

UFO

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Things Are Looking Up With UFO Watch Tower

Judy Messoline had the space after her cattle ranch went bust, and her modest platform now lures visitors from all sorts of wild places.

By DAVID KELLY
Times Staff Writer

HOOPER, Colo. — Shortly after her cattle business went bust, Judy Messoline looked to the heavens for salvation.

She had never thought much of flying saucers but knew that her San Luis Valley ranch sat in a region renowned for bizarre, unexplained phenomena. So Messoline erected what she believes is the world's first UFO watchtower.

"I opened it as a tourist trap," she acknowledged.

But it became bigger than that. Over the last four years she has seen self-described alien abductees, psychics, channelers and visitors from Pluto, Jupiter and points beyond come through her door.

The straight-talking rancher has learned to bite her tongue during these close encounters, occasionally of the third kind.

"Who am I to doubt?" she asked.

The last year has been her busiest yet. Thousands have pulled off Highway 17 near tiny Hooper in south-central Colorado to climb the tower and scan the skies over the craggy Sangre de Cristo Mountains.

People search for mysterious flying lights, soaring triangles or hovering balls of fire. Messoline, 59, shows documentaries of local UFO sightings and discusses assorted odd happenings in the 120-mile-long alpine valley that stretches into northern New Mexico.

The UFO WatchTower isn't exactly towering. It's a metal platform in the middle of the desert standing about 14 feet above a spaceship-shaped gift shop.

"I don't know why more people are coming," said Messoline, who doesn't charge admission but accepts donations.

She's taking advantage of

the newfound popularity by holding a conference at the site next weekend with UFO experts from around the country. And she's writing a book about her experiences here titled "That Crazy Lady Down the Road."

There is certainly enough material.

"I had a guy come in and ask if I had a place to sign in," she recalled. "I told him yes and he said, 'No, do you have a place to sign in for us?' and I said, 'Where are you from?' and he said, 'Pluto.'"

A woman claiming to channel the thoughts of extraterrestrials rebuked Messoline because the aliens depicted in her shop all looked alike. She said the real space folks were annoyed that just one of their 157 races was represented. The channeler left after buying a rubber alien head for her car antenna.

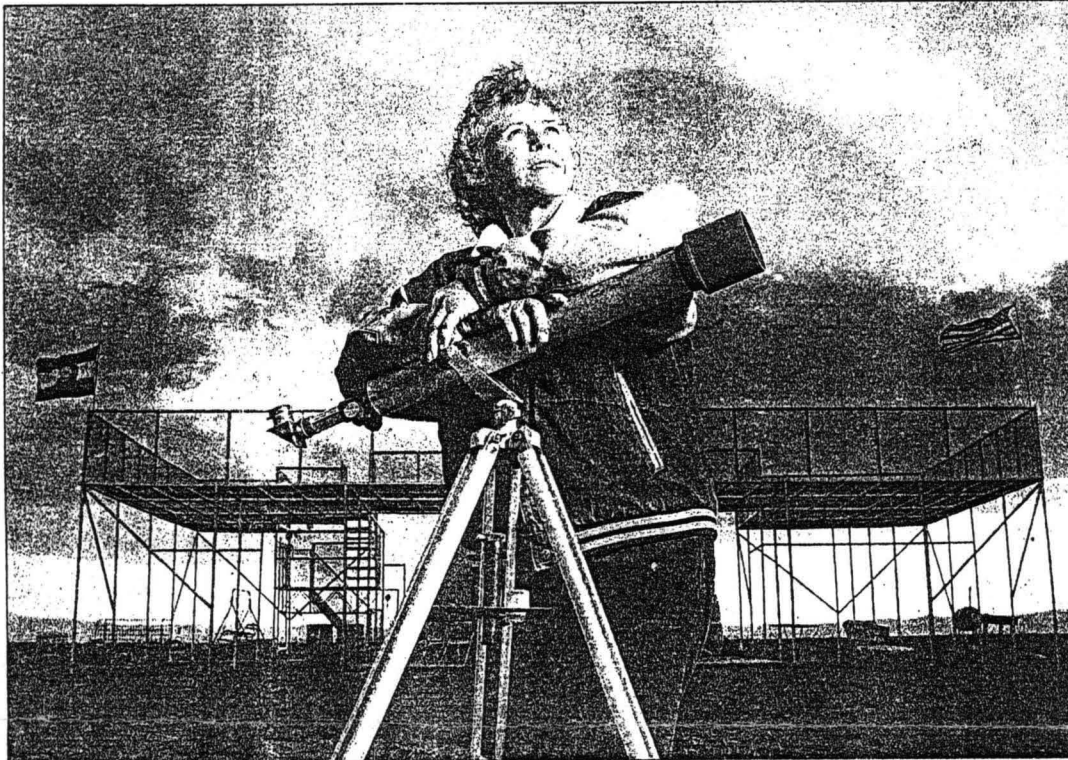
Then there was the trucker who said he saw a bright light above the highway and later couldn't account for three hours of his life.

"I told him to see a hypnotherapist," Messoline said.

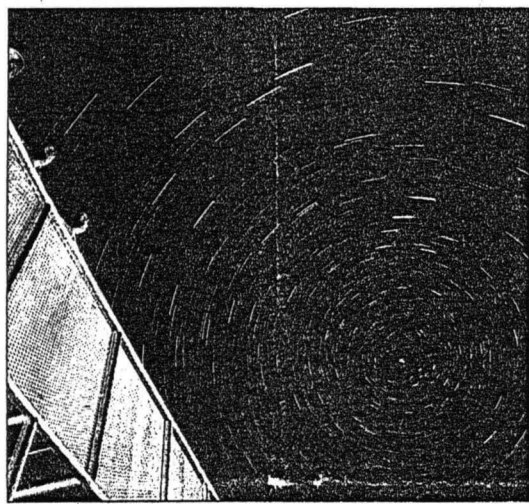
At an ethereal 7,600 feet above sea level, the San Luis Valley has always been a land of mystery, a place where the Wild West meets the Weird West. Early Native Americans claimed "ant people" lived underground here; other tribes talked about "star people"; and the Hopi believed all thought originated atop the valley's towering Mt. Blanca.

There are stories of Bigfoot sightings, clandestine military installations, secret alien bases and vortexes leading to other dimensions. New Agers and those seeking spiritual enlightenment flock to towns such as nearby Crestone, where Buddhist prayer flags snap in the windy foothills of the Sangres.

"The San Luis Valley was the first area colonized by the Spanish in Colorado, and it's just been sitting there for 400 years simmering in its own broth," said David Perkins, a journalist who has written about the region for nearly 30 years. "It's so isolated. It's ringed by mountains and there



OUT THERE: Judy Messoline admits opening her Hooper, Colo., UFO WatchTower as "a tourist trap," but she doesn't charge admission to the self-described alien abductees, psychics, channelers and visitors from Pluto, Jupiter and points beyond who visit.



NIGHT LIGHTS: Stars shine bright above the UFO WatchTower, at 7,600 feet above sea level in the San Luis Valley.

are a lot of superstitions."

Perkins said the mix of Indian, Spanish, Mexican and Catholic folklore might also make inhabitants predisposed to seeing certain things.

Leslie Varnicle, state director of the Colorado Mutual UFO Network, said the valley is an area of major military operations, full of low-flying, high-speed aircraft operating from bases in Colorado Springs.

"But that doesn't explain similar sightings 50 years ago when we didn't have that kind of technology," she said. "This is one of the biggest hotspots in the country for unconventional flying objects."

The valley's history was relatively unknown to Messoline when she arrived from Golden in 1995 to start a new life af

ter her divorce. It wasn't long before people asked if she had seen any UFOs.

Messoline hadn't. She was too busy trying to keep her ranch afloat. But dwindling pasture eventually forced her to sell her cattle, leaving her with 640 acres of unused land.

"My friend said, 'Why not put up a UFO watchtower?'" she recalled.

To her own amazement, she agreed.

After giggling her way through the permit process, Messoline had the tower built down the road from her house. She advertised with metal "aliens" along the highway. Soon after, she said, she saw her first UFO — a narrow, glowing object sailing over the



Los Angeles Times

out. It's strange."

Mysterious animal mutilations have a long history in the valley, starting with Snippy, a horse famously eviscerated in 1967. Some believe aliens are doing it; others say government agents testing for radiation are behind it. Police offer a more prosaic explanation: earthly animal predators.

As daylight waned over the tower, puffy clouds sailed past — white at first, then orange and finally blood red with the glow of the setting sun. Distant lightning illuminated the sky.

A new group gathered to watch the heavens.

"I love clouds; clouds are so cool," gushed Susie Noble, a Denver clerk who camps here every year, hoping to catch a glimpse of the unknown.

Noble, 50, showed off a model UFO she had built. It was made of a bundt cake pan with rubber aliens arrayed at the window and a little light blazing inside.

"It only took me a week," she said.

Lisa Lough, 38, looked at the stars gathering above. She saw her first UFO as a kid in South Dakota.

"It was a bright light in the sky that flashed and then went away," she said. "I came here hoping to see more."

Many watchers have UFO stories and each one is treated uncritically.

"People come here because they are free to tell what they saw or what happened without fear of being laughed at," Messoline said.

"Who knows if there are little green men? Some days I firmly believe, other days I have my doubts. My conclusion is, there is something very special about this place."



A SIGN: An alien points the way to UFO observatory.

Are aliens visiting Miami Township?

'Crop Circles' appear in Fox Farm corn field

by Kimm Mote

The News

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Could aliens be checking out the neighborhood at Fox Farm in Miami Township for their next high school?

We'll leave that conclusion to you, but the accompanying picture shows something going on in the corn field. Taken by Miami Township Police Department Major John DiPietro last week while flying in the Channel 7 helicopter, the pattern formation lies in the middle of the corn field on the property which is owned by Miamisburg City Schools and farmed by the Belvo family.

An investigative walk to the pattern revealed no human foot-

prints, no obvious evidence of chemical use, and no evidence of mechanical invasion. All of the downed corn crop lies in a clockwise direction and all of the crops are bent at the root. The widest point of the pattern was stepped off at 50 paces.

Crop circles have raised interesting and controversial discussions around the world for several decades.

Many crop circles have eventually been declared man-made hoaxes. Many, however, remain a mystery.

We may never know the answer to this corn field mystery, but it sure is fun to speculate and think about what just might be out there beyond the stars.



This photo, taken by John DiPietro depicts the crop circles in the Fox Farm corn field.

LIFE & LEISURE, Edmond, OK - July 29, 2004 CR: D. Farris

The Roswell Odyssey

Editor's note: This is the first in a two-part story on Edmond resident David Farris' trip to Roswell, N.M. The final part will publish in next week's issue.

I kept telling my recently married bride, "This isn't our honeymoon. We'll go on a real one later. This is a business trip."

Driving west on Interstate 40 in a rented Cadillac, I was amazed how soon the scenery changed, then changed for the worst after Highway 60 between Amarillo, Texas, and Farwell, N.M.



David Farris

I had never seen this part of the country before. I thought to myself, "Now I know why this land sold for so little after statehood. A tumbleweed could blow east through here until it smacks some Okie in the face."

We were on our way to Roswell, N.M. I had been invited by the International UFO Museum to be a part of its UFO Festival, July 1-4. The museum was hosting a book signing for authors featured in its gift shop, which as of November 2003, included myself.

The annual festival began in 1997, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the crash of something in a rancher's field outside of town. I had seen footage of past UFO festivals. Long before Roswell was known for anything else but the 509th Army Air Force Base or the local cheese factory.

Starting in the spring of 1954, thousands of people met at a giant rock in California's Mojave Desert which marked the annual Giant Rock Space Conventions. Old black-and-white newsreels captured these events, featuring people who themselves appeared out of this world — an old man wearing the head dress of an Indian Chief describing "space brothers."

Then there was the little old lady selling books about her trip to Venus, courtesy of extraterrestrials. I had no

idea exactly what to expect.

A short jog west of Farwell puts you on Highway 70 South out of Clovis, N.M. Only 110 miles left to go on the last leg of our journey. At this point, the natural beauty of the New Mexican desert was spread around us as far as the eye could see. I couldn't help thinking about Billy the Kid traveling this same country on horseback, so much of it unchanged since his days.

Many people don't know this, but there is a connection between Billy the Kid and the Roswell saucer crash. Wayne Brazil was charged with killing Patrick F. Garrett, the former lawman who killed the Kid. Thirty-eight years later, something strange crashed on land owned by Matt Brazil — Wayne's grandson.

After eight hours on the road the sleepy town of Roswell was a welcomed sight.

We arrived at our hotel in time to witness a picture-perfect sunset. The town has laws limiting "light pollution" resulting in a clear night sky. Exhausted, but too excited to sleep, we familiarized ourselves with the town, not much bigger than Edmond.

The festival events were concentrated along Main Street between the UFO Museum and the Civic Center. Restaurants and hotels everywhere displayed signs proclaiming, "Aliens Welcomed." Caricatures of spindly, big-eyed aliens, the type alleged found at the crash site, adorned many store fronts.

In fact it was hard to find anywhere void of an alien presence. The so-called "Greys" have completely replaced Kachina Dolls, Kokopelli and the garden gnome. Even the bulbs of street lamps in the festival area were affixed with large, black, wrap-around eyes to appear more alienesque.

After a junk food dinner it was time to hit the hay. Tomorrow was going to be a big day.

(David Farris is a University of Central Oklahoma graduate with a bachelor's degree in communications. He is the author of "Mysterious Oklahoma," "More Mysterious Oklahoma" and is currently finishing a second edition of his book, "Oklahoma Outlaw Tales." ☺)



Pictured above is artwork displayed in the UFO Museum.

PHOTO PROVIDED

Crop circle pops up

'The most impressive... I've ever seen'

By JAMES CUMMINGS
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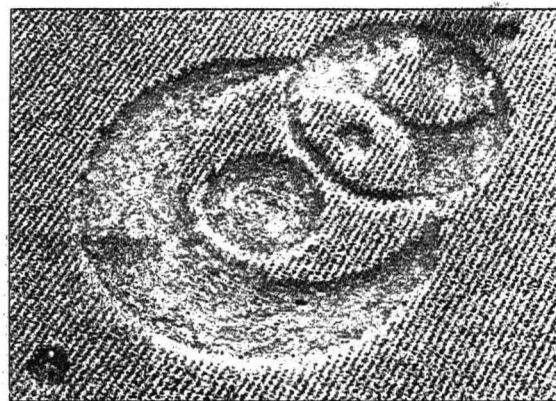
MIAMI TWP., Montgomery County — Fall often brings sightings of mysterious crop circles in Ohio, and this season the Miami Valley has one of its own.

Maj. John DiPietro of the Miami Twp. police department spotted the pattern of interlocking circles pressed into the cornfield about two weeks ago, according to Jay Phares, Miami Twp.'s community resource officer.

DiPietro was riding in a WHIO television news helicopter scouting sites for DUI checkpoints when he saw the circles and snapped a photograph.

The photo appeared on the cover of the *Miamisburg-West Carrollton News* last Thursday and began spreading via the Internet.

The crop circles are in a field owned by the Miamisburg School District, right next door to a Miami Twp. fire station and service garage.



JEFFREY WILSON/FOR THE DAYTON DAILY NEWS

CROP CIRCLES are seen in a field owned by the Miamisburg School District.

Crop circle investigator Jeffrey Wilson called the design found in the field off Linden Avenue just east of the Miamisburg line "the most impressive corn crop formation I've ever seen," and he's seen dozens.

He said he's seen larger, more elaborate designs pressed into crops like wheat or soybeans, but he said he's heard of only one crop circle in a cornfield that was larger than the one in Miami Twp.

"It's impressive not just because of its size, but because of the exactness of the geometry," Wilson said. "I've seen lots of crop circles that were obviously hoaxes, but this one didn't have the signs of mechanical damage to the plants you sometimes see in obvious fakes. The corn stalks were laid flat but not broken and

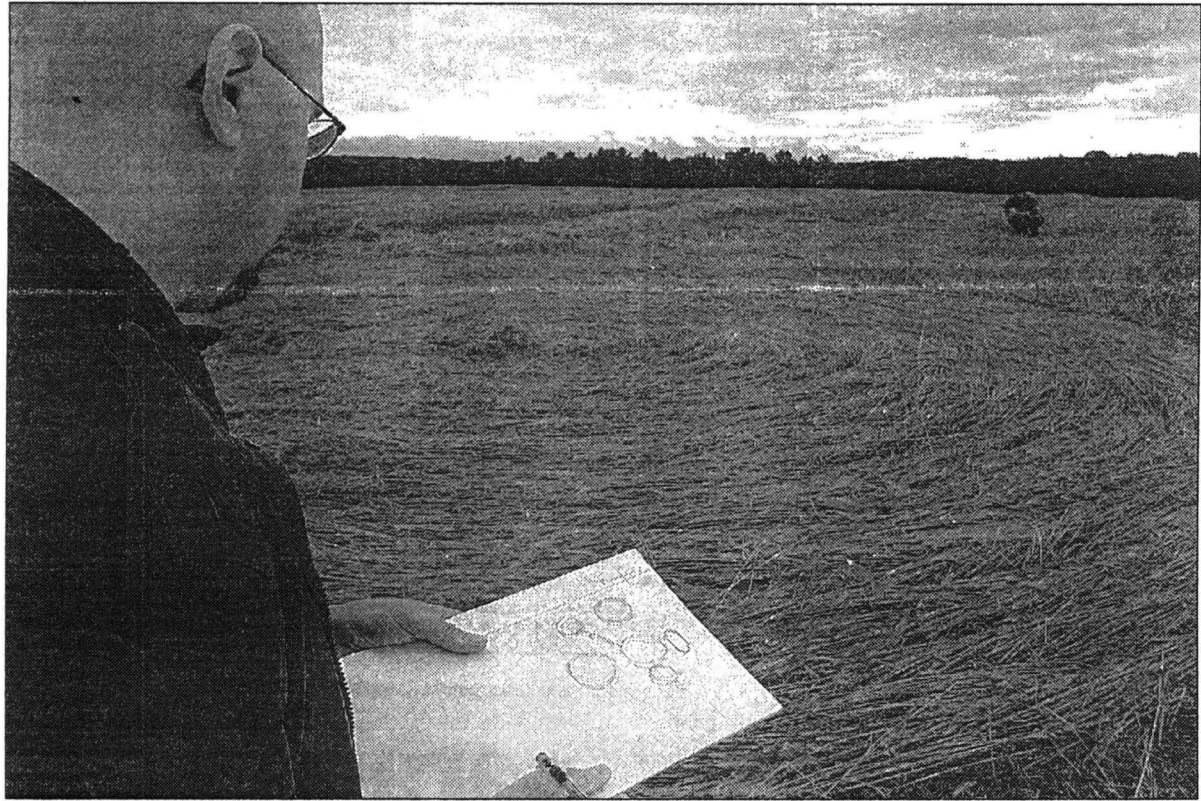
there was some interweaving."

Wilson, who lives in Williamsburg east of Cincinnati, is the director of a volunteer group called the Independent Crop Circle Researchers Association. He said he became intrigued with crop circles in 1989 and has been visiting sites to examine the formations scientifically since 1996.

Miami Twp. Service Administrator Jim Woolf said several people, apparently tipped to the location via the Internet, showed up Tuesday to see the circles.

"We had license plates from northern Ohio, Illinois, all over," Woolf said. "I don't think any of my guys have been out in the field to see it, though. We had people coming from Illinois, but we didn't feel it was worth going next door for."

Jury still out on origin of farmer's crop circles



PHOTOS BY BUTCH MCCARTNEY/WAUSAU DAILY HERALD

Terry Fisk makes a rough sketch Saturday of the crop circles on Scott Worden's farm.

Investigators look for signs that formations were a hoax

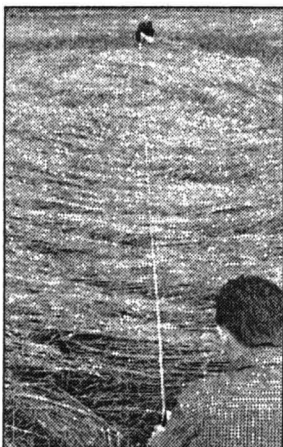
BY AMY KIMMES
WAUSAU DAILY HERALD
AKIMMES@WDHPRINT.COM

TOWN OF WAUSAU — Scott Worden won't say for sure whether he believes in the paranormal, but he doesn't dismiss the idea either.

That's why Worden, a longtime dairy farmer, agreed to have two paranormal investigators inspect six crop circles Saturday that were found by a farmhand Monday in Worden's barley field.

"Everybody thinks I'm nuts, but I just want to know what caused it. I know cows more than I know circles," said Worden, 37, through a sheepish grin. Worden runs the farm with his brother, Tim, and father, Darrell.

Paranormal investigator Terry Fisk of Eau Claire said he would first and foremost be looking for evidence that showed the formations were a hoax.



Investigators measure a set of crop circles found Saturday at Scott Worden's farm.

On the Web

For more on paranormal investigations and investigators Chad Lewis and Terry Fisk, log on to chadlewis.com. Log on to weird-wi.com for information on ghosts, aliens, UFOs, oddities, the occult and more.

"You usually can tell how the crops have been laid down and if there is damage to the crops," said Fisk, 49, who in July investigated crop circles found in Chipewa Falls. Usually, plants are bent, not broken in crop circles whose causes are difficult to explain. In obviously hoaxed circles, the grains are broken.

The two arrived at the site around 9 a.m. Saturday morning with cameras and tape measures. They also brought a Geiger counter, which measures radioactivity, and a TriField meter, an instrument that measures magnetic, electrical and radio waves, as well as microwaves.

They were disappointed to find that the field had been harvested with a combine after the circles were created. It also appeared that many people had walked through the field.

"We like to compare the crop inside the circles to the crop outside the circles," said paranormal investigator Chad Lewis of Eau Claire, who has been investigating crop circles for 10 years.

"Obviously, since this has been cut, we can't do that."

The circles' proximity to the road — about 50 feet — could indicate a hoax.

"Maybe someone wants it to be noticed, plus, it's easy access," said Fisk, who, along with Lewis, hosts a radio program called "The Unexplained" that airs weekly in the Eau Claire area.

Even the lack of activity found on the investigators' TriField meter could indicate a sham. But the duo won't dismiss the phenomenon as such at this point.

The waves the meter detects could have dissipated between the time the crop circles formed and today, Lewis said.

Town chairman Jim Riehle, who was looking at the crop circles Saturday morning, is convinced the crop circles are the real deal.

"I used to listen to Art Bell on the radio all the time," Riehle said. "I don't think this is a hoax. I'm a grain farmer. When you walk through a field like this, you leave footprints, and you can still see them three days later. There aren't any footprints around here, no tracks to show where people would have come in."

Bell hosted a nationally syndicated all-night radio show called "Coast to Coast AM" in the 1990s and from time to time from 2001 to 2003. The show, which is still on the air with a different host, deals with tales of the supernatural, the paranormal and weird.

Crop circles, most of which are found to be easily

explainable hoaxes, can be formed with a rope, a board and a couple of people.

You attach the rope to the board, step on the board and move in a circle, Fisk said. It usually takes two people, with one person standing on the end of the board at the center of the circle.

The crop circle investigation won't stop with Saturday's probe, which is considered preliminary work by the paranormal investigators.

They say they'll also check with Wisconsin Public Service for reports of power outages in the area around the same time the crop circles were formed. They'll also ask airport officials whether pilots have reported other circles in the area and find out if police received word of any UFO sightings.

Later, they'll send in soil and crop samples to BLT Crop Circle Investigations in Cambridge, Mass., for testing. Results from the lab work will not be available until spring 2005.



Scott Worden



Terry Fisk



Chad Lewis

'MR. INVESTIGATOR SCIENTIST'



Gary Goldsmith/DAILY REPUBLIC

Steve Moreno, founder of the Fairfield research firm, Psi Applications, investigates paranormal activities in Solano County.

Pilot to the paranormal

Fairfield resident lives to explain the unexplained

By Warren Lutz
DAILY REPUBLIC

FAIRFIELD — Thirty years ago, Steve Moreno stood near the gates of Travis Air Force Base, trying to come to grips with his psychic experiences.

For the first 21 years of his life, strange things happened to Moreno. He saw things other people couldn't. Odd weather patterns sometimes followed him. And he couldn't control any of it.

"It was pretty strange, because I had nothing I could really ground with it, or relate it to," he said. "So I felt quite different, to say the least."

Moreno had met people who had similar experiences. But that night, as he watched the jets cut through the sky,

depression began taking root. Maybe it was all in his head.

Minutes later, as he drove toward a local pool hall, Moreno's Dodge Roadrunner struck the center of the road and started to flip, end over end. Stuck upside down inside his vehicle, Moreno found himself pleading for his life.

"I said, 'Look, I'll never be depressed again,'" he recalled. "Just let me walk away from everything."

From psychic to science

Now 49, Moreno has a successful contracting business, keeps a tidy home on the edge of the military base, and has a wife and two kids. He laughs easily and listens well.

He also believes in UFOs, extraterrestrials and a satellite government. In fact, he doesn't just believe in such things. He has proof they exist, he said.

In the nearly 30 years since his near-death experience, Moreno has become Solano County's leading expert on all things paranormal and supernatural. Only now, he uses only science, not psychic ability, to explain such things as crop circles and straying spirits.

Since his accident, "I was no longer the out-of-control psychic," Moreno said. "I became Mr. Investigator Scientist . . . and I had the best of both worlds going for me because I already knew what being a psychic was all about."

His years of research came in handy when the largest crop circle formation in North American history appeared in a Rockville wheat field last year.

Through Psi Applications, the nonprofit paranormal research firm he runs from his home, Moreno collected chaffs of wheat and networked with more experienced crop circle researchers to explain who or what was behind the phenomenon.

"He is very dedicated investigator," said Ruben Uriarte, the Northern California director of the Mutual UFO Network who studied the circles with Moreno.

"When phenomena occurs in his backyard, Steve becomes a very key individual."

He set a precedent, too, by setting up a live Internet telecast from the wheat field, allowing researchers and interested parties from around the world to see the phenomenon, Uriarte said.

"That really opened the doors," Uriarte said. "Now other people can witness (such events) live."

Battling closed minds

While many of the researchers he works with have academic credentials and scientific backgrounds, Moreno is first to admit he doesn't have either.

He rather likes it that way. "Right now . . . I don't really pose any real threat to people that are involved in the intelligence community because they look at me and say, he's just a contractor and he's not going to go anywhere with it."

But what Moreno doesn't know, he learns from others, said crop circle researcher Jeffery Wilson, who describes Moreno as a meticulous researcher.

"Steve has gone out of his way to archive just about every paranormal thing that has ever hit the media," said Wilson, who holds a masters degree in general science from Eastern Michigan University.

"Since the crop circles came down in his county last year, he has sought out expert advice from people who have been studying crop circles for a long time," Wilson added. "He had really gone out of his way to learn as much as he could."

But with such work comes frustration. Hoaxes and claims of hoaxes often provide fuel for skeptics.

Two weeks after the Rockville crop circles were found, four teens claimed they made them out of boredom. Although they could offer little proof, many people — and some of the media — bought their story.

"People are afraid of what they don't know," Moreno said. "But if it's presented to them in the right manner, I think people are more than ready to understand there are other things that are beyond our current paradigms of science and theology."

Recording the abnormal

Crop circles are only part of Moreno's work with the supernatural.

For years, Moreno has investigated UFO sightings and "presences" rumored to exist in some of Solano County's oldest buildings.

Several years ago, for example, Moreno staked out the Vallejo Naval and Historical Museum after a employee caught something strange on camera. Enhanced frames of the shots show two illuminated faces looking downward.

On more than one occasion, Moreno

has seen supernatural occurrences first hand.

Several years ago, before a guest spot on the supernatural radio program "Coast to Coast AM," "this craft came over the house and started doing all these gyrations," he said. "I went up on the roof with my camcorder and that spot beam right there and flashed at it."

"The thing stopped in midair and started doing all these mutations and everything."

Moreno's tools — some of them handmade — include temperature gauges, Polaroid cameras (for tamper-proof images), and infrared motion detectors covered with black boxes to detect items that don't move in front of the devices, but through them.

Psi Application's Web site, www.psiapplications.com, is stacked with findings, Moreno's and others.

"All I am is just the messenger," he said. "I'm not creating any of this, it already exists. I've just brought all this documentation together and brought to one point."

Where we're headed

After years of research, Moreno has discovered common threads in his findings.

He also believes the Earth's resources are quickly running out — but that humans could be saved by a benevolent intelligence from beyond.

"All roads point to 2012 being the point of no return," he said.

"We'll still survive, it's not going to be like, 'lights out.' It's going to be a slow burn in hell. All the money and all the

power in the world is not going to make a darn bit of difference."

If people find Moreno's research and outlook strange, few share it with him.

After the Rockville circles appeared, Moreno was a guest on the Sacramento radio talk show "Armstrong and Getty."

"They were trying to poke fun at me a little bit," he said.

They asked Moreno if he was "a nut." "I didn't respond," he said. "I just let them sit there for a minute. Then I said, 'Well, no, I don't think so. I think I'm a regular person and I'm just trying to bring some information forward.'"

Moreno often spends more than 40 hours a week running Psi Applications. Although it's a nonprofit, he is looking for seed money or a grant so he can work full-time on paranormal investigations.

In fact, expanding people's views of the supernatural was part of the deal he made with the "source" he spoke to in the moments after his car accident.

And when he made that deal, he said, his car door opened, and Moreno was pulled out of the wreck on his back.

As he would many more nights ahead Moreno found staring at the sky.

"The stars," he said, "never looked so beautiful in my entire life."

Reach Warren Lutz at 427-6955 or wulutz@dailyrepublic.net.

Rotary quiet about UFO sightings

By BRANDI BARRHITE
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SANDUSKY

If Sandusky Rotarians have seen a UFO or alien, they aren't talking about it. But that's to be expected.

UFO investigator John Timmerman said that a wife won't even tell her husband because he might think she's "not put together right."

However, "There is other life in the universe," Timmerman assured Rotarians during their weekly lunch meeting. "We aren't alone."

Timmerman, Lakeview, Ohio, a retired businessman with a degree in sociology from Cornell University, was Thursday's guest speaker.

In 1980, Timmerman became the chairman and treasurer of the Center for UFO Studies, Chicago, and created the traveling UFO photo exhibit research project.

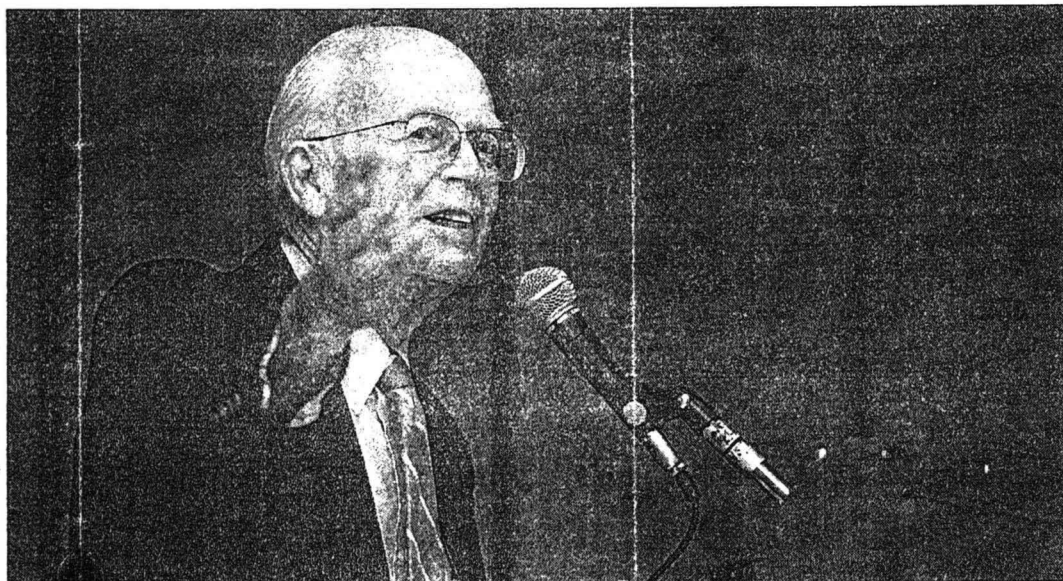
He retired as chairman in 1985, but still serves as the public relations vice president, treasurer of the center and manager of the photo exhibit project.

"I have never had a UFO experience," Timmerman said, but he said he has talked to thousands of people who have.

Timmerman told Rotarians they can talk to him about their unexplainable experiences. He also offered to lend them a two-hour video about having experiences they can't explain.

"This should be looked at seriously and not as a joke," he said.

One woman at the meeting didn't want to give her name to the Register because people might think she's crazy, but said she has had three UFO sightings.



John Timmerman of the J. Allen Hynek Center for UFO Studies addresses the Sandusky Rotary at their luncheon Thursday afternoon at the IAB Club.

Register photo/JASON WERLING

"I didn't know what they were," she said. "I couldn't explain it."

Another Sandusky woman had her first experience when she was in ninth grade. She came to the luncheon specifically to talk with Timmerman.

Although one of the sightings was on Cleveland Road, she said some people may

not have seen it.

"The ones who are meant to see it, will," she said.

Timmerman said nine local people contacted him by letter or phone before Thursday to talk about their UFO experiences. He hasn't had time to research them yet.

Rotary guest Norm Winkel hasn't had a UFO experience, but isn't ashamed to say he is interested in the topic.

"I have always been fascinated by it," Winkel said.

To contact Timmerman, call 937-843-3834 or write him at P.O. Box 1621 Lima, OH 45802.

CHRONICLE, San Francisco, CA - Aug. 16, 2004 CR: J. Laurino

Flying saucers in New Mexico? Governor rekindles Roswell

By Keay Davidson
CHRONICLE SCIENCE WRITER

Ten years after the U.S. Air Force closed its books on the claim that a UFO crashed in Roswell, N.M., in 1947, a top Democratic Party figure wants to reopen the investigation into the cosmic legend.

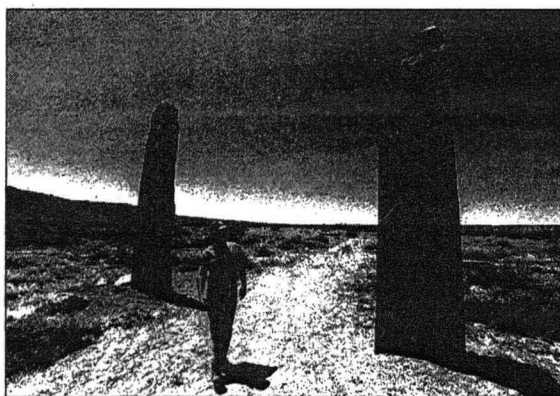
Despite denials by federal officials, many UFO buffs cherish the notion that in early summer of 1947, a flying saucer crashed in rural Roswell, scattering alien bodies and saucer debris across the terrain.

Now Gov. Bill Richardson of New Mexico, who chaired the recent Democratic convention in Boston, says in his foreword to a new book that "the mystery surrounding this crash has never been adequately explained — not by independent investigators, and not by the U.S. government. . . . There are as many theories as there are official explanations.

"Clearly, it would help everyone if the U.S. government disclosed everything it knows," says Richardson, who served as Energy secretary under President Bill Clinton. "The American people can handle the truth — no matter how bizarre or mundane. . . . With full disclosure and our best scientific investigation, we should be able to find out what happened on that fateful day in July 1947."

The passage appears in a paperback titled "The Roswell Dig Diaries," published in collaboration with TV's SciFi Channel by Pocket Books, a division of Simon & Schuster. The "dig" of the title refers to an archaeological dig at the supposed crash site.

A Richardson aide, Billy Sparks, confirmed the governor's remarks. Richardson "is interested in either debunking the story or (encouraging) full disclosure" of any unreleased records on the



CHRIS STEWART / The Chronicle 1997



U.S. AIR FORCE / Undated

Top: A man walks past obelisks marking the site where some claim a UFO crashed in Roswell. **Above:** An old Air Force photo shows a bag containing a test dummy; some claim it held alien victims.

case, Sparks said.

To the Air Force, though, there is no mystery — and there hasn't been for a long time. In 1994, the Air Force published "Roswell Report: Case Closed," which asserted that so-called saucer debris was, in fact, the ruins of an unusual type of military research balloon, which contained hypersensitive acoustic sensors designed to detect the rumble of any Soviet A-bomb tests. A subsequent investigation by the U.S. General Accounting Office was unable to locate any unreleased records on the case.

Hence, Richardson's foreword

drew scorn from veteran UFO investigators and science popularizers.

"We're kind of disappointed in Richardson for perpetuating the mythology of that thing," said Dave Thomas, president of New Mexicans for Science and Reason, a skeptics group in Albuquerque.

The grand old man of skeptical UFO investigators, Philip J. Klass, who has written for Aviation Week & Space Technology since 1952, said: "Gov. Richardson — whom I previously admired — is wrong about Roswell and too trusting of TV network



Gov. Bill Richardson said the mystery of Roswell "has never been adequately explained."

promoters. After more than a third of a century of research, I have found no credible evidence of extraterrestrial visitors."

Andrew Fraknoi, a noted astronomy popularizer and critic of pseudoscience who teaches at Foothill College in Los Altos Hills, called Richardson's foreword unbelievable.

"This continues to confirm that election or appointment to high office does not guarantee wisdom in all areas of human thought," he said.

But in a show of extraterrestrial bipartisanship, the executive director of the New Mexico Republican Party is taking Richardson's side. Greg Graves, a native of Roswell who suspects the crashed object was "something more than a weather balloon," wants to know what really happened in the Southwestern desert two years before his birth.

Still, Graves hopes the truth isn't disillusioning. That's because the saucer legend is so good for the local economy: "Thousands of people come to Roswell every year to visit the site and go to the museum. It's an incredible boon to the Roswell economy. Just think about 'X Files' and TV shows about Roswell."

"When I go around the country and tell people I was born in Roswell," he adds, "people ask: 'Do I think something crashed there?'"

E-mail Keay Davidson at kdavidson@sichronicle.com.

Odyssey to Roswell

Part 2

Editor's note: This is the last in a two-part story on Edmond resident David Farris' trip to Roswell, N.M.

I had to be at the Civic Center by 10 a.m. I stepped from the parking lot into a large room where the book signings and most lectures were scheduled. Along the west wall was the speaker's podium facing about 100 chairs.

Along the east wall were a series of smaller rooms for workshops. Between this area and the remaining wall space were many 2x6 foot tables for the 20 authors in attendance, and to accommodate a few displays.



David Farris

Sandy James, the museum gift shop manager and festival Civic Center organizer, was there to greet me. She showed me around, then led me to my table. I was so excited about being part of the festival I hadn't the heart to tell her my name on the table was misspelled (Farris). That's OK, it was spelled right in the program and on my books. In just moments, I would be rubbing elbows with UFO Royalty.

It is important to keep in mind that many of the participants' claims must be taken at face value. In keeping with the spirit of the festival I will reserve judgment for one reason, I wasn't there when any alleged events took place.

The first person I recognized from her many television and documentary appearances was Leah Haley. A CPA with a master's degree who became involved with the UFO phenomenon after her abduction experiences with

aliens. Her husband, who was scheduled to attend but couldn't make it, is Marc Davenport, an author and UFO researcher for more than 25 years.

Next to make an appearance was Apollo 14 astronaut Dr. Edgar Mitchell, who was speaking later that evening. Gwynyth Walsh and Barbara Scarfe, who play the buxom Duras Sisters on "Star Trek: The Next Generation," were also on hand to great attendees.

However, I had yet to meet the one person I wanted to have my picture taken with more than anyone. Then suddenly, without fanfare, he modestly entered the room and began setting up his table. Stanton Friedman is a nuclear physicist and the world's preeminent authority on UFOs and the Roswell crash. He has been featured in almost every UFO documentary I've ever seen. I have hours of his interviews at home on video and audio tape.

Within the UFO community he enjoys rock star status. I introduced myself to him, mentioning we have a few friends in common.

Then, like a tourist at Disneyland, I asked if he'd pose with me while my wife took a picture. He happily obliged, leading me to believe he's dealt with star-struck fans in the past. Later that day, he lectured for an hour to a standing-room only crowd.

Despite suffering from laryngitis and a sound system on the fritz, the room became silent as the audience strained to hear his every word.

Things began to break up around 5 p.m. Between yesterday's drive and dealing with the crowds all day I was needing a nap — but it would have to be a quick one. Sandy had given us tickets to this evening's concert featur-

ing the Drifters, the Platters and the Temptations. The show took place under the stars at the soccer complex that was formerly an airplane field.

It was here at sunset, I noticed something unusual in the sky, just above the eastern horizon. At first I thought it was the orange glow of a fireworks display — then I thought, maybe a neon decoration. Suddenly I realized, "Holy cow! It's the moon!"

It was the biggest, most beautiful full moon I had ever seen. What a perfect accent to the weekend festival. It was a wonderful show, despite being a "beer-free" event (as opposed to a "free beer" event). I was forced to placate myself with barbecue pork ribs.

There was also a concert Saturday night at the fairgrounds featuring Merle Haggard and Willie Nelson. However, it wasn't sponsored by the museum, so Sandy didn't have tickets. She was working on another event for tomorrow evening.

The following morning, we finally were able to visit the museum. Formerly a movie theater, it has been transformed into a shrine for all things UFO. The first display deals with the "Roswell Incident" and the ensuing timeline of events.

In addition are a series of displays featuring earlier, famous UFO photos, crop circles, and even statements made about UFOs by past American presidents. The walls of the museum are adorned with artwork depicting spaceships and their pilots. It is possible to take in the whole museum,

including the gift shop in less than an hour.

This, however does not include the research library. I could have spent days exploring classic UFO literature and documentaries from the 1950s and '60s. It was during this period when the U.S. Air Force was in the business of investigating UFOs. Whether or not you believe in extraterrestrial visitation, the official investigations were quite real.

In Roswell, for some reason, they have their parades at night. One of the floats featured was from the UFO museum, and any author who wanted could ride it and wave a glow stick. Now regularly, I'm not a "ride on the float" kind of guy, however this was Roswell. When else would I have such an opportunity.

Anna and I pulled up at the last minute to board the somewhat rickety contraption. As long as I didn't lean back on the cardboard aliens and braced my feet along the bottom rail, I was pretty sure I wouldn't fall off. The sidewalks along Main Street were packed with spectators as the parade pulled forward.

Down the 13-block route, the glowing float emerged through plumes of smoke creating an eerie effect. At the same time, at least seven planes crisscrossed the sky overhead, flying in close proximity to simulate an invasion. Everything came together to create quite a spectacle.

After the parade, it was time to enjoy our last night in town. Along Main there were people everywhere.

Odd lights seen over Marshfield

By MATT CONN
For the Daily Tribune

MARSHFIELD — So it's unidentified, and it flies, and it's an object — that simply means it's inexplicable, not that it's a UFO filled with little green women.

In the past two weeks, Marshfield-area residents have reported unusual lights and objects in the night sky, some accompanied by what looked like fighter jets.

On the night of Sept. 23, Eric Dickmann sat at a bonfire with friends and family at his home in the town of Day. Three lights in a triangle burned bright in the sky for about four seconds and then they disappeared, he said last week.

Ten minutes later, the bright lights reappeared and moved the same way, Dickmann said. He said that what the eight people at the bonfire saw that night was the same as what his son saw the Thursday before, while driving south from Spencer. That sighting was accompa-

nied by what looked like a fighter jet, he said.

Dan Young of the town of Cary, chief photographer at the Marshfield News-Herald, said Thursday that he had seen similar lights on several occasions, as recently as Tuesday.

The lights moved close together, then went away, he said.

"Tuesday night, the white lights came close together, and I could see aircraft lights, kind of like warning lights," he said. "I thought this was probably something that most likely could be easily explained after the second time. It looked like, my guess is, helicopters that came together in the sky and went their separate ways."

About 95 percent of all Americans have heard or read something about unidentified flying objects, and 57 percent believe alien craft are real, according to a Central Intelligence Agency report in 1997.

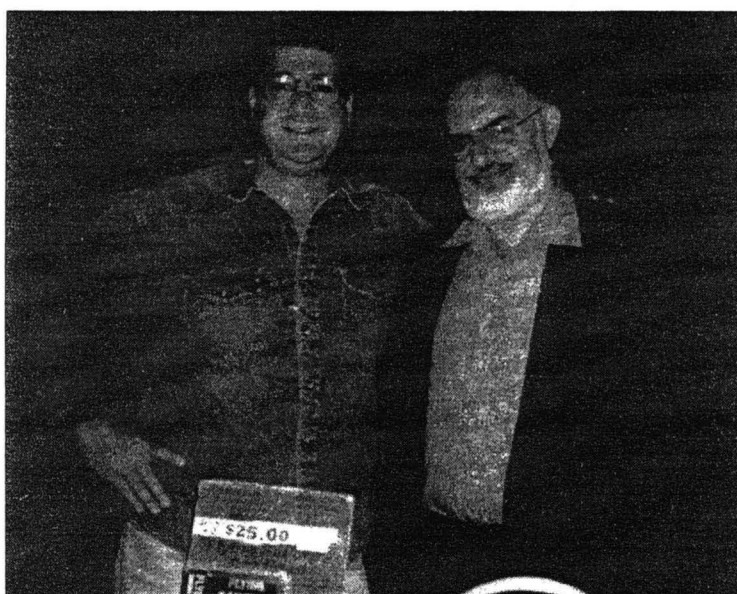


PHOTO PROVIDED
David Farris, left, had the opportunity to meet Stanton Friedman, a nuclear physicist and the world's preeminent authority on UFOs and the Roswell crash, at the festival.

Festival-goers mingled as a local band played in the background. Vendors had set up tent cities, selling food and souvenirs. We saw as much as we could, then we headed back to the hotel and packed. Tomorrow, after my lecture, it was time to head home.

For us, the festival was over.

I'm glad to report there were no comparisons between Roswell and the Giant Rock gatherings from decades earlier. The lectures and workshops were professional and dig-

nified. It seems that the UFO mystery in America has come of age. However, I don't want things to become too serious.

After all, what is the point of a festival if you can't have fun.

(David Farris is a University of Central Oklahoma graduate with a bachelor's degree in communications. He is the author of "Mysterious Oklahoma," "More Mysterious Oklahoma" and is currently finishing a second edition of his book, "Oklahoma Outlaw Tales." ☺)



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

WEEKLY NEWS, Newbury, England - Aug. 5, 2004

Mystery over fireball UFO burns on

A MYSTERY fireball dubbed the Hungerford UFO has continued to baffle residents.

And the strange visitor to the West Berkshire skies may have been spotted more than 40 years ago.

Former Inkpen Common resident Mike Bridgewater read our account of the sightings on the Internet from his new home in Edinburgh, Scotland.

He told the *Newbury Weekly News* of an incident that has puzzled him and his friends since 1960.

Another caller, who asked not to be named, suggested the fireball could have been a boating flare since some young people were heard threatening to ignite one at around the time of one incident.

But the latest reported sighting, by Mrs Valerie Panting of Kingsclere,

suggests the truth is still out there.

The *NWN* first reported the mystery fireball on July 22 when our web designer Chris Day photographed a fiery object as it traversed the Hungerford skies.

Police launched a search helicopter and firefighters scoured the scene where residents feared the object must have crashed. No debris or impact site was found.

Since then, callers have reported many more sightings, with some reporting a solid structure with the glow.

Mr Bridgewater said: "My wife, who was then Marian Jordan, and our friend John Bance, all lived on Inkpen Common in 1960.

"John worked for Peter Stirling Motorcycles in Hungerford and had been working late, so Marian and I picked him up from work and

drove back from to Inkpen from Hungerford via Kintbury."

He added: "As we drove out of Kintbury, over the hill before you get to what was Christchurch School, we saw the fireball.

"We stopped the car, got out and stood watching it make what can only be described as a controlled descent."

Mr Bridgewater went on: "We were facing Hungerford, or to the north of the town, and watched it for what seemed like several minutes."

The three friends were so alarmed by what they had seen they telephoned the police.

Mr Bridgewater said: "As far as we were concerned, that was the end of it. This was more than 40 years ago, yet all three of us remember it very clearly."

"When I read your article on the net I sent it to John Bance, who immediately responded to

confirm that he clearly remembered it."

Mrs Panting said that she and her husband had spotted the object around six weeks ago on the A339 as they headed home to Kingsclere.

The astonished couple watched it traverse the sky and appear to go down behind the village. Mrs Panting said: "We were just waiting for an explosion but nothing happened.

"We first saw it above Pithall Farm, about two or three miles out of Kingsclere, and then over Sandford Springs Golf Club. It went right across the A339, about quarter of a mile in front of our car."

Mrs Panting said there appeared to be a solid structure and that it was travelling too fast for it to have been a hot air balloon.

She added: "It appeared to be the size of a light aircraft."

ECHO, Loughborough, England - June 25, 2004

'Devil in road' man helped by Echo readers

ITALIAN Pasqualino Cassella, the Loughborough man at the epicentre of the spiritual storm concerning alleged strange happenings on the B676 road near Prestwold, this week said: "Thanks to the *Echo* I know I'm not alone."

Mr Cassella began the controversy by telling the *Echo* his car had been taken up into the air and he had seen a 'devil-like' creature when travelling along the road and asked whether any other local people had experienced anything strange there.

Since then we have published a story concerning Loughborough man Lez Cope-Newman, whose car was written off in mysterious circumstances, and near-neighbour Robert Fielding, who has also encountered spiritual trouble on the same stretch of road.

Mr Cassella said: "I do feel better because I'm not the only one, but I still can't explain what happened to me."

HERALD EXPRESS, Torquay, England - May 28, 2004

Was 'UFO' just a happy couple?

By PAUL JAMES

TWO life-size blow up dolls used at a wedding in Torquay may have been the UFOs which caused a stir across the resort on Tuesday evening.

Eddie Lee-Danby, who works at the Grosvenor Hotel in Belgrave Road, admitted today: "It might have been us."

He revealed that he and his colleagues could well have been guilty of sparking the flying saucer frenzy which the *Herald Express* reported yesterday.

Readers rang in excitedly to declare they had seen a mysterious object in the

sky over the Bay. Some had pictures to prove it.

But now Eddie reckons he can rule out Martians and weather balloons as the likely explanations for the apparition.

He is confident the helium-filled "wedding guests" — a suitably attired man and woman — were the fly-away culprits. They were leftovers from a wedding at the hotel on Saturday.

"They are used as decorations at receptions. They were still around on Tuesday, so we decided to let them

go for a laugh. We thought they would end up at Land's End or beyond," he said.

The happy couple, who had been hugging the ceiling, were duly launched in the morning and flew off towards Paignton before a change in wind direction brought them back over Torquay.

He says the woman was silver-coloured while her chap was brown.

All witnesses said the object they saw was dark and long, but none could guess how large they were because they were confused by the distances involved.

One said the end of his UFO had a tinge of yellow, which Eddie confirmed was the hair colour of the inflated gentleman.

The dome shape in the middle of the cylindrical-shaped figure seen by another may have been flapping limbs, Eddie suggested.

"The dolls were bought from a shop in Lucius Street. They were used for a wedding on Saturday. They were about 6-7ft tall," explained Eddie.

One witness estimated his UFO was at 10,000ft and probably the size of a Jumbo jet.

No one saw the object moving at any great speed. And no one reported seeing two of them.

Adam Nesbit, who lives in Starpitten Grove, Watcombe, insists that what he saw was not a balloon, and definitely not in human form.

"All I do know is that it was an object I could not identify. If it was a balloon it would not be moving in the way this cigar-shaped object was. It was far too big to be a blow-up doll," he said.

Herald reader Douglas Day said: "There is absolutely no doubt this was not an illusion. My wife and I definitely saw this over Torquay at around 6pm. I went into the house to get my binoculars. It seemed to stay in one place for about 10 minutes then moved on to stay in another place for one or two minutes and then disappeared."

Alison Cutts said she saw the same shaped object last year.

"It seemed to stay motionless in the sky for about 20 minutes and then it just disappeared. I live just outside Ipplepen and I would imagine it was in the distance above Newton or Kingskerswell," she recalled.

She added: "I remember it very well and even called my husband and father-in-law out to have a look at it."

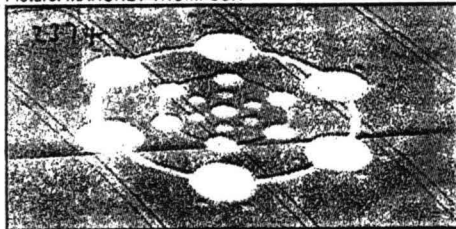
"We wondered if it was some sort of balloon but it did not seem to move at all and then it was just gone. I told a few people about it but they just thought I was mad so I didn't think any more about it till I saw the *Herald Express* story."

One theory is the "thing" was an '8 metre solar airship' sold in shops for under £13.

The mystery continues.

KENT ON SUNDAY, Ashford, Kent, England - July 25, 2004

Picture: MAHONEY-THOMPSON



THIS is the crop circle at Burham which is puzzling scientists and UFO hunters. The complicated design, divided into six shapes and made up of 31 circles, was spotted in the field between Maidstone and Chatham, last week.

It is in roughly the same place where two crop circles appeared in July 2003. People who stood in the middle of the larger of the two created last year, which looked like a Star of St David, said they felt giddy.

Last week Kent on Sunday investigated the crop circle phenomenon after the National Farmers' Union claimed most of the shapes were man-made hoaxes.

WEEKLY NEWS, Newbury, England - July 29, 2004

News in brief

More sightings of 'fireball'

SPECULATION continues over the strange night time sights in the skies over Hungerford after last week's report in the *Newbury Weekly News* about the mystery fireball.

At about 10.30pm last Monday, several of the town's residents contacted the emergency services saying they thought they had seen a burning aircraft, but after a comprehensive search of the area around Hungerford and up to the M4, fire engines and a police helicopter were unable to find anything.

Since then, many people claim to have seen the same thing in the sky several weeks before.

Possibilities for the object range from aircraft, illicit night time hot air balloons to meteorites and UFOs.

Are there mysterious signs of extraterrestrial life in England?
Or some guys with surveyor's tape and a stomping board?

A walk on the weird side

BY EDWARD WILKINSON-LATHAM

For the last two hours I've been in the company of three wanted men. We're driving in a hurry, southwest from London. We pass a sign: "Welcome to Wiltshire."

There are some that would consider my travel companions heretics, others who might call them outlaws. Matt, Luke and Ross (not their real names), each have a price on their head and various local police, bounty hunters and farmers have tried to ensnare them. They are not members of organized crime nor occultists out to rustle a sheep for an evening's bloodletting. They are Plankers, better known as Crop Circle Hoaxers.

Under the cover of darkness, these arable artists have been making crop circle patterns in fields, or Crop Glyphs, for more than 10 years, leading many to speculate that extraterrestrial craft do in fact visit the green fields of southern England.

While Wiltshire has been a leading hub of crop circle activity and UFO sightings for the past 30 years, its rich lineage of unexplained phenomena and neolithic sites makes it especially ripe for the hoaxers. Weirdness abounds with stories of witches, large wild cats, ghosts, lights in the sky and mystical energy fields.

Remnants of the recent and very distant past dot the county. Some date as far back as the Copper Age. Local tumuli (stone burial mounds) and menhirs (large, single upright standing stones) are likely related to the ceremonial stone circles at Avebury Henge, once the heart of megalithic Britain. Stonehenge stands only 32 kilometres away, directly connected to Avebury along a powerful ley line — paths of unknown energy current that run through the Earth in straight lines, inexplicably linking many sacred sites around the world.

Then there's Boscombe Down, a secret military facility in the area for the development and testing of aircraft, weapons and avionics. Not surprisingly, it's been suggested that experimental technology is the source of the strange lights and flying objects in the skies.

The believers, conspiracy theorists, investigators and the merely curious are not the only ones to sup from this alchemy of the outlandish — the hoaxers do, too. And so, too, do tourists. Wiltshire is becoming a popular travel destination for a variety of rea-

sons. Its weirdness certainly adds an element of allure, but so does the many neolithic monuments and the gorgeous rambling countryside, perfect for hiking and bike riding. The town of Salisbury, a hub for the region, boasts historic architecture and a vibrant culture that happily blends the rural and the urbane.

It just so happens that each year's bounty of crop circles appear from May to September, when travel is at its peak. Locals can take guided tours and helicopter rides over the glyphs.

By the time we arrive at our chosen site, we're behind schedule. As we squat behind a hedgerow, I study the tools of a crop circle artist. The simplicity of the kit is astounding: surveyor's tape, tent poles, string and a luminous watch with hands to plot degrees. And, of course, a four-foot plank with a rope looped through two holes at each end — a simple thing at the heart of so much intrigue.

Rather than crushing the crop to gain entry to the field, and thus leave a footprint, we follow Luke

as they follow the outline.

Meanwhile, Ross is studying the paper printout of the design they plotted on a self-made computer program. The tapes are adjusted and rods are inserted into the Earth at the radial points of the circle. I look at the design on the sheet, still keeping one eye and one ear on the surrounding darkness, as Ross whispers something about six-fold geometry and harmonic universal proportions. I don't understand a thing.

I watch Matt and Luke as they sweep the crop aside and twist the boards across it to create half-swirls rather than merely flattened wheat. One of the things that cause cropies to believe the circles are of non-human origin is the fact that they actually do minimal damage to a farmer's field; the wheat stalks are folded down so they are still able to grow. Watching the boys at it, there looks to be considerable skill involved.

I take hold of one of the tapes as Ross makes a number of outlines and arcs around me at various lengths and points from the first circle, using string as a marker. Matt and Luke soon undertake similar tasks on other plotted points. As we work I notice the moonlight illuminates a good portion of the field.

The stomping is more arduous than I had thought. I try to emulate what the others are doing, repeating the same body movement, pressing down and moving the plank aside slightly to spiral the wheat stalks. Taking smaller steps and adjusting my stance, I fall into a hypnotic dance, repeatedly stepping the right foot in front of the left, occasionally looking up at the night sky wondering if anything, anyone is watching.

Over the next two hours of creative geometry and precision stomping, the circle begins to fully appear. Smaller circles take minutes, while a secondary larger circle is flattened in 15 minutes as we form a two-tiered stomping method. As Matt, Luke and Ross put the finishing touches to the design, I put down my plank and walk within the formation, admiring its proportions and the flow from arcs to crescents, every circle flattened with the same organized spiral pattern.

I feel a little guilty about the farmer's crop but know that some can earn considerable pocket change from charging an entrance fee to curious cropies.

■ Excerpted from the November/December issue of *Outpost*, on newsstands on Oct. 8.

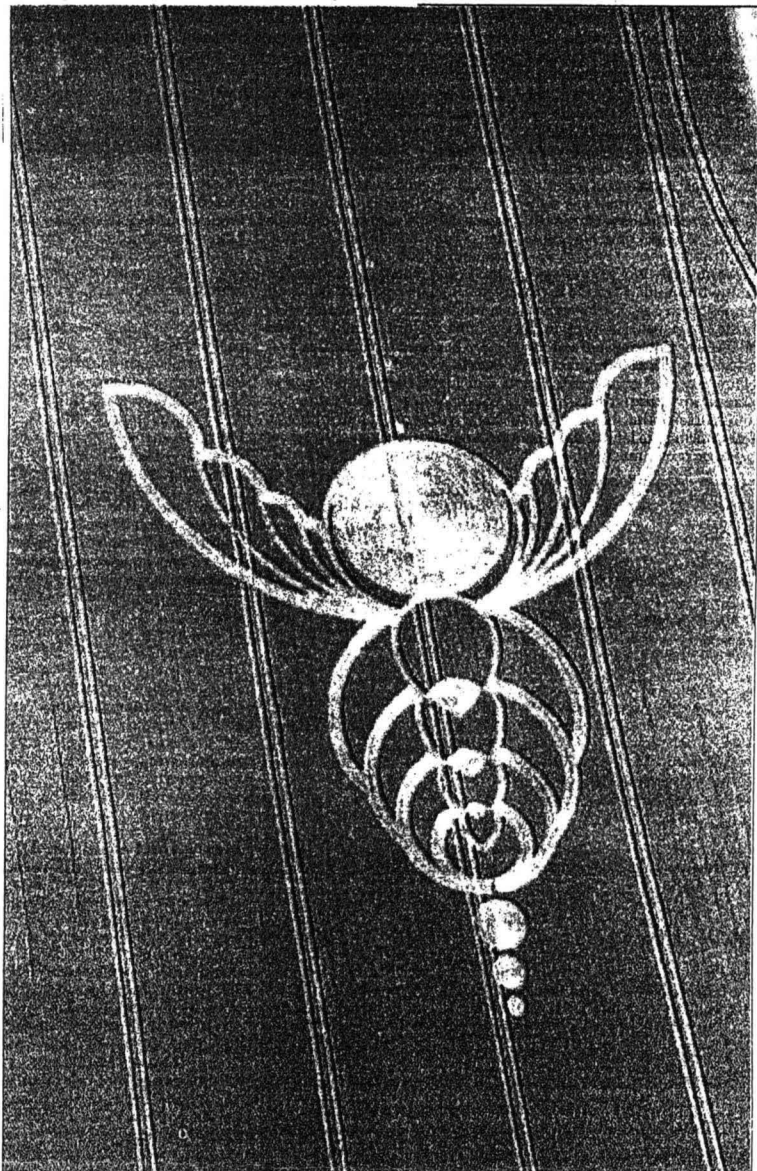
Outpost

The crop circles have become a draw for tourists

to the end of the field where the tram lines turn and loop back and we can jump in without a trace. Usually 18 metres apart, these tram lines allow the circle makers to reliably plot the design in advance according to the number of these lines in a field.

Once we reach the middle of the field we unpack the kit. The mother circle will border these central lines. Matt grabs one end of a long surveyor's tape and strides into the fresh wheat until Ross gives a sharp tug on the tape telling him to stop. Nine metres. From his rucksack, Ross produces an aluminum rod and presses it into the soil. Attaching the tape and holding the peg taut, Matt then makes the first arc of the circle, side-stepping to form an outline around us. Where Ross stands will be the centre of the first circle and the place where gear is stored. It is also where we'll meet at the first sign of trouble.

Matt and Luke each take a "stalk stomper," or plank, grabbing the ropes like reins. With one foot in the middle of the board, the crop is flattened with every step



Wiltshire, England, has been a leading hub of UFO sightings for 30 years. But its mysterious past dates back to the neolithic age.

LEADER, Drogheda, Ireland - May 26, 2004

Local women claim to have seen UFO over Drogheda

TWO local women claim to have seen an Unidentified Flying Object following a commercial aeroplane in the skies over Drogheda last week.

The women, who did not wish to be named publicly, contacted the *Drogheda Leader* after they read last week's exclusive story about close encounters which are supposed to have occurred over the Boyne Valley in recent months.

One of the women described in detail how she watched an aeroplane which was emitting black smoke

being tailed by a strange-shaped object with flashing lights.

"It was a bright object, which looked to be a silvery colour, with lights that were a lilac/mauve colour," the eyewitness said.

She was walking up the Chord Road when she saw the incident, which occurred on Monday night of last week some time between 9:30 and 10pm.

"This object was near the back of the plane and came out under it. The strange thing was the aeroplane looked to be black and didn't have any

flashing lights," she said.

"It was the black smoke that drew our attention, and the plane appeared to be moving very slowly, almost as if it was hovering. The other object was flying very close to it, and you'd never see something so close to an aeroplane like that."

Another woman who witnessed an incident similar to this early last week also contacted the *Drogheda Leader* after reading about the alleged incident in which an Aer Lingus Boeing 737 was said to have been damaged in an encounter with a UFO.

BEXLEY & ELTHAM EXPRESS, England - April 21, 2004

Close encounters of the UFO kind

BEXLEYHEATH has been identified as one of the top spots for seeing UFOs.

The town ranks number eight in a top 20 list of hotspots for UFO activity in the country, with Bonnybridge in Scotland in first place.

The research comes as no surprise to one teenager who, while babysitting his sister two years ago, witnessed what he believed to be an alien ship hovering near his home.

Conor Sherwood, now 15, of Malvern Avenue, Bexleyheath, said: "I was sitting in my living room and I heard a strange vibrating noise. I thought it was interference on the television, so I got up and turned the TV down.

"But the noise was still there

and it was getting louder. My house was shaking a little and I thought it could be a low-flying plane.

"I went outside and saw to my left a white triangle. It wasn't very high up, maybe as low as a plane coming into land or a tall building.

"The triangle looked like it was falling from the sky, but slowly, like the ashes of a firework that had just exploded.

"Then the telephone rang in my house, so I ran in to answer it and when I returned, which was almost straight away, it was gone. The sound had gone as well." Conor believes what he saw was a UFO.

Bexleyheath appears on a list compiled by UFO expert Nick Pope for Grolsch beer.

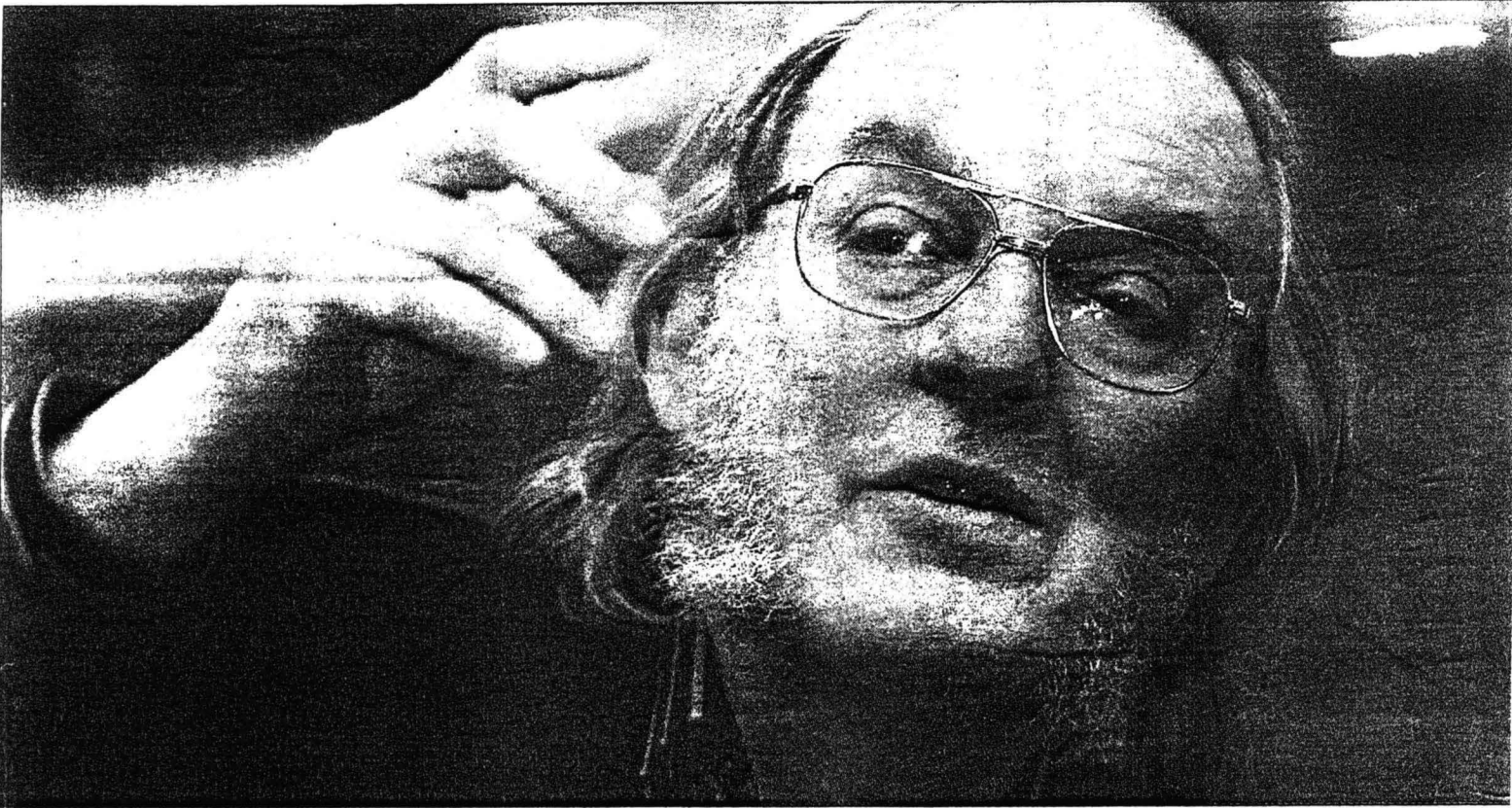


EDWARD WILKINSON-LATHAM / OUTPOST



BUSTY TAYLOR / OUTPOST

With their simple tools, Crop Circle Hoaxers make intricate designs in farmer's fields. Or do they?

THEORY: CLOSE ENCOUNTER 'COULD HAVE BEEN TO BLAME'

CANVASSING SUPPORT: Professor Colin Pillinger giving a lecture and answering questions at the Royal Society in London yesterday

Did UFO down Beagle?

Scientists have come up with a new theory that the missing Beagle 2 probe may have had a close encounter with a UFO.

Mission controllers are studying a mysterious blot on an image taken moments after the robot spun off from mothership Mars Express to start its descent to the red planet.

Experts are trying to work out if the dot is down to a camera fault, or if Beagle 2 was brought down by some kind of strange object.

Scientists admit it is a long shot, and are exploring many other options, but as the mystery surrounding the missing robot deepens, nothing seems too extraordinary.

Dr Mark Sims, Beagle 2 mission manager, said: "There is a little dot within the image.

BY CHRISSY HARRIS

"We don't know what it is or what it means.

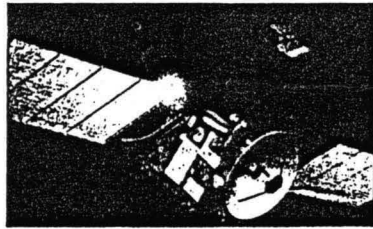
"It could be a feature of the optics of the camera or bits of spacecraft. It could be nothing but it could be everything. It's a case of wait and see. It is very much a work in progress at the moment."

Contact was lost with Beagle 2 on Christmas Day, when it was due to separate from the European Space Agency's Mars Express orbiter before landing on the planet.

Scientists have since tried repeatedly to contact the lander, without success.

Dr Sims said the team was going over all of its data again to try to find out what caused the probe to vanish.

Mission controllers told a London



DOOMED: Beagle 2 detaching from the Mars Express mothership

meeting that they were also considering the possibility that Beagle 2 simply crashed on the surface of Mars because the atmosphere on the planet was less dense than expected.

Scientists said they were examining photographs of the landing site that show four bright spots, dubbed the "string of pearls", that might be Beagle 2's remains.

Dr Sims said: "We're in forensic mode at the moment. We're looking at all the possibilities. It's like looking at a crime scene, but we don't know what crime has been committed. We may never know what happened, but everything we learn is a lesson for the future."

Professor Colin Pillinger, the lead scientist on the expedition, met the public during a webcast last night at the Royal Society in London to answer questions about what went wrong with the £45 million space probe.

Speaking before the event, Mr Pillinger said he was delighted to have sparked a passion for space exploration among what is now being dubbed the Beagle Generation.

He is already canvassing for more funds and sponsorship for another mission sending probes to Mars as early as 2007.

Paranormal film sales are out of this world

EXPRESS & STAR, Birmingham, England - Aug. 10, 2004

Copies of a documentary film studying paranormal activity on Cannock Chase have proved to be a bestseller.

Dozens of DVDs and videos investigating unidentified flying objects at the beauty spot have been sold by Staffordshire UFO group. The 45-minute programme, the culmination of a two-year project, was unveiled in April and has been very popular.

A series of strange sightings are depicted on the documentary although its main focus is a high profile incident on May 16, 1988, when two triangular shaped objects were seen over the beauty spot.

"They came down from a great height and hovered 1,000 ft above Cannock Chase then headed towards Stafford," said co-ordinator Graham Allen.

Police and Birmingham airport were alerted to the incident and the then Stafford MP Bill Cash brought it up in parliament.

Report by Bridget Ballance

The documentary, available on DVD and video, costs £10. The group, which has been going for around eight years and has 30-40 members, needs to sell 500 to claw back the £5,000 it spent making the programme.

It meets monthly and will next get together on August 19 at St Leonard's Sports and Social Club in Stafford.

For more information or to buy the documentary, phone Mr Allen on 01889 585149 or log onto the website www.sufog.co.uk.



■ It was like this – William Downing claims to have seen a UFO in the sky from his garden, as this photographic impression shows *Picture: RON POULTER*

Weird sight in sky puzzles great grandad William

WILLIAM Downing is keeping his eyes peeled after spotting what he believes was a UFO.

Mr Downing said the craft travelled "ten times faster" than a normal plane.

The retired electrician saw the

metallic round-shaped object flying from the north east to the south west while he was in the garden at his Thundersley home about 11.45am yesterday morning.

Great grandfather Mr Downing,

84, said: "It must've been a UFO. I don't think there is anything else it could have been.

"It went right across the sky in two or three seconds. A normal plane does about 350 miles an hour, but this must have been ten

times that. It made no sound and it didn't leave a vapour trail behind. I've never seen anything like it."

If anyone else thinks they may have seen the mysterious object, contact the Echo on 01268 469389.

EXPRESS & STAR, Birmingham, England - May 31, 2004

UFO case reopened by ex-police officer

By Dave Lawley

A retired policeman is appealing for help in solving a Black Country UFO mystery from 25 years ago. Tenants' leader Jean Hingley claimed she had experienced an encounter with aliens at her home in Blue Stone Walk in Rowley Regis.

She said she spoke to them then gave them mince pies before they continued with the journey into space. The story made headlines in newspapers and local television at the time and ended up turning Mrs Hingley, who is now dead, into a local celebrity. Now 25 years later, retired policeman John Hanson has launched an investigation into the mystery.

He said: "As a fresh faced police officer back in 1979, if anyone had brought this cause to my attention I would have dismissed them as being cranks or lunatics.

"But I was to learn the error of such ways many years later when during a research period of some 10 years I was to come across all manner of strange phenomenon reported by not only senior RAF officers, but members of the public who had nothing to gain by reporting such bizarre encounters."

Genuine

Mr Hanson said the Jean Hingley case had always attracted his attention, especially after he discovered that Mrs Hingley, the head of a tenants' group, was not the only person to spot UFOs over Blue Stone Walk during early January 1979.

He said: "I actually came across a family who contacted the police in Yorkshire a few hours later when they saw a huge UFO on the grounds of a local school."

Mr Hanson, who lives in Alvechurch in Worcestershire, added: "I am satisfied that this was a very genuine case involving the landing of a UFO which left marks in the snow.

"Unfortunately for Mrs Hingley not only was she caught in the force field of this object which led to her suffering a number of medical conditions, but a number of electrical items in the house were also affected," he added.

Mr Hanson appealed for help in tracing anyone who knew the couple, or who remembers the incident.

"This is one of the most important post war incidents to have taken place in the UK, added Mr Hanson.

NATIONAL POST, Toronto, Ontario, Canada - Aug. 12, 2004

Scientists find rock in Siberia; alien craft, too

Russian scientists claim to have discovered the wreckage of an alien craft at the site of a massive explosion in Siberia almost 100 years ago.

The Interfax news agency reported yesterday the scientists found the craft and a 50-kilogram rock near the Tunguska River in the remote northeastern region of Russia.

On June 30, 1908, an explosion that was felt hundreds of kilometres away wiped out some 2,000 square kilometres of forest.

The cause of the blast remains officially unexplained. A meteorite was ruled out because there was no impact crater, but in recent years scientists have said the explosion was caused by an asteroid that completely disintegrated before reaching the surface of the Earth.

The Russians making the extra-terrestrial claim work for a publicly funded organization that is studying the Tunguska phenomenon. The 50-kg rock is undergoing analysis, the scientists said.

Agence France-Presse

CR: G. Duplantier

IN ABSENCE OF CLONE, A NUDE BODY OR TWO

Raelians shed clothes for Playboy, proclaim Hefner an 'honorary priest'



GRAEME HAMILTON
in Montreal

They claim to draw their energy from extra-terrestrial sources, but publicity is what the Raelians really thrive on. And it has been a long dry spell for the Quebec-based, UFO-worshipping sect since they perpetrated their human cloning hoax in December, 2002.

Little surprise, then, that the group founded by French-born race car driver Claude Vorilhon is following the preferred path of the barely famous — a nude pictorial. Like Paula Jones, Darva

Conger and various castoffs from *Survivor*, the Raelians are hoping a little nudity will revive interest in their stalled careers.

In the October issue of *Playboy*, which hit newsstands on Wednesday, three of Mr. Vorilhon's most attractive followers — his wife, his personal assistant and the daughter of the Raelian scientist who claimed to have produced a clone — shed their clothes in a feature titled *The Rael World: Prepare for a Close Encounter of the Nude Kind*. (They did not make the cover; that honour went to the "wild" coeds of the ACC.)

Reached yesterday at his home in Valcourt, Que., Mr. Vorilhon, who prefers to be called Rael, or His Holiness, was ecstatic about the latest edition of the skin magazine. "I especially loved the article, which is very objective, and I think very respectful," he said, revealing that even free-love-preaching gurus enjoy *Playboy* for the articles.

He said he leapt at the chance to show off his girls. "We have always favoured the values promoted by *Playboy* and that is why for a long time I wanted to give Mr. Hugh Hefner the title of honorary priest," he said, something the movement will do this weekend when it gathers in Montreal. "He was a kind of pio-



In the October issue of *Playboy*, three "uninhibited" members of the Raelians, a Quebec sect, pose.

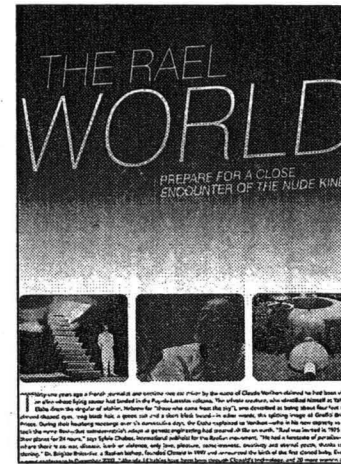
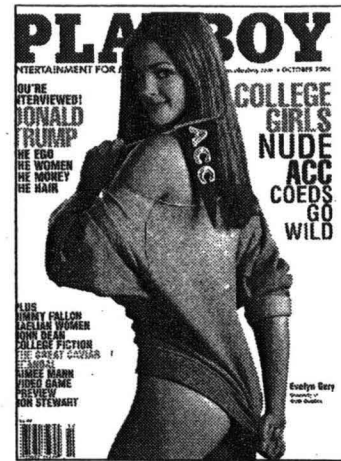
neer in the United States for promoting the beauty of nudity and a more open-minded society."

Mr. Vorilhon appears in one photo surrounded by the three naked women and in another standing by a stairway leading to a mock UFO.

In addition to admiring Mr. Hefner's attitude toward the human body, he shares his sartorial flare, sporting a baggy jumpsuit reminiscent of the *Playboy* founder's trademark pajamas. There is also a picture of the decidedly unsexy RMX2010, described as "the embryonic cloning machine developed by Clonaid that supposedly produced the world's first cloned baby."

The unsigned article leaves it up to the reader to decide what to make of the Raelian beliefs, although the writer cannot resist poking a little fun at Mr. Vorilhon's description of the alien he claims to have met in 1973 in France. "The affable creature, who identified himself as Yahweh, an Eloha ... was described as being about four feet tall, with almond-shaped eyes, long black hair, a green suit and a short black beard — in other words the spitting image of Graffiti Bridge-era Prince."

Not surprisingly, the magazine is more interested in the Raelian women's attitudes toward sex and their bodies than in the move-



their cause." She added that Mr. Hefner is "pleased by the unusual honour" of being named a Raelian priest, "however, we don't think he'll be joining the movement any time soon."

It is undoubtedly the most positive press the Raelians have received since the post-Christmas news conference in 2002 when Dr. Boisselier announced the birth of baby Eve, a supposed clone. Benefiting from one of the slowest news periods of the year, the Raelians landed interviews on CNN and made newspaper front pages. No baby was produced, no cloning lab revealed, no evidence provided whatsoever, but the simple claim was enough to generate horrified coverage that Mr. Vorilhon later boasted was worth \$750-million to his group.

More recently, the coverage has not been so favourable. Last year, a pair of female journalists from the *Journal de Montréal* infiltrated the Raelians and reported that Mr. Vorilhon lived the life of a millionaire thanks to the donations demanded of the movement's 60,000 members. They said Mr. Vorilhon surrounded himself with the most beautiful women, an inner circle of whom pledge to have sexual relations only among themselves or with Mr. Vorilhon.

Yesterday, Mr. Vorilhon was not going to venture a dollar value for the *Playboy* exposure, but acknowledged that it would help. "I think it's good to really maintain the interest of the public about our values," he said, adding that it is a bigger coup than when he and Dr. Boisselier were invited to speak before a U.S. congressional committee studying human cloning in 2001.

"I am thrilled to be in *Playboy* because it's about pleasure, and life is about pleasure as well," he said.

National Post
ghamilton@mon.nationalpost.com

The truth is out there - UFOs can be big business

Tomorrow is World UFO Day and, after this week's reports of a sighting of a craft in the skies above Co Monaghan, **Kim Bielenberg** says alien watching could be a new way to attract tourists

Mysterious black cats may come and go but the extra-terrestrials are always with us.

As alien observers across the planet prepare to mark World UFO Day tomorrow, the President of the UFO Society of Ireland, Betty Meyler, says it is time for us to celebrate our extra-terrestrial heritage.

Ms Meyler, who recently organised a successful international UFO conference in Galway city, says Ireland is such a hotspot of alien activity that space invaders could be used to attract tourists who are looking for close encounters of the third kind. She has called for the setting up of a 'UFO visitor centre' in the Boyle area of Co Roscommon.

World UFO Day falls on the anniversary of the most famous event in extra-terrestrial history, the Roswell Incident. Roswell, an area in New Mexico, entered American folklore after a local rancher, Mac Brazel, discovered a large amount of strange debris scattered over his land on July 4, 1947.

Military personnel arrived soon afterwards to retrieve the wreckage and an initial air force press release announced that a "flying disc... hexagonal in shape" had been found. Ever since, this mention of a 'flying disc' has been seen as an official admission that aliens had arrived.

Although the official announcement was rapidly changed and the mystery craft was then reported to be a weather balloon, alien enthusiasts still see Roswell as an extra-terrestrial incursion. The official explanation is dismissed as a government cover-up. Many explanations offered for the existence of UFOs are dismissed as cover-ups.

A recent poll by Gallup showed that 33% of American adults believe inhabitants of other worlds have visited our planet.

Ms Meyler believes many aliens, who are already on our planet, might take human form. She also believes aliens might patrol lakes and oceans in USOs (Unidentified Submersible Objects). She believes the lake at Glendalough is an alien habitat.

With enthusiasts flocking to Roswell in their thousands, UFO tourism has become a major source of income for the area. Betty Meyler says UFO tourism could bring similar benefits to Ireland.

Four years ago local alien watchers near Boyle examined the possibility of a UFO visitor centre. The centre was to include a model flying saucer and audio-visual displays giving accounts of sightings.

"This idea should now be revived," says Ms Meyler. "There is enormous interest in UFOs internationally and I think it would bring much-needed tourism revenue. We need something in the Roscommon area that would attract tourists and bring employment."

Just this week the lead story on many of the numerous international UFO websites was about the sighting of a triangular craft in the skies above Monaghan. The report, which

originally emanated from the *Belfast Telegraph*, told how two men working high up on a radio mast near Emyvale in Co Monaghan had spotted what was believed to be a "top-secret inter-planetary craft" flying north.

Miles Johnston, of the Irish UFO Research Centre, and another witness, Terry Malone, a rigger from Dublin, said the craft crossed the sky at ultrasonic speed, taking just a couple of seconds to reach the horizon. The strange craft was estimated to be 100 times the size of a jumbo jet.

Mr Johnston believes it may have been a secret man-made space craft designed for evacuation from our planet in the event of a catastrophe on earth.

Tracked down by the *Irish Independent* this week, the other witness, Terry Malone, could not say what it was: "I could not believe it when I saw it. It was a silvery colour and absolutely enormous. It was a clear blue evening and it just suddenly appeared. The only thing I could compare it to would be a space shuttle. Within two seconds it was gone. I am not sure what it was but it seemed out of this world."

Monaghan has for a long time been one of the principal centres of UFO activity in Ireland. Last year there were reports of mysterious rugby-ball-shaped objects flying across the sky above the border county.

According to local ufologist Jim Flora, there were at least six sightings of the oval crafts, which flashed red, blue and green. Witnesses said the UFOs, which hovered and occasionally moved in zig-zag patterns, responded to light signals.

County Monaghan was also the home of one of the most famous chroniclers of flying saucers, the late Desmond Leslie. Leslie's book, *Flying Saucers Have Landed*, helped fuel the craze for little green men in post-war Britain. It purported to record the first human contact with an alien and became a runaway bestseller in the 1950s. It tells the "true story" of George Adamski, a philosopher and winemaker, who claimed to have met with a blonde-haired humanoid gentleman from the Planet Venus.

In order to facilitate inter-galactic tourism, Leslie famously built a land-

HAVE YOU BEEN ABDUCTED?

►Could the mysterious attacks on livestock near the border have been caused by aliens? Any increase in the number of UFO sightings is seen by believers as a sign of an increase of alien activity on earth. Aliens might abduct people in large numbers and may leave signs of their presence. These might include crop circles or mysterious cattle mutilation, according to extra-terrestrial (ET) believers.

What do these ET impostors look like? According to surveys of victims who claim to have been abducted, the aliens are usually small, bald, have big craniums, small chins and large slanted eyes.

What do the ET kidnappers get up to? Frequently victims claim that the aliens raped them and performed experiments on them.

How can you tell that you have been abducted? According to the American Roper survey, here are some of the tell-tale signs of an abduction:

- Waking up paralysed with the sense of a strange person or presence in the room
- You have a period of time of over



an hour in which you were apparently lost, but could not remember why.

- Finding puzzling scars on your body.
- Feeling you were flying through the air although you didn't know why or how.

ing site for UFOs on the top of a hill in the grounds of Castle Leslie. Desmond's daughter, Samantha, who now runs Castle Leslie as an upmarket guesthouse, says her father's pioneering work with flying saucers still attracts a lot of interest abroad. One UFO enthusiast has even built a shrine to her father in Japan.

While extra-terrestrial visitors seem to make a bee-line for Monaghan (perhaps they too are looking for the killer cat), their favourite destination for earthly sojourns is Roscommon.

Several internet sites specialising in UFO hokum give an account of a flying saucer crash that is supposed to have happened in mountains near Boyle in May 1996. This incident is the closest we have to an Irish Roswell.

Most of the reports quote an Irish ufologist, Rory Thornton, who claimed that the silver-coloured saucer crash-landed in a lake after it clipped some treetops. "The aliens misjudged the landing," said Mr Thornton.

Several occupants of the craft survived the crash and, according to some accounts, were taken into custody by gardai, who must have been rather puzzled by the whole experience.

We are led to believe that a top secret Nato task force cleared the site and remained there for months.

As with most traffic accidents involving UFOs, inevitably we are told that the story has been kept under wraps by the Government. Bertie Ahern will not let on about the captive aliens.

According to Mr Thornton's account of the Roscommon crash, "the area was blocked off for six months. Boyle was full of Americans but they wouldn't say what they were doing".

But would we have believed them if they told us they were clearing up a mess left by a few aliens?

'SEVERAL INTERNET SITES SPECIALISING IN UFO HOKUM GIVE AN ACCOUNT OF A FLYING SAUCER CRASH THAT IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE HAPPENED IN MOUNTAINS NEAR BOYLE IN MAY 1996'

Lights mystery leaves more baffled

ANOTHER stargazer has come forward to reveal more about the spooky light show reported in the Thanet Times.

Open-minded Dean Williams got the shock of his life when he read our story about a woman who was

freaked out by lights in the sky in Broadstairs.

Dean, from Ashford, was in Broadstairs to visit his parents when he caught sight of something suspiciously similar.

Dean thinks aliens were to blame. He recalled: "It was

about midnight and I saw it as I was putting my bike in the shed.

"I hadn't been drinking or anything like that. The lady in the paper said she saw lights in a V formation but it was more like a triangle.

"It was as if someone in the

sky was shining a torch down on to me." The close encounter lasted for about 10 minutes and left Dean baffled but excited.

"I've always been into stuff like that but I've never experienced anything similar before," he said.

"A lot of people are scared to admit they have seen things but I'm sure we've all been abducted by aliens."

• Have you had an UFO experience - or can you explain what Dean's light's were? If you can, call the Times newsdesk on 578984.

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.]

June 9, 2004 — *Planeta UFO*, Chile — PERU: UFO PRESENCE "DELIGHTS FARMERS" — Several strange lights in the sky drew the attention of peasants from Rapayan, Uco, Paucas and Anra in the province of Huari (Peru). The collective farmers celebrated the arrival of the alleged UFOs because they took them as a sign of good fortune and because they foretold a good harvest. Local police are investigating the source of the lights, but have not found any leads.

July 4, 2004 — *La Cuarta*, Santiago, Chile — ALIENS SAVED FAMILY FROM COLLISION TO PROTECT PREGNANT WOMAN — ****Incredible story of a Chilean abducted along with his family at Cuesta El Melon**** — At first glance it is evident that Gabriel D.H. is an honest, laid-back man. Far removed from the hubbub and keeper of a low profile. At 44, he has no interest whatsoever in appearing on television for a minute of glory.

It took an effort to get him to share with *La Cuarta* the feverish experience he had at Cuesta El Melon while returning by car from a trip to the north of the country, fearing that he and the three family members who were passengers in his car that day would be identified and possibly harmed in their places of study and business. Consorting with "bad company" usually involves discrimination ... worse if they're aliens.

To psychiatrist Mario Dussuel, a specialist in abductions (the kidnapping of human beings by aliens) for three decades, Gabriel's story isn't the result of a pathology nor a complete loss of marbles. "I've studied the case for years. I've subjected it to a variety of screening tests and hypnotic regressions, and we have found several patterns indicating the presence of strange situations in his story. Even though others may not believe it, he truly underwent the story he tells."

Prior to his abduction, Gabriel had never had contact with the subject of UFOs, with hard science fiction or with stories claiming that guardian angels from distant galaxies protect certain "chosen" Earthlings for reasons best known to them.

"The fact is that the subject never appealed to me. What's more, I detested it because I didn't believe that such strange things could exist," remarked the convert.

- **So what really happened, Gabriel?**

- We were on the way back to Santiago when we suddenly entered an area covered by a strange yellow fog and the car started weaving like a boat in a storm. Suddenly, one of the three women traveling in the back seat screamed in horror that someone had just sat down between them.

(He made them quiet down, since he had all of his attention on controlling the vehicle, which seemed just about to fly off the road. He had goosebumps all over. He couldn't explain what was happening.)

- **Did you see anything?**

- Not at that time, no. I was concerned with controlling the car. It was all very strange. I got nervous when I perceived that the car seemed to slip away from my hands. We had been boarded by invisible presences and they were among us.

- **Did you notice anything else?**

- My hands became transparent. I saw the steering wheel through them.

- **Could you see the road?**

- No, the fog was very dense.

- **Later on, did you see the aliens?**

- Yes.

- **What were they like?**

- Stunning and very tall.

- **Did you feel fear?**

- No, and don't think that I consider myself brave or anything. The problem is that I'm very hardheaded when I want to find something out or uncover something I don't understand.

- **Were they violent?**

- No. They acted forcefully but inspiring trust and tranquility.

- **What was their mission?**

- I don't know.

- **Didn't you ask them?**

- I can't recall...

- **What information did the E.T.'s give you?**

- I remember that they told me they had saved our lives, and if we hadn't been abducted, we would've died because we were about to have a head-on collision with a bus.

- **Why do you think they did that?**

- According to them, to save one of the women.

- **Why?**

- They showed some sort of hologram in which my car was shattered and everyone was dead and broken. The projection they made was spectacular, because with simple gestures, they could increase the definition until they reached nearly microscopic points.

- **And what was the purpose of this?**

- The projection widened until [it showed] the womb of one of the women, containing a foetus.

- **And that's why the passengers were saved?**

- Just so...

- **Was the foetus an E. T.?**

- ... (silence)

- **How old is that person today?**

- A little over ten.

- **Do you think that she is an E.T.?**

- ... (silence)

- Is the girl special in any way?

- Don't pursue it, because I will not answer those questions.

- Are you afraid?

- Yes, but not of them. Rather, fear of the human beings who can cause tremendous harm to this person.

At the end of the experience, which lasted no longer than 10 minutes, Gabriel and his family appeared in Calle Larga, over 100 kilometers away from where the fog appeared. This phenomenon is not unique to Chile or to the continent. What is unique about it is that one of the protagonists should step forward and retell it. — CREDIT: Jose Martinez E., *ArgusPR*

August 5, 2004 — *La Estrella*, Arica, Chile — ACHA PHENOMENON ATTRACTS INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION — Young men traveling in vehicle show the puncture marks in their vehicle's tire. They claim feeling blows against their car while touring the Presencias Tutelares sculpture. — Three young men from the Espanoleto sector of Villa Universidad visited the Presencias Tutelares section in Pampa Acha driven by reports of encounters with strange creatures. Their curiosity, however, played a trick on them: as they were reaching the site at 20:00 hours, their Ford Festiva received several blows from something they couldn't see. Their surprise turned to panic when they felt one of the tires begin to lose air, showing signs of having been punctured with a sharp object. "We turned around immediately," said Calezca Fuentes, who traveled with her brother Danelo and Paola Astorga, his girlfriend. Once they reached the city, they ascertained that the tire had eight puncture marks.

Phone calls were received yesterday from news media in Santiago, Colombia, Argentina and researchers linked to paranormal subjects all day, requesting more background information on the sightings of strange animals in Pampa Acha, near the Presencias Tutelares sculpture.

La Estrella also received a variety of opinions to account for the phenomenon, substantiating the opinion given by ostrich breeder Ricardo Arancibia, who claims that what the traveling families encountered on the road were these birds, which had escaped from another area breeder.

Yesterday, avian biologist Ronny Peredo provided information substantiating Arancibia's remarks, saying that ostriches can indeed reach speeds of 100 kilometers an hour, between 72 and 96 KMH to be exact, and are able to take flying leaps.

"We must understand that at night, and when people have not seen an ostrich up close and personally, they tend to be startled and confuse things," Peredo explained. The biologist added that one of the characteristics that most led him to think that this type of flightless bird was involved is the description of the creature's wings being swept backward. "This is typical of these birds, because when they run, they extend their short wings backward, precisely to keep their balance, and that's what they often do when they encounter people."

Further supporting information can be found in the height and color of these birds, which coincides with the descriptions given of the creatures, which is to say, standing nearly 2 meters tall and grey in color. With regard to the question of would ostriches be able to survive two months alone in the desert, Peredo said that it is probable that they adapted to their environment "because they eat everything, from insects to branches, fruits, anything they can get a hold of, and it is likely that they would come close to the highway to feed."

However, Dario Riquelme, the first one to go public with his story of the strange encounter with these beings, completely rejected the statements involving ostriches, because he is sure of having seen something he'd never seen before. Furthermore, he claims being knowledgeable about these birds, as well as the nandu, and says that neither bird looks anything like what he and the family of Army official Hernan Cuevas saw in the Pampa Acha sector last Thursday night. "I was afraid of being ridiculed when I told my story. Now those who say that ostriches are involved are the ridiculous ones. What they say is a laugh, because they don't look anything like what we saw, and one thing has nothing to do with another," he said decisively. — CREDIT: Liliana Nunez O.

August 5, 2004 — *La Estrella*, Valparaiso, Chile — CHUPACABRAS "COUSIN" FOUND IN VALPARAISO — Specialists from the Museum of Natural History subjected the carcass of a specimen found in Cerro Cordillera to a battery of tests. — The situation came about a few days ago at the home of Manuel Otazo, who found the corpse of a strange animal inside a doghouse belonging to one of his animals. "We perceived the foul smell and thought at first that someone had thrown away fish byproducts. But then we saw that our pet was frightened and didn't want to go into his doghouse. Upon inspecting it, we came across this monster," said Sonia Valdivia, the terrified homeowner.

Manuel Otazo explained that the animal had a small head and red fur, with large fangs, claws and hands resembling wings, different from any rodent or known domestic animal. "Before finding it, at night we would hear noises on the rooftops and hens and rabbits died recently at a neighbor's house. We think it could be the Chupacabras or one of his relatives that was wounded and came to die in our pet's doghouse."

After burying it, the owners subsequently contacted the Museum of Natural History of Valparaiso, who transferred the specimen to their facilities.

The animal was submerged in a special brine. Fernando Soto, professor of Biology, reported that the carcass—in advanced stages of putrefaction—will be submitted to a treatment based on choleopterids that devour flesh and bone to recover the skeleton. The bones will be compared later on with the anatomies of known species.

Despite the a priori exam performed on the animal, he noted that while it could be a dog or a cat, he was surprised by some strange features such as the absence of incisors, the size of its extremities and the color of its fur.

The Museum of Natural History says that it isn't so unusual to run into strange species in the area. Only a few months ago, they received the carcass of a pig with three eyes. "The owners, who were from Cerro Baron, decapitated it at once, because they thought it was a thing of the devil rather than a genetic aberration." — CREDIT: Liliana Nunez O.

August 5, 2004 — *El Mercurio*, Santiago, Chile — SIGHTINGS IN ARICA: "DINOSAUR-LIKE" OSTRICHES? — Amazement spreads over accounts from drivers claiming to have encountered strange beings like Jurassic Park animals. — Mauricio Silva — ARICA -- The alleged dinosaurs allegedly seen in the desert by some drivers and their passengers, whose stories have caused certain expectation in the city, would have been no more than simple and peaceful ostriches.

Claims of strange, enormous creatures galloping across the Pampa come from drivers who were making their way at night on the road linking Arica with Iquique.

The local press has broadcast these stories profusely, causing both wonderment and some incredulous smiles.

Ricardo Arancibia, a breeder of these African flightless birds, located in the vicinity of the alleged sightings,

has 12 specimens on Lot 53 of Acha, very near the road and area where the apparitions occurred.

It is believed that some 200 ostriches exist in the Pampa today, distributed in scattered pens in northern communities such as Acha, Chaca and Lluta.

Concerned by these accounts, Arancibia contacted the media to offer background information that could bring an end to the mystery and turn what threatened to become a new modern myth, like the so-called Chupacabras or UFOs, into a harmless episode.

He acknowledged that the birds can escape from their pens and give the wrong impression, especially if seen at night.

A total of 11 people claim having seen alleged dinosaurs in two separate incidents--last Thursday and two weeks ago--both at night.

The descriptions agree that the apparitions were dog-headed birds, standing nearly 2 meters tall with long legs, developed thighs and small, inverted upper extremities. It is said that they moved swiftly with wide strides.

Municipal Veterinarian Alfrodin Turra ratified that said characteristics coincide with those of ostriches. But Dario Riquelme, 44, a fiberglass contractor who has been driving the same road for 10 years and made the first sighting, rejects this explanation. "I know what ostriches look like and there's no deal. [It] crouched in front of my pickup truck, I saw it clearly. They were just like the ones from Jurassic Park." — CREDIT: Liliana Nunez O.

August 10, 2004 — <http://edicion.yucatan.com.mx/> — MEXICO: MORE MYSTERIOUS LIGHTS OVER TICUL —**Two youths record "flying object"*** — For some weeks now, numerous residents of Ticul and even other municipalities in the area have made use of the hill that dominates the Benito Juarez neighborhood of La Perla del Sur as their nocturnal gathering place.

The reason for these gatherings has become a fashionable subject in this part of the State: alleged UFO sightings, a situation that has also attracted the attention of experts in supernatural phenomena.

There is no scientific explanation for these events; the alleged witnesses claim they are real, but other people in the vicinity consider them a product of the euphoric sensation experienced at the meeting site.

The fact remains that it is a party atmosphere that is readily visible on weekends at this site for at least a month now, including consumption of alcoholic beverages and the presence of street vendors.

This weekend, the UFO subject took a turn: two young men claimed having filmed the apparition of a mysterious "vessel" that was visible for only seconds.

The youths, with the characteristic excitement of those who have made a great discovery, showed the video of the alleged sighting to a reporter from *Diario de Ticul*. A circle of eight lights spinning on an axis can be seen; the lights then become tilted and elongated. Suddenly, the mysterious object changes course and vanishes. — CREDIT: Gloria Coluchi

August 11, 2004 — <http://edicion.yucatan.com.mx/> — MEXICO: Another UFO Reported, this time over Progreso — PROGRESO - Members of the Centro de Analisis de Fenomenos Espaciales (Space Phenomena Analysis Center) have pointed out that cases involving people who claim having seen unidentified flying objects are fairly common in the Yucatan Peninsula, but they are never widely known due to a lack of diffusion.

Cindy Martinez Sanchez, a partner with this statewide organization, reports that the phenomenon was seen two nights ago not only over Ticul, but also over Progreso.

Many residents of the Vicente Guerrero neighborhood were witnesses to a mysterious cloud with a light that appeared and vanished in the southern reaches of the port, she says. The sighting lasted some five hours. — CREDIT: Gloria Coluchi

August 28, 2004 — *Jose A. Martinez, Puertorican Research Groups* — Puerto Rico: Animal Mutilations in Ponce — In the early morning hours of Saturday, August 28, 2004, members of the Marin family of the Brisas del Caribe sector of the city of Ponce were shocked to find the ducks they raised in their back yard slain by an unknown assailant. The family's youngest son, in charge of feeding the animals, made the sad discovery. When asked if any noise had been heard, we were told that neighboring dogs had been restless, including the Marin family's own dog. The Marins believe that perhaps all of the animals were attacked, since they had gone off to the San Juan Airport at the time and upon their return, were faced with their son's bad news about the animals.

The animals in question presented a number of puncture marks near the tail, where their genitalia is located. One of the ducks was decapitated; another had its head and bill shattered. A third one survived the massacre but was wounded in one of its thighs; the puncture mark was barely noticeable, but we saw that the animal had some trouble walking and we examined it, making the corresponding note.

We return to the similarities we had observed earlier in all mutilations: a densely wooded environment and the most significant factor, that it was a night of full moon. This is an unwavering factor in the Puerto Rican mutilation cases. It is important that researchers looking into these situations take this circumstance into account and compile their own databases on mutilations and the phases of the moon.

We interviewed the Marin family and asked if similar [attacks] had occurred earlier. We were told that yes, a neighbor's rabbits had been slain by an unknown quantity the previous year. We asked if there were other neighbors aside from that one and were told that indeed, other local residents had had their animals killed.

We asked Mr. Bruno Marin if he had seen strange lights in the area. He told us that a few years ago, lights and saucer-shaped objects were seen over the area. Apparently, from what Marin tells us, [his area] is a UFO hot-spot. We checked out the animals with our own equipment and they were found to be free from any hazardous, radioactive or toxic contaminants.

The Marin family did not inform the police about the case, and we therefore only have the eyewitness accounts and photos taken at the scene of the attacks. Prints were found on a wooden panel which are assumed to belong to the perpetrator, but they were ambiguous. — CREDIT: Jose A. Martinez Echevarria, Reinaldo Rios, Puerto Rico

August 30, 2004 — *INFOBAE.COM, Argentina* — INCREDIBLE HUMANOID SIGHTING LEAVES WITNESSES SPEECHLESS — Mysterious creatures were seen by numerous witnesses in an area near the city of Coquimbo, Chile. According to their reports, they resemble small humans that float through the air without making a sound.

Francisco Vega, a laborer at the "El Pelambre" mine, was in the company of his brother and two other laborers of the Argandona ceramics company in the Planicie de Panul sector, a location adjacent to La Herradura de Coquimbo, where he owns a plot of property whose borders required demarcation.

At a distance of some 20 meters, Francisco witnessed what appeared to be a small "monkey" that was

approaching them, walking along the plain. Upon looking at it closely, he saw that it was a human-like creature, but red in color.

"It had a very bulky head, was no taller than 80 centimeters and looked like a gas bag, because it was so fat. My initial impression was that it resembled a rugby player," said the witness, according to the Chilean press. "Only a few seconds went by and I shouted very loud so that my brother and the workers would realize what I was looking at," he added.

The surprise experienced by the four men was even more complex when they noticed the strange being levitate over the plain, remaining in the air for several minutes.

Later, they said the creature began heading toward the sea at low speed, finally vanishing. The event occurred in July of this year.

A similar event befell a group of five youths who were spending the night at that lookout point. They saw strange entities emerge from the sea, gradually coming closer.

They were unable to make out any details at first, but later added that they were diminutive humanoids surrounded by something like an aura of light. After remaining motionless in mid-air, the beings began to disappear.

The entire group was able to see these strange entities, and all members coincided in their descriptions and the details of the visitors that emerged from the sea. — CREDIT: Alicia Rossi and Liliana Nunez O.

August 29, 2004 — *El Universal Online*, Tapachula, Chiapas, Mexico — SIX UFOs REPORTED OVER TAPACHULA — Six "spheres" flew over Pemex facilities; maneuvered above a storage terminal — 10:11 — An unidentified flying object (UFO) and six large luminous spheres were detected flying over the Pemex (Petroleos Mexicanos--Ed.) facilities in Tapachula, according to the Disaster Prevention Officer Juan Carlos Zuniga Rodriguez.

He said that the craft, having the shape of a circular plate the size of a commercial airliner, performed flight maneuvers over the Petroleos Mexicanos (PEMEX) Storage and Distribution Terminal at an altitude no greater than 1000 meters, with abnormal speed and direction changes.

He mentioned that a variety of photographs were taken and that upon developing them, it was discovered that at least six luminous spheres were flying over the area at the same altitude, although smaller in size than the craft. All of this material was presented to researcher Jaime Maussan, who immediately commenced the verification of their authenticity by means of sophisticated devices.

He stated that the tests yielded positive results regarding a central object made of unidentified material, and which appeared to be covered by some sort of radiation very similar to that of the spheres. In other words, the authenticity of the photographs was corroborated.

He insisted that in order to make the event known, the corresponding authorization had to be secured from the main offices of the quasi-state organization. Added to this was the factor of awaiting the outcome of Maussan's investigations.

Zuniga Rodriguez said that according to data obtained from professional spotters, UFOs have been frequent in this region around the oil facilities and points adjacent to the Izapa archaeological region, close to where the "Tree of Life, Creation of the Universe" stele is located.

There are also reports of fly-overs in the vicinity of the inactive "Tacana" volcano which separates Mexico from Guatemala. — CREDIT: Jose Martinez E.

September 2, 2004 — *OVNIVISION/La Region*, Coquimbo, Chile — "YES, WE SAW A SPACECRAFT AT PANUL" — LA SERENA -- Information continues to arrive regarding the apparition of mysterious entities in the Coquimbo's Panul Sector (4th Region of Chile). We are reproducing the article featured in Thursday, September 2's *La Region* of Coquimbo: Yolanda Santibanez and Edmundo Ramirez both claim, and startle us, by saying that on the same week of the humanoid sighting in Coquimbo, whose account appears in yesterday's edition, an unidentified flying object flew over the the area.

While the brilliant afternoon sun slowly vanishes into a disquieting fog and a chill wind appears to herald a storm, silence reigns among residents of El Panul de Coquimbo regarding the "humanoid subject," as we could classify the chronicles published on Tuesday and Wednesday this week, and which describe the sighting last July by four individuals.

Yesterday, we wished to collect new eyewitness accounts in the same area, but it is evident that people are feeling panic, or at least fear of being ridiculed and criticised by their nearest and dearest.

At first we are told no, that the witnesses aren't home, that they themselves haven't seen anything, that it's all just tall tales ... but they begin to relax when they realize that spreading doubt isn't healthy either.

It was thus that *La Region* learned new information on this subject.

A pair of local residents who live on a property that serves as a repair shop at the edge of the highway told us that they have indeed seen strange things, and that they themselves saw some sort of flying saucer.

Yolanda Santibanez recalls that it was during the month of July in late afternoon hours that she and other witnesses observed a strange phenomenon in the skies, as she describes it.

"Yes, it was July, I couldn't tell you the exact date, but we saw an object in the sky near La Romana. It had an elongated shape, black or grey in color, and it shrank and expanded ... it seemed to float while it assumed a square shape and when it remained like that, it seemed to have some things like wheels or such. At no time did we feel afraid, because we were accompanied."

She later adds other details and repeats them as though rewinding and reliving the events.

Edmundo Ramirez, another resident of the Panul sector, claims that such episodes occur repeatedly, and offered more details about them.

"The object we saw in July appeared suddenly. It made no noise, such as engine noise, for example. It was elongated, but kept getting longer and had no lights. The time was about 5 or 6 p.m. Some other people who work here also saw it. It arrived as if from the north, passing slowly over the eucalyptus trees in the La Romana sector. Then it descended along that terrain as if heading toward the sea, and then vanished. Luckily, it didn't approach us, and the dogs didn't bark either."

Both witnesses have indicated that the place where the vehicle disappeared is the same area indicated by the other witnesses claiming to have seen a small, glowing 80 cm. tall humanoid.

Eduardo Vega, his brother and two other workers of the Argandona brick works are the witnesses to this event, which they have shared with the greatest respect and seriousness, which they hope will be reciprocated. The Vega brothers are professionals and workers of the cement factory are adult heads of households.

Numerous calls to our newsroom and the high demand for the newspaper are proof of popular interest in the subject. However, *La Region* shall reserve the right to publish only those accounts given by people of known identity. — CREDIT: Liliana Nunez O.



Baylor professor studies unusual claims

By **JEFFREY WEISS**

The Dallas Morning News

DALLAS — Christopher Bader was one of those kids who loved tales of the improbable. He grew up to become his own improbable tale:

He's a sociology professor at the conservative and Baptist Baylor University, a Presbyterian who has a particular interest in people who say they are UFO abductees or victims of religion-linked ritual abuse. His study of the two groups was published in a recent issue of the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*.

"My students ask me all the time: 'Do you believe in UFOs? Do you believe in ritual abuse? Do you believe in Bigfoot?'" He said. "My answer is that I just don't care whether they're real or not."

Studying the sociology of religion is nothing like delving into theology, he said.

"We're not studying God. We're studying what people who believe in God and live on earth do," he said.

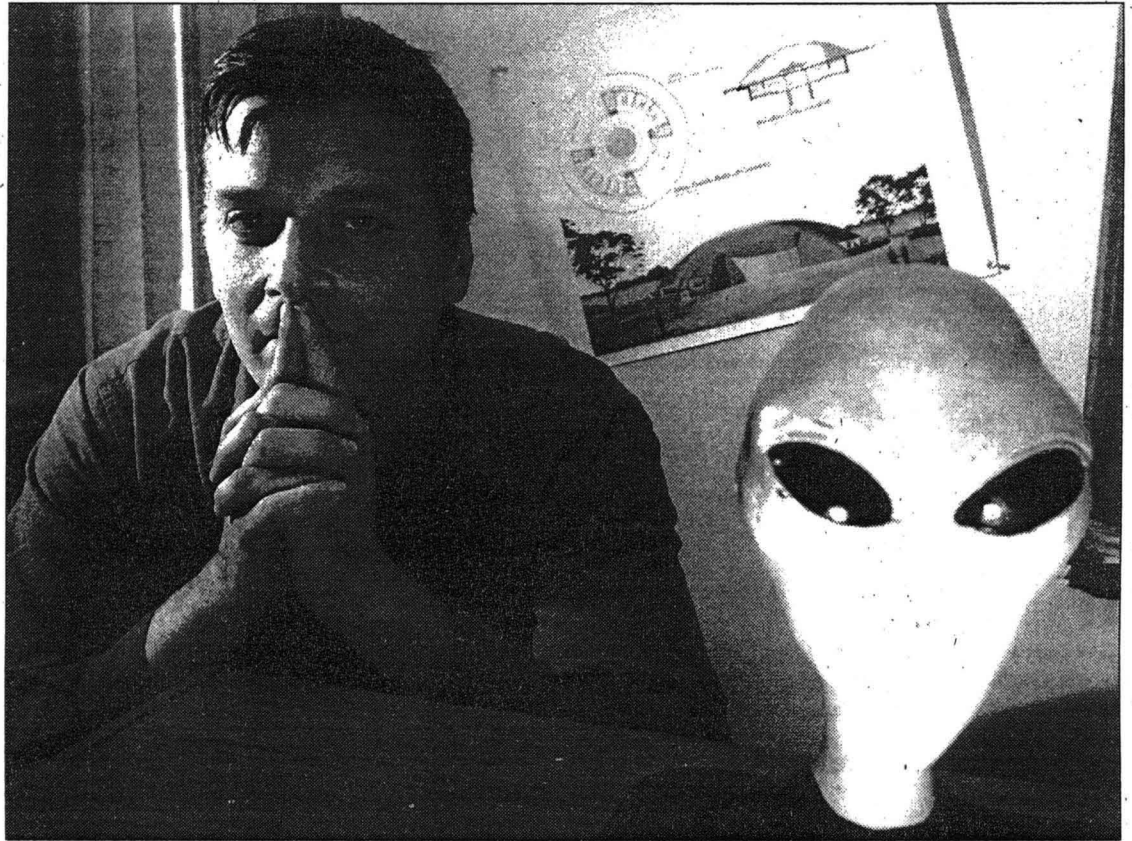
"God" and "religion" are defined broadly by sociologists of religion. Belief in UFO abductions and in ritual abuse both include a large dose of faith.

The scientific mainstream has not accepted any claims of alien abductions. And many who claim to have survived ritual abuse say they discovered the abuse through the recovery of long-repressed memories. The length of time between the alleged event and the recovery of the memory often makes it hard to investigate the claims.

So are there UFOs grabbing people? Are there Satanic cults abusing people? In many cases, people believe without the kinds of evidence that would convince outsiders — it's a matter of faith. And that means people who belong to support groups for UFO abductees or for survivors of ritual abuse can be studied as members of "new religious movements."

The only connection between the UFO folks and the ritual abuse folks is that the two groups gained attention in the 1980s, as Bader was starting his academic career.

Sociologists such as Bader study small groups like these because they believe this is a way to understand how successful faiths develop. After all, the largest religions all started with a few people con-



KRT/NATHAN HUNSINGER/

Dr. Christopher Bader, a professor of anthropology and sociology, says his research may seem strange for Baylor University.

sidered unusual by their neighbors.

"It really is no crazier than anything else," he said of the outside-the-mainstream stuff he studies. "I appreciate it as a belief, and a sincerely held belief."

Not that he expects belief in UFO abductions to morph into a major faith anytime soon. "Not in my lifetime," he said.

Most of his work involves less controversial belief systems — why churches and denominations succeed or fail in drawing members. But when Baylor hired him a couple of years ago, he told his new bosses that part of his studies could seem a bit, well, odd for a Baptist school.

"But when I talk about Satanism in class, I'm not recruiting," he said.

His paper, published in the peer-reviewed journal, is the fruit of years of tentative contacts with support groups for people who say they've been snatched by aliens or ritually abused. Members of these groups are suspicious of outsiders. Much of his paper details how he gained their trust — and eventually, some information about them.

Eventually, he was able to get 55 of the UFO folks and 51 ritual-abuse survivors to anonymously fill out forms about their ages, education and other demographic infor-

mation.

That information fills a hole in the study of these groups, he said. Most academic attention has focused on the beliefs or on psychological effects on the believers. Bader's goal was to identify the kinds of people who subscribe to these beliefs.

What he came up with has its limits, he admits. The sample size is small, and there's no way to know for sure if they represent the average UFO abductee or ritual-abuse survivor. But the results are in line with research done on other small, new religious movements, he said.

Many academics who study such movements tend to consider members of these particular groups as rubes, he said. "They assume that these are some country bumpkins who believe that the UFOs are plucking them off their tractors. That's not what people who are interested in new ideas are like."

It turns out that the folk who filled out Bader's forms are a lot like most Americans who seek out unusual faith experiences: They're generally female, white, affluent and well-educated when compared with the general population.

Of the 51 UFO abductees, 32 were women, 48 said they were white and six identified as Native American (three chose

both categories), 34 attended some college, and 29 were white-collar workers. Most said they found some positive aspects to their experience.

Of the 48 ritual-abuse survivors, all were white women, 44 had attended college, and of the 21 then employed, 18 were white-collar workers. This was an unhappy population, and most reported they had dozens of multiple personalities.

What they have in common, Bader said, is that they mostly follow the pattern found in other new religious movements.

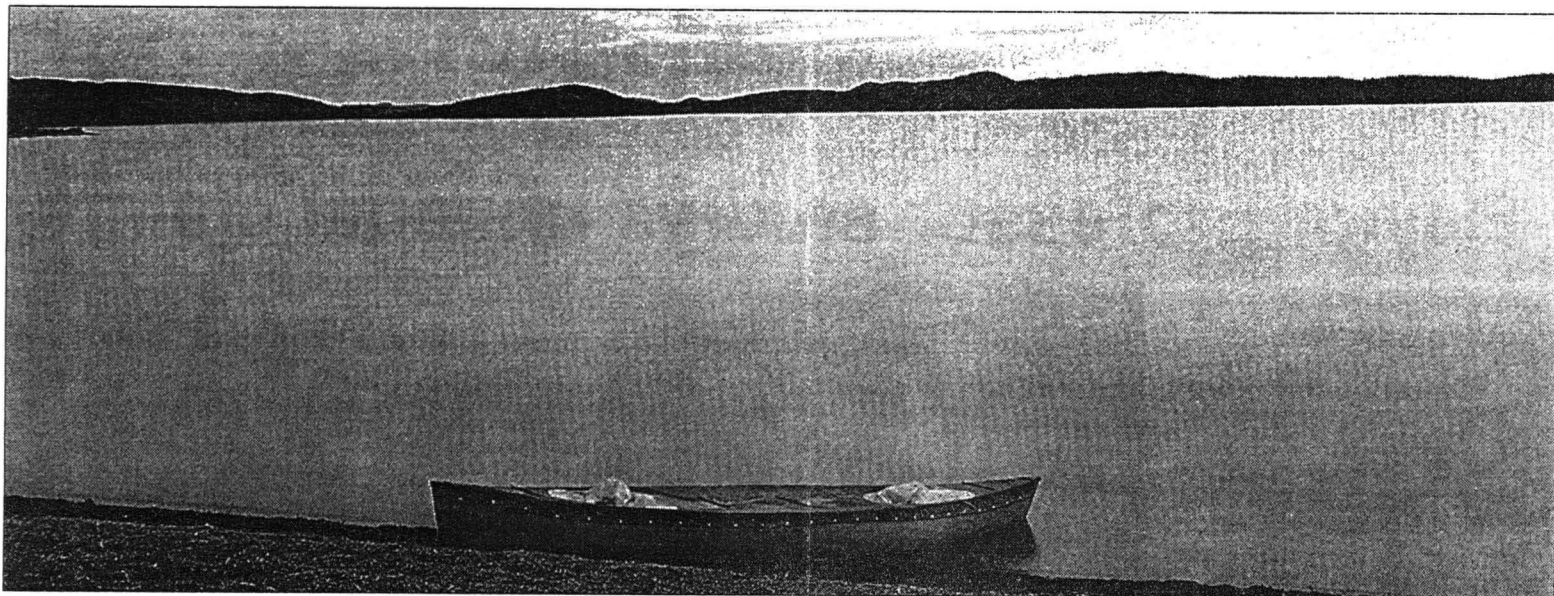
"The theory tells us that it doesn't matter about the personality of the 'god' involved," he said. "The point is that a certain demographic is interested in things outside the mainstream."

Bader's own interest in such things started when he was very young.

"I read 'The Amityville Horror' when I was in the fourth grade and I couldn't sleep for a week," he said. "When I was a kid, I used to try to find Bigfoot in the woods or worry that UFOs would come to my room and get me."

He'll admit to never losing his fascination with the mystery associated with tales of the supernatural.

"If we ever caught Bigfoot and put him in a cage," he said, "I'd be really depressed."



ED STRUZIK/EDMONTON JOURNAL FILES

A diver in the Lockhart River on the east arm of Great Slave Lake claims he saw a lake creature like an alligator, with a head like a pike.

Locals swear monster lurks in Great Slave Lake's depths

YELLOWKNIFE | Recent sightings reported, Dene stories back claims

BY NATHAN VANDERKLIPPE

YELLOWKNIFE, N.Y.T. — Somewhere in the murky depths of the continent's deepest lake lurks a monster.

Jim Lynn is sure of it.

This week, the 66-year-old Roman Catholic priest was looking out from his home on the shores of Great Slave Lake, near Yellowknife, when he saw an object trailing a small boat across the water.

"I got the goggles because it was moving fast and I was kind of curious as to what it was. It was high, six-to-eight feet above the water and moving at an incredulous speed," he said. "It was like the head of a dragon — just coming out of the water at just a ferocious speed, just moving like crazy."

Lynn watched the creature, which looked green in colour, hurtle behind an island, then disappear. He quickly called the *Yellowknifer*, the local newspaper, to place a classified asking the boater on the lake that day to call him.

"I would think they would have felt the waves (from the dragon)," he said.

Step aside Nessie and Ogopogo, there's a new mystery leviathan on the block. And according to Chris Woodall, it's called Ol'Slavey.

Woodall is a *Yellowknifer* columnist who wrote earlier this summer that Great Slave, with a depth of 614 metres, must hide some weird and wonderful creature.

To his surprise, his phone soon started ringing with stories of people claiming to have seen just such a thing — and he gave it the name Ol'Slavey, after one of the aboriginal languages in the Northwest Territories.

It's a fitting name, since the Dene abound with stories about an unknown creature in the waters.

When Antoine Michel was growing up in the traditional community of Lutsel K'e, about 200 kilometres east of Yellowknife, he was taught that a creature lived in the waters off Utsingi Point, about 80 kilometres southwest of the community. To appease the nameless creature, people boating by the point pass by in silence and feed the lake with tobacco offerings.

"We usually stop the motor and go around the point — paddle quietly," he said.

Years later, he saw the creature himself, on a calm moonlit night as he and his wife returned by boat from a caribou hunt.

"We seen a rock there — I thought it was a rock first time, there was seagulls around it," he said. "I just turned away from it, I didn't want to hit it, (then) it just went down. I felt the waves and then I just took off. I didn't take a look back."

Boaters have seen strange creatures suddenly surfacing in the water in front of them — and near Lutsel K'e are some of the deepest pockets of Great Slave Lake, a natural habitat for a beast of the depths.

Naysayers will tell you it's just a big fish, but the northern divers who actually swim those waters will tell you differently.

A decade ago, members of the Arctic Divers company were sent on a deep-water body retrieval near Lutsel K'e when one of its divers saw a terrifying beast.

"It looked much like an alligator, but with a head like a pike," said Wayne Gzowski, the company's district manager.

"I really do believe that there's unknown marine life in a lot of these

areas," he said, in places that have never before been explored by humans.

And if you don't believe him, believe the Dene elders. According to aboriginal legend, the great Mackenzie River was created by a giant beaver.

Rene Fumoleau, a retired Oblate priest and respected northern historian, remembers a Gwich'in elder telling him that a dragon now lives in the waters of Canada's biggest river.

"There are some places where the water never freezes in winter and that is because there is that monster somewhere at the bottom of the river that stirs the waters," he said.

The Mackenzie flows out of Great Slave Lake; perhaps Ol'Slavey moves between haunts. Whatever the case, Archie Catholique, the chief of Lutsel K'e, is a believer.

"The elders were saying that this thing here doesn't bother anybody — it's not there to hurt anybody," he said. But, he added, "people see it."

Edmonton Journal

DAILY JEFFERSONIAN, Cambridge, OH - Aug. 23, 2004

EDITORIAL Bigfoot

Is Guernsey County a new home of Bigfoot?

A local husband and wife last week reported hearing the unusual howling often purported to come from these beasts and the man said he caught a glimpse of an unidentified creature at Salt Fork State Park.

The couple and their dog were minding their own business, walking a groomed trail in the woods after a picnic supper.

These are ordinary and intelligent people. They don't drink, they don't do dope and they were wide awake.

They said they experienced something they'll never forget.

Sasquatch? Yeti? Bigfoot?

The couple related their unusual experience to area Bigfoot researchers and from there the story of the Salt Fork sighting quickly spread among those who follow such things.

Ever hopeful, members of the national Bigfoot Field Researchers Organization visited the park over the

weekend. They called the couple's story "compelling."

The Salt Fork State Park office said Saturday it hadn't received any reports of strange encounters of this type.

There was no indication of any danger to the public.

Despite a long history of sightings, conclusive proof of the existence of these creatures is lacking.

Unfortunately, there is no way to validate the claims.

Naysayers usually point to pranksters and argue that no bones of any kind have ever been found that resemble accounts of the creature, and no animal so large could live in inhabited areas for so long without being captured.

Is there an undiscovered creature stalking the woods of Guernsey County?

One can never totally discount the possibility.

Which makes the purported Salt Fork sighting a fascinating inclusion in local folklore — if nothing else.

Letter to the Editor

June 14, 2004
Letter to the Editor
The Citizen
Mansfield, AR 72944

I read with great interest Mr. McCaslin's three "Off the Beaten Path" columns about the Bigfoot animals in and around Mansfield. He is to be commended for having addressed the subject in such a fair, rational and unbiased manner. As some of your readers may be aware, columnist Eddie Glenn recently published similar articles in the Tahlequah Daily Press.

The information provided to Mr. McCaslin by your readers was so credible that I contacted him, and with his assistance subsequently contacted the person who furnished him the photograph of the Bigfoot track. As a result I met and talked with the area resident who took the photograph. On Wednesday, June 9 the resident and I traveled to the location where the photograph was made and to a location in Polk County where the resident believes there is ongoing Bigfoot activity. The observations made during those field trips confirmed the presence of the Bigfoot primates in both locations.

The fact that fresh plain tracks of at least three of those animals were so readily found at these locations would have caused the writer to suspect another hoax attempt had there been anyone else that knew the exact locations we were to explore. The person that accompanied me was never considered as being part of any deception simply because of his personal beliefs and convictions.

Although I was greatly surprised to see tracks so quickly in both areas, I probably should not have been. As many of your readers know from personal experiences these animals have been around the area for a long time. What they may not know is that the Western half of the State of Arkansas is part of a larger area which roughly encompasses the Southern part of Missouri, the Eastern half of Oklahoma, the Northeastern corner of Texas and much of Northwestern Louisiana which has a sizeable population of these animals.

This correspondence is not intended to try to convince anyone

of the existence of these animals. It would take a newspaper as thick as the Little Rock telephone book to present the results of all the studies and reports of field research by professionals and all of the reports from hundreds of credible witnesses to convince a skeptic that such animals do exist in many parts of the world. They have occupied the American continent for over 30,000 years.

The skeptical reader who is convinced at this point that the writer is nuts may want to turn to the sports page now. What follows is likely not going to alter that opinion. The rest is for those people who have an open mind and who are patient enough to wait awhile for the inevitable front page articles in this and other publications which will carry official confirmation of the existence of these animals.

The fact is that any person who hunts, fishes, hikes or drives in Western Arkansas may have the rare opportunity to join the ranks of thousands of other people in this country who have seen or heard one or more of these animals. The experience will either be frightening or awe inspiring. The real purpose of this correspondence is to provide the reader who does not know much about these animals with some information about their characteristics, habits and traits so that an encounter will not be traumatic.

The adult males of this unclassified species are huge. The largest reported in Arkansas and nearby McCurtain and LeFlore counties in Oklahoma are about nine feet in height. In some areas of the country males have been reported that are ten feet tall. A few years ago two males, both about nine feet tall, were seen fighting or rough-housing on the slopes of a mountain in central Arkansas. As would be expected the largest mature male animals are estimated to weigh as much as 750 pounds. The animals are ape-like in appearance and usually walk upright, although they sometimes walk on all fours (quadrupedal) as do gorillas. The animals are covered in long hair, usually reddish-brown, except for their faces, palms and soles of their feet. There have been numerous

reports of animals that show signs of old age and are gray in color. Many people report the hair to be of different colors under the arms and down the insides of the legs. In some parts of the country the hair is commonly black.

The females are not as large and are usually identified by their breasts which are partially bare. The breasts of mature females are usually reported as being noticeably pendulous. The exposed skin on the breasts of the females and the exposed facial skin on both the males and females is usually reported to be dark gray or nearly black, and having the appearance of leather.

The animals' heads are shaped similar to that of a large gorilla. The top of the heads of mature animals are somewhat cone shaped. The skull has a very pronounced brow ridge, and the eyes appear to be deeply recessed. The eyes are typically brown, although there have been reports of blue/gray eyed animals in Northern Tennessee and Southern Kentucky. The animals are generally nocturnal and their eyes very reflective in natural and artificial light. The color reflected by the eyes appears to be somewhat dependent on the light source. In moonlight the eyes are usually reported to "glow" with a reddish color. Many people report that the eyes are yellow or greenish-yellow when a bright light hits them.

Their neck and shoulder muscles are massive. Many people have reported that the upper torso of the males make them look like professional weight lifters. The width of the shoulders of adult males are typically reported to exceed three feet. Because of the large neck and shoulder muscles the animals' appear to have no neck. Witnesses typically report that the animals cannot turn their heads to look to the side without turning their entire upper torso. Nearly all reports indicate their hands are basically shaped like that of a man, just three times larger. There have been reports of animals with hands that did not appear to have opposable thumbs, although those reports are rare. The animals generally walk in a somewhat stoop-shouldered fashion. Most people report that the

done so and lived to regret it. When one member of a group finds a food source, the other members soon know about it. Before long the entire group is waiting for hand-outs, and when the food supply is cut off, the situation gets out of hand. Near Honobia, Oklahoma just a year or so ago a woman and her children were reportedly driven from their home by a group of animals that had been inadvertently fed by the husband who later cut off the food supply. Other similar cases have been reported from Arkansas, Tennessee, Georgia and Alabama.

While the home ranges of these animals are extensive, they apparently do not migrate. They do in fact move from one area to the other during the year. It appears from the plotting of sighting reports from Arkansas that during the winter months they move to the higher elevations within the Ozark and Ouachita mountains, and during the hot, dry summer months they move back down to lower elevations. The movements are believed to be related to the accessibility of water. The animals must obtain water during hot summer days just like any other animal. Many sightings that have been reported during late afternoon occur as the animals are going to or coming from sources of fresh water. In Arkansas the animals thrive along mountain creeks and rivers, and around lakes that have been formed by dams on those streams.

The animals typically forage at the upper ends of the lakes. They have been seen and/or heard along the shores of every major lake in Western and Northern Arkansas. They are excellent swimmers and are often seen trying to catch fish in streams across the country. Groups of people have seen them enter deep holes of water in the Pacific Northwest and stay submerged for more than three minutes. In Southern Arkansas they prefer the safety and seclusion of the swamps and bayous. In Arkansas and other states they have been seen tearing open rotted trees and overturning large rocks looking for grubs, crawfish and small rodents in the same fashion as bears.

These animals are not normally aggressive. In fact they are very shy and appear to be fascinated by humans and their activities. There have been numerous reports of the animals making routine visits to rural home sites during the early mornings or late evenings to watch from partial concealment as the residents went about their normal duties. Indian legends also contain such accounts. Older residents of various areas of the country have their own names for the animals. In the mountains of central Arkansas, some called them "Pine Monkeys". There is town called Monkey Run just west of Mountain Home. Not far away is a mountain some call Monkey Mountain. Nearby is a mine that is called Monkey Hill mine. That area continues to retain a sizable population of the animals and sighting reports from the area are common. In Southwest Arkansas an old man referred to the Bigfoot that often watched him from the wood line as he worked in his field as, "That damned ole monkey."

In places in Alabama the old timers called them "ghost apes". World wide they are known dozens of different names.

Field investigations of many sighting reports from the South disclose that for every report of Bigfoot activity made to local police agencies, many more sightings occurred that were not reported. People in many areas are hesitant to make such reports because local police agencies seldom take the reports seriously and usually do not even document the report for the record. I am curious if that has happened in the Mansfield area.

The animals have a habit of following hikers or hunters that enter their home territory. There have been hundreds of reports of people hearing animals following alongside them as they walked through the woods. If the person turned and walked away, they were escorted out of the area in the same fashion. The reports are all basically the same. The animal walked as the person walked, and stopped when the person stopped. In most cases no animal was seen, but the

animal could be clearly heard and sometimes smelled. If a person actually intrudes too close to the animals private refuge, the person will likely be greeted by roaring, screaming and the sounds of limbs being broken off standing trees. In some cases the animals have come into view making bluff charges, often beating limbs against the ground while screaming, roaring and growling.

The animals make an assortment of sounds. They roar, growl, scream, whistle and grunt. They have been heard to chatter amongst themselves as if carrying on some type of communication. They are also mimics, and make the sounds of wild birds and domestic animals. There have been documented accounts of them having imitated the sounds of a baby crying. In most cases that occurred in areas near homes that actually contained small children at the time or shortly before. As one might expect the people who heard the cry of a small child from the woods quickly called for help and joined in an unsuccessful search of the area.

Many witnesses who have encountered such an animal stated they smelled it before they saw it. Others have reported smelling the animals during close encounters. The description of the smell is always basically the same. It is described as a combination of the smells of raw sewage or sewer gas, putrid meat and a very wet dog. The smell of sewer gas - actually hydrogen sulfide and sometimes referred to as the smell of a broken rotten egg - is the most predominant. The smell is so overpowering and rank that many people have become sick from it. Residents in one small community in east Alabama stated that a law enforcement officer that was called to the area to investigate a "swamp ape" that had become aggressive with area residents became so sick from having breathed the scent of the animal that he had to be taken for medical treatment.

To my knowledge there have been no documented cases of humans having been injured by a Bigfoot this century. Under some circumstances they are aggressive as are many wild animals. People who have inadvertently gotten too close to a Bigfoot should avoid direct eye contact and slowly back away.

Direct eye contact between wild primates is a sign of aggression.

If the reader is interested in obtaining more information on this subject, there are many Bigfoot research groups that have Internet web sites that contain archives and related links that will provide it. Some sites clearly state the organizations are "Pro-Kill". Most groups do not advocate the killing of one of these animals to obtain the DNA evidence necessary to have it classified by the scientific community. Neither do I.

Hiram T. Bernard
Benton, Arkansas

arms are very long with the hands reaching nearly to the knees. It may be that their stoop-shouldered walk causes the arms to appear longer than they actually are.

The torso of the males are usually reported to be tapered to the waist, with the legs being long with very muscular thighs. The females are typically reported to have wider hips with less muscular legs.

The feet of course are very large compared to that of a man, hence their common name. The tracks of larger males have been measured to be nearly twenty four inches long and over seven and one-half inches wide across the ball of the foot. The feet are usually man-like, with five toes, although there have been many reports - usually from swampy locations in Louisiana and other deep south areas - of animals with only three or four toes. Many professionals believe the abnormal conditions of the feet are the results of

interbreeding of closely related animals. Others believe the lack of five toes may be the results of injuries or snakebite. The tracks of larger males show the length of their stride can exceed 51/2 feet. (A good example was detailed in the Oklahoma press earlier this year.)

Because of their size and built, the animals can move extremely fast, even through thick brush. When enraged or frightened their passage through dense brush and timber produces sounds like that of massive boulder being turned loose down the side of a mountain. When they see or smell a human they can, as many people have described it, melt into the thickest vegetation without a sound.

As mentioned, the animals are primarily nocturnal. They are without a doubt the most secretive, stealthy and reclusive animal in the world. (Most professionals who have devoted time to the research of the animals believe they are the descendants of the giant ape, gigantopithecus black, whose skeletal remains were found in Asia, and were thought to have become extinct 300,000 years ago.) The animals are omnivorous and generally utilize natural food sources. They also eat vegetables, orchard-grown fruits and various feeds put out by humans for livestock and wild game. They hunt, kill and eat many wild animals as well as domestic cattle and hogs. They have been seen hunting in small groups as they stampede deer, wild hogs and domestic livestock into well planned ambushes. Recently a hunter watched through a rifle scope

from a tree stand as a adult female ambushed and killed one of four wild hogs feeding as a group in the Sabine River bottoms in Northeast Texas. His detailed account of that event vividly documents the hunting skills of these animals.

In some highly developed areas of the country their home range has been restricted and the animals have had to forage close to populated areas, often raiding garbage cans and other garbage disposal containers. A few years ago the animals gained a lot of attention when they routinely visited the community garbage dump near Honobia in LeFlore County, Oklahoma. In most states more and more reports of close encounters with these animals are being filed as subdivisions are intruding into their home ranges. There is an ongoing case in Virginia in which a group of these animals have been interacting with people to obtain food. That case will likely make front page news soon as a team is monitoring the activity closely with some sophisticated night vision photographic equipment.

It is not a good idea for anyone to begin feeding the animals near a residential area. Many people over the years have

SASQUATCH SAGA

In Bigfoot hunt, it's East vs. West

Left-coast veterans look down on newbies as maybe a little loony

BY DAVID A. FAHRENTHOLD
Washington Post

WASHINGTON — William Dranginis says he saw Bigfoot near Culpeper, Va., on a spring day in 1995. He and two friends were using metal detectors in a field when a 7-foot-tall thing with thick hair and bulging muscles jumped from behind a tree.

Soon after, Dranginis reported his sighting to one of the nation's premier Bigfoot researchers in the Pacific Northwest.

The guy laughed at him, Dranginis says. Not because Dranginis was saying a species of giant primates might be living in America, undetected by modern science.

Dranginis was rebuffed because he was saying they lived in Virginia.

"They basically said I was drinking," Dranginis recalled. "Stay out of the woods, you idiot."

It was his initiation into the East Coast Bigfoot hunters, a group whose members say they are a put-upon subculture in the already marginalized world of sasquatch researchers.

On the one hand, East Coast Bigfooters say they have to fight discrimination from Western col-

leagues who think the creature doesn't live east of the Rocky Mountains. On the other, they have to deal with sighting reports from a more urban population, which includes some who are unfamiliar with wildlife and apt to mistake a black bear for the missing link.

Through it all, one thought keeps them going: Something really might be out there — and somebody in the East might find it first.

"The first carcass gets all the marbles," said Bob Chance of Harford County, Md.

Many of the East's leading Bigfoot experts converged Sept. 25 in Jeannette, Pa., a small town outside Pittsburgh, for the 2004 East Coast Bigfoot Conference.

One of the speakers was Travis McHenry of Norfolk, Va., who said beforehand that he aimed to move the East Coast Bigfoot community closer to the West Coast mainstream on one important point.

The point: On the West Coast, many believe Bigfoot to be a flesh-and-blood animal, while some on the East Coast think of Bigfoot in terms of a ghost or alien. But McHenry did offer this compromise: Couldn't there be ghosts of dead Bigfoots roaming around as well?

This kind of talk reinforces the view of researchers in the West that the East is an amateur scene, said Matt Moneymaker of California, who heads the Bigfoot Field Researchers Organization.

"They're kind of at the stage where Bigfoot research... had been stuck in, like, the mid-'80s," he said.

The West's Bigfoot movement is older and larger and provided some of the movement's most cherished evidence, including many footprints and a famous 1967 film purporting to show a Bigfoot walking through a California forest.

But folks on the East Coast say there is no shortage of sightings here. Mark Opsasnick, an author from Prince George's County, Md., notes in his Maryland Bigfoot Digest that hairy beasts were spotted near Baltimore in the 1970s: the Sykesville Monster in 1973, the Harewood Park Monster in '76 and a string of sightings in Harford County.

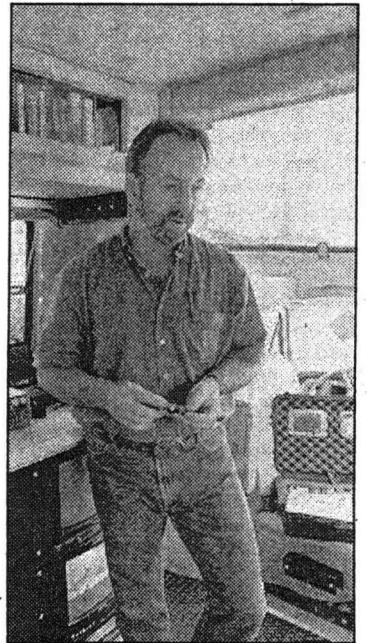
More recently, construction workers building Arundel Mills in Hanover, Md., in 2000 said they saw a 12-foot-tall animal with glowing red eyes in nearby woods.

For those intent on finding the creature, however, "sasquatchery" in the East is not easy.

First, there is the time constraint: They need hours to spend in the woods looking for evidence. But most everybody has a day job. Dranginis designs surveillance equipment, Chance sells Christmas trees, and McHenry is a Navy intelligence analyst. Another problem, the researchers say, is that many people in the East aren't familiar with either the Bigfoot legend or the for-

ests the creature might inhabit. McHenry recalled one woman who called to say she saw a werewolf.

He and others reassured her that it was probably a sasquatch. "She was glad, because to her Bigfoot was something more real than a werewolf," he said.



RICKY CARIOTI - WASHINGTON POST PHOTO
William Dranginis of Manassas, Va., shows off his RV at the 2004 East Coast Bigfoot Conference/Expo in Jeannette, Pa., in September. The RV has been transformed into a high-tech surveillance vehicle that he uses to hunt Bigfoot in the woods.

Farnam cow found mutilated

By MARY BETH CHAPMAN
The North Platte Telegraph

FARNAM — Larry Jurjens was checking his herd of about 100 cattle Aug. 19, when he found a dead 11-year-old Black Angus.

Jurjens said the cow's left eyeball was



Larry Jurjens

removed, the bag and udders had been removed and there was a large excision in the rectal region. None of the internal organs were removed and he said the cuts seemed to have been made with surgical precision.

The tongue had also been removed, with the incision made far back into the throat.

Jurgens said two puncture wounds were on the

covered.

The estimated time of death corresponds with unexplained noises heard in the area. On the night of Aug. 17, Jurjens wife Joanne heard what sounded like a large, low-flying aircraft going over their house. The low, rumbling noise was heard by several other witnesses as far away as

Gothenburg. Witnesses reported the noise persisted from a minute to as much as five minutes in some areas.

The cow's death is being investigated by Linda Moulton Howe, an international investigative journalist and documentary film producer from Jamison, Pa. She visited the Jurjens' ranch Aug. 25, accompanied by Jefferey Willerth, a Los Angeles producer. Jurjens said they interviewed witnesses and various samples were taken for scientific analysis.

The case will be featured on a documentary special for the History Channel, currently slated for broadcast in November.

Jurjens said this is not the first report of unexplained apparent mutilations of cattle in Nebraska. More recently, in April 2003, two cows and a bull calf were found dead in a pasture three miles west of Valparaiso. The cattle, belonging to Mike Benes, were described by a veterinarian as possibly being killed by electrocution. A teat was cut off each cow and the bull

removed. Similar to the recent Farnam case, no blood was found around any of the dead animals.

Ernest and Catherine Wempel of Overton found an apparently mutilated cow on their property June 23. The cow's calf has been missing since the incident. Ernest Wempel had checked the cows the evening of June 22 and the cow was alive then. At about 7 a.m. June 23, he said he found the cow dead, with an udder removed in a similar fashion as the Jurjen's cow.

The cow was removed by a rendering service by 9 a.m. June 23, so no tests were performed.

Wempel began wondering about the incident after the cow's calf was discovered missing. Now, he said, he wishes he had contacted authorities to do tests on the cow, and plans to do so if another mutilated cow is found.

covered.

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