

UFO

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SCENE, Cleveland, OH - March 31, 2004

STRANGERS in the NIGHT

BY JAMES RENNER

IN 1966, OHIO COPS CHASED A UFO INTO PENNSYLVANIA. THEN THE GOVERNMENT GOT INVOLVED, AND THINGS GOT REALLY WEIRD.

April 17, 1966, 5 a.m.: Chief Gerald Buchert is on patrol in Mantua, when the Portage County Sheriff's Department sends word over the radio for its deputies to look for lights in the sky, last seen headed east.

Buchert races home to wake his wife and grab his camera. Joan Buchert is still groggy as Gerald leads her from the house, babbling excitedly but making little sense. She becomes annoyed with his refusal to explain why she must venture outside in her bathrobe before sunrise.

She stops complaining abruptly as he points into the dark, cloudless sky. An object resembling two tea saucers joined together hovers not far from their yard. Light emanates from it, but it makes no sound. Then it moves slowly and deliberately to the east, tilting and tipping along the way. Gerald snaps a photo before the object moves out of sight.

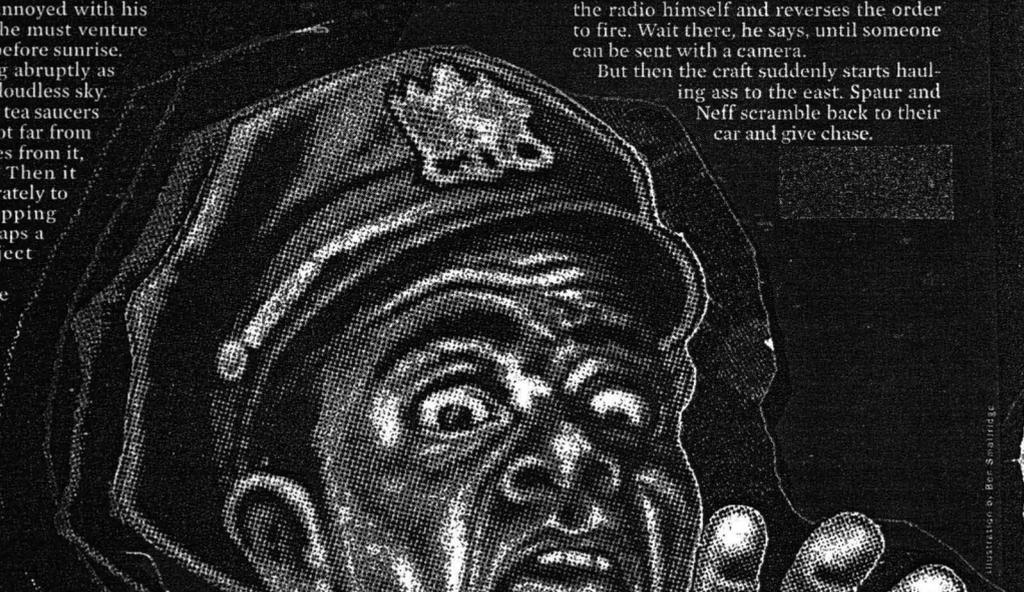
At about the same time near Ravenna, Portage County deputies Dale Spaur and Wilbur "Barney" Neff are investigating a car abandoned at the side of a rural road. The vehicle appears to be filled with radio equipment. Painted on the side is a triangle with a lightning bolt through it and the words "Seven Steps to Hell."

From behind, they hear a strange electrical humming sound. They turn and watch in amazement as a saucer-shaped craft — perhaps 50 feet long and 20-some feet high — rises slowly from behind the trees and hovers in the air. A bright light shines from the bottom, bathing the ground. Squinting, the officers make out what appears to be a dome on top and a protrusion like a thick antenna.

Spaur remembers his radio and reports what he's seeing. After a confused exchange, the dispatcher advises the officers to shoot it down, so they'll be able to prove their story. Spaur draws his gun hesitantly and aims it at the craft.

At the Ravenna police station, Sergeant Henry Shoenfelt suddenly wonders whether Spaur and Neff have spotted a government weather balloon. He gets on the radio himself and reverses the order to fire. Wait there, he says, until someone can be sent with a camera.

But then the craft suddenly starts hauling ass to the east. Spaur and Neff scramble back to their car and give chase.



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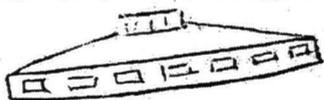
(continued from page 1 - SCENE, Cleveland, OH - March 31, 2004)

Half an hour later, Spaur and Neff are miles out of their jurisdiction, racing down dark, rural roads at speeds exceeding 100 miles per hour. Near the Pennsylvania border, Officer Wayne Huston of the East Palestine PD joins the chase, which continues over the state line. Even as the impending dawn pales the sky, the lights of the strange craft remain distinct.

Back in Ravenna, the dispatcher calls an air-traffic control tower in Pittsburgh. While they are on the phone, Spaur radios in to say there are already fighter jets in the sky, flying toward the craft. Another Portage County deputy also sees three jets moving to intercept.

At about 6:15 a.m., Spaur and Neff's car sputters — it's running on fumes. They pull into a Conway, Pennsylvania service station, where Officer Frank Panzanella stands drinking coffee, watching the object sail by.

Moments later, Spaur, Neff, Huston, and Panzanella listen as their radios pick up chatter between pilots who are chasing the craft. As they catch sight of it below them, the saucer accelerates rapidly, heading straight up this time, and disappears.



When residents of Mantua, a small community in Portage County, called the

police during the 1960s, the phone rang in Gerald Buchert's house.

"As kids, we weren't supposed to touch that phone," says his son, Harry Buchert. "For a while, it was a one-man police department. So he was it, 24 hours a day. My dad was very dedicated to the police department. It's probably what caused his death." Gerald Buchert was still chief of police when he suffered a brain aneurysm in 1986.

In life, the chief was known for his stubbornness. "If he thought something was right, he wouldn't back down," recalls Joan, his wife. But he'd be forced to make an exception — publicly, at least — amid the furor touched off by his close encounter.

The next morning, *The Plain Dealer* and three other papers carried stories about the high-speed, two-state chase. *The PD* quoted Buchert as saying the object was "round when I looked straight up at it, but when it moved to the left — I feel like an idiot saying this — it looked like a saucer, like two table saucers put together."

The attention from the local media was only the beginning. Tiny Mantua and other parts of Portage County were soon overrun with reporters from all over. The UFO phenomenon was already decades old in 1966, but this sighting was one of the most dramatic — and seemingly credible, coming from police officers — ever reported.

"It was like we set off a bomb in this town," recalls Joan Buchert. "My husband lost 20 pounds in three days."

Harry remembers the endless phone calls and knocks on the door. "It was three days of living hell."

Buchert wasted no time in getting his film developed. He was known for working by a simple code — "Cover your ass" —

and that's what the photo would do. Or so he thought.

When he was finally satisfied that he'd captured an image of the craft, he called the Cleveland office of the FBI. An agent referred him to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, near Dayton. Buchert relayed what he'd seen and was told that someone would be in touch.

Major Hector Quintanilla called the next morning. In addition to the incident, they discussed the photograph. The major told Buchert he could release a grainy copy of the photo to the press, but that he should send the negatives directly to him. The chief readily agreed.

Only later did this seemingly routine request begin to look like a setup. As it turned out, photographic evidence and vivid eyewitness accounts would mean little to the Air Force. From his office at Wright-Patterson, Quintanilla released a statement: Buchert's film was "severely fogged," he wrote, and the fuzzy image on it was nothing more exciting than a processing defect.

Furthermore, he said, his experts concluded that the officers had chased a stationary object — the planet Venus, warped by atmospheric conditions. Nothing



Major Hector Quintanilla led the Air Force's Project Blue Book in the 1960s.

unusual appeared on radar, he said, and no fighter jets were sent up.

The press abruptly backed off, but the cops were incensed. They were hardworking men, devoted to their jobs and respected in their towns, and the United States government had just told the world that they were stupid enough to have chased a planet from Ravenna to the outskirts of Pittsburgh.

Buchert later documented his frustration: "I was advised . . . that what I saw was PROBABLY only the planet [sic] Venus as it was in that general area," he wrote on April 22, 1966. "I asked the Major [Quintanilla] if it was the planet [sic] Venus then how come it moved up and down and to the side. I at one time kept the wires from the telephone pole in view and the object DID go below the wires and then above them. The wires were NOT moving. I was advised by the Major that this was due to the atmospheric conditions most likely."

And who could refute that? Quintanilla had an authority on such mistaken-identity cases, civilian astronomer Dr. J. Allen Hynek, working for him. But it would later become clear that Hynek had been out of the loop on this one.

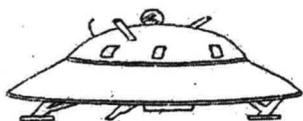
Even after the reporters had left Mantua and the excitement had died down, Buchert felt as if everyone in town was looking at him funny. He almost resigned. Over time he learned to live with the notoriety, but he never forgot. In a scrapbook, he kept every report, every newspaper article, every scrap of information pertaining to the day that he couldn't bring himself to discuss.

Harry has that scrapbook now. He keeps it in his office at the Mantua police station, where he has served as chief since his father's death. For years, he has wanted nothing more than to find some way to clear his father's name. This would be no small feat, given the time that's gone by and the "official conclusion" of the Air Force. But Harry has some unlikely allies: the sons of the government officials.

"WHEN IT MOVED TO THE LEFT — I FEEL LIKE AN IDIOT SAYING THIS — IT LOOKED LIKE A SAUCER, LIKE TWO TABLE SAUCERS PUT TOGETHER."



Chief Gerald Buchert (left), Deputy Dale Spaur, and Dispatcher Robert Wilson were hounded by the press after the incident.



Karl Quintanilla's earliest memories are of his father Hector getting ready for work. Donning his Air Force uniform. Sliding a firearm into his shoulder holster. Handcuffing a briefcase to his wrist.

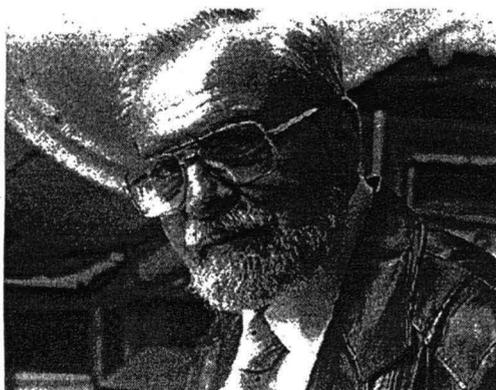
In the early 1960s, Hector Quintanilla had been a security officer for the Air Force out of Rome, New York. But after declining assignments related to the escalating conflict in Vietnam — Hector worried about leaving his family and perhaps not returning — he wound up in Ohio, chasing flying saucers.

Apparently as punishment for defying his superiors, Hector Quintanilla was assigned to Project Blue Book, the Air Force's investigation into unidentified flying objects, conducted at Wright-Patter-

son from 1952 to 1969. According to the Blue Book manual, the project had two missions: "First, to determine whether UFO's pose a threat to the security of the United States; and, second, to determine whether UFO's exhibit any unique scientific information or advanced technology which could contribute to scientific or technical research."

Quintanilla was a skeptic. Though willing to accept the possibility of other civilizations, he believed that the distances between our world and others were far too great to traverse. Whether his superiors knew this or cared isn't clear, but skepti-

cism was definitely an asset. The Air Force wanted rational explanations for the thousands of UFO sightings that were being



Dr. J. Allen Hynek did not endorse the official ruling on the Ravenna case.

reported each year, and Quintanilla was prepared to provide them.

Unfortunately, investigating possible alien encounters was not a 9-to-5 job.

"He got called. Often enough, it was in the middle of the night," Karl recalls. "He was always grumbling, moaning about it." Sometimes he would go himself. "And sometimes he would send Hynek."

Dr. J. Allen Hynek had been a professor of astronomy at Ohio State and Ohio Wesleyan in 1948 when witnesses in western Kentucky, including the commander of Godman Air Force Base, reported seeing a craft that look like "an ice cream cone topped with red." Air Force officials theorized that what they had really seen was the planet Venus, low on the horizon, through fog. What they lacked was a respected civilian who could back up these claims for a fearful public.

"So they called the closest astronomer," says Paul Hynek, the doctor's son. "They needed a person in the field to say it was bunk." This suited Dr. Hynek just fine; he

(continued on page 3)

relished the challenge of overcoming panic with science. And he was still consulting on UFO cases when Quintanilla was assigned to Blue Book.

"Our house had all these relics," recalls Paul Hynek. "My bedroom, much to my chagrin, was the biggest UFO library in the country. We were a normal suburban family. But there were all these incongruous things, though. We had a Christmas tree, but most of the bulbs were UFOs."

"People used to ask Dad if he believed in UFOs," says Scott Hynek, Paul's younger brother. "He challenged the word 'believe.' 'I haven't seen a whale,' he would say. 'But you wouldn't ask me if I believe in whales. There are enough reports of them to believe they exist.' Then eventually he saw a whale and couldn't say that anymore."

There were also the phone calls. Answering them became a favorite pas-

time for the Hynek kids. Sometimes it was a guy calling himself Prince Michael of the Perseids. Another would warn that star movements were indicating that their father's life was in danger.

"The phone would frequently ring at dinner," says Scott Hynek. "He would always take the call. A certain amount of these people were crazy, some weren't. It was hard to tell the difference. But if you're in your car and it suddenly stops and you see something in the sky, you're going to seem strange even to people who know you. He gave people a chance to tell their stories."

Over the years, Dr. Hynek was able to explain away nearly every reported sighting. Hector Quintanilla was haunted, however, by the unexplained 2 or 3 percent. Hynek empathized, but the unresolved cases were a source of tension.

"Dad sort of felt [Blue Book] was a

dead-end job for Air Force personnel," says Scott Hynek. "It was their job to make us feel safe about what was going on in the sky. But sometimes they wanted to fit a square peg into a round hole."

Karl Quintanilla recalls meeting Dr. Hynek once, when his father brought the scientist home for dinner. Even then, he knew that the men were at odds. "My father felt Hynek was exploiting the subject for his own notoriety. In other words, when Dr. Hynek would go to press conferences, it wasn't with the exact line [my father] wanted."

Hector Quintanilla worried that someday there would be a dramatic, credible sighting that Hynek would not be able to dismiss as Venus or an airplane. Such a scenario could ruin his career. Obviously, the UFO phenomenon was just a case of overactive imaginations.

people involved for this thing to be a mirage, or somebody's imagination."

Soon after Quintanilla returned to his base, Chief Buchert was ready to call it quits. The mayor was annoyed with him, and everyone else was giving him sideways glances. "The only reason he stayed [on the job] was, I made a call to his mom and dad," Joan Buchert says. "It was a frantic phone call. His parents had a big impact on him. I don't know what they said to him, but he was better afterwards."

When a *Plain Dealer* reporter came calling about six months later, Buchert turned him away. "It's something that should be forgotten," he explained, appearing nervous.

Officer Neff also declined to be interviewed, but his wife spoke. "I hope I never see him like he was after the chase," she said. "He was real white, almost in a state of shock. It was awful."

"And people made fun of him afterwards. He never talks about it anymore.

Once he told me, 'If that thing landed in my back yard, I wouldn't tell a soul.' He's been through a wringer."

Today he lives in Florida "with two of them Taco Bell dogs." He can talk about it now, though he prefers not to. "When I left Ohio, I got away from it all," he says. "I don't look up anymore. I look down. I just want to forget." But he stands by his story.

So does Officer Wayne Huston, who left his job in East Palestine, moved out west, and started going by his middle name, Harold. People track him down occasionally, he says, and he's gracious, but won't dredge up the past. In the aftermath, he took a lot of heat for leaving his town unprotected to join the chase. "The chief of police and I didn't get along. [The incident] didn't help. I really don't want to go further than that."

Pennsylvania officer Frank Panzarella refused to be interviewed. He is not known to have recanted any part of his account.

Dale Spaur fared the worst — perhaps because he was alone among the cops who saw the UFO again, about two

"I know Dale had a lot of problems after that, but I'm not sure they were all caused by the UFO," says Henry Shoefelt, who was the sergeant who advised Spaur and Neff not to shoot at the object. "All of the problems that occurred in his life after that, he blamed on it. I can't agree with that. We all have to accept responsibility for our actions."

Still, he adds, "I never doubted what happened. Not for one second."

As recently as two years ago, Spaur had a small house in Rocky River. His mail is forwarded to a post-office box in West Virginia, but his whereabouts are unknown.

During Major Hector Quintanilla's interview with the police officers, one of them asked, "What did you do that you got this kind of job?"

"I really don't know," Quintanilla responded. "I've often asked myself that question."

Whether the historically skeptical major was moved at all by his interviews with the officers is not known. In any case, it did not affect his ruling. The Venus explanation stood.

But not everyone was willing to accept it. In May 1966, the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP), then a 10-year-old, civilian-run organization, took an interest in the case. Investigator William Weitzel picked up where Quintanilla had left off, collecting every report and newspaper article he could find, and reinterviewing Spaur several times. The most intriguing piece, however, came from Dr. J. Allen Hynek, the Air Force consultant. Hynek noted that Venus had risen at 3:35 that morning and would have been too high in the sky, by the time of the sightings, to be mistaken for an aircraft.

In 1968, Weitzel personally delivered his files to the University of Colorado, where researchers were conducting a review of UFO sightings for the Air Force. But their report, submitted to Congress in 1969, made no mention of the Ravenna case. Armed with the researchers' conclusion — that "further extensive study of UFOs probably cannot be justified in the expectation that science will be advanced thereby" — Congress disbanded Project Blue Book.

Quintanilla was free. He retired from the Air Force not long after and focused on golf, until a golf-cart accident left him with head injuries from which he never fully recovered. He died in 1997.

But he lived long enough to see his son Karl follow in his footsteps, in a manner of speaking. After working as a cameraman on game shows and soap operas, Karl Quintanilla began editing UFO documentaries. His best-known work to date is a Sci-Fi Network show on Bob Lazar, a physicist who claims to have worked on a top-secret "reverse engineering" project involving a captured UFO stored at a government base in the Nevada desert.

Karl told his father about Lazar. "He said, 'That's not the government, but be careful,'" Karl recalls. "I think he was suggesting there were other parties interested. A black operation. Maybe not the government, but it comes to the government in the end."

In January, Karl received a scanned version of the Buchert photograph through e-mail. After viewing the digitally enhanced image, Karl was not inclined to dismiss it as a processing glitch, as his father had done in 1966.

But that 2 percent — what of those? Why couldn't the astronomer just do his job?

Quintanilla's concern over Hynek's methods may have been why he didn't consult the scientist on the Ravenna case.

William Powers, Dr. Hynek's assistant at the time, blew Quintanilla's cover. In a letter to Spaur and Neff, Powers wrote: "I found out considerably more about this event than the Air Force investigator did, because I cannot agree with the evaluation publicly released a few days after the sighting. What you have reported to me could not possibly lead to such a conclusion [the Venus explanation]. As a matter of fact, Dr. Hynek agrees with this. He was not consulted before this news release was put forth."

When Quintanilla found out about the letter, he realized that if the situation were going to remain contained, he could no longer avoid visiting Mantua. The Buchert home was his first stop.

Joan Buchert recalls the well-dressed man from the Air Force as friendly. "We sat and had coffee," she says. "They discussed the picture. They discussed the priest."

"The priest" was the head of St. Joseph's Church in Mantua. The Bucherts cannot remember his name, only that he had come to Gerald and said that he too had seen the object. Another highly credible witness, another thorn in Quintanilla's side.

After this visit, the Air Force became "highly involved," Harry Buchert says. "We were bombarded by calls at home. My Dad had more meetings with the Air Force. They were trying to tell him it was a weather balloon. He couldn't change their minds. You just surrender to it eventually."

On May 10, Quintanilla conducted taped interviews with Spaur and Neff, their boss, Sheriff Ross Dustman, and dispatcher Robert Wilson. The transcript shows that Quintanilla seemed to alternate between the Venus and weather-balloon explanations, but remained adamant that the officers had not seen anything out of the ordinary. He denied that Air Force jets had been dispatched, insisting that nothing had shown up on radar.

Silent through most of the interview, Dustman spoke up near the end, apparently out of frustration: "Well, I, I feel this way about it. It's too damn bad that these things are running around through our sky over our heads, and the United States Air Force and the government doesn't know what's going on out there. Because there's too many of them, and there's too many people have seen it." (Dozens of civilians claimed to have seen the craft as well.)

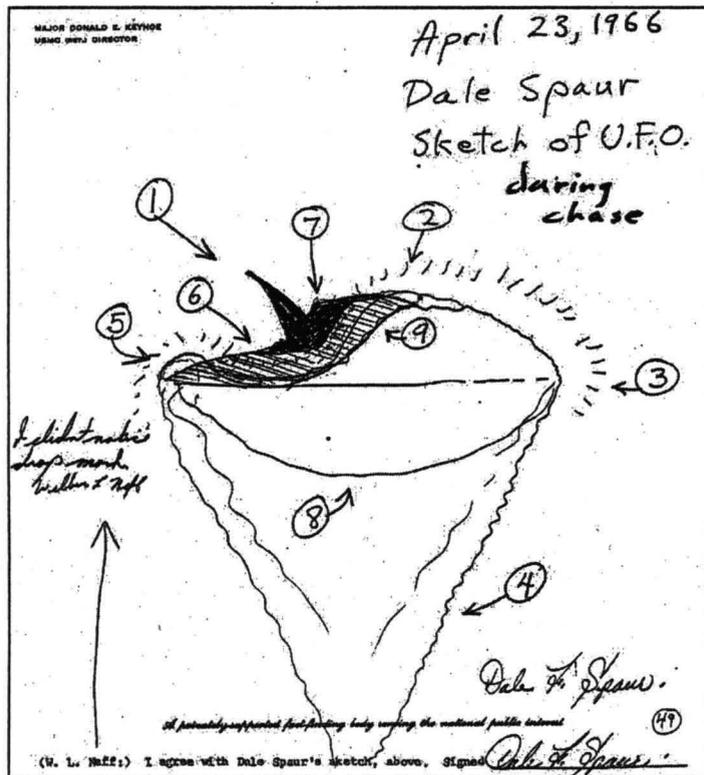
"What does the Air Force think these are, Major?" Wilson asked.

"Misinterpretation of conventional objects and natural phenomena," Quintanilla responded.

"What category does this go under? What Dale saw?"

"Place it under the category of satellite and atmospheric observations."

Dustman: "Well, I'm sorry it's turned out this way, because I know a lot of people have come to me and they saw the same damn thing, and there's too many



Spaur drew the UFO for investigators.



Chief Buchert's photo, digitally enhanced by Paul Hynek.

months later. He lost weight and began disappearing for days at a time. He left his job and his wife. Six months after the chase, a PD reporter found him living in a motel in Solon, gaunt and destitute.

"I have become a freak," he said in his last known interview. "I'm so damn lonely. Look at me . . . 34 years old, and what do I have? Nothing. Who knows me? To everyone I'm Dale Spaur, the nut who chased a flying saucer."

(continued from page 3 - SCENE, Cleveland, OH - March 31, 2004)

"The longer I look at it, the more fascinated I become," Karl says. "In the enhanced picture, it does have the classic [saucer] shape. There's the classic tilt forward, like the craft I've seen in the [Lazar] video. With all due respect to my father and the Air Force, given the fact that [the police]

title, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, borrowed a phrase Hynek had coined. A scene near the beginning, in which police chase UFOs through rural Indiana in the middle of the night, is an homage to the 1966 Ohio-Pennsylvania incident. Dr. Hynek died in 1986.

when he says that this picture — and whatever was reported by the Ohio deputies who zoomed into Pennsylvania in hot pursuit of it — was not in fact Venus, it's hard for a reasonably open person to dismiss it. "This shows what I believe were the misaligned interests of my father and the

"DOES IT MEAN THAT IT'S A SPACESHIP FROM MARS, WITH LITTLE GREEN MEN? NO . . . [BUT] IT REMAINS A UFO."

were tracking this thing at 103 miles per hour, saying it's Venus is a stretch."

After Blue Book folded, a disillusioned Dr. Hynek moved his family to Chicago and founded the Center for UFO Studies. Uninhibited by government overseers, he spent the rest of his years applying the scientific method to reports of sightings from around the country.

In 1976, a young Steven Spielberg hired Dr. Hynek as a consultant for a movie. Its

His son Paul Hynek, a partner in the production company behind many episodes of the MTV series *Driven* and other reality-based projects, also has seen enhanced versions of the Buchert photo. He too rejects the Venus explanation.

"By 1966, [my father] had already investigated thousands of UFO sightings, and he wrote extensively about just how often throughout the ages the planet Venus has been mistaken for a UFO," Paul says. "So . . .

Air Force. For my father, a dispassionate scientific observer, the goal was to shed scrutinizing light on the reports, and let the chips fall where they may.

"Does it mean that it's a spaceship from Mars, with little green men? No. It just means that given the available evidence, it remains a UFO — an unidentified flying object."



The Ravenna case attracted the attention of Dr. James E. McDonald, the physicist, meteorologist, and former Naval intelligence officer who spent most of his career in the 1950s and '60s arguing for real scientific inquiry into the UFO phenomenon.

The incident "calls for reevaluation not only on the scientific grounds involved, but also to avoid unfairly subjecting to local public ridicule the several officers who have testified," he wrote. "The available evidence (especially Wm. Weitzel's extensive report for NICAP) seems to me to make the astronomical explanation, that now stands as the official Air Force evaluation, quite unreasonable."

Problem is, there's no one to hear an appeal. The Air Force has been out of the UFO investigation business — officially, at least — since Project Blue Book was shut down.

Five days a week, Harry Buchert patrols the streets of Mantua from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. When he pulls out of the station, he passes the baseball field dedicated to his late father. At the end of his shift, he writes reports on the day's events — usually nothing more exciting than traffic violations and domestic disturbances — in an office his father once owned.

The episode with the UFO is always at the back of Harry's mind. He remembers the frenzy of the town in the days following the incident, his father's uncharacteristic acceptance of the humiliating explanation.

Harry has spent his life following in the footsteps of his old man. So it's only fitting that he'd want to write the final report on the one piece of business his father left undone.

Validation will not come from the Air Force, but maybe the opinions of Karl Quintanilla and Paul Hynek will help put the matter to rest. Or maybe from one of the pilots whose planes the officers saw. Or maybe from Dale Spaur, who may still be out there somewhere, running from his memories.

James Renner can be reached at scene@clevelandscene.com.



Harry Buchert took over for his father in 1986.

JOURNAL SENTINEL, Milwaukee, WI - Feb. 10, 2004 CR: R. Heiden



UFO discs

UFOs may or may not exist, but the *UFO Anthology*, a three-CD set for Windows and Macintosh computers, makes a case for their existence.

The collection was made several years ago and contains an encyclopedic guide to UFOs up to that time. The narrator introduces topics such as crop circles and alien abductions in a persuasive manner. The opening CD features experts in the various fields of UFO phenomenon, alleged government coverups, and CIA documents that the narrator says prove the existence of UFOs.

A timeline lists strange, unexplained sightings, from Roswell, N.M., to Washington, D.C., and challenges official government explanations. The third disc contained dozens of government documents about UFOs that can be printed. *UFO Anthology* will run on Windows 95, 98, Me and XP; and Macintosh PCs running System 7.1 or higher. A copy of the *UFO Anthology* costs \$20, plus \$5 for shipping. See www.washingtoncd.net.

ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE, Little Rock, AR - April 23, 2004

OTHER DAYS

50 years ago
April 23, 1954

HOT SPRINGS — Six men who had gathered late last night at a rural home near here to ride to work said they watched a mysterious, gleaming ball hover over the house for 20 minutes. Les Reatherford said the ball once dived toward him, and he had to duck to avoid being hit.

PRESS, Johnson City, TN - March 7, 2004 CR: D. Perkins

Is the truth out there?

Unicoi group tackles the unexplained

By JAMES BROOKS
Press Staff Writer
jbrooks@johnsoncitypress.com

UNICOI — Been abducted by aliens lately? Are there ghosts in your attic? Is Bigfoot stomping your daffodils and nobody's taking you seriously?

Try calling the Extraordinary Experiences, Sightings and Information Hotline at 735-0848, or e-mail to Director@AlternateRealities.org. According to

Our purpose is the pursuit of understanding and awareness. It has tremendous value for humanity'

— Stacey Allen McGee,
Alternate Realities Center

Stacey Allen McGee of the Alternate Realities Center, your report will be "treated with the utmost discretion and confidence."

Stacey doesn't care if a

UFO sighting is a figment of the observer's imagination. "If you can imagine something exists, perhaps somewhere in the universe it does," McGee said.

He hopes to lead people to use their imaginations more often so they might discover more of the abilities we possess as human beings.

"Our purpose is the pursuit of understanding and awareness. It has tremendous value for humanity."

Stretching the limits of believability is one way to shift the mental map, which McGee describes as "the accepted truth of the indi-

(continued on page 5)



Angela Jones/Johnson City Press

Stacey Allen McGee with the Alternate Realities Center studies the pyramid.

vidual." The ARC's biggest problem, according to McGee, is overcoming misconceptions about the group. "We are not a clan. I am a devout Christian, but not all answers are easily obtainable. The pursuit of knowledge may be our sole purpose on the planet, and this pursuit may take us closer to the creator. The more complex the universe, the greater the glory of its creator."

McGee's single-wide in rural Unicoi is unremarkable from his neighbors except for the two pyramids in his yard. Inside the walls are covered with space photos, including shots of a UFO he says were taken in Unicoi County. Space music plays and tables are covered with Egyptian symbols: pyramids, cobras, and falcons.

ET dolls sit on the floor surveying this inner space wide-eyed.

"We're working on new ways to gather para-normal evidence," McGee said. "We've had a lot of success with digital cameras. They can stop light better so we are able to see beyond the moment in time."

All these subjects and more will be explored on Sept. 24-25 at the Alternate Realities Conference at the Millennium Park Conference Center. Keynote speaker will be Kriss Stephens, host of the MTV series "Fear."

Other speakers will be Leah Haley, author of "Unlocking Alien Closets;" Jim Hickman speaking on alien abduction of humans and a history of UFOs in the media; Donald M. Ware (USAF retired) on "UFOs and the Spiritual Hierarchy;" Jason Martell on "Ancient Astronauts and the Sumerian Culture;" and McGee on his forthcoming book "Time, Space and Thought ... Journeys in Metaphysics."

A 50 percent discount on door admission is offered to pre-registrants before May 1. E-mail inquiries to Director@AlternateRealities.org.



Angela Jones/Johnson City Press

Stacey Allen McGee with a stuffed extra-terrestrial.

"One of the hardest things to accept is change," McGee said. "People will fight or resist, do everything they can to try and keep it away."

The ARC is guilty of this tendency as well. "We didn't own a computer until 1997," McGee said. "We feared our privacy would be violated, but we've come to an understanding that it can do more positive things for us."

He says there are 400 members in the organization, reached through their e-mailing list. The non-paying members are in all 50 states and 18 countries, McGee said.

"Einstein spoke of the multi-dimensional universe," McGee said. "He realized that consciousness may exist on several planes at once. Time may not be as linear as we would like to believe. Sometimes we are on waters where people don't want to go. As they say, where no man has gone before."

McGee says The ARC wishes to examine UFO sightings and para-normal activities using scientific methods, but that takes equipment and equipment costs money.

An alternative is to explore inner space. "You have to open your eyes and refuse to take other people's word for how things are," McGee said. "We are each a universe unto ourselves and unless you explore inner space you cannot explore outer space. Unless we open ourselves we won't have anything to offer other sentient beings out there."

Attendees at the ARC plan to share and exchange ideas in an atmosphere without ridicule.

McGee feels there is also an environmental message to ponder. "Why would God bring us to a perfect world if we can't take care of what we have here?" McGee asked. "It's not too late to make changes and do what you know is right."

Analysts say November UFO sighting is authentic

By Ronna Wiig
Staff Reporter

Editor's note - This is the second in a continuing series of articles about sightings of unidentified flying objects in the Ashland area. The couple in this story have asked to remain anonymous.

ASHLAND - Sunday, Nov. 30, 2003 was a beautiful 64-degree afternoon in Ashland.

A young man was out on his porch enjoying the nice day when he noticed something in the sky about 12:45 p.m. He watched for a few minutes and then yelled through the door for his wife to come outside. They watched in amazement for a couple of minutes before they think to grab the camcorder.

The young woman said, "It just looked like a black circle til it started moving."

She went on to explain the object moved up and away and then down before coming closer. Just before it left, it went up and went west.

After the incident, the young couple watched and re-watched the video with close friends and family. Wanting more information, the woman then went to the computer and looked up unidentified flying objects on the Internet.

"It was hard for me to type it," she said. "I thought to myself, yeah, right!"

Under "UFO" she found a web-

site, for reporting such incidents. After being prodded by friends and family, she filed a report on a website. The report she filed was as follows:

Occurred: 11/30/2003

Time: 12:45

Location: Ashland, NE

Shape: Disk

Duration: 3-5 Minutes

Summary: Large dark disk shaped object with very bright light seen in daylight - Have video proof

A couple of months later the couple was contacted by Doctor Jack Kasher, president of the local chapter of the Mutual UFO Network (MUFON). After the initial contact she was skeptical so she took to the Internet again, this time to check out Kasher and MUFON.

The Mutual UFO Network, Inc. (MUFON) was founded in May of 1969 and is an international scientific organization composed of people seriously interested in studying and researching the phenomenon known as "Unidentified Flying Objects" (UFOs) by combining their mutual talents, areas of expertise and investigative efforts.

After she checked Kasher out and decided he and his organization were legitimate, the couple granted him an interview. Kasher and some of his colleagues came to the couple's home to interview them and get a copy of the tape.

"When we of MUFON investigate a sighting, we try to get to the truth of what really happened, using science where we can," said Kasher. "We just try to find out what happened."

The couple reported that the object made no noise and they estimated it to be 30 to 50 feet in diameter. The whole incident lasted for about five or six minutes.

Kasher sent the video to an internationally known photo analyst. The analyst, who Kasher describes as being somewhat skeptical, said, "this video is interesting more than you know."

"It is similar to another case I received in August although this is much closer video."

Black spots that continually appear on the object seem to be unexplained. The analyst said he first tried to explain them away as some kind of camera artifact but the trees, eyes and other objects show no hint of such spots. Also he said the spots are a consistent percentage of the disk diameter. If it were a camera artifact, it would be independent of the disk size.

"Therefore a very unusual object," he wrote.

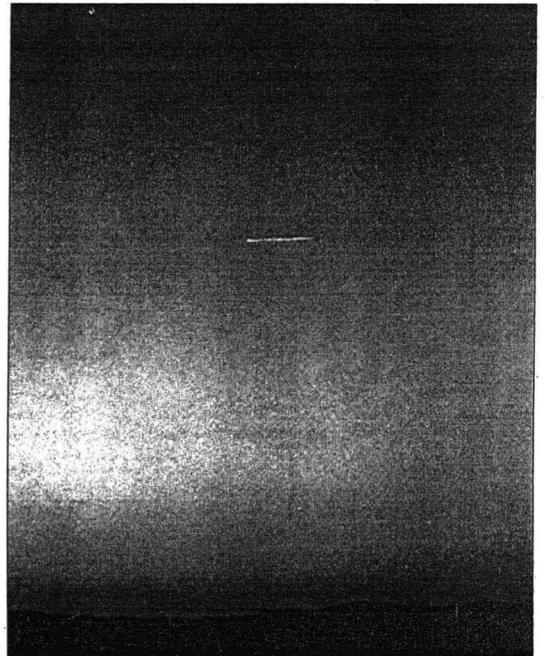
Kasher said he has reason to believe that the Ashland sighting was not a hoax.

"By the way, in my experience hoaxes are few and far between. I usually have the opposite problem. Most people are reluctant to talk about their sightings and must be encouraged to do so," said Kasher.

After the sighting was reported on an Omaha television station, the couple, via Kasher, have been approached by a film producer about using the video and Kasher's expertise.

Robert Kaviat has been the executive producer for FOX programs such as "The World's Greatest Hoaxes: Secrets Finally Revealed" in 1999, "UFOs: The Best Evidence Ever Caught on Tape" in 1997 and "Alien Autopsy: Fact or Fiction" in 1995.

The couple have released the video to Kaviat, but declined to be interviewed by the television producer for any upcoming programs.



NASA / JPL / CORNELL

NASA's Mars rover Spirit came across a surprising unidentified flying object while observing the sky with one of its cameras.

NASA's rover spots Martian streaker

Scientists believe image is of Viking 2 launched in 1975

BY MARY VALLIS

Spirit, one of NASA's Mars rovers, has sent a photograph back to Earth that shows an unidentified flying object above the red planet.

The rover snapped the image, which shows a pronounced streak across the Martian sky, while taking pictures of Earth, said Steven Squyres, the chief scientific investigator for the mission.

The rover's cameras are rarely pointed at the sky. It usually transmits close-ups of the Martian surface and panoramic shots of the planet's landscape.

"We were incredibly lucky," Dr. Squyres said in an interview yesterday. "We were pointed at the Earth, but we caught a spacecraft in the frame, too. It's kind of a remarkable thing."

Astronomers are still debating what caused the streak, but Dr. Squyres has a solid theory. Based on the streak's length and orientation, he suspects Spirit caught an image of Viking 2, one of seven out-of-commission spacecraft still orbiting Mars. NASA launched Viking 2 in 1975 and it went out of service in 1978.

NASA says the streak was the brightest object in the sky when the photograph was taken last week. Spirit took the picture with the green filter of its panoramic

camera and a 15-second exposure.

The streak covers about four degrees along a north-south arc, which would match Viking 2's polar orbit.

But there are other possibilities. The streak could have been another spacecraft or a meteor, but Dr. Squyres is less convinced of those options.

"It doesn't really look like that to me," he said. "A meteor streak tends to be faint at both ends, and this one's not. It starts abruptly at one end and ends abruptly at the other, as if it were something moving slowly across the sky."

Calculations show the object was moving at the right velocity to be a spacecraft in orbit, he added.

Tom Bolton, an astronomer at the University of Toronto, said he would be "very surprised" if the streak was caused by anything but Viking 2. "Meteors rarely move north to south, he said. "It does happen, but it would be unusual unless it was a meteor shower."

The photograph will likely become fodder for conspiracy theorists anxious to find proof of alien life, said Phil Plait, an astronomer at California's Sonoma State University.

"There's always a very small segment of the population who disbelieves everything they hear from a government source," said Dr. Plait, who runs a Web site debunking astronomy myths.

"If NASA were trying to cover this stuff up, then why would they be releasing the pictures at all? They are, and that indicates there's nothing to hide."

NASA sent two rovers - Spirit and its twin, Opportunity, - to Mars on a US\$820-million mission to research the planet, which has an esteemed position in alien folklore. This week, Spirit has been analyzing a drift of wind-blown material nicknamed "Serpent." On the other side of the planet, Opportunity is examining soil samples.

National Post
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'Alien creators' topic of lecture at Aztec UFO Symposium

By Debra Mayeux
The Daily Times

et," binding mankind, so people can no longer think.

"This being here may cause controversy, and I think it will be good for the symposium," said coordinator Dave Albright, who invited Green to speak during the Aztec Library's event. "I don't think he's involved in any cults."

Green claims his contact with

UFOs and extraterrestrials began when he was 19 years old and serving in the Air Force. He said he saw a silver disc in a hangar at Edward's Air Force Base and was later shown photos of two dead aliens.

"When the government is ready to tell the story about UFOs and ETs, it will," Green said.

From his stint in the military, Green went to college and became involved in real estate development. But his life changed 26 years ago, when he attended a secret meeting in Aspen, Colo., where he was asked to be the financier for Jimmy Carter's presidential campaign. During this meeting, he said he discovered there are 300 fami-

lies who control the planet. Some members of these families, who look like humans, are actually of a "reptilian race," Green said.

Albright said Green is not alone in his thinking about reptilian aliens controlling the planet. This

will just be the first time this type of thinking has been promoted at the symposium.

Through these beings and a Swiss photographer, Green said he made contact with the commander from the Pleiadian Star System, who is named Quetzl. It was Quetzl, who gave Green the truth about humanity and its upcoming demise.

"All of the different races come from different star systems," he said. "I'm sharing as much (information) as possible."

Green shares information, theories and messages from space in a book, which he said will be available for free at the symposium. The

book, he said, is a guide to salvation from upcoming attempts by extraterrestrials to wipe us out.

"(Through the book) you can see what is really going on in the world and be in contact with extraterrestrials," he said.

In the history according to Green, there was no Jesus and the books of the Bible are false. Instead aliens placed people on earth — a penal colony. People were created as warriors and are "nothing more than holograms containing a spirit," he said.

"We are a product of the thought of creation, and the wild card is free will," Green said adding free will has led to an overpopulated earth, which could soon

be destroyed.

He has two destruction theories. The first he claims is a lowering of the population from six billion to 500 million with only 20 million Americans left by the year 2012. The second is a theory that the ETs will cause a nuclear war which "would make this another sun."

This is not even a possibility, said nuclear physicist Dave Thomas of Albuquerque.

"Earth is a tiny little planet. It wouldn't have enough atoms to go nuclear," said Thomas, who is a former presenter at the symposium.

If the Earth could be vaporized, it wouldn't become a star, but a brown dwarf. This is because its mass would need to be increased by

26,000 to have the bare minimum to make it a star or sun-like object. Nuclear fusion would not be present in the blast, thus a brown dwarf would be created, Thomas said.

Green said his claims are real. "This is not an X-File."

He will speak at 4 p.m. Saturday at Koogler Middle School, 455 N. Light Plant Road.

Tickets for the symposium are \$50 for Saturday and Sunday, plus an additional \$18 for Friday's Meet and Greet at 6 p.m. For a single day pass, the cost is \$35.

Information: The Aztec UFO Information Center, (505) 334-9890 or on the Web at www.aztecufo.com.

Aztec UFO fest opens Friday

Today is 54th anniversary of 'Farmington Armada'

By Debra Mayeux
The Daily Times



File photo

UFO artwork can be seen in this file photo from 2002. This year, the Aztec UFO Symposium will begin Friday night with a Meet and Greet from 6-8 p.m.

AZTEC — Fifty-six years ago on a small, dirt road north of Aztec, something unexplainable happened.

A saucer-shaped ship, 100-feet in diameter, was said to have crash-landed leaving small charred bodies inside. There were eyewitnesses — military, locals and police officers. There are Air Force documents one man is working to declassify.

Scott Ramsey of Charlotte, N.C., has spent the past 14 years of his life researching the purported Aztec UFO crash of 1948. He has traveled to 28 states, visited numerous military bases and talked to alleged eyewitnesses of the event.

"We want to be extremely careful to make sure people are reliable witnesses," Ramsey said of his research. "We really try not to open our mouth until a lot of

research has been done."

Ramsey will present his findings at the 7th annual Aztec UFO Symposium Friday through Sunday at Koogler Middle School. His talk, which he says is "no smoking gun," will be presented at 11 a.m. Saturday.

The alleged Aztec crash occurred only months after the more famous 1947 Roswell crash of another alleged UFO. It was two years before the March 17, 1950, Farmington UFO Armada, which celebrates its 54th anniversary today.

News accounts at the time, including a front page story in *The Daily Times*, said a fleet of hundreds of UFOs were seen by hundreds of residents flying in formation at high rates of speed across the city. The event later became known as the Farmington UFO Armada.

Ramsey said there were several UFO sightings in the state between 1947 and

1953, almost of which were documented in Air Force archives.

"Aircraft were picking up UFOs in New Mexico," the researcher said. "My declassifications are centered around Aztec and the Air Force during that time frame."

Most of his research began with a book, "Behind the Flying Saucers," published in the 1950s by Frank Scully, who was tipped off by New Mexico oil men Silas Newton and Leo GeBauer. The two did not have the best reputation and most skeptics believe the story was a farce used by Newton and GeBauer to sell oil "doodle bug" equipment.

"They had their share of encounters with the law," Ramsey said of the men, but Scully also claimed he received information from eight or nine scientists.

Ramsey said Scully went into such great detail in his book, it had to come from scientists. Ramsey said he was able to prove many of the details from documents declassified in 1999.

"It's hard to put my presentation into a nutshell, but we've looked at Scully's story," he said.

In addition to Scully's claims, Ramsey was able to discover secret military radar sites in the state. These sites may have detected the UFO before it crashed near Aztec, but Ramsey said he still has years of research before solidifying that claim. What he does have is maps of the radar bases for public review at the symposium.

Ramsey also commissioned a study of artifacts found at the crash site. Unfortunately the findings will not be ready for presentation until next year.

A key artifact was a piece of concrete slab at the site. The slab has been dismissed as a well cap, but a member of the military told Ramsey its purpose was as a footer for a crane used to remove the UFO.

"It's a controversial piece, we're trying to date to 1948," Ramsey said adding the study is highly controlled with only one person on staff knowing the concrete came from a purported UFO crash site.

Ramsey said he will present his findings to date, some claims from skeptics, as well as a time line for the crash. He will also lead tours to the crash site, when he is not speaking at the symposium.

The cost for the symposium is \$50 for Saturday and Sunday, plus an additional \$18 for the Meet and Greet from 6-8 p.m. Friday. A one day ticket is \$35.

Information: The Aztec UFO Information Center, (505) 334-9890 or on the Web at www.aztecufo.com.

Debra Mayeux: debram@daily-times.com

NEW MEXICAN, Santa Fe, NM - March 19, 2004 CR: D. Perkins

Roswell enters the picture

Taos isn't the only New Mexico community experiencing a film festival frenzy. Roswell will host its first-ever film festival July 2 to 5 within the larger framework of the Roswell 2004 Festival, formerly known as the Roswell UFO Festival.

More than 100 independent features, documentaries and shorts, mostly sci-fi related, will be shown at venues throughout the city, the *Roswell Daily Record* reported. The film festival will complement such other events as an Alien Invasion and concerts by Willie Nelson, Merle Haggard, Los Tigres del Norte, the Platters and the Drifters.

Organizers expect overall attendance to push 50,000. ◀



Jon Bowman
Film Critic

Native view of 'star ancestors' to be topic

— By Debra Mayeux —
The Daily Times

AZTEC — A Native American filmmaker and author will share her insights into strange sightings and extraterrestrial visitations Sunday at the 7th annual Aztec UFO Symposium.

Nancy Red Star of Taos considers herself an investigator given the task of recording

statements from indigenous people and the military in regards to UFOs.

"It's been a wild ride," the former professor of Indian studies said, adding she's interviewed 80 people.

Red Star became involved with the UFO phenomenon six years ago during the 50th anniversary of the Roswell crash.

She was asked to set up a satellite connection with indigenous cultures and present their testimony. The event fell through, but Red Star said she decided to continue with the project.

What she has found is a link between the sky and Native Americans everywhere.

"All Indian people have a relationship to the stars. Many

say they came from the stars," she said. "That's part of the legacy — the quest."

Red Star is familiar with many tribes and knows the traditions of her own people — the Abenaki and Cherokee. She is also of Middle Eastern descent.

Her journeys have also led her to learn some stories surrounding the Navajo people of the Four Corners.

Red Star said she had contact with "Red Wing" and his son "Aukee," who live in Indian Wells, Ariz.

"They had a UFO land above their house," she said. "There is a whole group of Navajo people who have had sightings in that area."

Aukee, she said, photographed everything including a burnt circle and a liquid substance, but his film was confiscated by NASA.

"There are some interesting government twists and turns," Red Star said of her work.

In addition to the various cultures involved with UFOs, Red Star said she has learned about laws of the universe — "governing space and the care-taking of the planet" — set out by the star ancestors.

"We haven't followed those laws. We're failing. This is a global message. ... Each race has responsibility to care take this planet," Red Star said. "I'm not trying to put out platitudes. That this is the way it is. I'm trying to connect the dots."

Red Star will speak at 9 a.m. Sunday at Koogler Middle School.

Other symposium speakers include Mark Kimmel speaking on extraterrestrial contact at 9 a.m. Saturday, Art Campbell speaking on the archaeological excavation of a UFO crash site in Roswell at 2 p.m. Saturday, and Freddie Silva speaking on Crop Circles at 11 a.m. Sunday.

Tickets for the symposium are \$50 for Saturday and Sunday, plus an additional \$18 for Friday's Meet and Greet at 6 p.m.

For a single day pass, the cost is \$35.

Information: The Aztec UFO Information Center (505) 334-9890 or on the Web at www.aztecufo.com.

Debra Mayeux: debram@daily-times.com

DAILY TIMES, Farmington, NM - March 20, 2004



Ben Chrisman/The Daily Times

Paul Kimball, of Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, reacts to a question concerning the public's perception of UFOs during an open discussion prior to the start of the 2004 Aztec UFO Symposium at Koogler Middle Friday evening. Kimball recently completed a UFO documentary, "Do You Believe in Majic?"

Symposium to 'unveil the truth'

— By Laura Banish —
The Daily Times

AZTEC — Whether you're an earthling who scoffs at the thought of UFOs or one who wonders if there really is other life out there, the 7th Annual UFO Symposium at Koogler Middle School should have something for everyone to ponder this weekend.

"It's for anybody with curiosity about UFOs, people who know nothing about UFOs and of course the diehards," said Dennis Balthaser, master of ceremonies and a UFO investigator who takes the subject "very seriously."

Aztec, home of the alleged 1948 UFO incident, will abound with speakers and activities centered around extraterrestrial information and purported undocumented history in this year's exposition themed, "Unveiling of the Truth."

"The symposium will give the public a chance to meet one-on-one with researchers and ask questions," Balthaser said. "There are so many books on this out there, you wouldn't live nearly long enough to read them all."

Presentations will vary from research and film to personal encounters, but the speakers all seem to have one agenda: Alien life does exist. However, don't expect to be bombarded with stories about little green men with almond-shaped eyes. According to one speaker, there are somewhere between 50 and 100 different species of aliens that have visited planet Earth.

In general, the speakers maintain that the mainstream public does not believe in UFOs because of government and media cover-ups. They say

acceptance of other life would disrupt everything from the stock market to religion.

Paul Kimball, producer and director of two UFO documentaries, "Do You Believe in Majic" and "Aztec: 1948," said North American people are so shielded by the mainstream, it would take a flying saucer landing on the White House lawn or news about alien life on CNN to change their opinions:

Scott Ramsey, who will present "The Aztec Crash, Categorizing Fact from Folklore," said he hopes the symposium will stimulate thought on extraterrestrial life.

"We welcome all skeptics. The problem has been in the past that the skeptics don't do much research, they just have knee-jerk reactions on this," Ramsey said. "We have carefully laid out a lot of research to let people come and make up their own minds."

Event organizer Dave Albright calls the symposium a place for free thinking.

Sunday

9 a.m. "Legends of the Star Ancestors" by Nancy Red Star, which will explore the connections that she has found to exist between extraterrestrials, the international military and indigenous cultures throughout the world.

11 a.m. "Crop Circles, Cathedrals and Sacred Space: the Energy Connection," a presentation by Freddy Silva regarding the importance of specific points on land for communication with higher levels of consciousness.

1 p.m. - 2 p.m. Panel discussion.

7th Annual UFO Symposium 2004 Schedule

All events held at Koogler Middle School, 455 N. Light Plant Road, Aztec, unless noted otherwise. Tickets for the symposium are \$50 for Saturday and Sunday or \$35 for a day pass. Information: The Aztec UFO Information Center (505) 334-9890 or on the Web at www.aztecufo.com.

Saturday

9 a.m. "Awakening" presentation by Mark Kimmel. Kimmel will discuss extraterrestrial contact and how the events have been covered up, as well as the messages to be derived from these events.

11 a.m. "The Aztec Crash, Categorizing Fact from Folklore" by Scott Ramsey. A close look at the original story of the Aztec incident.

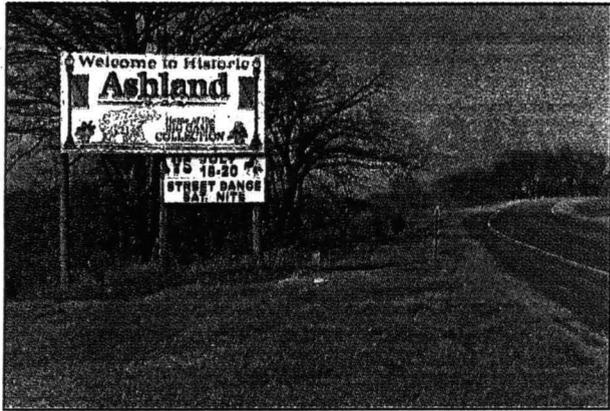
12:45 p.m. Lunch.

2 p.m. "Plains of San Augustin Project" by Art Campbell. Campbell establishes the basis for a San Augustin UFO crash in this presentation.

4 p.m. "The Big Picture" by George Green. This is a personal account of Green's own examination of UFOs, the implications of government cover-ups and future changes.

7:30 p.m. Paul Kimball's film, "Do You Believe in Majic" film.

7:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. StarGaze at Aztec Ruins National Monument.



Staff Photo/Ronna Wiig

UFO SIGHTING - It was on this spot in 1967 that Ashland Police Officer Herbert Schirmer reported seeing a UFO. A recent videotape of another Ashland sighting as brought UFO experts to the area to research the events.

Experts land in Ashland to review UFO sightings

By Ronna Wiig
Staff Reporter

Editor's note - This is the first in a series of articles on reported UFO sightings in Ashland.

ASHLAND - A recent visit by experts in the field of "unidentified flying objects" to the Ashland area is renewing interest in the area's history of sightings.

The experts, members of the Mutual UFO Network, visited Ashland last week to study a UFO sighting that was videotaped last winter on Ashland's east side. Their visit brought a news crew from Omaha's KETV channel 7 and a bit more notoriety to the area. However, this is not the first time the news media has reported a UFO sighting in Ashland.

UFO makes headlines in 1897

"Air ship seen in Ashland" was the headline over 100 years ago in the Ashland Gazette. In the April 16, 1897 edition of the Ashland Gazette, it was reported that mysterious lights had appeared in the heavens over Ashland.

The first sightings started the night of April 5, 1897 in Omaha

with over 100 people witnessing the appearance of the flying object. It was reported that the object was approximately 12 feet long, spherical in shape and shiny. The object was so luminous that the brightness woke people as the light came through their bedroom windows.

Several nights later there were sightings in Sioux City, Iowa. Next it was sighted in Chicago, Illinois where a newsstand dealer took pictures of the object.

In Ashland, however, Mrs. Cornelius and her son, Eugene, were fortunate to get a good view of the object, as reported in the Gazette the next week.

"While returning home from church Sunday evening shortly after 9 p.m. they saw what first appeared to be a cloud. It was quite small, described as about as large as the side of an ordinary room and appeared not to be far from the ground and was hovering over the western part of town. Its flight was rapid and it moved towards the north. Twice

it flashed a brilliant light and shortly passed beyond the range of vision. The evening was perfectly clear and what was taken for a cloud was the only object bearing any such appearance anywhere in the heavens."

Professor Gibson Harris and several others at the Harris home in the western part of town witnessed a similar event, the Gazette reported.

An interesting fact to ponder is that it wasn't until Dec. 17, 1903, in Kitty Hawk, N.C., that the Wright Flyer became the first powered, heavier than air machine to achieve controlled, sustained flight with a pilot aboard. That is six years prior to these first reported sightings of an object flying over Ashland.

Schirmer sighting

Over 70 years later on Dec. 3, 1967, another UFO was sighted in the Ashland area.

This time, a 22-year-old Ashland Police Officer, Herbert Schirmer, revealed that he had seen something in the southern part of town. His logbook read "Saw a flying saucer at the junction of highways 6 and 63. Believe it or not!"

The story, reported in the Dec. 7, 1967 issue of the Ashland Gazette, said Schirmer was alone in his police car driving southwest on Highway 6. He was approaching the junction where Highways 6 and 63 meet when he saw a lighted object over the slope not far from where you turn off Highway 6 on to Highway 63 to come into town.

He drove on south to the loop off to the right side of the road (on the shoulder) that encircled a tree to see what was there. He then saw what he described as an elliptical object about 20 feet long and 14 feet thick surrounded by lighted portholes connected by a line or a band which may have been paint and/or some sort of catwalk.

When the police car's lights fell upon the object, the inner cabin lights of the object began to flash

off and on. Schirmer said the craft was hovering a few feet off the ground partly on the highway and partly over the shoulder next to the ditch and the steep embankment. Schirmer speculated that the glow at the bottom of the craft must have been some type of ray rather than any sort of propulsion device.

The craft soon shot up to 50 feet in the air and began to emit a strange noise. Schirmer compared it to the noise of Ashland's new fire truck, only weirder, he said. Then he said the craft rose straight up and disappeared.

but from another galaxy although they have bases on Jupiter and Mars. He also said that he was told that the spacecraft would make two more visits to him sometime in 1968.

The Unidentified Flying Object Study Team based out of Boulder was better known as the Condon Committee. The committee of scientists set up in 1966 worked under the guidance of Dr. Edward Condon, scientific director at the University of Colorado. The University of Colorado worked under contract for the U. S. Air Force to complete a study on

"Saw a flying saucer at the junction of highways 6 and 63. Believe it or not!"

Herbert Schirmer's police logbook entry
Dec. 3, 1967

UFOs. The study ended in 1968 with a published report that basically said UFO's were not worth further study and of little significance.

In the article, Police Chief Charles Wlaschin was quoted as saying, "Schirmer is a fine officer and he is a teetotaler and he is perfectly willing to take a polygraph test."

It was also reported that an U.S. Air Force investigation team was being sent to check out the report.

In the Feb. 22, 1968 issue of the Ashland Gazette the headlines read "Schirmer Talks Under Hypnosis: 'Fuzzy Space Man to Visit Me Twice More This Year.' Under this headline it was reported that Schirmer was asked to meet with the Unidentified Flying Object Study Team from Boulder, Colo. on Feb. 13.

While in Boulder, Schirmer was said to recall under hypnosis that a white fuzzy human-shaped form approached him from the UFO. He said that the white form struck him in the neck. He told investigators that the visitors were not from our solar system

Schirmer's encounter was not only reported in the Omaha World-Herald, the Lincoln Journal, the Lincoln Star and on KETV, his encounter made the front page of the National Enquirer. Schirmer also signed book deals and in investigating this story, the Gazette staff has found Schirmer and his experience mentioned in numerous books and on several web sites dealing with UFOs.

Next week, the Gazette will focus on the most recent UFO sighting, as well as some of the experts who investigate these phenomena.

DAILY TIMES, Farmington, NM - March 21, 2004

Personal accounts, declassified documents shared

Presentations at UFO Symposium give residents 'something to think about'

— By Laura Banish —
The Daily Times

AZTEC — Up front, Don Watkins IV will say he is not a "100 percent believer" in aliens, but once he gets talking, he will tell you that he thinks life exists beyond the bounds of planet Earth.

In fact, Watkins claims he has seen an extraterrestrial space craft first hand. The middle-aged man said that as a 14-year-old in St. Louis, Mo., he observed a circular object, "like an egg rolling" in the sky.

"I know airplanes and I know

what I saw that day," said Watkins, a pilot whose parents own a flight school in Colorado. "It wasn't an airplane."

Watkins said he took his two sons, ages 11 and 14, to the 7th Annual UFO Symposium in Aztec this weekend to open their minds and keep them on their toes.

Those at Koogler Middle School Saturday were privy to a range of purported UFO information, which varied from Scott Ramsey's presentation of declassified government documents and interviews related to the alleged 1948 Aztec incident to

George Green's personal account of allegedly seeing a space craft at a U.S. Air Force hangar and communicating with aliens from the Pleiadian Star System.

Ramsey's presentation was derived from thousands of documents from the Atomic Energy Commission and U.S. Air Force, more than a dozen interviews from first-, second- and third-hand witnesses and field work pertinent to the Aztec incident.

The amplitude of data impressed Faith Martin, who,

along with her husband, has been interested in extraterrestrials for quite some time.

"The people here seem really well educated, which is nice because you know sometimes people think you are ridiculous when you tell them you think there is life on other planets," said Martin of Rio Rancho. "I think there's enough evidence that points out the crashes are real, the sightings are real and they are really visiting us. People are very closed-minded to think we're the only ones out there."

Green maintained during his presentation that extraterrestrials, or ETs, are not only out there, but living on Earth now.

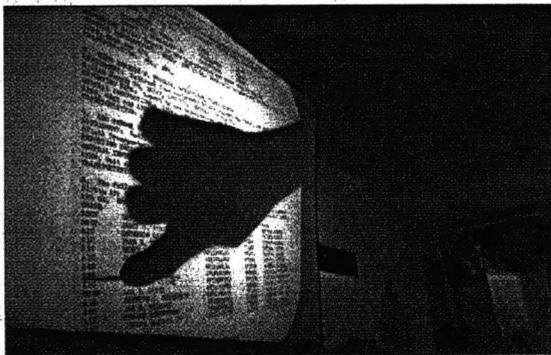
"They walk among us," he said. "We're being visited by all kinds of extraterrestrials."

Green said the ETs take on many forms and some look like humans. Green presented the audience with photographs of silver space crafts reported to be taken in Switzerland and a being who he claimed was an alien. The ETs face was not visible in the photos, only a gold suited-

arm, which Green explained by saying it was because the alien did not want its identity known.

While Green said some ETs have a friendly purpose — he claimed that Jesus' earthly father Joseph was an alien — he also warned that through his extraterrestrial contacts he has learned that there is a global plan to annihilate 83 percent of Earth's population. He identified 2012 as the critical date.

Green said the planet is unbalanced because of destruction to the environment and the



Ben Chrisman/The Daily Times

Scott Ramsey, of Mooresville, North Carolina, (right) gives his presentation on the alleged 1948 UFO crash in Aztec during the seventh annual Aztec UFO Symposium at Koogler Middle Saturday. The hand seen on the projector is that of Ramsey's wife, Suzanne Ramsey.

unhealthy ways humans treat their bodies.

"We are so out of balance on planet Earth, we are disrupting the balance of other planets," he said. "You're looking for someone to save you, but you need to do it yourself."

He advised that people begin with reading the book, "Handbook for the New Paradigm," which he said was written by the Pleiadians themselves and given to him to promote.

From Green's presentation, Martin said it appeared as if alien

life forms were using Green as a disciple. Martin said her only criticism was that she wondered how much of the information is from the ETs and how much was provided by other people.

"It's very strange and very interesting. I'd like to understand it better," she said. "I don't think you should leave this freaked out, but with something to think about."

Laura Banish: laurab@daily-times.com



STANDARD, Terrace, B.C., Canada - April 7, 2004 CR: G. Conway

HAVE YOU seen anything unusual in the skies over Terrace lately? You're not alone.

From the Horseshoe to Ferry Island, and from Krumm Road to Highway 16 West, residents of the Terrace area are seeing weird things in the sky that no one has been able to explain.

According to the latest annual UFO survey, Terrace remains a hotbed of activity, accounting for about 10 per cent of all the sightings reported in B.C. last year.

Terrace is ranked in fourth spot in the country for UFO reports, according to the 2003 Canadian UFO Survey.

We're just behind Houston, B.C., Toronto, and Vancouver, which has emerged as the Canadian UFO capital.

"There's something happening, and I don't know what it is," says Brian Vike, a Houston, B.C.-based researcher who operates a 1-800 UFO hot line and sends in data to the UFO survey.

A while back, every time he got a new UFO report from somewhere in B.C., he'd put a pin into a map of the province he'd hung on the wall.

An unmistakable pattern has emerged.

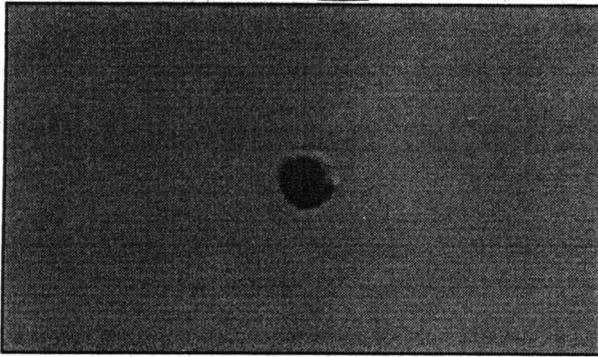
To Vike, it sure looks like most of the reports are coming from inside a band that stretches south-east from Terrace to the Cranbrook area in the Kootenays.

"This is where the majority of sightings of unusual craft are being seen," he says, adding a number of the locations along this line are larger lakes, mines and power stations.

"Terrace has a number of natural and manmade things which may attract these objects," he adds, pointing to Alcan, a relatively close source of hydro electric power.

The natural thermal power of the hot springs may also be responsible for local sightings over the years.

"I get lots of reports around there of strange lights," Vike says, pointing out that seismic ac-



WHAT WAS IT? This mysterious object was photographed over New Westminster and has garnered widespread interest.

Seeing things

Giant disks, flying crosses among UFOs folks here reported last year

By Jennifer Lang

Activity is sometimes associated with UFO reports.

But that certainly doesn't account for other unexplained Terrace area reports Vike's logged over the past year.

■ In February, 2003 a couple driving home from Prince Rupert spotted a huge, disk-shaped object travelling north across the Skeena River, about 85 km west of Terrace on Highway 16.

It was dark, with two large, rectangular glowing lights on the bottom.

The husband wanted to pull

over, but his wife insisted they keep driving, Vike says. Both were disturbed because the object moved so slowly.

■ In March of last year, a Tuck Ave. resident noticed a bright glowing object in the sky above the Eby, St. intersection that looked like a meteor hurtling down to the ground.

The eyewitness said it was moving from side to side, and didn't make any noise.

■ In July, a couple with a great view of Terrace and the Skeena Valley was enjoying the

view, relaxing with cup of coffee.

At around 11:45 p.m., they saw a large, glowing object moving slowly along the side of the highway near the 16/37 intersection. At first they thought it was some sort of aircraft, because it kept pace with some of the cars. But then they realized it was flying too low.

It appeared to stop suddenly before shooting off towards the west.

■ Other witnesses reported seeing a flying cross – a huge, dark-coloured object with lights along the bottom panels – above the Skeena River.

The sighting lasted for just a few seconds, before the object flew behind some trees, blocking their view.

Vike is convinced people are seeing something.

He just doesn't know what.

Last year, Canadians reported nearly two UFO sightings a day, adding up to 673 in all.

That's an all-time high for the Canadian UFO Survey, released by Ufology Research of Manitoba, an independent study group based in Winnipeg.

Most UFO reports are eventually identified as planets, meteors, or aircraft.

"Popular opinion to the contrary, there is yet to be any incontrovertible evidence that some UFO cases involve extraterrestrial contact," study author Chris Rutkowski said.

Just seven per cent of sightings in the survey's "unexplained" category are deemed "high quality" unknowns.

Many eyewitnesses are pilots, police and other individuals who are expected to have good observational skills – and good judgment, Rutkowski said.

Nation-wide, the number of UFO sightings climbed by 39 per cent in 2003.

British Columbia leads the rest of the country in terms of sheer volume of sightings, with 304 reported here last year, compared to 150 in Ontario and 76 in Alberta.

Most sightings have two witnesses and last for 10 minutes.

Mass sightings sometimes stem from a big event – like a major fireball in 1993 that hundreds across Canada witnessed.

Similarly, last year, a major event in the Okanagan helped boost the number of sightings. "Literally hundreds of people" saw a band of white light arching across the sky" on July 28, the report says. That mass sighting is unexplained, but some think it may be a phenomenon long-time residents call the Okanagan Arch, a whitish band that crosses the sky.

The reports offer no "positive proof that UFOs are either alien spacecraft or a specific natural phenomenon," the report cautions, but notes something people call a UFO is continually being observed.

Various agencies and individuals participate in the survey, including the Houston, B.C., Centre for UFOs, which supplied seven per cent of the reports in this year's survey.

Vike, meanwhile, says the northwest's growing reputation as a UFO magnet, is resulting in a tourism boom. He fields many calls from people who want to visit the region.

That's why he's started to showcase the region's natural and tourist attractions on his website.

"I get lots of letters about the beautiful scenery," he says. "That's what's catching people's attention, too. They're saying, 'Yeah, I'm coming up your way.' People are saying, 'This sounds good – you've got fishing and hiking.'"

He can't understand why the towns of Terrace and Houston don't capitalize on their reputations as great places to see UFOs.

Vike is in demand as a guest on talk radio shows in the U.S. He also runs his own website, tracking the reports from northwest B.C. – and far beyond. "I reach about 13 million people now a month," he says.

Aliens did it: circle investigator

MYSTERIOUS CIRCLES that appeared on a Scott Ave. lawn last month are the real deal, says Larry Sommerfield.

They're crop circles created by alien visitors who are secretly monitoring our planet.

"Actually, I would call it 'lawn circles, not crop circles'," notes Sommerfield, who has been monitoring the site since he saw a photo in the *Terrace Standard* ("What in the world?" Page B1, March 17)

There's been very little change in their appearance, he said.

He's counted 16 circles of varying sizes. Some are a few inches in diameter, others are a few feet wide.

Inside, the grass is still dead, while neighbouring blades on the lawn are growing taller and greener with each passing day.

"It could only be imitated by leaving a heavy weight there for several days, and would be seen,"

says Sommerfield, a retired tow truck driver and auto body repair man who lives in Thornhill.

Just weeds are making a comeback now that the snow has melted.

He notes the circles are located on the side of a ditch, leading down a small embankment.

"A prankster would have put them in the centre of the lawn where they can be seen," he concludes.

So, why would alien visitors leave such baffling clues on someone's lawn?

"It's simply the aliens' way of letting us know they're around. They want us to know they're here."

Sommerfield is something of a self-styled expert in the paranormal. He became interested in alien activity after he realized visitors from outer space have been monitoring Earth for tens of thousands of years, a habit that in-

creased once humans began testing and detonating atomic bombs, ending the Second World War but ushering in the Cold War.

"Until the atomic bombs went off, they just had a mild interest," he says. "It's only when we entered the Space Age they realized we were doing something to be concerned about."

He claims to have been the target of ongoing alien pranks. Invisible visitors from outer space occasionally steal objects from his home, only to replace them several days later – but not always in the original location.

"Normally, the stuff comes back in about four day's time," he

says, recalling a particularly curious incident involving the unexplained disappearance of a Frank Sinatra 8-Track tape that contained the blue-eyed crooner's signature ditty, "My Way".

Last year, Sommerfield and a colleague also found something they believe is Sasquatch scat – droppings they hope to have analyzed by a scientist.

So far, they still haven't heard back from any of the scientists they contacted.

Meanwhile, Sommerfield says Scott Ave. resident Jean Thompson shouldn't worry about the curious circles on her lawn.

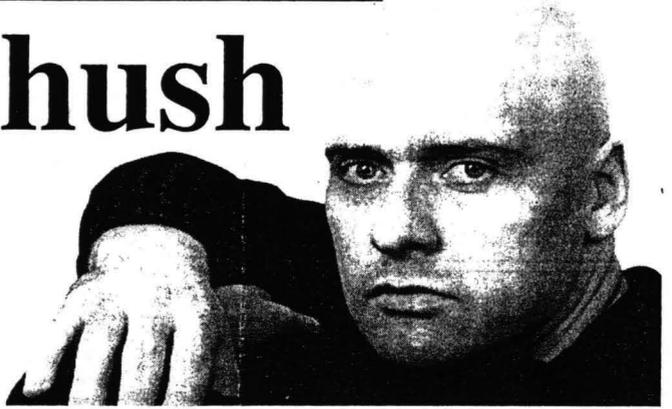
"Just leave it. By fall it will grow back."



Larry Sommerfield

Nick knows all about the real-life Men In Black

They tried to hush up sightings of UFOs



■ Nick owes his interest in strange secrets to his dad, a former RAF radar operator.

NICK REDFERN may not look much like Fox Mulder, the investigator of unexplained happenings in the TV series *The X Files*.

But British-born Nick, author of the newly-published *Strange Secrets*, is just as dedicated when it comes to uncovering the facts behind mysterious goings-on such as sightings of UFOs or the Loch Ness monster.

Remains detached

Yet despite having seen enough information to keep conspiracy theorists going for a lifetime, Nick remains reassuringly detached.

"People imagine that everyone interested in unexplained phenomena is some kind of anorak, but I've always thought it's important to keep things in perspective and have a normal family life," he laughs.

"The *X Files* was entertaining,

but Mulder had no life away from his office. You have to enjoy the work and not get too paranoid. You can't assume that every unexplained click on the telephone is because someone is bugging you."

Nick's book is based on documents gleaned from official files obtained under America's Freedom of Information Act and from the National Archive (formerly the Public Record Office) at Kew in London.

"It's important that I use information in such files. If I can impress on people that government agencies have looked seriously at these things, perhaps even the sceptics will think twice."

Nick's interest in the unexplained came from his father, who worked on radar with the RAF in the 1950s.

"There were several sightings of strange objects. Pilots who were scrambled reported strange lights but everyone involved was told not to say anything."

"My father told me this in 1978 and that set me off. I wanted to find out what the government knew about these things and if they were trying to find answers.

By Gavin Sherriff

"There's a lot more information available in America, but at our National Archive there are about 4000 pages of information on UFO sightings — reports from pilots, policemen and radar officials — and many of them are very credible."

Nick says that even in official circles there are disputes about what is and isn't possible.

"In the 1970s the CIA investigated remote viewing or ESP, looking at the possibility of training agents to spy at a distance using their minds."

Waste of time

"Some people thought it might work. Others said it was a waste of time and that at the height of the Cold War they should have been using their money elsewhere."

Nick has come across declassified British files from World War 2 showing that dowsing was used to find bodies buried in the rubble of bombed buildings.

"A policeman who'd used dowsing to find water said he could help find a body, and he did. But some senior officers decided it shouldn't be used — they thought it was witchcraft!"

All over the world there are tales

of strange creatures such as the Yeti in Asia or Bigfoot in North America, but Nick says some of them may be no more than rumours started by governments for their own purposes.

"One strange case was the way the US military in Vietnam used psychological warfare. They spread the idea that there were werewolves and vampires living in the jungle. Idea was that when North Vietnamese troops in those areas got wind of it, they left at high speed."

Nick spent a lot of time looking into the real-life Men In Black, the mysterious people said to visit those who claim to have had encounters with aliens.

"There are many accounts of people who say they've seen UFOs getting visits from officials asking them not to talk about it."

"The first account of their activities was in a book from the 1950s called *They Knew Too Much About Flying Saucers*. Intriguingly, American files show that J. Edgar Hoover, head of the FBI, requested a copy of the book."

Nick believes it's possible governments have encouraged the notion that alien spacecraft may

visit earth as it can act as a useful diversion.

"Many of the sightings of UFOs in the '70s and '80s were probably of prototype stealth aircraft as they occurred in remote areas where these things are tested."

As far as Nessie is concerned, Nick agrees with the biologists who say there's no way an ancient dinosaur could be living in a Scottish loch.

Giant eel

But he says evidence from an investigation in 1965 by the RAF's Joint Air Reconnaissance Intelligence Centre (JARIC) persuades him there might be a giant eel maybe 20 or 30 feet long.

"I'm not a raving sceptic. I don't doubt that strange phenomena occur, but it's not always as black and white as people paint it."

"People HAVE seen strange sights in the sky which our governments seem unable to explain to us. Maybe they are covering something up, or maybe they are using mistaken sightings for their own purposes."

■ *Strange Secrets* (Simon and Schuster, £9.99). ISBN 0-7434-6976-3.

NATIONAL POST, Toronto, Ontario, Canada - Feb. 6, 2004 CR: G. Conway

Searchers find no sign of Lagos plane crash, call it UFO

LAGOS • The search for a light aircraft that crashed into the sea off Lagos last week has been abandoned after rescue workers found no trace of the plane or its occupants, officials said yesterday.

The alarm was raised after several people told authorities they had seen a commercial aircraft capable of carrying 25 people ditch in the sea off Lekki beach, east of Lagos, Nigeria's commercial capital.

Local rescue workers and South Africa-based Critical Rescue International were called in, but they searched in vain for wreckage.

"We are tired of looking at water. We are now convinced that there was no plane crash," said Emmanuel Ijewere, president of the Nigerian Red Cross.

The Nigerian Aviation Ministry said it still had no lead on the reported crash. Air traffic controllers had no knowledge of the plane.

The country's aviation watchdog, the Nigeria Aviation Safety Initiative (NASI), said on Sunday the crashed object had been classified as an Unidentified Flying Object.

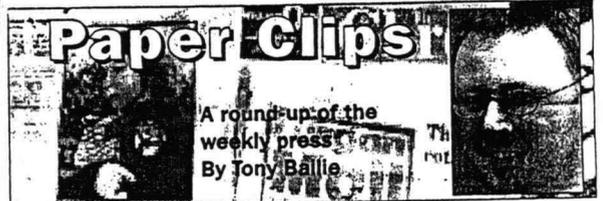
Captain Jerry Agbeyegbe, executive director of NASI, urged the government to intensify the search

with more sophisticated equipment to determine the veracity of the witnesses' claims. "Certainly, an object was sighted crashing into the ocean. We have termed it for now as a UFO," he said. "We have advised government to intensify [the] search until we are absolutely sure that it was not a plane."

Industry experts blamed the mystery over the aircraft on the deplorable state of aviation facilities at Lagos airport. Air safety has been a source of worry ever since the government deregulated the airline industry in the mid-1980s.

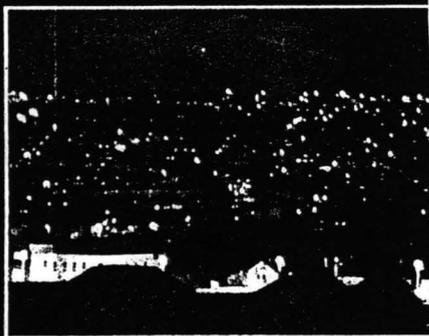
Reuters

IRISH NEWS, Belfast, Ireland - Feb. 9, 2004



FINGAL, in Co Dublin, is becoming a 'hot spot' for UFOs with reports of almost 100 incidents of unexplained events last year, according to the *Fingal Independent*. The paper said many of the sightings centre around Dublin Airport, with one report exclusively described to the *Fingal Independent* by the UFO and Paranormal Research Ireland (UPRI), an organisation that monitors the skies of Ireland in search of strange and unexplained 'aerial phenomena'. The story continued: "Late last year the organisation received a report from the co-pilot of an airbus who said he had seen an unidentified 'red disc' flying in Irish skies after the co-pilot's flight had taken off from Dublin Airport. "With what the crew said was 'phenomenal speed that no aircraft could perform', the disc shot vertically upwards and disappeared from sight at 7,000 feet. "Twenty-seven minutes later the

crew say they overheard a KLM pilot radioing air traffic control at Dublin Airport with a similar report. "The Irish Aviation Authority checked flight logs for the reported date at both Dublin and Shannon airports but found nothing unusual while a spokesperson from the Pilot's Association said that none of its members has ever expressed concern over unidentified flying objects in the skies around Dublin Airport." The *Fingal Independent* claimed there had been a number of other incidents "equally as mysterious". The report continued: "Mystery still surrounds an incident last September when a Garda helicopter was called out to investigate an unidentified flying object over Dublin Airport which resembled a paraglider. "When asked if that was possible, the Irish Paragliding Association stated that 'no-one in their right mind would paraglide around the airport.'"



LIGHT IN THE NIGHT: The amateur photographer caught these images of what appears to be a flying saucer over Plymouth. Experts are puzzled by the object which seems to turn in different directions, above, and emit a bright light, top and inset

'Flying saucer' pictures stun UFO watchers

REMARKABLE pictures of what seems to be a flying saucer hovering over houses have sent UFO watchers wild.

An amateur photographer captured the images when he was trying out his new hi-tech digital camera at night.

They show what some experts are convinced is a UFO hovering above Plymouth. A photographic expert has said the pictures appear to be genuine and not faked in any way.

The pictures were taken by a Devonport Dockyard worker who wishes to remain

By Mark McGivern

reporters@dailyrecord.co.uk anonymous. The Royal Navy has already asked to study the snaps.

Plymouth "UFO-logist" Bob Boyd has called the snaps among the best five pictures of a UFO he has seen in 25 years of spotting the phenomena.

Boyd, chairman of the Plymouth UFO Research Group, said: "There's no doubt in my mind it's the real thing."

The photographer was put in touch with the UFO Research Group. Boyd said: "He was just experimenting

with his new camera and was amazed when he looked at the photographs an hour later.

"He was a total sceptic before this but he's now a firm believer. He was really shocked by what happened."

The photographs were taken on January 28, just before 6pm, at St Budeaux Square in the Devon city.

Daily Record Picture Editor Stuart Nicol was more sceptical. He said: "It could be a number of things."

"What concerns me most is that the images of the UFO are sharp but there is a degree of movement in the landscape."



■ What in the world?

SCOTT AVE. resident Jean Thomson watched in amazement last week as mysterious circles began appearing in her grass ditch. They began to multiply, becoming more visible with each passing day. The perfectly-shaped "crop circles" didn't appear on anyone else's lawns, she noticed, wondering why her house appears to have been singled out for the curious phenomenon. "They're small enough to be a leprechaun circle," she speculated, pointing out they arrived in time for St. Patrick's Day (today, March 17). Otherwise, she said, aliens could be the culprits, provided they were very small.

JENNIFER LANG PHOTO

UFO mystery baffles mum

A MOTHER believes she may have had a close encounter with a UFO this week.

She reported the sighting to the *Courier* after seeing a mysterious object hovering in the sky over Kineton at 7.50am on Wednesday. An aeroplane in the vicinity seemed to disappear as it approached the object.

Clare Reed, 29, of Lodge Farm near Compton Verney, caught the unidentified flying object on camera as she took her two sons to school. Her pictures were inconclusive.

She said: "It looked really bizarre - like a huge flame with a wispy bit at the top and a black dot in the middle."

Ms Reed's two sons Jamie, 13, and Jacob, 12, were equally baffled. Ms Reed said: "They said 'wow, it's an alien', and we sat and watched for two minutes, trying to figure it out."

"There could be a perfectly logical explanation, but I don't have a wild imagination. I just don't know what it was."

COURIER, Leamington Spa, England - Jan. 30, 2004

Mysterious lights in night sky explained

by BERNICE TRICK
Citizen staff

The mystery of the orange lights in the sky above Prince George about a week ago has been solved.

"The lights turned out to be parachutists jumping at night," said Brian Vike, a UFO expert from Houston.

"The jumpers were doing acrobatics — almost doing somersaults at times — and the orange lights attached to their feet or ankle areas would appear to rise upwards during these acrobatics," Vike said. The mystery was solved by a retired military man who viewed the action with a pair of binoculars, he said.

"One landed close to his home, and he said just before landing, the jumper turned the lights off."

On Friday *The Citizen* ran a story of the unusual sightings reported by Andrea Lanoue who, with four friends, observed bright orange objects.

She described the lights as hovering for a time before moving slightly apart at different speeds, and

some then "fading off."

Vike said he's not sure if the skydivers used the lights to keep track of each other during formation jumping or if they were "playing some kind of hoax."

A UFO survey released Monday by Ufology Research of Manitoba shows the top-10 communities in Canada for reported UFO sightings, Vike said.

In 2003, there were 673 reported sightings across Canada, with Vancouver leading with 41.

Toronto ranked second with 34 sightings followed by Houston at 33, Terrace at 30, and Airdrie, Alta., at 17. Prince George is not among the top 10.

"Most reported unfamiliar lights in the sky are identified as meteors, planets or stars," said Vike, who became heavily involved in UFO sightings in 2000 after moving to Houston. Since then he's participated in radio shows in Canada and the U.S. and was one of the main characters featured in a 2002 TV documentary called *The Magnificent Obsessions*.

Among cases still unsolved is one involving two women travelling away from Kelowna last July.

"They report seeing three white lights which turned green and dropped down in front of them on the highway. They both reported a loss of 45 minutes, and a tingly feeling throughout their bodies," Vike said.

"They turned around and headed back to Kelowna with the light following them for a short distance before disappearing," said Vike, noting eight other people also reported seeing green lights.

The next day, both women felt ill with the passenger having a nosebleed and finding a burn on her tailbone which a doctor said appeared to be a radiation burn.

Since then, both have experienced weight loss, hair loss, nausea, salt cravings, dehydration and pressure to the back of the neck, but doctors cannot figure out the problem, Vike said.

Vike's website at www.hbccufo.com or call his toll-free number at 1-866-262-1989.

It came from outer space – possibly!

By Stephen Meredith

SPOOKY Sharon Larkin, West Cumbria's answer to Agent Scully, has enlisted the help of boffins at Cambridge University to try to fathom out whether a bizarre magnetic stone found on the side of a car is from outer space.

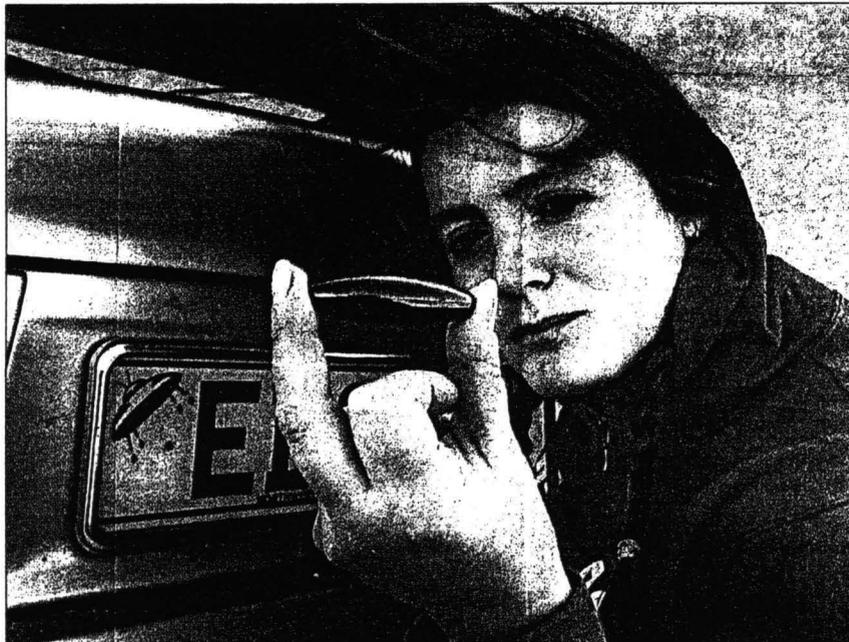
Sharon, administration director for the North West Cumbria UFO research and investigations group, has been left baffled by the strange object which is 6cm long, dark brown in colour, shaped like a tapered cigar and weighs 2oz.

She hopes scientists will be able to fathom out its origin but has also appealed to anyone who may know what it is to get in touch. The weird stone was sent to her by her cousin, Donald Fenwick, who was startled to leave his house one morning and find it attached to the driver's door of his car.

Sharon, 31, of Broughton Cross near Cocker mouth, said: "I have never seen anything like it before. Donald's a none believer, a sceptic, but this has even got him wondering."

"We have sent a fragment to scientists and hope they will have the answer."

If you know what the object is, call Sharon on 07788 543850.



Beam me up: Ufologist Sharon Larkin with the stone found stuck to her cousin's car

JIM DAVIS

Vancouver tops list of UFO reports

CITIZEN, Prince George, B.C., Canada - Feb. 6, 2004 CR: G. Conway

WINNIPEG (CP) — Vancouver and Toronto topped the list of Canadian cities with UFO sightings, says an annual report.

According to the 2003 Canadian UFO Survey, released by Ufology Research of Manitoba, there were 673 UFO sightings across Canada last year — a 39 per cent increase over 2002 and a 350 increase since 1998.

Forty-one sightings were reported in Vancouver and 34 in Toronto.

Survey author Chris Rutkowski said of all those sightings, only 17 per cent remain unexplained.

"We have enough information to judge that the other objects were a star or an aircraft," said Rutkowski.

He said it's difficult to tell why more people are coming forward with UFO sightings.

"It's still puzzling why we're seeing an increase," said Rutkowski. "It could be that more people are willing to admit they've seen a UFO because they see other people admitting it. The ridicule barrier is almost completely eliminated."

Rutkowski said many witnesses are reliable sources with good observational skills, such as pilots and police.

He has even received calls from National Defence and Transport Canada personnel.

THE TRUTH IS...SOMEWHERE

Documentary lets ufologists battle over arcane details



JASON CHOW
on Television

Watching middle-aged men argue over obscure details of an issue far removed from most people's daily lives — say, the sexual proclivities of a U.S. Supreme Court appointee or the validity of a set of government documents pertaining to UFOs — can be weirdly entertaining and engrossing simply because it's so arcane and distant from reality.

Few knew who Clarence Thomas was until he was a) nominated to sit on the Supreme Court and b) accused during his confirmation hearings of, among other things, making a bad joke involving public hair and a can of cola.

Of course, this was broadcast on C-SPAN and CNN, and many of us watched hours of the long testimony in October, 1991, as senators from both parties unleashed a barrage of questions. We became strangely enamoured by the drawling accents and serious tone lent to the details of something so inane.

The new documentary *Do You Believe in Majic?*, which premieres tonight on Space (9 p.m. ET), potentially has the same effect on viewers: Just substitute government papers on the Roswell UFO landings for Clarence Thomas's private life and replace senators with science geeks. As an added bonus, the time investment is fractional — the film is only one hour long, while the Thomas hearings went on for days.

The centre of this controversy is a stack of documents that allegedly pertain to a top-secret agency dubbed the Majestic 12, a group of high-level scientists and civil servants that was formed in 1947 within the U.S. government to deal with the crash landing of an alien spaceship near Roswell, N.M.

This story is true, argues Canadian ufologist Stanton Friedman, who says these papers were leaked to him and his associates in the early 1980s. He argues this group has remained in existence



SPACE: THE IMAGINATION STATION

Watch the skies: Director Paul Kimball (left) and cinematographer Tarek Abouamin in northern New Mexico.

since then to aid and abet the research and the cover-up of alien matters. Pitted against him is U.S. ufologist Karl Pflock, who says the documents are bogus and has spent much of his time over the years playing the skeptic on these documents and on the Roswell incident.

And of course, behind the controversy is the Roswell UFO crash itself — long the source of conspiracy theories and sci-fi plots. The television shows *X-Files*, *Dark Skies* and *Roswell* have all ensured that the New Mexico town sticks in our popular-culture consciousness and have jointly contributed to UFO fandom and paranoia around the world. As *X-Files* once had us ponder: Could it be that the U.S. government is secretly breeding the extraterrestrials recovered from Roswell in a far-flung cave in Alaska for their own research?

Well, we won't get the answer to that question on this documentary. Instead, the discussion is tightly focused on the debate that surrounds the Majestic 12 papers. This is not a broad-sweeping special about Roswell, and here comes the Thomas connection: Midway through the special and the seemingly endless debate between the pro and anti forces, you realize that the details used to bolster or debunk arguments are equally compelling and ridiculous.

One sticking point in the Majestic

12 debate is that the documents are labelled "Top Secret Restricted" on each page — a redundancy that the Pflock et. al. say betrays that these things are a fraud ("Top Secret" would certainly have sufficed). Meanwhile, Friedman contends the label had been used sparingly at that time in genuine government documents. Another UFO historian says the documents look real because "the outer edges turned yellow" and "the pages had few creases," meaning the large document was held intact for a long time.

Moments like these make you wonder what makes people like this spend so much time doing what they do. Of course, the UFO experts would say they're uncovering a mass conspiracy (or a

clever practical joke). Thirteen years ago, Democratic senators who were prying into Thomas's private life said they were doing so to protect the integrity of justice. These people have noble goals, but the most hilarious and reductive ways of acting on them. *Do You Believe in Majic?* is hardly a masterpiece of documentary-making — it's visually boring, there are too many talking heads and overuse of voice-over narration by filmmaker Paul Kimball. Still, once you get past the introduction and into the fury of this debate, it's a submersion into another world where arguments are taken to extreme levels of obscurity and, somehow, remain interesting.

National Post
jchow@nationalpost.com

Encounters of second, third and fourth kind

by DAVID HOLMES

LAST week's *Chronicle* report about a strange craft passing over Chester has encouraged more UFO spotters to come forward.

Steve Culshaw and his partner Erika Tetley had told how they witnessed a triangular-shaped craft, which made a humming noise, skimming the roof tops of the Blacon estate on a recent Sunday evening.

Other people have since been prompted to contact the newsdesk with similar tales of angular-shaped craft travelling low and slow in the sky.

One ex-RAF serviceman, who did not wish to be named, believes he too saw the craft above Blacon on February 29.

The witness said he was an experienced pilot who only left the Air Force last year.

He said: 'I was travelling back from my parents home in Ruthin, I live in Chester, when I saw a light in the sky. It was like a very bright star in the distance. I was probably at about Loggerheads at the time.'

'As I got quite close to Chester coming down Sealand Road, it was not long after 11pm, I did see it and it looked very much like an airliner but I didn't see the outline of an aircraft.'

'It was quite difficult to see what the shape of the vehicle was,' continued the witness, who added visibility was not brilliant because it was misty.

'There appeared to be more lights than on a normal airliner and it was moving very slowly. It was quite low, possibly about 1,000 feet.'

'If it was an aeroplane it must have been very close to dropping out of the sky,' said the observer, who commented he would be 'surprised' if the object was anything other than a jet, but added: 'It was definitely unusual, I have got to say.'

Another reader Jane Steven believes she saw the same phenomenon on a different occasion.

She said: 'I read with interest the article on the UFO sighting as I am positive I saw this same 'aircraft' a few weeks ago. As I was driving to my family's farm between Rossett and Holt a very low triangular aircraft suddenly passed overhead. I seriously thought it was going to land in one of our fields.'

'This would have been at about 7pm and on a week night. The thought of it being a UFO flicked through my mind, but I'm sure there is a more realistic explanation!'

'Sisters Helen and Jenny Schrimshaw, of Malpas, were prompted to get in touch by their mother Kay who read last week's article and remembered her daughters saying they had seen a UFO, although she had dismissed it at the time.'

Helen, 19, who works at the Ramada Jarvis Hotel near Chester, said she and her sibling were with three friends in the churchyard at Malpas in April 2002 when they experienced a close encounter.

She said: 'We were sitting there until 4am. We heard this dodgy humming noise. We could see these red lights. We had no idea what it was. By the noise it seemed dead close to us.'

'Then we saw it and we thought "What is that". It was a bit like a cube in shape. It had a square base with a hexagon on top. We were underneath it. We were really scared.'

'And it was hardly moving. We thought it was going to land in the other field. I had never seen anything like before.'

Helen compared the size of the craft to the Jodrell Bank radio telescope which she visited recently. And although she doesn't believe in 'little green men' she finds it hard to imagine how it could have been created with existing technology.

Her theory is the craft, which only just passed above the church spire is 'something to do with the MOD.'

Sister Jenny, 19, a sixth former, said: 'It looked like a massive blue or purple object which flew quite low above the church. It had green lights at the back corners and a massive beam of red light at the front.'

'At the time people thought I was mad,' she added.

Family friend Nick Sivil, 19, of Malpas, a performing arts student, said: 'We definitely saw a solid object, and it was not a plane. I really don't know what I saw that night.'

GAZETTE, Blackpool, England - Feb. 19, 2004

Strange sights in port's skies

A FRESH batch of unexplained sightings in the night sky above Fleetwood is giving the town a national reputation as a UFO crossroads.

There have been strange lights in the sky periodically over the past few years and after a rash of UFO activity just before Christmas more people have this week been reporting unexplained orange lights.

The incidents logged by Fylde coast UFO researchers are now so frequent that Fleetwood has featured on the cover of *UFO Magazine*.

The Fylde branch of Lapis - the Lancashire Aerial Phenomena Investigation Society - says it has never known anything like it. But they are not ruling out the possibility that it could be the work of hoaxers.

Orange

The latest sighting was on Sunday night at about 8.30pm, when a number of people across the north of

Fleetwood reported an array of orange lights in the sky over Rossall.

Lapis member Rob Whitehead said: 'Something is going on, that's for sure. It is always from the same area of north Fleetwood, it is always on calm, clear nights and it is always the same kind of thing - orange lights moving slowly, fairly low in the sky.'

'What are they? We've absolutely no idea, but we wouldn't rule out anything at this stage.'

NEWSFILE

New website for UFO fans

FLYING Saucer expert Russ Kellett of Filey is filling the gap left by the imminent closure of *UFO Magazine*.

The publication, produced at Stourton, Leeds, lost its founder, Graham Birdsall who died last September and his family has decided to close it.

Mr Kellett, 40, is launching an on-line pay-to-view magazine called *ufoparanormal.com*. He can be contacted on 07901 597743, or on rkellett@supanet.com or by post at PO Box 33, Filey, Y14 9YE.

YORKSHIRE EVENING POST, Leeds, England
March 12, 2004

ROCHDALE OBSERVER, Lines, England
March 13, 2004

I saw UFO too, says Andrew

THE 'sighting' of a UFO by children has been supported by a 34-year-old IT consultant.

Andrew Smith, who lives in Smithy Bridge Road, says he saw a mysterious flying object, forcing him to pull off the M62 motorway and on to the hard shoulder near to junction 21.

The children playing near their home in Summit, Littleborough said the 'spacecraft' hovered slowly above the rooftops about 7pm last Thursday and then shot off at hyperspeed.

Andrew said: 'There was a similar sighting in Wakefield about three or four weeks ago. It was hovering over houses in the early hours of the morning.'

'One theory suggested was that it was a terrestrial TV satellite, which tend to hover slowly. But in the case of the children and my experience, the object shot off at hyperspeed, which would seem to rule out a satellite.'

'It really freaked me out. It was either diamond or square in shape, it was bright and was below the cloud level.'

'A couple of days ago a friend of mine saw a similar object in the sky at Stalybridge.'

'I am interested in UFOs, but I think the vast majority of sightings can be explained away. I was wondering if any other readers had seen it last Thursday night.'

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.]

March 10, 2004 — *La Estrella del Loa*, Calama, Chile — STRANGE ANIMAL DEATHS — A new series of animal slayings occurred in Tocopila, reviving old fears about the existence of a pitiless creature that attacks without leaving a trace or explanation as to how the deaths occur. Yesterday, in the "Tres Marias" sector of the town, located to the north of the port area, the Chupacabras legend was resurrected at the smallhold of Eduardo Covarrubias, where 32 farm birds were found dead. Their bodies were scattered inside the henhouse, which showed no signs of forced entry by trespassers or other animals from the region. Covarrubias made the macabre find when he went to feed his animals as he did every day, coming across the unpleasant scene of his lifeless hens.

The police was immediately informed. Alarmed by the violent animal slayings, law enforcement reached the site swiftly, witnessing the events on the ground. Carabineros (Chilean state police) cordoned off the area to avoid losing evidence while bloodhounds aided in collecting the first hints that would explain this strange event. However, area residents blame the legendary Chupacabras, who has returned to trouble their nightmares, a belief substantiated by the manner in which the deaths occurred.

It was possible to ascertain that the birds showed a single orifice on the base of their necks, having almost the same depth throughout their bodies. Furthermore, it was not possible to find vast quantities of blood on the ground despite the magnitude of the killings. Added to this was the death of the only two roosters, who were beheaded during the attack.

Covarrubias was shaken by the attack, which represented an economic blow in excess of 300,000 Chilean pesos. Research personnel conducted a thorough investigation at the site, taking some of the dead hens with them for more detailed tests. — CREDIT: Liliانا Nunez

March 20, 2004 — *Centro de Analisis de Fenomenos Espaciales (CAFE)*, Merida, Yucatan, Mexico — While members of the CAFE group were in the town of Nolo on March 20, 2004 in preparation for the UFO skywatch scheduled for that day, they were approached by Nichte Ha Martin Loeza, who reported having had a multiple UFO sighting on March 19 at 8:17 p.m. while she was at the Haltun Ha estate in Nolo doing some stargazing. Suddenly she noticed four white lights racing over her head; it was clear to see they were not an aircraft since there were no blinking lights. She also remarked that no sounds were heard.

The weather was completely clear and the sky could be seen perfectly, aside from being in an area where there is little artificial light. While she observed the movement of the lights, the third light that followed the first two vanished from sight and reappeared in front of the two others, Her first idea was to think that it was some sort of satellite, but she dismissed the possibility in view of the apparent race that the objects were engaged in, since the second light seemed to be catching up to the first. All of the lights vanished after being in view for two minutes.

After having received this information, the Centro de Analisis de Fenomenos Espaciales checked to see if a satellite or satellites had crossed the heavens at that time, but none coincided with the time and trajectory mentioned by Nichte Ha. Therefore, the conclusion was reached that she had seen an unidentified flying object. — CREDIT: David Triay Lucatero

April 3, 2004 — *Centro de Analisis de Fenomenos Espaciales (CAFE)*, Merida, Yucatan, Mexico — On Saturday, April 3, 2004 the Centro de Analisis de Fenomenos Espaciales conducted a UFO investigation in the town of Ucu, Yucatan, where several interviews were conducted to glean information about sightings in the area.

The site was visited due to reports of a strange presence: triangular, zig-zagging lights in the sky and objects that manifest themselves.

Arriving at the site, which is close to the city of Merida, members of CAFE visited the home of Hugo Raciell Luna, 24, who told us of several UFO experiences.

Hugo began by describing his first UFO sighting. At around 4 p.m. in the month of December [2003], he saw a very bright light having a magnitude greater than the planet Venus. He told us that the light's brilliance increased and diminished for several minutes. He thought at first that it was an airliner or a satellite, but rejected this possibility because the object lacked the navigation lights of an aircraft. He adds that there was no sound whatsoever and that the object did not follow a definite trajectory, meaning that it couldn't be a satellite. He explains that several local residents came out of their homes to see the object, amounting to 9 witnesses after a while. He was starting to think the object might be some planet when the light suddenly began moving away and vanished from sight.

After describing this initial sighting, he has devoted more time to looking at the sky and told us that on a recent Sunday evening, he saw three lights over the Ucu baseball field which were approaching in a zigzagging motion between 11 and 12 at night. He said that in the measure that the lights approached, he could tell that their number increased to a total of nine in a triangular formation. Hugo says they were the size of the lamp on top of a streetlight and appeared to be heading from the vicinity of Celestun.

Upon seeing this, Hugo alerted his mother and aunts and all of the locals came out of their homes--a total of 15 witnesses on this occasion--and remained outside until 1:30 a.m., at which time the lights vanished.

Hugo explains that during the time that the objects were visible there was neither sound nor smoke. He comments that there was "a lot of air in the atmosphere" [sic] and the objects were forming triangles three by three--the first one toward the west, the second toward the north, and the third toward the east. After several turns, the objects constituted a larger triangle formed by the nine lights. Once this configuration was achieved, they sped off in the direction of Merida.

Researchers: Ing. David Antonio Triay Lucatero, Ing. Yeymy Gamboa Ku, Emilio Cetz Aguiar. — CREDIT: CAFE

April 10, 2004 — *El Dragon Invisible* and *El Diario de la Republica*, San Luis, Argentina — CONCERN IN

JUSTO DARACT —**Child hospitalized; claims he was startled by El Unudo ("The Clawed One") —SAN LUIS -- Local residents, police and community protection brigades went in search of the elusive creature, but it managed to escape yet again. The child only suffered a fright.

First it was a source of amusement and very few paid it any attention. But the fact is that since Wednesday night, El Unudo went on to become the main subject of conversation in [the town of] Justo Daract after a child was hospitalized with nervous shock after having encountered the mysterious character.

As mentioned by this newspaper in earlier editions, the strange character drew attention when it appeared before some young women who work for the Community Safety Watch, one of whom fainted. In any event, the most serious episode involving this creature occurred on Wednesday night, when a child heading home from doing some errands was startled by it.

According to the information collected, the 11 year-old boy was returning home when on the dark corner of Liniers and Los Andes streets in Justo Daract's Barrio Norte, he felt someone tap him on the back. Upon turning around, he found something or someone that frightened him considerably. Terrified, the boy ran home screaming, alerting neighbors to the situation. They immediately came out of their homes to find out what the commotion was about.

While residents of this sector, adjacent to the train station, started the search, elements of the 18th Sheriff's Department combed the area as well, without positive results.

Journalist Maura Avila of the RJD1 radio station reached the scene to conduct interviews as the search continued. She told *El Diario de la Republica* the following: "I was informed that there was a great deal of movement in Barrio Norte, near the hospital, and we headed there just as the police arrived. We learned that El Unudo had appeared -- a character who has gained notoriety in Justo Daract because he/it has been appearing for several days now, and has now terrified an 11 year-old on the corner of Liniers and Los Andes." [...] "Those who claim having seen El Unudo [say] that it doesn't have human form, rather an animal one, adding that it walks on four legs and hops, being capable of very swift movements."

The search, conducted by residents, policemen and community watch members, concentrated around the railroad tracks since "some claimed having seen it climb to the very top of the grain silos found there. Some men climbed but saw nothing abnormal. They also searched nearby wells without any results. It managed to escape once again."

Regarding the child, the journalist confirmed that "he was taken to the hospital to see if he'd experienced any injuries, but it was made clear that he'd only suffered a good fright."

Beyond the remarks and eyewitness accounts regarding this phenomenon, Maura Avila stated: "Personally, I've seen nothing at all, and I think that there isn't much reality to it and a good deal of psychosis. It is true that much is being said about this character in Justo Daract, especially among the kids, but it could be a case of mass hysteria."

She added that El Unudo isn't the only weirdo being spoken about in town: "There have been other cases, and not only featuring this entity, and they always take place in poorly lit locations. For example, a naked man is believed to appear in certain areas as well."

Avila finally added that "it is worth noting the time at which these episodes take place, that is to say, Easter Week. In this regard, there are those who speak of the existence of black magic cults that could be involved in these events."

A resident of Barrio Norte told the Panorama Informativo radio show, hosted by Maura Avila, that what happened was "that a little boy was frightened and the neighbors, especially the men, ran everywhere and couldn't catch it, although many saw it. The kid was taken to the hospital and the entire neighborhood is alarmed, since this character, who I believe is known as El Unudo, has already appeared in this area twice before."

The woman added that "there is very little light in the neighborhood, so let's see if the commission can do something about it because you can't see a thing at night. But there is a great deal of concern now because it's not normal. It isn't a game anymore, and an end must be found to this situation."

Many sources claimed that several police officers were able to reach the mysterious fugitive on Wednesday night, and were able to trap it, but in a display of tremendous strength, and because of its slippery body, it was able to slip away and escape with prodigious leaps and bounds.

Sheriff Miguel Miranda of Section 18 rejected said stories, stating that "it is true that there are rumors about a person dressed in black, but officially we have nothing, no reports making reference to such an event. In any case, we have increased our patrols as a preventive measure." The police officer acknowledged having heard remarks that the creature "walks on four legs like an animal and hops like a kangaroo, but there is no evidence to corroborate such statements."

While some alleged witnesses describe it as a mythical, almost ethereal animal, others have described it as a tall man, dressed in black and caped, covering his face with a mask and using gloves equipped with long, seemingly metallic nails -- a detail which earned him the name "The Clawed One" (El Unudo). His latest apparition leads to the belief that it is a person disguised with the aim of frightening the population. Added to this is the fact that children and teenagers in Justo Daract are fans of the "X-Men" cartoons, whose protagonists are mutants. One of them--Wolverine--has metallic claws as his main weapon for fighting crime.

On the other hand, the exploits of this mysterious creature are reminiscent of others that aroused popular curiosity at the time. Last year, around this same date, there was talk of "The Crow" (El Cuervo), a being described as similar to the bird in question, while in 2002 several locals claimed having seen two individuals clad in white robes, and others recalled another character whose brief fame earned him the nickname "Green Hood" (El Encapuchado Verde), until he was identified as a mentally impaired individual.

Most people have a predilection for fear at the level offered by a horror film. This explains the repercussion achieved by these strange apparitions. However, beyond the countless anecdotes that keep piling up, nothing proves the existence of the paranormal in these events.

On the other hand, most people suspect that behind this situation are one or two individuals who want to have fun by frightening people, not dismissing the possibility that these could be deranged persons or practitioners of black magic or the occult in general. Some residents of Justo Daract told this newspaper that they knew who were the parties behind this wave of apparitions.

Padre Fabian, parish priest in Justo Daract, dismisses the phenomenon, saying that "there are only three things to be said: first there isn't enough street lighting in Justo Daract. Therefore, at night one sees not only clawed ones, but also dinosaurs, sea serpents and other things, especially when there's a psychosis afoot. Secondly, if a prankster is involved, he will be apprehended at any time by the authorities, since the police force is on alert. Finally, if it is a supernatural force, it would evidently be some game of the Devil to confound people, since at this time of the year their attention should be fixed on Christ. Of course, you can add the psychological element to all this, especially in small towns and cities." — CREDIT: Mario Luis Bracamonte and Carlos Lurchuk

April 11, 2004 — *El Diario de la Republica*, San Luis, Argentina — SEARCH FOR "CLAWED ONE" CONTINUES — ****Strange character who frightened boy, young women has not been found**** — SAN LUIS — It all began a few weeks ago when some young women left school around 23:00 hours and came across someone described as "dressed in black, masked, with long nails" who climbed deftly up the main flagpole in Pringles Plaza, causing terror among the students.

Almost simultaneously it was said that a person involved with the Community Watch program saw the strange entity in an open field between the Pringles Club soccer field and the Libertario Ferrari neighborhood, while other ladies claimed having seen it climbing up trees in the Juan Esteban Pedemera square of the Barrio 331 Viviendas neighborhood.

Remarks began to spread despite the fact that no formal complaint had been made, according to authorities of the local sheriff's office. Some locals said that the authorities had indeed been apprised of the strange phenomenon, accepting that the stories indeed existed.

Up to this moment, the descriptions of the persons who claimed having been startled in the dark involved a somewhat tall person wearing a mask and who appeared to have horns; subsequent accounts changed its size, although descriptions of its agility of movement remained the same in all accounts.

Little by little, the intrigue increased along with the collective psychosis, and manifestations of "El Unudo" (The Clawed One) took place in a variety of neighborhoods, times and with other circumstances and appearances.

Reliable official sources said that on the evening of April 5th, there were joint operations involving police and community watch personnel to the south of the Ilusion and Libertario Ferrari neighborhoods, where some claimed having seen the sinister character near a soccer field.

"It jumped over the barbed wire fences with remarkable agility and moved with such long strides that it appeared to be floating on air, and was impossible to reach," said some witnesses to the enigmatic apparition, while adding that the chase and tracking were fruitless.

That same night, others claimed having seen the now "small" character in the Jardin Ferroviario neighborhood to the south of the city and in 62 Viviendas to the southeast of the urban radius,

Tuesday night was restful, since no one reported encounters with "El Unudo" the next day, but Wednesday the 7th caused the most comment and terrified many people, unleashing mass hysteria: an 11 year-old boy from Barrio Norte went into shock after the sinister creature of the night tapped him on the shoulder and showed his terrifying face to him.

The boy was treated and released from the "Ernesto Pompeo Borsani" hospital. But it was precisely this medical center that became the source of the rumors, since it is said that a nurse, a doctor and an ambulance driver, along with security personnel on site, caught a fleeting glimpse of the night creature, causing panic in some of the witnesses.

The authorities were informed immediately and a patrol car reached the site, but nothing could be gleaned except for the considerable fright experienced by some witnesses, particularly the nurse. Another guard did not deny this event occurred; on the contrary, he said that the Police had been phoned and that nothing was found. Further details were unavailable since "everyone here was really scared."

A truck driver living close to the Pringles Club's stadium also claimed having seen the character appear over the wall of this building and although this has not been ascertained, he fired some shots at "El Unudo", who seemed immune. A subsequent inspection of the site with a flashlight showed no signs of the apparition.

"It has an ape-like appearance, standing no more than 1.20 meters, and leaves footprints similar to those of a goat." This is what some who claim having seen the creature are saying after having witnessed it climbing the flagpole at Plaza Pringles, the Pringles soccer field and the cereal silos in the vicinity of Barrio Norte. This apparition is linked to a young woman who was riding her bicycle back to her home in barrio Libertario Ferrari around 3 o'clock in the morning on Friday, April 8th. She saw a strange character jumping from rooftop to rooftop in the 331 Viviendas neighborhood.

Frightened, the young woman pedalled back to the bus station, some 10 blocks distant, to take the bus and return home in tears, as was seen by the very same employees of the bus stop who attended to the young lady.

Large and with a mask and horns; small and apelike, black or brown, with a nude upper torso and covered with tattoos; walking upright or on four legs; leaving goat-shaped hoofprints; climbing trees, pipelines or metal silos; jumping over wire fences and large lagoons, swift and elusive — these are the descriptions that have been given of the sadly notorious Unudo who has captured the public's attention and caused fear in most. — CREDIT: Mario Luis Bracamonte and Carlos Iurchuk

April 23, 2004 — *El Diario de la Republica*, San Luis, Argentina — EL UNUDO MANIFESTATIONS CONTINUE IN JUSTO DARACT — ****Locals Claim "El Unudo" still wanders through the night**** — The bothersome and disquieting manifestations of "El Unudo" (The Clawed One) have become more sporadic but have not vanished altogether, according to eyewitness accounts from residents of Justo Daract, who claim that the night still belongs to this elusive character.

Everyone believed that the strange phantom would vanish with the passing of Easter, but this has not been the case. Some claim having seen it under different guises.

It was thus that two persons were in the offices of the ADAD organization, located in Barrio 331 Viviendas, and noticed a being descending from the rooftop of a nearby building, while others claimed having seen a similar apparition near the swimming pool of Public School No. 16 in the center of town and in locations adjacent to said school. The witnesses have been a community watchman and a young stalwart from the Pringles soccer team.

Nearby Villa Salles allegedly witnessed a similar creature last Monday night, spreading panic as has occurred in early events.

What no longer coincide are the descriptions of the creature's shape and the color of its attire: it is now being described as small and dark, brown or black, and at other times taller and dressed in white. The strange and improbable character seems to be affiliated to some transportation company, since nocturnal travel by night using hired cars has increased significantly, according to half-humorous remarks. Many people in Daract, especially women, now avoid walking the streets after dark.

On Wednesday, police officers in Justo Daract acknowledge having received reports of a similar event in Villa Mercedes. These accounts state that an undefined figure had been seen by some persons in the Ciudad Jardin neighborhood in the city's northwestern corner, bordering the Serranias Puntanas Highway.

"We were told that some persons had seen a kind of shadow in that area, which has little light at night. Knowing that we were dealing with apparitions here in Justo Daract, they called us for advice. In any event, we must make it clear that there is nothing that attests to the veracity of this phenomenon from a police perspective," said police sources. — CREDIT: Mario Luis Bracamonte

April 25, 2004 — *El Diario de Araucania*, Temuco, Chile — MORE MUTILATED ANIMALS — ****Animal remains were a horrifying spectacle**** — A family in Collipulli is going through hard times after having discovered remains of twelve hens kept locked in a henhouse beside their home.

"This looks abnormal," said Orlando Coronado, still profoundly disturbed by the macabre spectacle that revealed itself before his eyes in the early hours of yesterday morning, and which affected his household located at Agromedo 807 in this city.

"I don't understand what happened. I opened the chicken coop like I do every day to feed my birds, and I'm faced with this. All of the hens were dead. Some were headless, others were missing their legs and the strangest thing is that there wasn't a drop of blood. I really don't understand how they were slain, or exactly what happened."

There are two fierce dogs in the Coronado backyard, but neither of them barked. As for himself and his family, they heard nothing, in spite of the fact that the master bedroom isn't very far from the henhouse. "We heard no sounds at all, nothing."

"I keep my hens under lock and key every evening, so there's no explanation. We don't know what happened and we don't understand it," he said, showing the dozen or so dead and exsanguinated birds.

The event caused a stir among Collipulli's inhabitants. Word spread immediately that a "Chupacabras" attack had taken place, attributing the event to the legendary contemporary character to whom hundreds of similar attacks throughout Latin America have been blamed.

A less sensational explanation involves a mink, a foreign species that has caused serious losses to residents of the Aysen region after having been introduced there a few years ago. — CREDIT: Liliana Nunez

April 27, 2004 — *El Tribuno*, Salta, Argentina — LA POMA: ANOTHER SIGHTING IN THE CHALCHAQUI VALLEYS — *****Shepherds Feared UFO Abduction***** — ****It was an intense light that suddenly began moving and stopped above us. I thought it would whisk us away**** — The terrifying story was told by Julio Rafael Espinosa, 39, a farmer of the La Poma region, who, two weeks ago -- in the company of his two sons and an elderly shepherdess -- witnessed one of so many luminous apparitions at Quebrada de Orozco, some 20 kilometers away from the aforementioned community in the Chalchaqui Valleys.

"On that night, around 20:30, we were waiting on National Highway 40, which links La Poma to San Antonio de los Cobres, for the merchandise truck that passes by a few times a week bringing novelties with it and supplies," the man recalled as he hugged one of his sons. Espinoza added: "We were with my two boys, ages 6 and 9, and with Grandma Braulia, 82, a shepherdess who is a neighbor of our stand in the Sauzalito area, when suddenly, a luminous object appeared out of the slopes of the Nevado de Cachi, flying at low altitude and zigzagging."

According to the humble farmer's testimony, the large object's luminosity increased and diminished in the measure that it approached the point where the group observed the phenomenon at the edge of the road, surrounded by the mountainous massifs of La Poma. Espinoza says that they were perplexed and nearly frozen by the situation until the UFO stood over their heads, which was the time of greatest luminous intensity emanating from the vehicle. "It lasted only an instant. It was motionless in the air, some fifty meters above us and its white light would become yellowish. It had no shape... it was like an enormous, refulgent mass," he recalled.

The shepherd said that after a few seconds, the object lost itself swiftly among the northern hills in the vicinity of the location known as Punta del Agua. "The UFO came from the area of La Poma and the entire event lasted some three minutes, from the moment it appeared, stood over us, and vanished. After that, we remained waiting for the truck, didn't say anything to anybody, and left. The next day Grandma Braulia told me that that wasn't the first time she'd seen a similar phenomenon in the area. Before that I thought I was the only one who had seen so many flying objects. However, many more locals have witnessed this phenomenon," the man said.

Espinoza, a privileged eyewitness to this new sighting, had already witnessed similar events, such as one last December as he travelled in the company of six people aboard a bus on the Tin Tin highway. On that occasion, he managed to see lights similar to those of a UFO on the ground in the middle of Los Cardones National Park. But on that occasion, Espinoza claims having seen some aliens descending from the craft and who appeared to be taking samples of the soil or shrubs growing in the region.

Somewhat more confidently, Espinoza dared to reflect that "this area appears to be used by these strange devices as a passageway to the Cordilleran region, because it's surrounded by large massifs and the basin of the Chalchaqui River could serve as permanent means of communication toward the Andes." — CREDIT: Gloria Coluchi

April 27, 2004 — *El Once Digital* and *La Calle Online*, Entre Rios, Argentina — IS THERE A LOBIZON IN OUR CITY? — A story that some people took with good humor and which created anxiety among others gave rise to a state of general unrest--and a desire to know the truth--regarding the being that has kept the community on tenterhooks.

It is said that a person with a deformed face, an out-of-proportion body, about the size of a calf and with extremely red eyes, has terrified an important sector of the city's northwestern quarter.

The strange apparition comes about at night, has been seen by some people and at least two of them had been hospitalized in a state of shock in our city's medical center, according to some residents.

Without going any further, our newsroom received a phone call yesterday complaining about a similar situation, since an elderly man had a shocking experience when this entity appeared before him as he rode his bicycle.

The story is strange and it is a fact that several employees of the meat packing plant located in the city's northwestern sector have expressed a certain fear of running into the strange "lobizon."

LINKS:

<http://www.lacalle-online.com/noticias.php?id=28934>

http://www.eloncedigital.com.ar/muestranoticia.asp?noticia_ID=5903

CREDIT: Gloria Coluchi



amazing but

Bigfoot has a toe-hold locally?

Editor's note: For the last few months, a team of Lake Oswego Review and West Linn Tidings writers and correspondents has worked to put together stories for our annual Perspective magazine. The stories were all based on the general theme: "Amazing But True."

Inside today's newspaper, readers will find the culmination of that effort: 104 pages filled with stories about people in Lake Oswego and West Linn who have had or done something out of the ordinary.

Fifteen writers crafted 25 stories for the special section. In addition, we have combed the archives for unusual stories from the past. Finally, we asked our readers to submit some interesting tales of their own. While we were unable to include all of these, we tried to give a good representation of their comments.

We hope you will enjoy the offerings of the 2004 Perspective. It represents some hard work by a group of people interested in sharing some "amazing" stories with the community.

— Martin Forbes
Review Editor

By Staff Reporter Scott Hammers

There is a highway running through Lake Oswego and West Linn. An invisible highway, lined not with service stations but with roots and berries and crawfish to fuel the journey of those who travel along it. Travelers who do not cloak themselves in tons of steel, rubber and glass, but instead go naked. They travel by foot. Big feet.

The highway is the Tualatin River. But if those who study it are correct, it may as well be called the Bigfoot Expressway.

Thom Powell, a Clackamas County resident, junior high school sci-

See BIG-FOOT, Page A2

true



ence teacher, and author of "The Locals: A Contemporary Investigation of the Bigfoot/Sasquatch Phenomenon," has never seen a Bigfoot. He's a skeptic. But in years of research, he's convinced there's no reason the creature — if it exists — could not freely roam up and down the Tualatin River. As Powell sees it, the river is a natural migration route for animals traveling back and forth between the Coast Range and the Cascades. Given the elusive and nocturnal tendencies attributed to the Bigfoot, as well as the heavily wooded ravines that crisscross the area, a large and intelligent animal could go all but undetected.

"All bets are off at night," Powell said. "We are absolutely not inhabitants of the landscape at night, so whatever's inhabiting it, we have no awareness of it, we can't do anything about it, and we absolutely can't document it."

But Bigfoot sightings have been documented locally. Oregonbigfoot.com, a Web site maintained by Eugene-based researchers Bob and Autumn Williams, collects witness reports from people who claim to have encountered a Bigfoot. Their site features three reports submitted by local residents.

A report from sometime between the 1950's to early 1960's recounts the experience of a young boy living near Boones Ferry Road in Lake Grove. The boy was with his brother in the attic of the family home when they spotted an apelike face ringed with white hair looking at them through a window nine feet off the ground. The report concludes:

The two boys fled down the ladder to the ground floor and hid in the shower until their father returned. The ape was gone and their mother, and their mother, a deeply religious Southern Baptist, was convinced they had

seen the devil.

Fast forward to June 1987. A couple living on Troon Drive, atop the hill overlooking Marylhurst University, are settling down to sleep when a warbling scream came wafting through their open windows. The noise seemed to be coming from a cul-de-sac downhill from the couple's home, a popular make-out spot for local high schoolers. Concerned that a young girl had gotten in over her head, the husband put on his clothes and went down to investigate:

I ran down to the cul-de-sac (approx. 200 yards) and The Sound was now clearer. There were no cars, and no teenagers. It seemed to be coming from an area of greenbelt heavy in brush, blackberry bushes and Douglas Firs. The screams stopped after about 4 to 5 minutes. The Police arrived and I told them about the screams and they flashed some lights

(continued on page 18)

around, and said they'd check it out.

At midnight on July 12, 1995, a man and his dog were near the Willamette River in the Willamette area of West Linn:

Along a sewage stream with brambles and swamp off the freeway, lit by arc streetlights, he saw a large white creature moving around. It kept bobbing up and down in different locations, and seemed to just be looking at him, moving around to different places 100-200 feet away. It was about 7 foot high, had three-inch long white dirty hair, head the shape of a big dome.

The sightings don't end there, according to one local man. An amateur Bigfoot tracker, the man is now maintaining a low profile in order to protect his family's privacy, and requested his name not appear in print. Like Powell, he subscribes to the river-as-highway theory, and maintains it's easy for clever animals to hide in the city, noting a cougar that lives on the south side of West Linn.

The man knows of two additional local sightings, both within the last three to four years. In the first, a local siding installer was fishing with friends on the Tualatin River, near the low-head dam about three-and-a-half miles upstream from the Willamette.

Across the river, on the south side, they saw an ape-like creature crouched in the reeds, using its hand to scoop water into its mouth. The men took pictures with a disposable camera — their prints were "pretty indistinct," said the anonymous man, but "with the right equipment, you could probably do something."

The second sighting involves what the anonymous man calls a "pretty stable kid" who shot a video of a suspected Bigfoot near Wanker's Corner. The video is less than perfect, he says, but the boy's recollection of the event has convinced him the tape is not a hoax.

"The young man would have had to do tons of research over many years to come up with some details that are generally known only to enthusiasts," he said.

Both men are sure there are more sightings out there than have been reported. Many people, the anonymous man included, keep their encounters to themselves for years, fearful they'll be branded as delusional.

"If a person sees one of these things, the typical pattern is they'll sit on it for six months to six years, then they'll go, 'uh-oh, I gotta find out,'" said the anonymous man.

Trying to "find out" often leads to more questions than answers. Even among those who believe Bigfoot exists, there's no consensus as to what it might be. Many believe it's a relative of modern apes, *Gigantopithecus blackii*, a towering southeast Asian primate that went extinct — maybe — around 300,000 years ago. Lesser-circulated theories hold that it is something altogether different from any other animal, a creature capable of altering its own physical form and vanishing into thin air.

Powell is of the opinion that any real-life Bigfoot is likely a Hominid, the scientific classifications for all animals on the

"human" side of man's evolutionary divergence from the ancestors of modern apes, an event believed to have occurred some 15 to 30 million years ago.

"Neanderthals may not be as extinct as we think," he said.

The anonymous local man says he wouldn't be a researcher, let alone a believer, if not for his own experiences.

"It's an interesting phenomenon. But the bottom line is you have no bones, no bodies, and no reputable, good photographs except for the Bluff Creek one," he said.

The Bluff Creek photographs come from the 16-mm movie shot in 1967 by Roger Patterson near Bluff Creek, Calif. The validity of the film has been in question ever since it became public, and definitive answers have eluded both skeptics and believers.

Perhaps the truth will never be known. But the question of just what, if anything, is out there goes back far further than 1967. Powell's interviews with Native Americans on nearby reservations have unearthed stories of "stick Indians," a lost Native American tribe bearing an uncanny resemblance to the modern Bigfoot legend.

And their stories speak to a local connection, a long-lingering dispute over fishing rights at the base of Willamette Falls.

"Native American lore holds that they would fish the east side of the falls and avoid the west side, because they believed it was the domain of the hairy man," Powell said.

STATESMAN JOURNAL, Salem, OR - April 25, 2004

Author chases visions

On Valentine's Day of 1994, Randall Sullivan sat down at his home in Portland and picked up *The Oregonian*.

Reading a newspaper was something Sullivan did every day, as is true of many of us.

But this time, Sullivan read about something that would take him not only halfway around the world but almost out of this world. He read an account of a vision of the Virgin Mary — a vision that took place in a dilapidated trailer home in Boardman in northeast Oregon.

The story intrigued him, especially the part about how many people came to see the vision and how many of them claimed they saw it.

The glowing figure appeared in the corner of a landscape painting on a bedroom wall.

Sullivan went to northeast Oregon to talk to the witnesses, and that was the beginning of a long journey that took him to the Vatican and to the miniscule village of Medjugorje in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The trail of visions led him back to America, to Scottsdale, Ariz.

For eight years, he researched and studied and talked to people. The story of his journey and his search is told in "The Miracle Detective."

This book is an examination of religious ecstasy, of illusion, of truth — objective and subjective. Ultimately, it is a discussion of what the word "miraculous" means.

This book isn't a hymn of praise to anyone or anything. Sullivan quotes those who



Dan Hays
Northwest Books

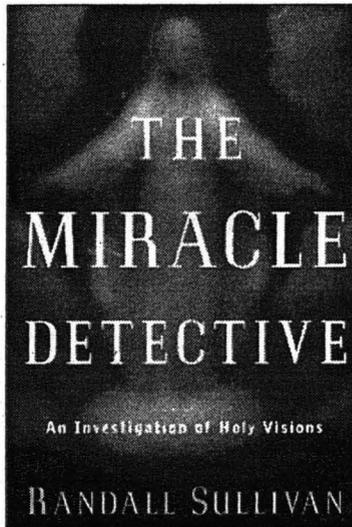
'The Miracle Detective: An Investigation of Holy Visions'

AUTHOR: Randall Sullivan
PUBLISHER: Atlantic Monthly, New York; 2004; 450 pages; ISBN 0-87113-916-2
FORMAT: Hardbound
COST: \$25
AVAILABLE AT: Borders, Escape Fiction, Jackson's Books, The Willamette Store

believe with honesty and openness. What is considered here is intensely Roman Catholic, but one can extrapolate to a large number of truths from the material the author provides.

Whatever one might think about visions of the Virgin Mary, it cannot be denied that many of the people Sullivan met believe with all their hearts. Some of the priests he describes are fascinating. Almost everyone he tells us about is drawn with such pure wording as to make them seem real.

Sullivan is aware that searches often become living creatures and that what you find may not only be something different than



what you thought you were seeking, but something you did not want to find.

Sullivan's journey is a religious one, a Christian one. But what happened on that journey and what it might mean to people of all — or no — faiths makes this book unique and valuable.

If you want to talk to Sullivan, he'll be signing copies of the book at 7:30 p.m. on May 3 at Powell's City of Books, 1005 W Burnside in Portland. Call: (800) 878-7323.

MAIL TRIBUNE, Medford, OR - April 4, 2004

Bigfoot lives

"Dispelling the myth of Bigfoot" by Paul Fattig left an impression that the Bigfoot phenomenon is now surely dead because of recent events. That impression can be best summarized by the famous Mark Twain quote, "The rumors of my demise have been greatly exaggerated."

The carved wooden feet the Wallace family produced to support their claim that Wallace was Bigfoot at the 1958 work site don't hold up to scrutiny. There were three separate sized tracks found, casts were made and the carved feet match none of the casts in size and shape.

People attempting to wear the feet and make tracks find it to no avail. Their size makes them work like snowshoes and won't let anyone sink to produce a track, even in soft soil.

When looking at interviews, past and present, and comparing them to what's in Greg Long's book, "The Making of Bigfoot," there are numerous contradictions about the suit and more. The long list of names of those claiming to have worn a Bigfoot suit in the film dates back to when the film was released; there is nothing new here.

You'll find modern researchers online at www.bfro.net and www.bigfootforums.com; it's a whole new world. — Sam Saladino, Medford

Big Foot sighted by OK resident?

By **EDDIE GLENN**
CNHI News Service

TAHLEQUAH (CNHI) — Bigfoot in Pumpkin Hollow?

Several weeks ago, a young Tahlequonian presented a photo he said his mother shot in the Pumpkin Hollow area, and that it plainly showed what could only be identified as Bigfoot him/herself, right smack-dab in the middle of the picture.

After some investigation, we have to admit that the aberration in the photograph — while not clearly identifiable as Bigfoot — isn't really identifiable as anything besides Bigfoot either.

Of course, it could be a scratch on the lens of a camera or a speck of dust on the film or any number of other technical explanations. But we can't rule out the possibility that it just might, maybe — within the realm of all possibilities — really be a hairy, upright-walking creature that is commonly known as "Bigfoot."

If it isn't Bigfoot in the picture, what the heck — no harm done.

But if it is Bigfoot, or a variant thereof, it wouldn't be the first one allegedly sighted in these parts.

According to the Aug. 3, 1990, edition of the Tahlequah Daily Press, a Bigfoot sighting on the east side of Eldon Hill was reported to the Cherokee County Sheriff's Department on Aug. 1 of that year.

"We kind of shook our heads when we got the call but the lady sounded serious," Jack Goss, then a sheriff's investigator, was reported as saying. "She said Bigfoot was in her backyard. We thought she might have seen a bear but she was really sure that it wasn't. She said it was hairy and stank really bad."

The story also cites then-and-now Cherokee County Undersheriff Dan Garber, who said several residents in the area had reported similar sightings and that several calves and sheep had been reported missing in the area.

"I've known other areas to get calls like this but this is the first time we've heard anything like this in Cherokee County," Garber said in the 1990 story.

On Monday this week, Garber said he remembered that incident fairly well.

"It caused quite a commotion for about a week," he said. "The people from the national Bigfoot organization called up and said, 'If you hear of any other sightings, let us know.'"

The national organization to which Garber referred is the Bigfoot Field Researchers Organization and, according to their Web site, the 1990 Eldon incident is a "Class A" sighting.

According to that Web site: "Class A reports involve clear sightings, in circumstances where misinterpretation or misidentification of other animals can be ruled out with greater confidence. There are few footprint cases that are very well-documented. Those are considered Class A reports as well, because misidentification of common animals can be confidently ruled out, thus the potential for misinterpretation is very low."

The Web site states that Cherokee County Sheriff's Deputy Joe Weavel investigated the sighting and found foot impressions big enough to place both his feet in. It also states that two days after the initial report, an 8-year-old girl and her mother described a similar creature rummaging through a trash pile near their house.

"Their dog chased it but returned with its tail between its legs. The creature was described as 8 feet tall with dark brown frizzy hair and similar to a bear, except that it was described as walking upright," states the BFRO report.

Since 1990, there haven't been any other sightings — until now.

Of course, if Bigfoot really does live in the woods of Cherokee County, it seems reasonable to assume that the person most likely to see him (or her) would be someone who spends a lot of time out in those woods.

That someone would be Oklahoma Game Warden Brady



A Tahlequah-area resident claims to have taken a photo of Bigfoot, or some similarly large, hairy creature. (CNHI/Tahlequah Daily Press)

May.

May, however, has never seen Bigfoot. But he has seen a couple of bears. In fact, May said 1990 was during a several-year-long period in which bear sightings were common in Cherokee County. Most of the bears in Oklahoma are in the southeastern part of the state but young males are often run out of normal mating areas by older, larger males.

"It's not uncommon for our department to go to an area where there's a nuisance bear complaint, trap it and release it," said May. "It wouldn't be uncommon for someone to see one around here."

Still, the 1990 Eldon Bigfoot sighting is (at least in Bigfoot parlance) a "Class A" event, and according to the BFRO Web site, "Several reports near this area (have been made) since the early '70s, also possible reports near Peggs, Okla., northwest of Tahlequah, Okla."

According to Garber, regardless of whether Bigfoot is a Cherokee County resident, the terrain is definitely conducive to such sightings.

"One thing that always seems to be consistent in these sightings," he said, "is they always seem to be in wooded areas where an animal could move around undetected. You don't get many sightings in Arizona, or Enid for that matter. I mean, how many Bigfoot sightings do you hear of in Enid?"

Eddie Glenn is a Tahlequah Daily Press staff writer.

USA TODAY, Washington, DC - Feb. 12, 2004

Mysterious fires hit Italian town

Unexplained fires have been flaring up in a Sicilian village. For almost a month in Canneto di Caronia, electrical appliances and wiring have burst into flames, said Giuseppe Maschio, an expert looking into the problem for the Civil Defense Agency. At least one house was damaged, he said. The utility company cut power to the town after the first reports, but the fires continued. Catholic exorcist Gabriele Amorth blamed Satan. Maschio said he was looking into whether an electromagnetic disturbance could be the cause.

By Smita P. Nordwall with wire reports

Believers in Bigfoot rebut claim that it's fake

As Sherlock Holmes often told Dr. Watson, the game is afoot. In this case, we're talking really wild game with really big feet.

Last week, slipping headlong on the banana peel of poor judgment, I wrote a column about Bigfoot.

Talk about stepping in it.

Those who follow the Bigfoot path were not at all amused by my musings.

But I won't say they went ape. Promise. Yet they definitely went bananas.

Most indicated it didn't take a Sherlock Holmes to follow the trail of clues left by Bigfoot over the years.

And they were quick to point out that I was definitely no Sherlock.

The seemingly innocent news hook was that a retired fellow from Yakima, Wash., had announced that he had donned a big monkey suit to star in the famous Roger Patterson film shot of an alleged Sasquatch along Bluff Creek, Calif., in October 1967. His confession is in "The Making of Bigfoot," a new book by paranormal investigator Greg Long.

Following the slippery slope of Bigfoot doubters, the column noted that when retired logger Ray Wallace of Centralia, Wash., died at age 84 late in 2002, his son, Michael Wallace, had told The Seattle Times that his father was the one who started the modern Bigfoot legend.



**Bigfoot
or joker?**

The senior Wallace was a practical joker and had left large footprints at a logging site in Humboldt County, Calif., by strapping on a pair of 16-inch carved wooden feet on an August morning in 1958 before the rest of the crew arrived, his son said.

Finally, I mentioned that while setting chokers during the summer of 1968 in the Bluff Creek drainage, two choker-setters I worked with had told me they had contributed to the Sasquatch lore the previous year by making big footprints in the dusty log landing and tossing equipment over the side of the landing. Bluff Creek is about 50 miles south of Happy Camp.

Like I said, the Bigfoot true believers out there found it abominable.

Several noted that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has stated that it is "not unlikely" that Bigfoot exists. Scientists have even dubbed it *Gigantopithecus americana*, they added.

Consider the lengthy e-mail from Daryl Colyer who describes himself as a Texas field investigator for the

**Paul
Fattig**



*Off the
Beaten Path*

Bigfoot Field Researchers Organization.

"Let me state that the BFRO is convinced there is indeed an undocumented, elusive hominid, probably a primate, that dwells, albeit in small numbers, in the remote portions of North America," he began. "In addition to the mounds of anecdotal evidence based on literally thousands of credible eyewitness accounts through many decades, physical evidence continues to accumulate."

That includes hair, tracks, possible nests and vocalizations heard, he added.

"There are certain characteristics of bigfoot, learned through observation of the animal, that promote the creature's survival wherever it may dwell, and may provide an answer as to why, to our knowledge, hunters have not killed one," he continued.

His group believes the creature is extremely intelligent, nocturnal, nomadic and has a healthy fear of humans.

When it came to the Patterson film, he pointed to what he says are flexing muscles.

"When I watch the footage, details digitally augmented, it is evident to me that a costume of 1967 could in no way simulate the definition of the creature's latissimus dorsi, quadriceps, gastrocnemius, trapezius and gluteal muscles," he wrote. "These muscles are all quite clearly flexing as the animal attempts to flee."

Then there was Jon-Erik Beckjord, director of the Bigfoot Investigation Project in Berkeley, Calif.

The group has been researching the big fellow for 28 years, he noted.

Echoing the sentiments of his like-minded believer in Texas, Beckjord says the Patterson film could not be a hoax.

Beckjord cites a college professor at Idaho State University who says that a natal cleft is obvious in the film. The bottom line, so to speak, is that the creature has a butt crack, unlike someone in a costume, Beckjord said.

Moreover, citing training which includes film analysis at the U.S. Air Force Academy, Beckjord believes a female reproductive organ and an anus can also be seen.

"... only those with a fine eye for detail will immediately see these last two features," he said.

But he figures the natal cleft alone is enough to crack the hoax case.

On a lighter note, there was the e-mail from a wise old friend who remains open minded about the Bigfoot question. He submitted a few lines from a Wendell Berry poem in which the poet quotes his daughter:

*"I hope there's an animal
somewhere that nobody has
ever seen.*

*And I hope nobody ever sees
it."*

You can reach Paul Fattig at 776-4496 or e-mail him at pfattig@mailtribune.com

STATESMAN, Logan, UT - March 5, 2004

Truth is out about Bigfoot

(LAT) — Now it can be told: Bigfoot isn't real.

So says Bob Heironimus, a retired Pepsi bottler from Yakima, Wash., who reveals to the Reliable Source that he donned a gorilla costume and appeared in the famous grainy film clip that helped fuel the Bigfoot craze in 1967 and is studied by Bigfoot, Sasquatch and Yeti investigators to this day.

"It's time people knew it was a hoax," Heironimus told us. "It's time to let this thing go. I've been burdened with this for 36 years, seeing the film clip on TV numerous times. Somebody's making lots of money off this, except for me. But that's not the issue — the issue is that it's time to finally let people know the truth."

Heironimus, 63, makes his full "confession," as he calls it, in a just-published book by paranormal investigator Greg Long, "The Making of Bigfoot." Long spent four years investigating the 60-second film clip and the people behind it. He traces the shaggy Bigfoot costume to a North Carolina gorilla suit specialist, Philip Morris, who says he sold it for \$435 to an amateur documentary maker named Roger Patterson (who died in 1972). The hoax was staged near Bluff Creek in Northern California, according to Heironimus.

"Patterson was the cameraman," Long tells us. "They made a gentleman's agreement that Bob would get in the suit and walk in front of the camera for \$1,000."

But, Heironimus says, "I was never paid a dime for that, no sir," and adds, "Sure I want to make some money. I feel that after 36 years I should get some of it."

Backers of the Bigfoot legend include primatologist Jane Goodall, who was in Silver Spring, Md., last week to tout a new chimpanzee documentary airing this month on Discovery Communications' Animal Planet network. Too busy to comment herself, Goodall authorized an aide, Nona Gandelman, to tell us she has read "countless books" about Bigfoot, Sasquatch, Yeti, Chinese wild men and other creatures. "She's spoken to people whom she respects who say they have seen one of these hominids," said Gandelman, "and to many other people she respects who have heard strange calls they thought were made by Bigfoot. As a scientist, she has a very open mind about this and has yet to close the door on the possibility."

Bigfoot researcher John Green, a retired Canadian journalist, says the book doesn't disprove the existence of the mysterious beast. "It's all (expletive)," he told us. "There are going to be libel actions flying."

Tom Malone, a lawyer in Minneapolis, called us Friday on behalf of Bob Gimlin, associate of the now-dead Bigfoot filmmaker. "I'm authorized to tell you that nobody wore a gorilla suit or monkey suit and that Mr. Gimlin's position is that it's absolutely false and untrue."

And the mystery lives on ...