. This award-winning documentary reveals through exclusive interviews with high-ranking military and government personnel that some Unidentified Flying Objects could be of extraterrestrial origin. The film, narrated by Peter Coyote, brings to light how secrecy and ridicule are used to shroud the UFO issue.

"PROJECT REDSTAR — MARTIAN GENESIS": This video offers evidence of an extraterrestrial base on Mars. This is volume one in a series of three, which probes the depths of the greatest mystery to confront the human race. Who built these structures? Why are they so much like those found on Earth in both scale and shape? Why do we have such a mixture of structures, like those found in the Middle East, India, Mexico, South America and Egypt? What are the high technology structures that are clearly seen there as well?

"CROP CIRCLES: QUEST FOR TRUTH": A documentary full of never-before-seen footage and interviews with leading crop-circle researchers and scientists, some of whom agreed to be on camera for the

first time. The film is an in-depth examination of prevailing theories about the origin and nature of crop circles and the possible implications for Earth.

"RODS III": Jose Escamilla's long-awaited third installment about rods and the first DVD on the subject. The most remarkable rods footage ever released. This video contains the rods documentary and "Skyfishing," the tutorial on how to videotape rods.

"SECRET NASA TRANSMISSIONS: THE SMOKING GUN": Startling evidence that our atmosphere is orbited by more than mere satellites and shuttles. Visitors apparently are in abundance, and NASA knows all about it. What appears to be a war in the heavens has been captured on video.

"CLOSE ENCOUNTERS: PROOF OF ALIEN CONTACT": For the first time, see pieces of the alien craft that crashed at Roswell. Concealed for 50 years, this material is extraterrestrial. Former NASA astronaut Gordon Cooper breaks his silence and discusses his close encounters with alien craft. Witness UFO photographs taken in space by former NASA astronaut James McDivitt. Watch renowned surgeon, Dr. Roger Leir, remove an actual alien implant.



FOREIGN NEWS

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

INFORMER, Kingston-upon-Thames, Surrey, England - April 25, 2003

Close encounter made my hair stand on end

A WEIRD website has been set up to trace extraterrestrial sightings after a UFO and an alien were allegedly spotted in Richmond Park.

Eyewitness John Reeks, who lives in Richmond, set up sightingsinthepark@blueyonder.co.uk

His first-hand account places the UFO sighting on February 16 at 2.30pm near Sheen Gate.

At the time, he was strolling through the park with a friend when they were struck by the vision of an 'orb pouring itself over the wall' before 'bouncing and instantly shooting towards a tree, against which it rubbed itself'.

The friendly orb next raced in front of a black Fiat Uno going along the park road towards Roehampton Gate, where it was witnessed by the driver before finally vanishing, added Mr Reeks.

Appropriately, the site also asserts that a creature with an abnormally large

By DAEMIENNE SHEEHAN

head appeared alongside the orb.

"What I saw next made my hair stand on end," Mr Reeks continued.

"In the spot where the 'cloud' had disappeared, a figure stepped out...the size and shape of a small boy, but with a huge head. There was a flash and the creature vanished."

The website also features two other witnesses' impressions of the orb, driver of the Fiat Sophie Rayton and Mr Reeks' companion, Richard Hamilton.

Mr Reeks also asks visitors to the site to contribute their stories of unexplained entity experiences.

However, despite attempts by the *Informer* to make contact via the website, the creator has proved shy.

If you can help us solve the mystery call 0208 572 1816 or write to *The Informer*, 93 Staines Road, Hounslow, Middlesex, TW3 3JB.

'A small boy with a huge head stepped out of the light'



Circled is the friendly orb of light photographed by John Reeks in Richmond Park

WIDNES WEEKLY NEWS, Cheshire, England - May 15, 2003

Army cordoned off crash site following UFO sightings

Is Berwyn the Welsh Roswell?

MOST people who are interested in UFOs will know about the Roswell Incident, in which an alien spacecraft allegedly crashed in New Mexico in 1947.

But there have been many other well-documented cases of alleged UFO crashes, and one of these cases is known as the Berwyn Mountains UFO crash, which took place in Wales in January, 1974.

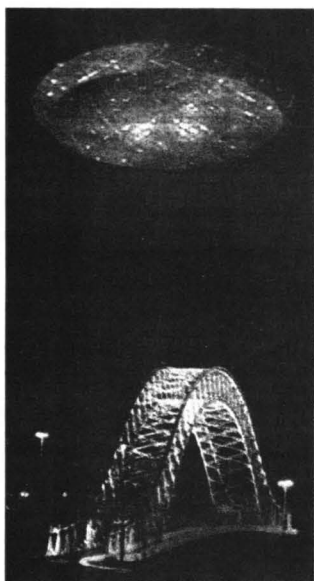
At 8.30pm on January 23, 1974, an enormous disc-like craft was seen to fall from the skies over what was then Clwyd in Wales.

Dozens of witnesses across Lancashire and Cheshire had phoned the police earlier that evening after seeing a strange formation of green lights flying erratically over the skies of the North West.

At exactly 8.38pm something impacted into the Berwyn Mountains in Clwyd, and the resulting tremor - which measured 4.5 on the Richter Scale - was felt in Wrexham, Chester, Liverpool, Southport, and even in some areas of Greater Manchester.

A so-called 'skyquake' was also reported simultaneously in Ellesmere Port that shook the foundations of buildings.

Police immediately converged on the Berwyn Mountains, expecting to find a crashed passenger jet, but just what they did find has



never been divulged.

A convoy of army trucks passed through Chester that night and made their way to the epicentre of the crash site, then the army threw a cordon around the area.

Even the police and crash investigators were warned off. A nurse who lived near the scene of the impact told a newspaper a flying saucer 'the size of the Albert Hall' had smashed into a mountain, throwing debris and

bodies for over a mile.

She said she walked up to one of the bodies, and realised it wasn't human, but before she could describe what she had seen, the military intervened, and two Ministry of Defence officials ordered her to remain silent about the UFO because her comments 'would constitute a threat to national security and the defence of the realm'.

That nurse later vanished into obscurity, and a news

reporter who visited the scene of the alleged crash refused to talk about the incident until his death in 1979.

In 1980, an electronics engineer named Arthur Adams, who had worked on Concorde, visited the Berwyn UFO crash-site and found strange green coloured pieces of metal embedded in the rocks there.

He took samples of the metal to his laboratory and discovered a sample the size of a 1in cube gave off kilowatts of electricity, when wired up to a volt meter.

Mr Adams contacted the *Daily Express*, and the newspaper featured a series of articles about the strange find, but the Ministry of Defence stepped in and killed the story.

Today, no one knows what crashed in the Welsh mountains on that winter night in 1974; it was too large to have been an experimental man-made top secret military aircraft (like the Stealth bomber) so perhaps it was an alien craft from another world.

A similar huge UFO was seen hovering over the Run-corn Bridge one night in 1999.

If a UFO did crash in 1974, what happened to the bodies that were seen scattered all over the mountain after the crash?

The case remains a real-life X File.

TELEGRAPH & ARGUS, Bradford, England
April 25, 2003

UFO hotspot is revealed on TV

UFO sightings in the Keighley area are to be spotlighted on national TV.

Expert Nigel Mortimer - who lives in the Bracken Bank area - will debate local phenomena next week on top day-time programme *This Morning*.

Keighley is now recognised as a UFO hotspot, with dozens of sightings being reported over the years.

Recent sightings in the district have included a craft, which had landed at Cononley. Human-type figures could be seen inside the glass dome-like structure.

Mr Mortimer's is to give a series of lectures at the High Spirits shop, in Low Street, Keighley, starting tomorrow. Admission to the 8pm talk is £3. For more details phone 01535 669848 or 01535 605997.

EVENING NEWS, Scarborough, England - May 14, 2003

Video contest for UFO watchers

SKY-WATCHERS are urged to get out their camcorders and start shooting in a competition organised by a local UFO enthusiast.

Russ Kellett, of Filey, wants to find the best film footage of activity in the skies over Scarborough, which he believes is becoming the UFO capital of Britain.

The maker of the best video will win a three-night stay in Leeds to attend the 22nd International UFO Conference in September.

Mr Kellett said: "Some of the things people are seeing are quite spectacular, like explosions in the sky, and I know from my contacts that people are seeing them up and down the coast."

"We know for certain that sometimes we're mistaken about astronomical objects, aircraft and weather balloons, but when we've got objects that defy science, that disappear and appear somewhere

else, we try to find out what could be the cause."

He said he had already seen some impressive footage taken by people in the area, and was building up a collection.

He said: "I get calls from newspapers in Whitby, Bridlington, York and Leeds, and people are getting very interested in these objects."

"My fascination is with the ones seen in close proximity."

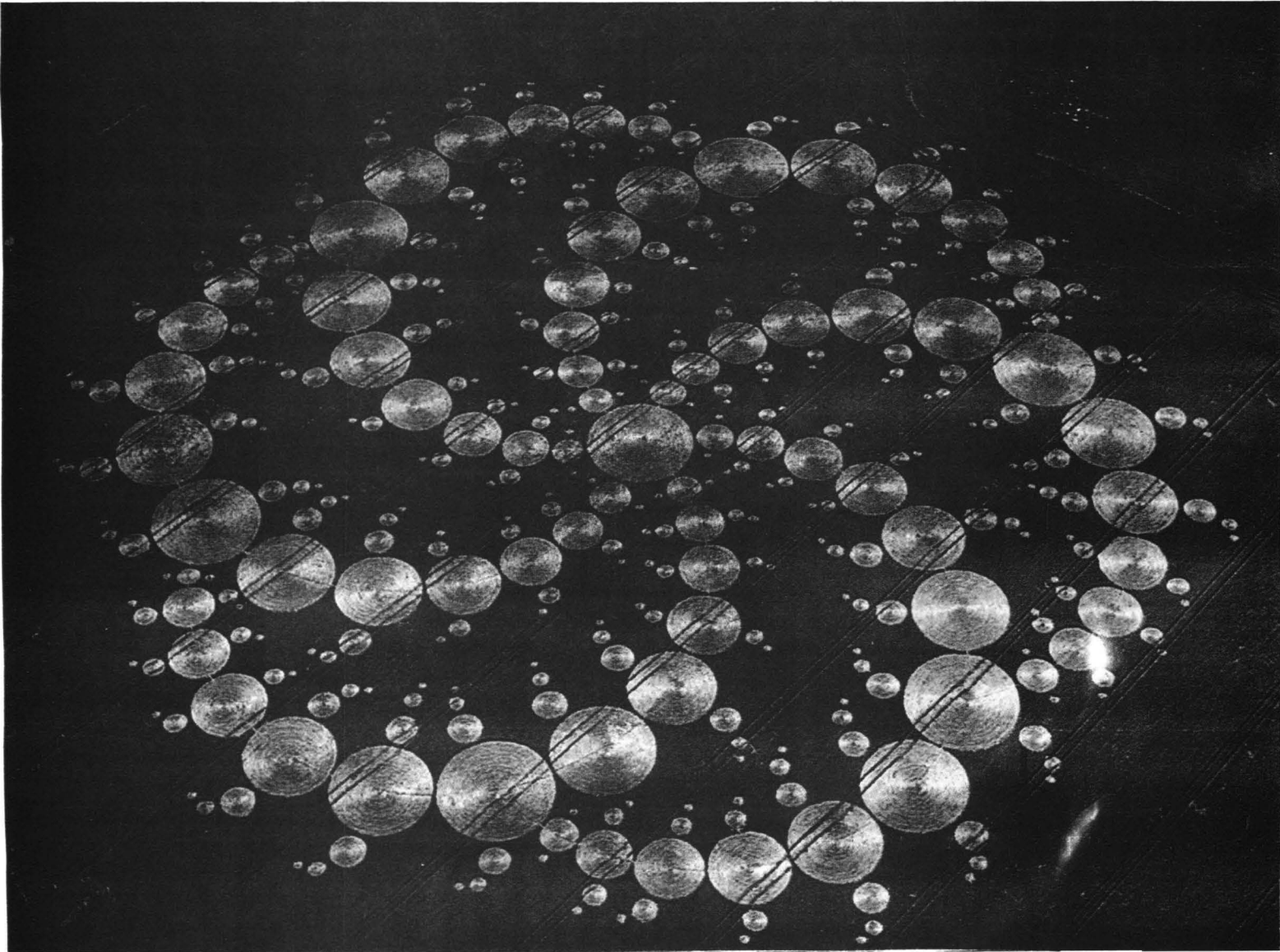
"Anything can be a UFO - there's no 'typical' phenomenon. I once heard of a 'ball' following someone home on the coastal road from Whitby. It's just a one-off chance, and you could be filming it."

Scrutinising the entries will be Graham Bairstow, of UFO magazine, while the best entries will be watched by a panel of judges headed by Filey mayor Eddie Holden.

"It's fantastic having someone who's interested in this. He's very open-minded," said Mr Kellett, who is aware some people "will be faking things".

Videos should be sent to: UFO Investigations and Research, c/o R Kellett, PO Box 33, Filey YO14 9YE, by July 7.

The winner will win the stay at the Queens Hotel; tickets to the conference and entry to the grand gala dinner.



Crop circles shown are from the documentary film *Star Dreams* by director Robert Nichol, a Sunshine Coast resident and former National Film Board film-maker.

Director puts hopeful spin on crop circles

Phenomenon heralds a better time ahead for humans, film-maker says

By KATHERINE MONK

What you have to understand about Robert Nichol is that he's already crossed over. To him, there is no "other side" to the crop circle story.

A former film-maker who worked for the National Film Board during the '60s and '70s, and current resident of the Sunshine Coast, Nichol recently completed the a documentary about crop circles called *Star Dreams*, which premieres in full Saturday at the H.R. MacMillan Space Centre Feb. 1, and airs on the Space Channel in a shorter form Wednesday.

A film that examines the spiritual side of the crop circle phenomenon, more than the scientific one, *Star Dreams* is a movie aimed more at the converted than the neophyte, and after talking to Nichol for a few minutes, it's not hard to see why.

Nichol is a believer. He believes crop circles are here for one reason, and one reason only: "As a communicate to help us tune in to a new vibratory frequency."

According to Nichol, "crop circles are the realization of a higher consciousness presented to humanity at this time to aid in the universal awakening to a higher dimension of being."

It all may sound a little nutty, but Nichol is used to skepticism and simply points to the ridicule aimed at other visionaries, from Copernicus to Columbus, when their ideas threatened the accepted thinking of their day.

"When you dispute the notion that crop circles are anything but

the creation of a higher intelligence, you end up saying silly things," he says.

For instance, when people argue that the circular shapes that pop up in wheat fields and snow packs could have been created by a group of humans, Nichol points to the absurdity of such a conclusion.

"Thousands of them have appeared around the world — 10,000 crop circles in 40 countries — in some of most remote areas on the planet, accessible only by airplane. The logistics involved in achieving such a feat are far harder to believe than the alternative, but, for some reason we reject this ample proof of higher intelligence because it doesn't conform to our current understanding of the world."

The film looks at crop circles throughout the world, including those seen near Vanderhoof and Prince George. Many of these are shot from the air, revealing exquisite geometric patterns.

On the ground, we see unbroken corn stalks bent at 90-degree angles.

It looks at those who research the phenomenon, affectionately called "croppies," and other followers who sometimes speak in New Age lingo, referring to "star brothers and sisters," and who vow they "feel the circular energy."

The son of a plumber, Nichol says his eyes were opened to the possibility of extraterrestrial life after his father saw saucers hover over the local airport where he was working in Buffalo, N.Y. It was the 1950s, and the nuclear age had just begun. Nichol's dad

and a buddy watched the saucers hover, then, shortly afterwards, saw the fighter jets scramble to investigate.

Nichol had his own UFO experience a few years later, and soon began to adjust his own thinking to accommodate the possibility of higher life forms.

"There are 450 billion stars — or suns — in our Milky Way galaxy alone. Beyond our galaxy, there are 450 billion more galaxies ... with that many stars potentially having their own planetary configurations, what are the chances that Earth is a unique environment in the universe? What are the chances that we're actually alone?"

Nichol is convinced that contact is imminent. He says it won't just happen in our own lifetimes, but some time over the next two or three years.

Again, he points to the increase in crop circle formations as a sign of the coming new age. Concentrated in Britain, which has the highest percentage on Earth, crop circle activity has been heating up in recent years — mostly around Stonehenge.

Star Dreams contains hundreds of images of such formations, as well as countless interviews with crop circle groupies.

Because almost everyone who sees the crop circles finds the geometric shapes familiar, Nichol says they must be some form of timeless communication — a message aimed at helping us understand our place in the cosmos.

It all makes sense, to some degree, but then where is the scientific research? The linguistic experts attempting to find the interstellar Rosetta Stone? The reputable documentation published in big journals

such as *Science* or *Nature*?

Nichol believes the American military has most likely reverse-engineered a few saucers by now — but they guard the secret in the name of national security.

Not that it matters, he says. The reputable scientific research on crop circles is coming, he says. Just give it time.

"Scientists have been studying crop circles for years ... but they're afraid to talk about it out loud because they don't want to look silly in the eyes of their peers."

Nichol says he had one respected scientist lined up for the film, but she bowed out at the last minute.

"I'm just a film-maker. I'm not a scientist, but I've talked to all of them and I can tell you what they're afraid to say on the record."

First of all, Nichol says, the plants affected by crop circles are significantly changed. Though bent at precise, 90-degree angles, the stalks of the plants do not break. In fact, they often end up yielding more fruit.

"I believe the effect is produced by steam. What happens is that there's a beam of light like a microwave, and this microwave is receptive to the life force of the planet and that beam creates heat. The heat draws up the moisture from the earth and steam is produced."

Hence, the complex patterns are able to appear in a matter of seconds.

Nichol knows that to most people, he sounds like a nutbar. But he doesn't care. "More than 72 per cent of the population in the U.S. believes the government is lying to them about extra-terrestrial contact ... I'm not alone."

Then again, with company like the Raelians, does Nichol really want to be identified as a member of the same group?

"Well, the Raelians seem to be grandstanders more interested in doing their own thing," says Nichol. And as for M. Night Shyamalan's recent blockbuster *Signs*, Nichol says, "Yet again, they got it all wrong."

"They aren't out to get us. I believe our planet has been quarantined because every time someone tries to make contact, they get shot at. I mean, look at movies like *Independence Day* and, really, if a species had the ability for inter-galactic travel, don't you think they'd be able to turn the nukes around and send them back where they came from?"

The only mainstream entertainment that Nichol believes to be a part of the same crop circle inter-galactic awareness program is *Star Trek*. "That show is preparing us for contact."

If you would like to make contact with Nichol, or *Star Dreams*, the show has its Vancouver premiere Saturday at the Planetarium with Nichol in attendance. A shorter version airs on Space Wednesday. You can also order the full tape, by calling 1-800-667-7718.

(continued on page 10)



POST, Stafford, England - April 24, 2003

TV date for UFO hunters' movie

UFO enthusiasts are filming a documentary about sightings in the Stafford area which hit the headlines in the late 1980s.

Set to be completed at the end of this year, the documentary, which will be screened on a satellite TV channel, will map the history of sightings of triangular shaped objects seen in the sky above Stafford and Cannock Chase.

It is being made by the Staffordshire UFO Group, which holds regular meetings at the St Leonard's Social Club, St Leonard's Avenue.

The most notable sightings took place in 1988, when dozens of Stafford residents witnessed the triangular objects.

They attracted such attention that the then MP of the town, Bill Cash, asked the Ministry of Defence for an explanation and was told it was because of busy air traffic above Birmingham Airport.

Graham Allen, co-ordinator of the Staffordshire UFO Group, said: "I did a bit of digging and found there have been sightings of these objects in this area dating back to the Second World War, with the earliest being before that."

"My whole family witnessed the objects on May 16 1988, as did dozens of others. The documentary will look into the history of the sightings and include interviews with various people, including those from the MOD."

"We will be doing a flyover the area in May and track the events, whilst also adding a few special effects."

In the meantime, the group's next meeting will feature a talk from the editor of UFO magazine, Graham Birdsall.

He will look at facts surrounding the reality of UFOs and explore some of the cases in Staffordshire.

Graham Allen added: "We are lucky that he has agreed to talk for us and we're all looking forward to his lecture."

The event takes place next Thursday, May 1, at St Leonard's Social Club, starting at 7pm. Limited tickets are available from Graham Allen on 01889 585149.

by Tom Hobbins

ESSEX CHRONICLE, Chelmsford, England - May 2, 2003

The back issue... Double vision

THE truth is out there... Essex UFOlogists are investigating claims that an unidentified flying object was twice spotted in the skies over the county on the same night.

John Wilson, 69, said that he was out walking

his dog when he saw a bright, ball-shaped light over Mersea Island around 9.15pm on April 11.

Ninety minutes later, an experienced Boeing 737 captain radioed air traffic control to report a UFO two miles from Stansted

Airport, while a ground patrol reported seeing shooting stars.

The incident has been logged by the Stansted control tower as an unidentified flying object.

Additional witnesses are invited to come forward.



Director Robert Nichol, (above) is a firm believer in an extraterrestrial explanation for crop circles. A film crew (left) ventures into a farmer's field during the making of *Star Dreams*.

DAILY STAR, London, England - May 21, 2003 CR: N. Oliver

WE'RE UNDER SIEGE FROM UFOs

THE skies above Britain are buzzing with UFOs, latest research shows.

Researchers probing claims that the age of Unidentified Flying Objects is over asked members of the public for their views.

And they were deluged with first hand reports of strange aerial phenomena across the UK.

Last night a spokesman for UFO Magazine, which carried out the huge survey confirmed: "Ordinary people are reporting extraordinary things in the skies above Britain."

And leading police officers are now giving the reports credibility.

Detective constable Gary Heseltine of Crofton, Wakefield, west Yorks, has started a website which logs actual police reports of UFO sightings. Some of the startling cases that were highlighted in the UFO Magazine survey include...

● In September, residents of Kirk Hallam, Derbys, saw "a brightly-lit craft looking like two massive crosses" hovering over the village. Witness John Smith recalled: "It had many bright, cream coloured lights and two red ones... and it gave off a strange humming sound."

● A mammoth 54 sightings were reported over one house in the village of Boxted, Colchester, Essex.

Witness Sheri Lane said: "It was a cylindrical craft, either dark grey or black, with a pinkish red flare resembling a sparkler firework at one end and a weak turquoise green light flashing on its underbelly."

"The craft was extremely noisy."

● Retired builder Arthur Freeman, 85, of Southampton, Hants., saw a bright orange object which changed colour and then very gradually faded from view. He recalled: "I was shocked. I wondered if it could have been an alien craft."

● Malcolm Chamberlain spotted UFOs over Weston-super-Mare, Avon. He said: "I observed a formation of about seven orbs of light

WATCH THE SKIES: Three of the 'alien' craft (right); website cop DC Gary Heseltine



by TONY LEONARD

below the clouds just after sunset. These were travelling in a V formation."

● Paul Riccobono of Walsall, West Mids., was watching aircraft fly in and out of Birmingham airport, when his attention was caught by a vehicle flying much faster than any others. To his amazement, it circled over his house. Paul

who failed to capture the image on camcorder said: "It was completely lit up with a series of dotted lights, like a Christmas tree."

● In Bournemouth, Dorset., a strange stationary silver object was spotted in the sky in the middle of the afternoon.

● An Australian woman saw a "spinning top-style vehicle" flying over Stonehenge, Wilts. An Surfer Dick Smith spotted a huge

black triangle with a "metallic sphere following behind it" during a holiday to Cornwall last Summer.

● A woman in Scarborough, North Yorks., said three orange balls had buzzed over the rooftop of her house.

Researchers believe the findings are just the tip of the iceberg.

The survey noted: "Only 10 per cent of UFO sightings are actually reported."

MEL GIBSON'S SPOOKY NEW BLOCKBUSTER, SIGNS, FINDS A CHILLING EXPLANATION FOR CROP CIRCLES. LEE MARLOW FINDS MORE EARTHLY SUSPECTS IN LEICESTERSHIRE

They appear somewhere once every couple of days or so: mysterious patterns of flattened corn in the centre of farmers' fields. The ingenious methods used to create them without leaving a tell-tale trail may still be a puzzle, but there can be no doubt about the culprits - can there?

Mischiefous hoaxers, farmhands with big boots, a belly full of ale and an eye on the next day's headlines are the usual suspects. Who or what else could be behind them?

Step forward the unusual suspects: freak weather patterns; archaeology; aliens - or even the dying sighs of Mother Earth herself, if you listen to David Icke.

On average, around 250 crop designs appear around the world each year.

The crop circle capital, with more elaborately squashed corn than anywhere else on Earth, is Wiltshire.

But once upon a time, not all that long ago, crop circles pockmarked the Leicestershire countryside too.

'NUISANCE'

Oadby (1988), Melton (1990), Whetstone (1990), Countesthorpe (1990), Shepshed (1993), Loughborough (1994), Kibworth (1996), Great Easton (1996), Wigston (1996), Vale of Belvoir (2000), Harborough (2000), Barrowden (2001) and Morcott (2001) have all been visited by crop circle creators.

For more than a year, though, it has been quiet.

Officially, there have been no reported crop circle happenings in Leicestershire since last summer.

County farmer Charles Tyler hopes it stays that way.

His farm in Morcott, off the A47, was the last to be targeted, back in July 2001.

"I can't understand how people can say they are the work of something mysterious," he says.

"They're man-made. All of them. And they're a nuisance. They never appear in oil seed or rape fields because it's too difficult to gain access.

"They're always in barley or wheat fields - and it costs farm-



HOW DO THEY DO THAT? A young crop circle watcher is stumped by a 'visitation' in Leicestershire in the early 1990s, when crop circle mania was at its height

ers money. The crops are damaged.

"I had one person last year who came all the way from Israel to look at the crop circle in my field. I couldn't believe it."

Farmers generally have little time for elaborate and mysterious crop circle theorists.

County farmers' leader Phil Abbot also reckons there's a simple, human explanation.

"It's just hoaxers. There's nothing mysterious to them is there? I've never seen one. I know they have many more in Wiltshire than they do in Leicestershire, but I suspect the kids in Leicestershire have better things to do.

"If it is a message from something out there, we're in trouble aren't we?" he adds, with a chuckle.

David Icke, the Leicester-born self-proclaimed turquoise prophet, doesn't find crop circles a laughing matter.

"The crop symbols that have appeared over the last few years with increasing complexity have been the last desperate attempt by the spirit of the Earth to ask creation for help before it is too late," he warns on his website.

"Why is Mother Earth doing this? Because she knows she is going to die."

That's not necessarily so, says



MYSTERY OR MENACE? UFO researcher Pat Delgado using an offbeat method to photograph a crop circle in the county in 1988. Above, right, crop circle hoaxers struck in Melton in 1990

Peter Doye, of the Wiltshire-based Centre for Crop Circle Studies.

There is no simple, all-encompassing theory to explain the mystery of crop circles, he believes.

Instead, says Peter, it's a genuine mystery. Those circular patterns, it seems, are brainteasers even the experts can't crack.

"If you're looking for a simple explanation, you won't find one," he says.

"I would say that as many as six out of every 10 crop circles,



maybe more, are created by hoaxers.

"But even if it was as high as 99 per cent, if you've got one genuine crop circle, that's enough. What has caused that? What does it mean?"

Even crop circles that have been man-made can exude an eerie, paranormal energy, he says. "Many people believe there are certain energies and powers to be found at Stonehenge and other man-made sites across the UK," he says.

"If you can find paranormal

activity there, then it's also plausible you can find it at a crop circle site - even if it is a man-made creation."

Large circular swirls of flattened wheat or corn were first reported in the 17th century.

It was no big deal then. Locals oohed and aahed, pointed, scratched their heads and went back to work.

One of the first crop circles to be reported in Leicestershire was found in a quiet corner of Earl Shilton 62 years ago.

Again, it made little impact at the time. "We were fighting a war," harrumphed one correspondent in the Leicester Mercury 50 years later, in response to an article that harked back to the mystery.

"There was no hysterical talk about messages from Mars then."

Instead, locals put it down to a vixen with a litter of cubs who flattened a perfect circle in the centre of a growing wheat crop.

Interest increased when the first aerial pictures of the intricate patterns appeared in the newspapers in the 1980s.

In August 1988, scientists headed for Oadby after a 30ft diameter pattern was found in a field off Gartree Road.

It was one of the most northerly sightings. Scientists were intrigued, but not for long. Two days later, the experts were off to Wales - where 98 circles appeared in one week.

In 1991, retired pranksters Doug Bower and Dave Chorley claimed they had invented the crop circle phenomenon a few years earlier as a prank to flummox a local farmer. They just got a bit carried away, they said.

But more than 300 documented crop circle formations predated their exploits.

If it wasn't Doug and Dave, who was it?

Appliance of science helps to solve mysteries

AFTER an eight-year study, scientists concluded that up to 80 per cent of reported crop circles were hoaxes. The remainder, they said, were due to some kind of "unknown intelligence".

Dr Martin Barstow, a reader in space science and astrophysics at Leicester University, reckons there is al-

ways a scientific explanation.

"It is true that at least 80 per cent - I would say a lot more - of these crop circles are man-made, created by hoaxers," he says.

"The intricate patterns are always man-made by a group of people with some wooden boards, a diagram

and a piece of string. The simple ones are sometimes caused by isolated weather patterns or freak bursts of wind.

"Some are caused by underlying archaeological factors such as ancient settlements which have disturbed the soil. In fact, many important archaeolo-

gical sites have been found because of the appearance of a so-called mysterious crop circle."

Is it a case of Mother Earth warning of impending doom?

"Of course not," says Dr Martin. "I have never heard as much nonsense in all my life. That is just rubbish."



BLOCKBUSTER: A scene from Mel Gibson's new thriller Signs

YORKSHIRE EVENING POST,
Leeds, England - April 21, 2003

Experts study Yorks UFO film

UFO experts are studying "flying saucer footage" snapped over a Selby back garden.

One life-long analyst, Graham Birdsall, has described as "intriguing" the video film of a strange object spotted in the sky over the town.

Fellow UFO researcher Russell Kellett said it was

some of the "most bizarre footage" he had ever seen.

Mr Birdsall, editor of *UFO Magazine*, published at Stourton, south Leeds, said: "The tape lasts for several seconds during which time the object appears to change shape.

"It is dark and discoid at first and it turns over on its side. It's a bizarre-looking

thing. It doesn't look like a balloon and they don't change shape like this."

The film was taken by 20-year-old Jody Holden, unemployed, of St John's Square, New Lane, Selby, who was sitting in his garden at 4.30pm on Sunday, March 30, when he spotted a dark object in the sky.

As he grabbed his camera, the object flew above his house at a height of maybe 500ft. He estimated it was 30ft across and was the classic flying saucer shape.

Jody's tape has now been sent for analysis to Prof Roger Green of Warwick University, who is a Home Office expert witness on video tapes.

The truth is out there

STEPHEN Mera is Manchester's answer to Fox Mulder.

The ghostbuster, from Wythenshawe, started to believe the truth was out there as a child when he learned the ropes in paranormal investigations from his dad.

Now he teaches any would-be Mulder or Scully to follow in his footsteps and sit exams on everything from crop circles to poltergeist hunting, and phantom hitchhikers to ESP.

Stephen is the head tutor with MAPIT, Manchester Association of Paranormal Investigations and Training, a group taken so seriously that the police and the city council have demanded their services.

They have seen off poltergeists in Stockport, halted hauntings in a Beswick council house, tackled spooks in the Lake District and claim to have helped police investigations into missing persons.

And they can train anyone to take

Do you fancy yourself as a real-life Mulder or Scully? A course now on offer by a leading Manchester paranormal investigation group could open up the X-files for you. RACHEL BROADY reports

on spectres and spooks with the 20-week British Investigators Training Course in Anomalous Phenomena. The 60-hour course can be taken at basic, advanced and professional levels and sees students learning how to investigate UFOs, tell a genuine crop circle from a fake and capture encounters with ghosts on film.

MAPIT was formed in 1974 and ghost-hunter Stephen Mera took over the role of leader in 1989. Today he welcomes students from across the globe through classes at South Trafford College and Sale Grammar School and through an increasing popular international correspondence course.

He said: "We have students from

all over the world, including America and Australia. They learn to deal with witnesses, how to differentiate between psychological phenomena and drug-induced hallucinations. Then we go through the field of investigations and how to use the equipment in different circumstances before teaching how to investigate different cases, from UFOs to crop circles to ESP."

Steve believes that ghosts interacting with individuals is "reasonably common" so there is a lot of work to do for any newly-qualified ghost hunter.

But the team teaching the course are not the haunted world's version of train spotters, many boast degrees in psychology and training in psychoanalysis. The course leads to a diploma and, Steve says, could secure you a place on a degree course.

He said: "We investigate paranormal phenomena then people contact us with investigations and we assist them. We can tell them if we have found a rational explanation for the problem - or not."

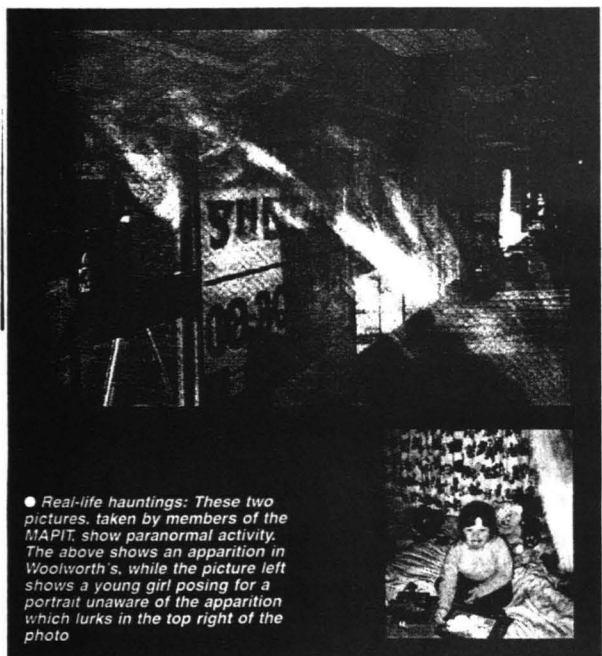
"We have helped the police and the council when there have been reports of paranormal phenomena in council housing. We submit an honest report to the council. There was a poltergeist infestation in a home in Stockport where a young girl was pushed down the stairs and broke her ankle. There was a six foot apparition upstairs that left three foot cracks in the doors as it slammed them."

But Steve is quick to stop any student who thinks a job in paranormal investigations is always exciting. He said: "People get the wrong impression that we run around the country looking for these things when most of our work is paperwork and we sit in the office typing stuff up to submit to scientific establishments. It's difficult to get away from the portrayal of paranormal phenomena because of television but, after the course, people can come with us and be in an environment where alleged paranormal activity is taking place."

The course subjects have titles like "foo fighters and UFO occupant



● Investigations: Stephen Mera trains would-be UFO and ghost hunters



● Real-life hauntings: These two pictures, taken by members of the MAPIT, show paranormal activity. The above shows an apparition in Woolworth's, while the picture left shows a young girl posing for a portrait unaware of the apparition which lurks in the top right of the photo

classifications", and "St Elmo's Fire and counter glow". There are also in-depth looks at "bedroom visitations", "crash retrievals and astronaut sightings", the Bermuda Triangle, "doppelgangers and classic hauntings".

Then there are phantom hitchhikers, live hauntings and near death experiences before students

learn how to find the history of haunted hot spots and the role of the investigator.

Even astronomy, big foot and sea monsters are discussed in the detailed course costing £35 for non-MAPIT members.

● For more information go to the MAPIT website at www.maxpages.com/MAPIT/home

2003 Hundreds travel across the world to discuss unexplained phenomena

An encounter of the UFO kind

By ROB PEAKE

rob.peake@dorsetecho.co.uk

PEOPLE travelled from across the world to visit a conference in Dorchester on unexplained mysteries.

Organiser and UFO expert David Kingston, from Martinstown, said the conference was one of the most successful in the annual event's eight-year history.

Among the topics under discussion were the origins of the Ark of the Covenant, crop circles and fears surrounding the year 2012, which some believe will bring the end of the world.

Retired Royal Air Force intelligence officer Mr Kingston, 65, who has spent the last 42 years amassing information on UFOs, said 300 visitors flocked to the one-day conference at the Corn Exchange from the United States, Israel, France, Holland and Italy.

Rosicrucian, Templar and Royal Society archives and claimed to reveal secrets of the whereabouts and origins of the Ark of the Covenant.

Mr Kingston described the talk as 'mindblowing'.

He said the conference, which is the only such event on the south coast, was a success because it catered for a range of interests.

Mr Kingston credited a surge in bookings to a Stephen Spielberg television series about aliens called Taken.

The mini-series tells of a group of people abducted by aliens and their impact on the world.

Mr Spielberg is said to have based details of the show on actual government cover-ups and investigations over the past half-century.

Next year's conference is booked for April 4 and Mr Kingston promised another exciting line-up of speakers.



MEN OF MYSTERY: Conference organiser David Kingston, left, with guest speaker Ian Lawton. Picture: BRIAN JUNG/61025A



Did aliens, nature
or hoaxers make
60ft crop circle?

A FIELD OF MYSTERIES



WHEAT AND SEE: Farmer Tom Ashton is waiting for an explanation for the crop circle on his land at Paradise Farm

Picture: GARY BRUNSKILL

HAS Shevington had a Close Encounter with something strange?

Farmer Tom Ashton certainly thinks so.

He doesn't believe in Men from Mars but has been left scratching his head for any other explanation after finding a huge crop circle cut into a field of golden wheat.

The perfectly symmetrical 60ft diameter shape has appeared on his land at Paradise Farm.

The first time Tom noticed it was when he received a startlingly eye-filling from the fine aerial vantage point of the M6 motorway's Gathurst Viaduct as he drove home.

It is the first time famous champion Belgian Blue cattle breeder Mr Ashton has witnessed the phenomenon in more than 60 years working the land.

Like all good countrymen, Tom can predict the weather from the smell of the wind or the curl of a leaf. But he is completely baffled by how this strange circle has come about.

He said: "I don't believe in little green men from outer space. But, apart from a mini whirlwind or what have you, I've no idea how else this thing has come. At first I

BY RICHARD BEAN

wondered if some university students on engineering courses had done it for a lark but I can't see any feet mark trails or pathways from the circle through the surrounding wheat.

"Although the wheat inside the circle is flattened it's not been trampled down as such and there is a single ear of wheat still standing every foot or so. It's very strange, it really is."



EXCITED: Balon plans a scientific investigation

Wigan ufologist Steve Balon is fascinated and excited by Tom's find and is already making plans for a scientific investigation. He has no doubt the crop circle is a result of extra terrestrial activity.

Steve said: "I remember studying two crop circles in Leigh about 12 years ago when Wigan and Shevington

in particular were quite a hotbed of UFO activity in the 1980s.

"I have seen videos which showed quite clearly a blazing globe of light hovering over a field in Wiltshire which, when it eventually moves away, leaves what we know as a crop circle. You can easily tell those that are produced by hoaxers."

MUSICIAN Sally Hope, aided by a host of talents from the Llanidloes area, has released her own CD of 12 original tracks.

Sally is also a therapist and Medicine helps realise her ambition to produce a healing album in a popular format, with some of the lyrics reflecting self-help therapy teachings.

It is all achieved with music of beautiful intensity with the help of the Wild Angels Llanidloes gospel choir, and other musicians.

Sally sings and plays acoustic guitar and she wrote all the songs and co-produced, co-arranged and recorded the album with her partner Jez Woodroffe who has worked with Black Sabbath and plays a variety of keyboard instruments on the album.

Inspired

The album opens with *squasie* and ends with a largely instrumental remix of the song. It slides in like a Celtic legend loaded with mystery and emotion but was actually inspired by a UFO encounter.

Today Sally Hope reveals all about the close encounter upon a Welsh mountaintop in August 1988 that inspired *squasie*.

Sally tells the tale in her own words: "The four of us stood there huddled together upon the runway of light, we were scared, we were faced with the unknown, we didn't know whether to laugh, cry or run, so we followed our basic instincts and huddled together as if we would be able to offer some protection to each other."

"Somehow, as the events unfolded we 'felt' less threatened and became almost

COUNTY TIMES, Welshpool, Wales - May 9, 2003

'We were faced with the unknown'

Sally Hope tells of encounter with UFO

By BARRY JONES
barry.jones@countytimes.co.uk

childlike and excited and accepting of what was happening."

Sally and her then husband Stewart, and good friends Tom and Annette were attending a "Harmonic Convergence" at a stone circle on the mountain, aimed at creating a network of meditation in all the powerful key points of the world and consequently send healing to the Earth and its inhabitants.

They spent the first day meditating but all the time Sally has noticed faint lights that she put down to the sunny haziness of the day. A

buzzing sound had also been noticed seeming to come from a large stone about 200 yards from the stone circle.

On the fourth evening of their camp, they were sat around a fire about midnight before setting to investigate a strange light Stewart said he had seen.

Sally said: "We were almost level with the largest stone, and that's when we found ourselves huddled together in the middle of the runway of light that seemed to be coming towards us."

"Suddenly, the clouds seemed to open up and a beam of light shot silently upwards. Dark, shadowy oval shapes started flying across the sky, about four

or five of them.

"By now we had relaxed a little, somehow, it suddenly felt non-threatening and positive. The different light displays were happening all at once and we found ourselves excitedly shouting."

"Ahead of us we saw strobe effects of pillars of light in an arc shape. To the side of us was another hill, slightly higher, and we watched as a fiery sun rolled up the side of the hill, and what appeared to us as thousands of little lights travelling across the top of the silhouette of the hill."

'Dark, shadowy oval shapes started flying across the sky, about four or five of them'

"All of a sudden, it all stopped. Seconds later, a military jet appeared and flew over the top of us. As soon as the jet was out of view all the lights returned with their wonderful display."

"This happened two or three times and always the lights stopped until the jet had gone, it really felt like the 'lights' were playing with them. Two hundred yards from us a single light hovered, it then fell down to the ground and split itself into three lights, just sitting there on the earth."

"Tom and Stewart felt an incredible urge to go and stand in the lights, but Annette and I were holding on to them feeling

as though, if they had stood in the lights they may have disappeared."

"This whole experience lasted for an hour, I did attempt to take a couple of pictures, which only shows a blurry image, and at the time, I was afraid of missing something," said Sally.

The next morning they met a man in a white boiler suit carrying a geiger counter who said he was writing about the paranormal for a magazine and who was very interested in their encounter.

"He reckoned that the three lights were doorways into another dimension and that if Tom or Stewart had stood in them, that they probably would have disappeared."

"Seeing the lights was strange enough, but the appearance of this man turning up seemed to be even more of a coincidence," Sally said.

Honoured

They decided to stay on for a couple more days but saw nothing else strange although they did experience some difficult relating to normal life, a feeling that persisted for about two weeks after returning home.

Sally said the experience made her feel that anything is possible.

"It made me feel honoured to have witnessed it, it made my mind 'open up' to other possibilities, it made me feel very humble and incredibly 'small' in the whole scheme of things."

"It really made me believe that there is some force of energy out there, looking over us, looking after us, helping us in a positive way and that we are not alone in this world," she added.

THE UNEXPLAINED: They are nothing new, but there are still no explanations as to who or what decides to create weird and wonderful designs on our agricultural landscape. Perhaps the legions of investigators will find an answer – one day

Which force from beyond uses these crop calling cards?

by Emily Twinch
The News

ALIENS, helicopters, manifestations of the subconscious or whirling dervishes – just some of the explanations for a common phenomena in our communities.

Crop circles are becoming more frequent and more elaborate in Hampshire every year.

A stunning design of an alien's face recently appeared in a field near Winchester which grabbed national attention.

People often dismiss the crop circles as being man-made and laugh at suggestions there maybe anything supernatural or unearthly about them.

But there are scientists called cerealogists who have spent years studying the intriguing specimens and say they can not be explained easily.

Lucy Pringle, from Petersfield, has been studying crop circles for 14 years and has written a book and various articles on the subject.

She lectures at home and abroad about them and has taken some stunning aerial pictures of crop circles over the years.

Lucy Pringle said: 'I've an open mind. I've always been interested in mysteries and crop circles remain a mystery. But I do believe in an



Lucy Pringle

intelligence beyond this planet.' She began to study the circles after pain in her shoulder disappeared when she sat in the perimeter of a circle in the Hampshire village Morestead in 1990.

And a friend, suffering Raynaud's Phenomenon – bad circulation – began to feel her fingers tingle when she sat in the same place.

Lucy Pringle now tests the nitrate and protein content in and around the circles to try to find an explanation.

But she refuses to accept the circles are caused by more earthbound phenomenon – such as a couple of students with a piece of string or animals.

She says there is strong scientific evidence of an energy force – a force she believes comes from 'beyond' – in the environment that splits crops. She said when the force hit the target there was a huge electrical discharge

■ There are reports of crop circles as long ago as 800AD.

■ Experts say there are people who can remember playing in crop circles as children in the 1920s and 1930s.

■ There are eye-witness reports of crop formations from over 40 different countries, including Russia, Japan, America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Romania, Czechoslovakia,

Hungary, Bulgaria, France, Spain, Germany, Holland, Norway, Finland, South Africa and Israel.

■ Since records of crop circles began in the late 1970s it is estimated between 4,000 and 5,000 have been discovered. Experts say many more may have appeared but not been recorded because farmers are reluctant to report them.

■ Over the years the

number of corn circles has increased as has the complexity of the shapes. Simple circles were made about 10 years ago, then double circles appeared. Now shapes such as the alien face found this year near Winchester are emerging.

■ Experts say about 80 per cent of corn circles are man-made while 20 per cent are still unexplained phenomena.

CROP CIRCLE FACTS

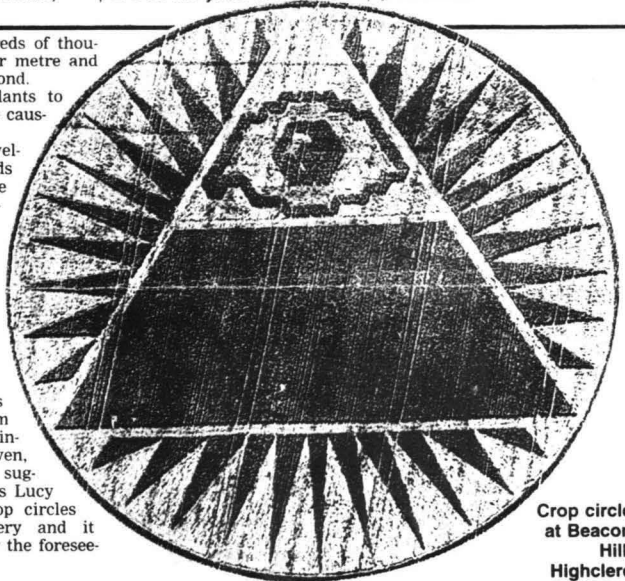
measuring hundreds of thousands of volts per metre and lasting a nanosecond.

This caused plants to soften at the base causing them to fall.

The force travelling upwards breaks down the molecular structure inside the stems.

When the force is too great it escapes through expulsion cavities in the nodes along the stems, splitting them.

Perhaps this force is from UFO's, a higher intelligence or even, as some people suggest, God. But, as Lucy Pringle says, crop circles remain a mystery and it seems will do for the foreseeable future.



Crop circle at Beacon Hill, Highclere



This crop circle appeared at Old Winchester Hill last year

Phenomena the bane of a farmer's life

CROP circles may draw people from miles around to see the elaborate shapes made in fields but farmers say they are nothing but a bane.

A crop circle recently appeared on the south side of the M27 just past junction 10 on the way to Southampton.

The land, rented by a tenant farmer, belongs to the Southwick Estate whose managers are less than pleased when these phenomena appear.

Christopher Langford, the agent for Southwick Estate, said: 'It's a desecration of this tenant farmer's crop and a lot of value for him.

'I wish this didn't happen.'

In fact, most farmers would say 100 per cent of crop circles are man-made and there are no suspicious circumstances surrounding their appearance.

There are several theories as to how the circles are made, varying from people trailing shopping trolleys to ladders around the fields.

And farmers say these circles are damaging their livelihoods at a time when most farmers can not afford to lose money.

Spokeswoman for the National Farmers Union for the South East, Isobel

Bretherton, said every crop circle can cost a farmer about £250 in lost profit.

She said: 'The crop is damaged because it's flattened and it's impossible to combine.

'If a farmer loses an acre of top milling wheat that can be £250. This comes at a time when farmers can ill afford it.

'And there's the added hassle of sightseers who cause extra damage when they trample through the wheat.'

She added it makes it difficult when the farmer comes to plough the field because the crops have been squashed flat into the ground.

WIDNES WEEKLY NEWS, Cheshire, England - April 24, 2003

'UFO' captured on camera

INVESTIGATIONS into a UFO sighting in Runcorn have led to a possible space craft being captured on video.

Eric Morris, from the UFO Studies Centre, was carrying out routine research into a report of a black, cigar-shaped object hovering, then descending into woodland near Dutton service station.

He visited the spot where the UFO had been seen by workers at O2, Preston Brook, at about the same time the next week as they reported spotting the spooky shape in the sky.

After taking film footage of the area, Eric returned home to study the tape – only to notice an odd shape in the sky.

He said: 'There were two discs, which

appear to be touching each other, hovering over Dutton. I'm not saying it's definitely a UFO, but I'd say the chances of a cloud formation making that shape would be a million to one.'

Now the tape is being analysed by experts in the field at the BBC.

'Personally, I'm very excited,' Eric said. 'The last time I had a video like this, it made national news. It's good

footage, and I'm sure all the UFO magazines etc will be extremely interested in this.'

Eric is urging anyone with any information about possible UFO activity to call him on 01606 330567.

60 SECOND INTERVIEW



■ Erich von Däniken rose to fame in the late 1960s with his book *Chariots of The Gods*, which convinced people round the world that the Bible was little more than a collection of UFO stories. Since then, he's published some 25 other books deconstructing religion and belief as recounted tales of proof of alien visitation. His latest, *The Gods Were Astronauts*, is out now.

Erich von Däniken

■ You profess to believe in God. Isn't the stuff you write blasphemous?

I want to make clear that I'm a deep believer in God. I am not an atheist. I say some thousands of years ago, when our forefathers were primitives, they were visited by extraterrestrials. At that time, our forefathers could not understand what was going on, so they believed they were gods. As soon as I came up with the concept, I was criticised as an atheist – but however far back you take an idea, there is always something before. At some point, there was creation and that was done by God.

■ So you debunk organised religion rather than a supreme being?

Yes. I had to start with one of them, which is why I went for Christianity, then Judaism and Islam. Go further back and you come to smaller cultural groups who all had their religions: Incas, Aztecs, Mayans. The question is: 'Are there similarities between these religions and today's great religions?' Yes – they all have an expectancy of arrival. When Francisco Pizarro conquered South America, the Incas believed he was the long-expected son of the Sun God. When Hernando Cortés conquered central America, the Aztecs and the Mayans believed he was the long-expected god Kukulcan. Expectation is not a Christian invention. The three great religions today are all waiting for a Messiah – either the arrival or return. They can't all be right, but what if they're all wrong?

■ Could there have been an intelligent race of homo sapiens that was then destroyed? Yes, but that does not exclude extraterrestrials – we could have had both together. There is a phenomenon called 'cargo cult'. Whenever a technologically higher society meets a technologically lower society, the latter believes the former is some kind of god. In Papua New Guinea after World War II, the tribes could not understand what aircraft were. When the Americans left they tried to improvise aircraft-looking models with straw and they worshipped the models as something from heaven. This is cargo cult. In antiquity we had the same situation. I don't exclude high technology such as Atlantis but look at some of the texts. Especially in ancient Indian Sanskrit texts, our forefathers asked the gods where they came from and they replied: 'From the stars.'

■ So are we waiting for a return of aliens or are they here?

First of all, I have to clarify: I have never seen a UFO. Sometimes I'm afraid that when Erich von Däniken turns up they all fly away [laughs]. I know that in a lot of UFO literature there is a lot of nonsense. Honest people believe nonsense. But there are some cases that are scientifically inexplicable. I do not exclude that they are here, nor that they may be observing us. Maybe they want to know how far we have come.

■ Your early books were huge in America. Do you feel responsible for all the abduction claims?

I hope not [laughs]. There are so many that are nonsense. But there is a Harvard professor called John Mack – a nice, intelligent guy with two degrees. Some seven years ago he wrote a book called *Abduction: Human Encounters With Aliens*. He was a non-believer but is now convinced. I live in

Our forefathers asked the gods where they came from and they replied: 'From the stars'

the Swiss mountains. We have big ant hills with black ants. If I take a jar, put one of the ants in, take it home, photograph it, then – because I'm a nice guy – take it back to the same ant hill, that ant might run around saying: 'I was abducted by an ex-ant society.' Yet all the ants know there is no such thing as an ex-ant society, so they think the ant is crazy. Perhaps it's similar in human abduction.

■ You've been shot down so many times. Ever think of giving up?

On the contrary. Some critics were correct – others, of course, were not. I learned a lot. I always try to learn from my mistakes. In the new book, I have made sure every quotation, every damn detail is spot-on right. I have come away from the idea that I'm the one who is right. I offer one possibility and maybe you will come to the same conclusion – if not, it doesn't matter. I've stopped trying to be the missionary I was 25 years ago.

■ Find what Erich thinks of sci-fi films at www.metro.co.uk

Interview: JAMES ELLIS

Ex-policeman relives UFO close encounter

By Kelly Thornham

RETIRED policeman Alan Godfrey, who had a close encounter with a UFO, relived the experience before an audience of more than 100 people.

Mr Godfrey took time out from filming a programme for the BBC to talk at a charity event about the day in 1980 when he spotted the UFO while on patrol in Todmorden.

The talk at North Bridge Leisure Centre, Halifax will help raise cash for the Calderdale Chronic Pain Support Group.

The event was filmed and will be included in the "Inside Out" programme due to be broadcast in January.

Mr Godfrey was on patrol in Burnley Road when he claimed he saw a diamond shaped UFO the size of a double decker bus blocking his route.

He later underwent hypnosis, which confirmed his version of events, and revealed he had been abducted and medically tested.

"In UFO circles throughout the world my version is accepted as one of the most plausible," he said.

Speaking of how he felt on the night, he said: "I was not scared, just gobsmacked!"



Sylvia Watson with Alan Godfrey

"I didn't know what it was until I got very close. It looked like something out of 'Star Wars'."

Since the event, Mr Godfrey has given countless talks to charitable organisations and appeared on a number of TV programmes.

Mrs Sylvia Watson, of Lumbuts Road, Todmorden, asked Mr Godfrey to speak at the charity night. She said it was an ideal opportunity to raise much-needed

cash for the support group.

Other speakers at the event included Detective Constable Gary Heseltine, who collates a database of incidents reported by police officers which they cannot explain.

For more information on the chronic pain support group, which is also seeking a new meeting place, contact Mrs Watson on 01706 818539.

Flares are back!

■ By Steve Larnar

FLARES are back in fashion – reckons astronomer John Bell with a likely theory for Milton Keynes' latest crop of UFO sightings.

Following on our report of a mysterious 'blob' spotted over Tilbrook, John, of Milton Keynes Astronomical Society suggests it might have been an 'iridium flare'.

"This is simply a spectacular reflection from the antenna of one of the iridium series of satellites. There are about 70 of them and their positions in the sky are well known."

There is a website which gives accurate predictions of their positions in the sky and their brightness from any point in the world, he said.

"What you actually see is like a slow meteor covering only a few degrees of sky starting out

as invisible and then increasing to great brightness and then tailing off – very much as your witness described," said John from Haversham.

He said people seeing a 'meteor' over Milton Keynes did not mean it would strike the earth in Leighton Buzzard, as claimed before Christmas.

"Most true meteors are the size of gravel and the bright flash in the sky is the object vaporising itself 60 miles up through atmospheric friction."

And John says the current crop of UFO 'sightings' might have more to do with the Steven Spielberg TV series about alien abduction!

The iridium satellite website is at <http://129.247.177.10/>

● Two more people claim to

have seen UFOs over the city.

Linden Stead recalled spotting a giant, but silent, flying machine cruising over the city one night several years ago.

"I saw three lights – red, white and red left to white. If they had been on the wings of an aircraft I reckon it would have had a wingspan of several hundred feet," he said.

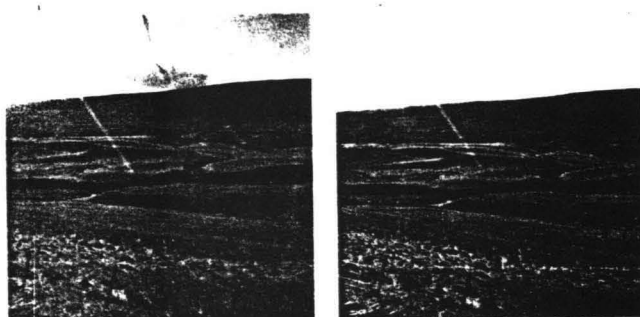
He reported it to an agency in London.

Mark Hamp, of Simpson, and a friend saw a strange "thing" one night – it was "blurred, multi-coloured and of violet, red and orange with white lights gradually changing colour."

He said it was hovering over Cranfield airfield and then vanished!

steve.larnar@mkcitizen.co.uk

AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHER, London, England - May 3, 2003



UFOLOGY TOO

Q Can you tell me what is happening on my pics? The two frames were the only ones on the film with this light streak. The camera was handheld for these pictures and the two shots are not identical, but the streak is in the same position on the subject in both cases, which would indicate it is in the subject rather than some fault with the camera or the processing. The intriguing thing is that there were suspected UFO sightings in this area recently. Could this be a UFO laser beam. Ian Robertson *Grampian*

Despite the possible attendant UFO sightings, it is an altogether more powerful source of light than an alien laser – the

sun (the celestial body, not the tabloid newspaper) – interacting with something as mundane as a human hair in front of the lens. It

might be a UFO's laser beam, then again I might be the Latin American dancing champion of Tierra del Fuego. *Joël Lacey*

TRANSLATIONS

[The following translations are all courtesy of Scott Corrales and the Institute for Hispanic Ufology, with translation copyright being retained. Credit for individual contributors will be given at the end of each article. All articles are from South American and other Spanish-language newspapers and media sources.]

May 24, 2003 — *Diario El Tribuno*, Salta, Argentina — UFOLOGISTS PICK UP INTRATERRESTRIAL WAVES — Ufologists recorded electromagnetic signals and radiation emanating from an underground source — Two scientists affiliated to the Fundacion Instituto Biofisico de Investigaciones (FICI), headquartered in La Matanza and directed by Pedro Romaniuk, one of the most well-known analysts of the UFO phenomenon and an author of 20 books on the subject, claimed having picked up radioactive signatures, microwaves, levels of electricity and oscillations originating from the depths of the earth.

Omar Hesse and Jorge Millstein surveyed the mountains surrounding Cachi last week -- 157 km from the capital and 2,280 meters above sea level. After applying a Russian tester in the vicinity of the Nevado de Cachi, they concluded that the signals are not natural in origin, and rather originate by machinery operated by intelligent beings (sic).

"The oscillations clearly indicate that kilometers beneath the surface there is activity: alternating electrical waves, which means a power source," said Hesse. "This could mean engines," he added.

The area was not chosen at random: it was based on four film recordings made by local mountaineer Antonio Zuleta between June 2000 and November 2002. All of them show analogous images--strange, swiftly moving lights which appear to "plunge" into the ground at the same point. The researchers calculated the site's location and accompanied by Zuleta himself, reported to the area some 8 km to the southwest.

"We will have to return with equipment of higher sensitivity and equipped with depth rods (sic) to achieve greater precision in the data," observed Millstein. However, despite the magnitude of their discovery, members of the FICI were not impressed. "It's just that this is one of the hottest areas of the planet regarding extraterrestrial activity. It's a band that stretches from La Poma to Cayafate and which has roused interest all over the world, as we have attested through our worldwide investigation network, where consultations regarding the area are recurrently made."

The two researchers estimate that Zuleta's recordings and the signals recorded from the depths of the earth correspond to a technology not native to our world. "To those of us in this field, the possibility that vessels may penetrate the earth is nothing new in the Andes, as depicted by numerous stone records from Ecuador to Mendoza," they concluded. [Translator's note: our readers will recall that Zuleta's findings were hotly disputed a year or so ago. The FICI organization's leader is also one of South America's better-known contactees]. — CREDIT: Gloria Coluchi

May 24, 2003 — *El Diario de la Pampa*, Argentina — TWO MORE CALVES FOUND MUTILATED — Field researchers specializing in the subject of animal mutilations--Raul Chaves and Ester Urban--pointed out that "so far this year we have accounted for some 60 mutilations in La Pampa and Buenos Aires." They noted that "thanks to the fact that they already know us and know that we research the subject, cattle ranchers inform us when mutilated animals are discovered. We then obtain samples which we send to the University of Buenos Aires and document everything on videotape."

They referred to the two most recent cases -- on May 16th and 17th, respectively -- between 45 and 30 kilometers away from Santa Rosa. The first of these took place in the "El Martin" ranch 45 km northwest of the Pampan capital and involved a year-old calf weighing 200 kgs. On the left side of its head, the absence of the outer ear was evident along with the entire inner ear, its eye, and an oval-shaped flap of skin, measuring some 30 cm. in diameter. The absence of vulva, edge of the anus, hyoides, larynx, pharynx and a segment of the trachea, as well as part of the upper muscular mass, was also noted.

The entire animal found on May 17 was found on a rural property located 30 kilometers north of Santa Rosa. It was a 2 year-old calf weighing 250 kg. missing half of its tongue with a cauterized incision and missing the left ocular orb. The field researchers noted that in both cases samples were secured for subsequent study and analysis by professionals.

They invite those interested in the subject to visit their website at <http://www.ciufos.com> where information collected on mutilated animals can be found. — CREDIT: Gloria Coluchi

May 26, 2003 — *Planeta*, Argentina — UFO FLEET OVER NECOCHEA, ARGENTINA. — Dear readers of INEXPLICATA: The following message was received from UFO researcher and INEXPLICATA contributor Guillermo Gimenez — Be advised that I am investigating an incident which transpired on Sunday, May 25, when a witness saw the maneuvers of some ten (10) objects of considerable size, white in color, in the vicinity of the Port of Necochea-Quequen (Argentina). The eyewitness is an engineer with the Necochea Power Station, belonging to the Centrales de la Costa Atlantica S.A. (CCASA) company. The objects were seen between 20:20 and 20:30 hours on Sunday, May 25. The objects maneuvered in absolute silence and vanished in the direction of Parque Miguel Lillo in Necochea, originating from the Quequen port sector and flying over the Necochea beach resort. More information on this episode will be available shortly, proving that Necochea is once more a constant area of UFO manifestations. — Guillermo Daniel Gimenez, Necochea, Argentina



\$7M sale could end 200-year hunt for gold



Oak Island, N.S., has been scoured by treasure seekers for more than two centuries, ever since an underground shaft was discovered in 1795. Some believe buccaneers hid their gold and silver there, while others say the original manuscripts of Shakespeare are buried deep underground. Now the island is up for sale and the community tourism society is trying to save it from development and turn it into a protected heritage site.

Nova Scotia's treasure island

BY RICHARD FOOT
in Oak Island, N.S.

It is Nova Scotia's most mysterious piece of private property — a 56-hectare island of spruce and fir and famous legend, nestled next to the coast south of Halifax. For more than two centuries, Oak Island has been scoured by treasure seekers in search of pirates' gold.

A ramshackle causeway connects it to the mainland, where a sign now warns visitors: "No Trespassing."

The 79-year-old man who lives in the house at the other end of the causeway, and who co-owns four-fifths of the island, says that after a lifetime of looking for its elusive treasure, he is now willing to sell Oak Island for the right price.

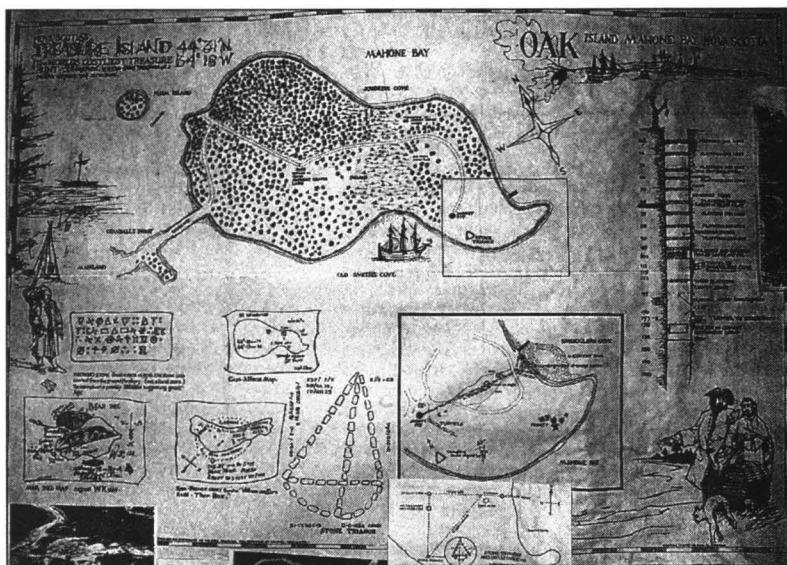
"We're asking \$7-million," Dan Blankenship said yesterday. "If we factored the buried treasure into the price, then we'd be asking \$50-million instead."

Mr. Blankenship's decision to sell the island is stirring anxiety among area residents and members of the Oak Island Tourism Society, a community group that hopes to resurrect public tours on the island and turn it into a protected heritage site.

"My worst fear is that a developer will buy it and put a subdivision of fancy, seaside homes in there," says Danny Hennigar, a society board member. "The anchorage on the side facing the western shore is perfect for boats and yachts."

"Oak Island has never been designated a protected, special place in Nova Scotia, even though everyone here sees it as a special place."

The riddles of Oak Island were born in 1795, when a teenager stumbled across a man-made, underground shaft. The shaft was covered by flagstones for



sign to the area; a few metres below that, a series of oak logs was strung across the pit, which disappeared deep into the earth.

So began an obsessive, 200-year search for buried treasure.

It was well known that in previous centuries, privateers had frequented Nova Scotia's shores and possibly buried their booty along its hidden bays and islands. Diggers and dreamers reckoned Oak Island's shaft, which later became known as the Money Pit, was the spot where either Captain William Kidd or other buccaneers hid their gold and silver.

More recently, theories have surfaced that the Money Pit holds the as-yet-undiscovered, original manuscripts of William Shakespeare.

Over the years, diggers discovered enough evidence to keep the mystery alive. Core samples drilled more than 60 metres deep revealed everything from

pieces of oak and iron, to coconut fibre and stones inscribed with strange, cipher symbols.

Excavators were always hampered, however, by seawater flooding the pit at periodic intervals — leading some to conclude the shaft had been booby-trapped by its original builders.

As the decades passed, a series of searchers, including Franklin Roosevelt and John Wayne, made futile bids at finding the treasure. Six men died in the process. Then in the late 1960s, Dan Blankenship purchased most of the island, left his home in Florida and came to Nova Scotia determined to locate the loot.

In 1971 he sank a borehole named "10-X" north of the original pit. Core samples brought up pieces of brass and china. The hole was enlarged enough for a television camera to be lowered down. At 64 metres, the camera entered a large, watery cavern, sending back pic-

tures to the surface of what Mr. Blankenship claimed was a human hand, cut off at the wrist, floating in the silt.

Before the cavern could be explored by human divers, the hole collapsed inwards, nearly killing Mr. Blankenship.

For more than three decades, Mr. Blankenship and his family have searched in vain for Oak Island's mythic treasure. He and David Tobias, a Montreal business partner who co-owns the property, are now elderly men.

Eight years ago, they reluctantly shut down tours on the island, and banned the public from crossing the causeway, because they could no longer afford the insurance liability costs.

While Oak Island once bustled with thousands of tourists each year, Mr. Blankenship now shares it only with his grown-up family, and two or three other owners who have cabins and small lots on its shores.

Although weathered with age, the old treasure hunter still carries the conviction that first brought him here more than 30 years ago.

"I'm still digging," Mr. Blankenship says. "It doesn't matter what others believe; I know there's treasure there."

Mr. Hennigar knows Mr. Blankenship and his partner have reached the end of their gold-digging days. Someone else will soon take ownership of the property, which sits near a section of the coast dotted with millionaires' homes and exclusive summer cottages.

Mr. Hennigar and John Chataway, the area's Conservative MLA, want to prevent Oak Island from being paved over by pricey mansions and preserve what they can for public access.

Late last year, the pair approached Mr. Blankenship and Mr. Tobias about leasing their property to the Oak Island Tourism Society, which aims to build a museum on the site and start guided tours there again.

"The island has huge tourist potential," says Mr. Chataway. "If you ask people outside Nova Scotia what they know about this province, most know something about Oak Island. It's been an international mystery, drawing famous figures, for years and years."

When the society inquired about a lease, or about buying a small piece of the island, Mr. Blankenship refused to subdivide his property. But he did offer to sell his entire share of the island for \$7-million.

Because the society has little money of its own, it appealed to the Nova Scotia government for help, but received only a cold shoulder.

David Tobias, contacted in Montreal, said he and Mr. Blankenship would not sell the island without considering the development plans of the purchaser. "We have moral responsibilities and community responsibilities," he said.

Still, said Mr. Hennigar, if Oak Island is not protected, and sold instead to a housing developer, then the heritage of Nova Scotia may suffer the same kind of loss it did the day the original Bluenose schooner was sold to a foreign shipping firm, only to sink and disappear on a reef off Haiti.

"That was a horrible blemish on our history," he said. "The sale of Oak Island could be another one."

National Post
rfoot@nationalpost.com



Blankenship



Hennigar

"He looks like a big hairy guy, and he stinks really bad."

Bigfoot's toehold on region up for debate



Carl Prine/Tribune-Review

Stan Gordon, of Greensburg, has investigated Pennsylvania Bigfoot and UFO sightings for three decades and often makes plaster casts of strange footprints. A group of investigators is gathering in Jeannette today to compare notes.

By Carl Prine
TRIBUNE-REVIEW

He stinks. Not that that's his only problem. He's at least 8 feet tall. Very hairy. And painfully awkward in his size 85 feet. Very shy, too. Loves Dumpsters, but hates puppies, babies and group hugs. Spotted more than 500 times since 1973 in western Pennsylvania alone, the tall, dark and hairy man-beast known as "Bigfoot" takes center stage today in Jeannette, Westmoreland County, where a gaggle of Sasquatch aficionados will host the fourth annual East Coast Bigfoot Conference & Expo. Although never captured or otherwise scientifically substantiated, the big lug known for his mammoth footprints continues to cut an impressive — and odor-

ous — path through the collective consciousness of the Keystone State. "He looks like a big hairy guy, and he stinks real bad," said John Vukovich, a West Newton hunter who claims to have seen Bigfoot six times since the early 1960s. "Armpit, body odor, real bad, real concentrated. And diarrhea. He smells like diarrhea, too. "In the sixties, we didn't really know what he was. We thought these tracks were from some hippie walking barefoot in the woods. "Now we know better." Or do we? The Bigfoot tracking network nationwide is split on the nature and number of Bigfeet. Some trackers in the Pacific Northwest insist Bigfoot hasn't relocated to the Pittsburgh area.

"People want to believe in Bigfoot. They want to touch that notion of wild innocence."

Some say there are no more than 2,000 Sasquatches nationwide and that they should be on the Endangered Species List. Others estimate as many as 6,000, living in nuclear families from Maine to Alaska, with cousins in Tibet and Guyana. But Pennsylvania's Bigfoot has always been a bit different. There are more sightings here than any state east of the Mississippi, according to the Bigfoot Field Researchers Organization. In fact, Pennsylvania sightings rank third nationwide, with nearly as many reports as Canada. He's also a bit more supernatural here. Surveyors point to our Bigfoot's unusual three-toed footprints, his glowing red eyes and note the big fella mysteriously disappears when shot at or touched — not to mention witnesses who claim they saw Bigfoot carrying a glowing green orb through Beaver County. They've seen him near UFOs. To these Keystone State trackers, he's out of this world. Yes, Virginia, there is a Bigfoot, and he came to Pennsylvania in a space saucer. "If you see Bigfoot, call us as soon as possible," says Stan Gordon, a longtime UFO and Bigfoot tracker. "You need to get people there as soon as possible who are trained to do this. Don't shoot at them or disturb them in any way. We still don't know how they'll react."

Gordon has never gazed directly at either UFOs or Sasquatches, but in his Greensburg basement bunker, a vast array of radios and other gadgets patrol the night skies, searching for the crackling whispers from squad cars, jets or park rangers following Bigfoot. Or spacemen. Or both. Once on an investigation he heard the song of the Bigfoot, and it wasn't pleasant. "Bigfoot, these creatures make a sound you'll never forget. They vibrate the sound out of them, a wailing, like a baby crying or a woman screaming. That's very common. We heard it, and it was like a person with asthma." Gordon's hotline typically nets callers reporting Bigfoot darting in front of their cars, terrorizing farm animals or crashing through the forest with a deer on his back. He has a newspaper clipping dating to 1981,

park, but Sasquatch has never knocked on his door. Altman, however, has probed an August sighting of Bigfoot skulking about the Delallo's Italian grocery store near there. Does Bigfoot nosh on capicola? "We have a theory: He was going through the Dumpster," says Altman. "He has to fight for food. You've got an 800-pound creature roaming around, and he needs a lot of calories. Berries and nuts and twigs aren't going to cut it. "We went and talked to the woman who saw him at Delallo's. We met her, and she told us all about it. She definitely saw a Bigfoot, and my wife and I staked out the area after that, but he never came back. "There was a point where my wife got kind of scared, so we left. We don't know if Bigfoot ever returned or not, but he's often sighted in this area. West Newton, Jeannette, the whole Chestnut Ridge. Delallo's is part of that area. Bigfoot country." But at Delallo's, workers and patrons alike contend they've never seen the Bigfoot. A clerk mumbled something about an ex-boyfriend, but still insisted she'd never spotted Altman's ape man there. Ditto with the guys eating outside on Delallo's picnic table, who were listening to a crooning Sinatra, not the asthmatic wail of the Sasquatch.

"The Bigfoot? Never saw him," says Mike Samsa, an Allegheny Energy Solutions executive from Chicago. "But I can see why he'd come here. Definitely, he should stop by for the sausage-stuffed peppers. Bigfoot would love 'em."

To skeptics, Bigfoot will likely never drop by Delallo's or any other Jeannette haunt. The fact is, they insist, there's no proof Bigfoot exists or has ever existed. Beyond the Indian lore, the plaster casts of three- and five-toed Sasquatches, the brief sightings and the grainy photographs, there's no DNA evidence, no Bigfoot bodies, no nothing but a hazy legend.

"I assume, for the most part, that people are being sincere when they say they've seen Bigfoot," says Ben Radford, editor of the Skeptical Inquirer Digest and a longtime debunker of the Bigfoot myth. "Of course, there are hoaxes, and the Bigfoot field is littered with hoaxes."

"People want to believe in Bigfoot. They want to touch that notion of wild innocence, that Bigfoot is a mysterious creature, a 'wisdom keeper,' who connects us to nature. It's part of a deeper need all cultures have. They want to believe in a creature that modern science or technology can't explain."

For true believers, however, Bigfoot is as real as, well, UFOs. Or vampires. Or Camelot.

"To me, Bigfoot research is like the quest for the Holy Grail," Altman says. "Modern science has never seen the Holy Grail, and people looked for it for years and never found it. The ark. People looked for Noah's ark for years and never found it."

"I like to see myself as a private investigator who is trying to solve a mystery. And, hopefully, our organization or another one will solve the Bigfoot mystery. It's a blast, and I wouldn't trade it for anything."

Carl Prine can be reached at cprine@tribweb.com or (412) 320-7826.

Scientists keep ears to skies

BY DAVID PERLMAN
San Francisco Chronicle

Is E.T. signaling us from outer space?

Out of 5 billion bursts of radio noise flowing into more than 4 million computers around the world, scientists say they have identified the first 150 "candidate" sources for what just might turn out to be signals from intelligent beings on some distant planet somewhere in the universe.

As a result, space researchers at the University of California-Berkeley are heading for Puerto Rico this month to focus America's most powerful radio telescope on the puzzling noises.

But they aren't planning on any close encounters anytime soon.

"I give it a 1-in-10,000 chance that one of our candidate signals turns out to be from E.T.," said project physicist Dan Werthimer.

The scientists will look at the first results of a four-year effort called SETI@home that links volunteer computer owners into a combined global push to analyze all the radio static that constantly fills the sky, and to seek out any noise that doesn't seem to be merely random. SETI stands for "Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence."

In the project, more than 4,287,000 home computers have been mobilized to work together in a technology called distributed computing that might, the scientists say, one day provide convincing evidence that Earth is not the only place where so-called intelligent life exists.

The scientists at UC-Berkeley have equipped all the millions of volunteer computer owners with "screen savers," which are in fact programs that run continuously and automatically whenever any of the computers is turned on but not in use.

The Berkeley project's worldwide computers are all linked to

the 1,000-foot Arecibo radio telescope in Puerto Rico, and every computer in the network automatically analyzes a different batch of radio noise that Arecibo receives 24 hours a day from the sky over the Northern Hemisphere.

The Berkeley team is headed by Werthimer, who has been searching for extraterrestrial signals for the past 24 years in a project called SRENDIP, the acronym for the cumbersome "Search for Extraterrestrial Radio Emissions from Nearby Developed Intelligent Populations."

The group will be going to Arecibo to focus the telescope there on the 150 puzzling bits of static that have been selected as the most interesting of more than 1,000 other intriguing radio noises they have examined already in tape recordings.

And those thousand, in turn, have been culled by computer from the 5 billion "little blips" that all the participants in the SETI@home project have picked up over the years, according to David Anderson, director of the project.

Those blips could merely be the hisses from TV transmissions or cell phones bouncing off the upper atmosphere, or random noises that suffuse all of space, Anderson said.

More hopeful candidates, however, would include noises picked up at the same frequency from the same spot in the sky, or others that repeat themselves over and over again, or that seem to come from the close neighborhood of a star that might have its own solar system, Anderson said.

No one, however, thinks this first batch of 150 candidate radio sources — or even many future batches — will suddenly be the first true signal from some extraterrestrial somewhere in the universe, said Anderson.

"If there's any possibility at all of finding an extraterrestrial signal, it's probably much less than 1 percent," he said.

The project's Web site is www.setiathome.ssl.berkeley.edu. The free screen saver that links any computer to the search for E.T. can be downloaded from the site.

CR: M. McCormack

Naga's Fireballs



Scientists in Thailand will investigate a legendary phenomenon that annually draws spectators to a stretch of the Mekong River that runs through the north of the country. Every year on the full moon night of the 11th lunar month, which coincides with the end of Buddhist Lent, hundreds of red, pink and orange fireballs soar up into the sky from the river. The Naga's Fireballs have been observed for generations and have long mystified scientists. Experts will start collecting soil and water samples from the areas where the fireballs appear to originate, according to the deputy permanent secretary of the Ministry of Science and Technology, Saksit Tridech. He believes the decomposition of accumulated plant and animal remains on the bottom of the warming Mekong could lead to the release of methane and nitrogen, sparking the fireballs.

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Ghostly, ghastly and green

Area conference draws seekers of Pa. aliens and local Bigfoot

By LAURA GIOVANELLI
Dispatch/Sunday News

It may be telling that the 2nd annual Pennsylvania Paranormal Conference program guide warns attendees that Gettysburg National Park closes at 10 p.m.

"Park Rangers do patrol the battlefield at night, and you will receive a stiff fine if caught," the guide reads.

The Evergreen and National cemeteries up the street are also off limits once night falls.

But who would leave to hunt dead soldiers when the co-founder of the Pennsylvania Bigfoot Society is in the room?

For the 150 fans of the ghostly, the ghastly and the little green who crowded into a hotel ballroom at the Holiday Inn in Gettysburg yesterday, the Keystone State is rich in mystery.

There's Kecksburg, Pennsylvania's Roswell, where an acorn-shaped UFO reportedly crashed in 1965 and was hauled out by the federal government on a flatbed truck under the cover of night. Hauntings in houses and cemeteries in Lancaster, Harrisburg and Camp Hill. Photo albums full of battlefield snapshots dotted with spooky orbs and smeared with ectoplasm (for those apprentice ghost hunters, that's

Paranormal information

For more information on next year's Pennsylvania Paranormal Conference, call Rick Fisher at 871-8610 or contact him by e-mail at rfisher@redrose.net.

the residue left by spirits that supposedly connects them to the physical world).

One of the nation's foremost authorities on spontaneous human combustion, Larry Arnold, was in attendance.

And Linda Moulton-Howe, an expert on crop formations and cattle mutilation also sat in the audience to hear Kelly Weaver, a member of the Academy of Religion and Psychological Research, speak on "After-Death Communication" and author Ed Okonowicz offer his advice on "Conducting and Starting a Ghost Tour."

In the words of one speaker, Katherine Ramsland, who teaches forensic psychology at DeSales University in Bethlehem (and is the author of "Piercing the Darkness: Undercover with Vampires in America Today"), these researchers don't have answers, but they do have adventures.

Conference host Rick Fisher, founder of the Pennsylvania Ghost Hunters Society, said he brought the daylong conference to Gettysburg because of its bloody past, making it "one of the most haunted places in the state, if not the country."

Beyond Devil's Den: Still, the unexplained and the mysterious in south-central Pennsylvania goes beyond — and is, some say, bigger — than ghost hunts through Devil's Den at Gettysburg Battlefield.

Pennsylvania Bigfoot Society director Eric Altman says more than a dozen Bigfoot reports — sightings, track marks and high-pitched wailings — have been recorded in Michaux State Forest since the 1970s. Two hundred tracks, of an unusual shape even in the far-from-usual genre of giant footprints, were found on Valentine's Day last year circling a reservoir in Waynesboro.

The Waynesboro prints were more ape-like than most suspected Bigfoot prints, said Altman, who fielded questions yesterday behind a table covered with feet-shaped plaster casts and photo albums. A Pennsylvania map dotted with pins marking reported sightings and tracks stood propped up on an easel behind him.

"How do you know if it's a

human foot?" asked a skeptic. He pointed to one of the smaller casts. "That looks like my foot."

The point to Altman is that he can't be sure.

"Unless you see the creature making the footprints, you don't know," he said.

"I don't try to force a Bigfoot track on someone. I let them make their own decision."

Altman and other society members try to research Bigfoot with the help of infrared video cameras and audio recorders. The researchers sometimes try to lure Bigfoot out in the open with fish, apples and honeycomb.

"The basic theory is that it's an omnivorous creature," Altman said. But, he added, "I've never seen it, so I've never seen it eating."

Even the director of a 150-member organization dedicated to the belief that the truth is out there, who has been fascinated with the legend of giant, hairy wildmen since he was 10, is only 75 percent to 80 percent of the way to being a believer.

"I'm a show-me guy. You got to show it to me for me to believe it," said Altman.

Still, he asked, "Why would someone run around barefoot so far away from civilization?"

OUR VIEW

Life can be hairy here in Edmonds

You're strolling through Gifford Pinchot National Forest in the wilds of downtown Edmonds when you practically stumble on it — the footprint of Bigfoot himself (or herself).

What's wrong with this statement?

Nothing, according to the esteemed Denver Post, which recently ran a Page 1 story datelined Edmonds, Washington in which the above "facts" appeared.

The story concerns the discovery of the so-called Skookum Cast. Anthropologists are thrilled about it. Daris Swindler, who taught at the University of Washington for 30 years before retiring to write "An Atlas of Primate Gross Anatomy," is among those who believe the Skookum Cast is a legitimate record of a hairy giant that sat down beside a mudhole to catch his (or her) breath.

There's more. The Post story is accompanied by a map that shows Edmonds as a remote outpost somewhere north of Mount Vernon. Most of us who live here believe otherwise.

And most of the maps we see rashly place Gifford Pinchot National Forest in Cowlitz County near the Oregon border. Not a route we often take on our morning walk.

Which raises a question: Is it better to be written about falsely than not at all?

Yes. Definitely — if you're a politician or a sports team or a lady of ill repute. Visibility is all. Being ignored is the fate-worse-than-death you sometimes hear about but hope never to endure.

No — if you're the chamber of commerce, and you're trying to persuade people that Edmonds is a great place to visit and hang out and spend money.

The first thing the chamber must do is tell the outside world where we are. Putative tourists could spend days scouring Cowlitz County without spotting either Bigfoot or Edmonds.

The other essential is to inform tourists that very few Bigfoot sightings take place within city limits. Reader Steve Date, who sent us the Denver Post clipping, has lived here for 56 years, and laments that he has never seen a single Bigfoot.

Next question: Should we import a few? Why not? Yellowstone National Park imports its wolves from western Canada.

Besides making honest men and women of the Denver Post, there would be local benefits. To wit: one more reason to visit beautiful downtown Edmonds.

We trust the chamber of commerce to get right on it.

If not, somebody else will.

— AL HOOPER

McCracken to give program on hoax about King Crowley

By Curt Hodges
Sun staff writer

It's a hoax that won't go away.

King Crowley, one of several stone effigies "found or discovered" in Northeast Arkansas in the 1920s, is still around, and there may be some who believe that it and the other stone images were made by ancient humans who lived in the region.

"It has gotten out of hand," said Lloyd McCracken Sr. of Jonesboro. "It's just crazy."

McCracken will present a program on "Dentler Rowland, King Crowley & Those Mysterious Stone Images" at the monthly meeting of the Craighead County Historical Society at 7 p.m. today in the Fellowship Hall of First Baptist Church.

McCracken said the deception began when Rowland, a gunsmith and jeweler who died in 1944 and is buried in Oaklawn Cemetery in Jonesboro, "discovered" the stone items on Crowley's Ridge south of Jonesboro in an area said to be near what is now Rosewood Circle and Windsor Road. At that time, the location was a mile or two south of Jonesboro and was covered in trees and dense un-

derbrush.

Some of the items were said to have been unearthed from woods near the mounds of Old Town Ridge north of Monette, according to the Harry Lee Williams "History of Craighead County."

Rowland's discovery took on a life of its own and deceived a number of people for many years throughout the state and nation. Rowland was said to have made several thousand dollars from his discovery.

The mystery of the images still commands interest and evokes questions of their origin.

"In most cases," McCracken said, the experts who examined the objects had questions about their authenticity as prehistoric.

King Crowley, said to be the largest of the stone items, looks almost Aztec. It has copper and silver eyes and gold ornaments on its ears. All told, there were more than a dozen items.

Williams bought into what was thought by many to be a hoax. Following is a paragraph taken from his book published in 1930.

"After reading Conant's 'Footprints of Vanished

Races," the writer is convinced that these images were made by the Aztecs and placed on Old Town Ridge and on the ridge below Jonesboro, as it is definitely established that the Aztecs once resided in what is now Missouri and Arkansas. Exact replicas of these images were found by Conant in the mounds near New Madrid in 1857. Hence the genuineness of the Rowland Collection is thoroughly established in the mind of the writer."

Williams did note that "A few have looked upon these relics with suspicion and incredulity, even hinting that they may have been planted."

He wrote that the collection from Old Town Ridge near Monette are of the same type and origin as the Missouri Collection, which Conant said is proof that the "same tribe which placed the relics in the mounds of Missouri also resided in this locality in the ancient day."

Others question why, if the ancient Aztecs lived in this region, have not similar items shown up in the past 70 or 80 years given that fact that much excavation for agriculture, drainage and construction has taken place.

The book Williams refers to was written by Alban Jasper Conant (1821-1915) and is actually "Footprints of Vanished Races in the Mississippi Valley; Being an account of some of the monuments and relics of prehistoric races scattered over its surface with suggestions to their origins and uses."

Bernice Babcock, author and superintendent of the Museum of Natural history at Little Rock at the time, purchased a large collection of relics from Rowland and expressed the belief that it was possible that these images were not altogether genuine. She said that the stone images found in Arkansas "resembled the work of the ancient Aztecs and Incas of Peru and Mexico, rather than the simple pottery which prevailed among the later aborigines that populated this country."

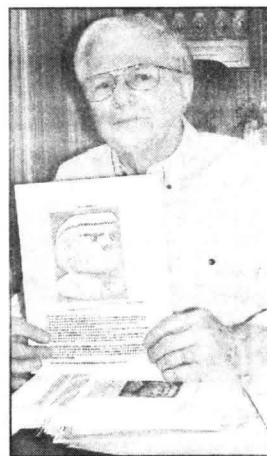
She sent samples of the relics to the Smithsonian Institution and received a reply that they resemble the relics and images made by the pre-historic mound builders of 2000 years ago.

McCracken said the Smithsonian, in 1924, opined that the Rowland items were not authentic and were not made by pre-historic humans.

S. C. Dillinger, former curator of the University of Arkansas Museum, regarded by many as the father of archaeology in Arkansas, said in a 1944 article in the Arkansas Democrat that the effigies were fakes. "No professional archeologist who has caught sight of or examined the items thought they were anything but fakes," Dillinger was quoted as saying.

"The story is so comical when you get down to what's been said over the years," McCracken said. "It was a hoax, and was proven so several times."

McCracken said that over the



Real or fake?

Jonesboro historian Lloyd McCracken Sr. holds a photograph of "King Crowley," one of several stone images that were discovered in the 1920s near Jonesboro and Monette. McCracken will make a presentation on the images and their discoverer today for the Craighead County Historical Society. —Sun photo by Curt Hodges

years there have been hints that the images might have been made here and buried for some time to age them before they were "discovered."

Whatever the truth really is, Rowland took it to the grave.

Two of the items will be on display at tonight's Historical Society meeting.

SENTINEL, Carlisle, PA - March 23, 2003

GETTYSBURG

UFOs, Bigfoot, ghosts, oh my

◆ About 150 flock to paranormal conference.

By Jennifer Vogelsong
Sentinel Reporter
jvogelsong@cumberland.com

Sharon Miller doesn't tell many people about the evening she saw a UFO hovering above her Dauphin

County home in the late 1960s.

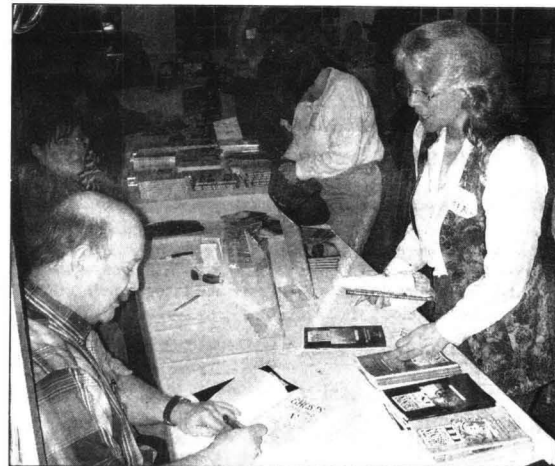
Miller, who now lives in Chambersburg, says she worries people will think she's crazy.

"At first I thought I was just imagining it, so I called my sister to come look," she recalls. "The next day I saw something in the newspaper



Jennifer Vogelsong/The Sentinel

Ed Dubil Jr. shows off Brutus, his dog that he claims is capable of detecting ghosts.



Jennifer Vogelsong/The Sentinel

Author Mark Nesbitt signs a copy of one of his books for an unidentified conference participant.

about reports of UFO sightings."

Miller was one of more than 150 people from all over the state and beyond who came to Gettysburg Saturday for the second annual Pennsylvania Paranormal Conference.

Organized by long-time ghost hunter Rick Fisher of Lancaster, the all-day event featured authors and experts speaking on topics that included Bigfoot and UFO sightings, after-death communication, and how to start and conduct a ghost tour.

"There's lots of unexplained phenomena that happen," Fisher says. "I wanted to bring people who study these things together."

Most conference participants came from Pennsylvania, but some traveled from Maryland, West Virginia, New Jersey and Chicago to attend. Two women flew in from California.

Miller, like many of those who came, wanted to spend a day among others who have had unexplainable experiences similar to her own.

"I've had a lot of encounters throughout my life, but I only tell people I'm close to because they know me," she says. "I'm a very skeptical person and very scientific-minded. I only believe what I see."

Ghostly gift

Karen Graves of Reading has always enjoyed reading local history and folklore, including ghost stories. "I'm fascinated by them."

She wanted to attend Saturday's conference to talk with experts about a strange experience she had recently, but didn't ask her husband because "it cost too much money." Besides, he's a skeptic.

But her husband needed something to give her for Valentine's Day, so the two were at the conference together Saturday.

George Graves rolled his eyes and kidded with his wife as she pulled a piece of paper from a manila envelope. It was a photocopy of the back of a picture of family members with her grandfather, who died in December.

Above her mother's list of those in the photo were the words "At home, now I can rest," written in red ink in her grandfather's flowery handwriting.

She says the message wasn't there when she and her mother got photos together for her grandfather's viewing.

After the funeral, George put the photos in the trunk of his car, where they stayed until a few weeks ago when Karen took them back to her mother. It was

then they found the message. "It's a little weird," she says. "It blew my mind."

Haunting hobbies

Ed Dubil Jr. makes frequent trips to Gettysburg from his home in Harveys Lake, Pa., to learn about Civil War history.

A few years ago, he took a ghost tour and decided to join others who went out at night with cameras in hopes of photographing ghosts.

He never had much luck until four years ago when he came with his father and new American bulldog Brutus.

Whenever Brutus was around, Dubil was able to capture ghosts, or "orbs" of light, in his photos by snapping pictures when the dog started acting strange, stopping for no apparent reason, barking, or sniffing.

"They say if ghosts are going

to contact anybody, it's going to be animals or children," Dubil says. "I've never seen an apparition, and until I see something, I'm going to be somewhat skeptical. But, yeah, I believe in ghosts."

Valerie Malmont of Chambersburg took copious notes during talks by UFO researcher Stan Gordon and author Ed Okonowicz.

A mystery writer, she came to the conference for research purposes. "I'm thinking of writing a series with some paranormal elements," she says. When asked whether she believes in paranormal activity, Malmont smiles and says, "I have an open mind."