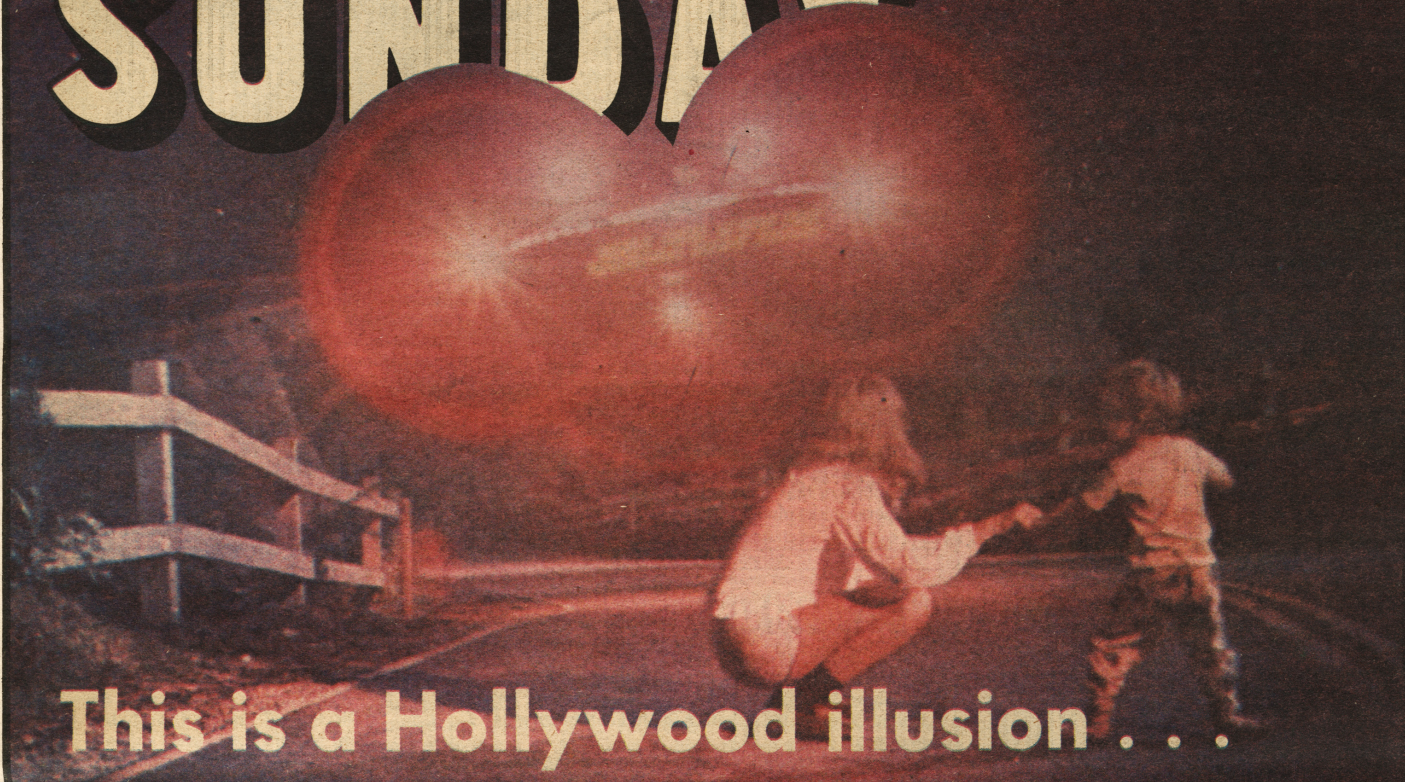


Gannett Westchester Newspapers Section G January 22, 1978

SUNDAY



This is a Hollywood illusion . . .



. . . but is this a real alien?

SUNDAY

Gannett Westchester Newspapers
 January 22, 1978
 Hugh Wachter
 Editor

7 Saunas to snowshoes

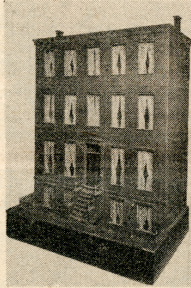
Tired of winter but too broke for a week or two in the sun? At wit's end with snow and ice—and cars that know 15 ways to not start when the mechanic knows but 14? Richard Heller's review of *The Cold Weather Catalog* may be just the relief, with everything you could ever need to know about beating the blahs of Old Man Winter—including hot spiced wine.

8 Comfort without status

Ossining's community of Crotonville has continually been among the last to receive basic community services, but those who live there have only high regard for their neighborhood. Other areas may have more status, higher incomes and larger homes, but in Crotonville the wealth of good friends and permanent roots are enough to make life enjoyable. Ed Trepasso's article and Arny DiLaura's photos tell the story in today's *People, places*.

10 The scale of history

No longer the playthings of children, dolls' houses are now hot items for collectors. At the Museum of the City of New York, the 12 houses of the Toy Collection have become one of the most popular attractions. Holly Hill does some small-time window-peeking in today's *New York City* article.



16 Words are cheap

If used-books were sold like used cars, advertisements might well read, "Formerly owned by a little old lady who only read one chapter a week." Like a car really owned by "a little old lady," a used book can be a real bargain. Barbara Mayer cases the used-book outlets in the area in today's *Suburban Strategy*.

COVER

The top photograph is a scene from *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, a \$19 million special-effects extravaganza. The bottom photograph Mark Brinkerhoff says he took in March, 1977, at the Mahopac Middle School. He is convinced it shows the arm and head of an alien being behind the porthole of a spaceship.

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PERSON TO PERSON

BISSELL - SPIRO

Somehow, wherever there is a winner's circle you will find a Westchester resident. Take the National Postage Stamp Show held at the New York Coliseum at which **George Jacobs**, proprietor of the Holbrooke Stamp Company in White Plains figured in a winning incident. **Bernard E. Wendroff** of New York City was the winner of a \$1,000 prize for the stamps which he chose at the Holbrooke booth.

☆☆☆

Members of the staff of the **YWCA of White Plains and Central Westchester** are still chuckling about two cute vignettes. One is this weekend's Blizzard Swim Meet. The codirectors of the event which was held yesterday and continues today, are none other than **Mr. January** and **Mr. Snow**. Last year the director was **Mr. Winter**. . . we kid you not. Add to that their little tale of **Charlie**, a middle-aged horse donated to the YWCA. Although this is not the usual type of donation, **Ruth Simons**, health and physical education director, did not hesitate to accept **Charlie**, who was not quite ready for pasture. Now it has paid off because **Judy Balta**, owner of the Bear Ridge Riding Stable in Pleasantville, where the 'Y' offers riding instruction, bought **Charlie** for \$250. The moral of that story is that the 'Y' never looks a gift horse in the mouth.



GEORGE JACOBS, LEFT, AND BERNARD E. WENDROFF

Empire Brush president and United Hospital board chairman, **Jack Gantz**, and his wife, **Sarita**, who works with the Twigs as well as other philanthropic organizations, opened their home in Rye for a reception honoring **Kenneth F. Adamec**, new president of United Hospital. More than 120 physicians, trustees, managers and hospital staff members attended. Among the guests were three former hospital board chairman: **William M. Jennings** of Byram; **H. Clay Johnson** of Rye and **Richard W. Dammann**, also of Rye, and **Dr. Stanley Mandell** of Mamaroneck, president of the hospital's medical staff, as well as directors of various medical divisions. **Adamec** and his wife, **Joan**, are residents of Pound Ridge.

—ELAINE BISSELL and HELEN G. SPIRO

CAMPION

En masse, Yonkers Kiwanians—40 strong—headed by chairman **Pat Marino** will man a battery of phones Wednesday night, Jan. 25, to collect for United Cerebral Palsy before the full campaign gets underway.

All in the family: **Caroline Hodges Persell** has published her second book, *Education and Inequality*, while brother **David Hodges** has authored *Microelectronic Memories*, an article for a recent issue of *Scientific American*. They're the daughter and son of **Mr. and Mrs. Albert Hodges** of Bronxville. **Caroline** is an associate professor and director of undergraduate studies in the department of sociology at New York University. **David** is a professor of electrical engineering and computer science at Berkeley (Calif.) and has several patented inventions. He is living in Berkeley and returned recently from speaking engagements in Germany.

Mildred Wilensky of Florida, a former national president of Hadassah, is the bride of attorney **Milton Friedman** of Hallendale, Fla., an ex-Yonkersite who was active in the Yonkers Lawyers Association.

☆☆☆

Beaming proudly these days are the **Arthur Gruens** of Yonkers over daughter **Barbara Joyce Gruen's** new Ph.D. from Fordham University in counseling and personnel services. Her dissertation was titled "Self concepts: Changes in women through the self-disclosing process in group counseling." The group counseling sessions were conducted over many weeks at the White Plains Women's Center. **Dr. Gruen** was also awarded membership in Phi Delta Kappa, a national honorary organization, and she is now a guidance counselor at Roosevelt High School.

—EILEEN CAMPION

CRIBARI

Art Carney commuting between California and Connecticut. Wonder why? . . . Speaking of mementos, **Howard Smith** of Scarsdale has a classic—a little, green, Heinz pickle-lapel pin he picked up at the 1939 World's Fair. **Howard's** brother, **Lester Smith**, by the by, is **Danny Kaye's** business associate and part-owner of the Seattle Mariners. . . **Hans Juenemann** is leaving Sunningdale to take over, as general manager of the Country Club of Cleveland, Ohio, next month. . . Recommended: *Baseball's Best & Hall of Fame Gallery*, authored by **Marty Appel** of Tarrytown and published by McGraw-Hill. **Marty** is half of **Ahzt Garagiola-Appel Enterprises** of Tarrytown.



ART CARNEY COMMUTING?

The **Vallis Clan** of Yonkers is breathing a bit easier these days now that young **John Vallis, Jr.** is on the mend, following emergency surgery twice within the past three weeks . . . once at Rhode Island U. and again at Montefiore in the Bronx. **John** is the All-County griddler from Roosevelt High . . . Also on

the mend is another prominent Yonkersite, **Les Beck**, dean of Westchester coaches, following surgery . . . **Julie LaRosa** of Irvington is a hit at the Playboy Club in NYC.

☆☆☆

Add look-alikes—**Jim Kelley**, popular prexy of Springs Mills and TV's **Johnny Carson**. . . Congrats to Winged Foot's **John Martin**, promoted to vice president, programming and assistant to the president at ABC Sports. . . **Harrison's William Denis Fugazy** recipient of Max Kase Sports Lodge B'nai B'rith "Sportsman of the Year" award last night at the Hotel Roosevelt. . . And **David A. (Sonny) Werblin** gets the **John V. Mara Sportsman of the Year Award** at the Catholic Youth Organization's Club of Champions Dinner Feb. 1 at the Waldorf. . . Hampshire CC undergoing a quarter million dollar refurbishing according to club president **Alan Wein**. . . **Lisa Camerino**, an accomplished senior tennis player herself, leading a contingent of "netsters" to the inaugural Monte Carlo International Veterans Tennis Tournament April 1-9. **Prince Rainier** is entered. . . Kudos to WFAS' **Vince Lupiano** for his prize-winning creative commercial, entitled "The Wooden Wolf," for the Bodelian Book Shop.

CIAO!

—GUIDO CRIBARI

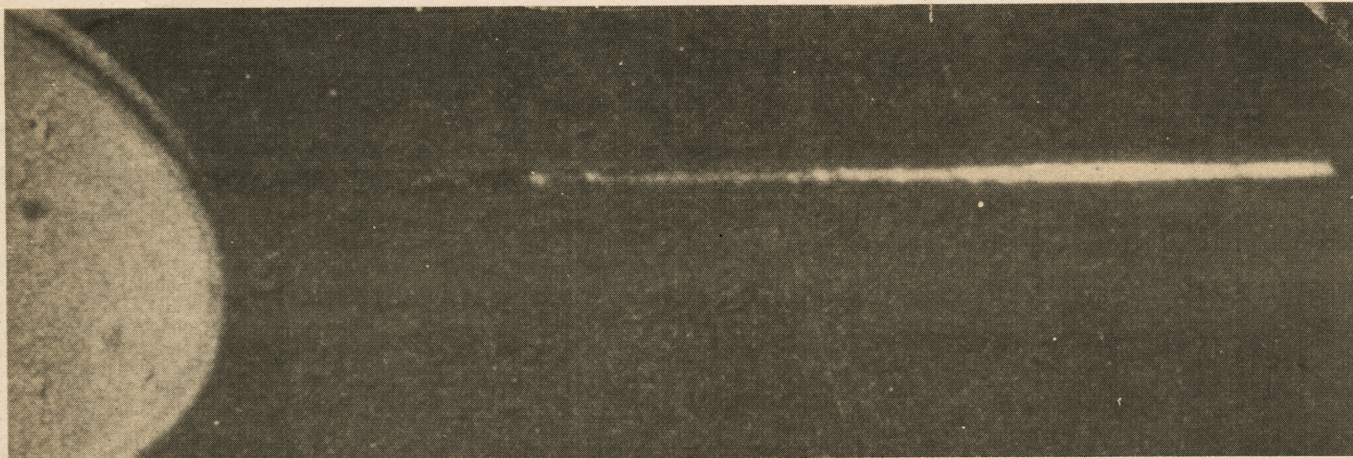


Photo by Mark Brinkerhoff

Mark Brinkerhoff of Mahopac says he took this picture at the Mahopac Middle School in March, 1977. He calls it 'UFO shooting probe.'

It is time to ask, 'Are we alone?'

By Joan J. Cirillo

Visitors from the sky have fascinated and puzzled man for centuries. Cavemen encountered or imagined them and drew haunting images of helmet-headed creatures, believed by many today to be alien beings. The prophet Ezekiel wrote in the Bible of a wheel bursting forth from flames in the sky, a description many say was that of an unidentified flying object. Even 19th century man had his enigmatic visitor, a strange airship—origin still unknown.

Unidentified Flying Objects—UFOS—may have visited this planet for centuries but it is only recently that man, equipped with advanced technology, is seeking answers to the mystery. Only in the last decade have scientists begun to recognize the probability of intelligent extraterrestrial life in other solar systems, and experimented in contacting this life by beaming radio messages into the distance. And only in the past five years, as more and more creditable people express their belief in UFOs—people like the President Jimmy Carter. UFOlogy (you-follow-gee), the study of UFOs, is becoming a serious topic.

No wonder then that a film like *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* has kindled public interest. The \$19 million fantasy, coupled with the receptive thinking of the times, has catalyzed a UFO renaissance. The curious have inundated the Center for UFO Studies (a four-year old UFO research center in Evanston, Ill.), the White House, NASA and planetariums across the country with questions about UFO phenomena. And witnesses, previously embarrassed or afraid to reveal their UFO encounters, are standing up to be counted.

Many witnesses say they've had

close encounters, witnesses like Joe Guisti of Mohegan Lake and Mark Brinkerhoff of Mahopac, two area residents who claim they've been contacted by visitors from the sky.

It was Dec. 20, nearly a month ago. "I was restless," recalls Guisti, a 32-year old jack-of-all trades in the music business. Guisti had gone to sleep around one that morning, but could not get to sleep. As he tossed in his bed, he noticed a light flash through his bedroom window. He glanced at the clock. It was 3:55 a.m.

"I got up out of bed, pulled on my trousers and grabbed a flashlight. And then, as I came down the front steps outside the house, my flashlight went off. All of a sudden I heard a noise to my left. Right in front of me—within five feet—were two objects. I got so scared I just reacted, and threw my flashlight at one of the objects, turned around and ran into the house," says Guisti.

When he got back to his bedroom, Guisti noticed that it was 4:20 a.m. He was surprised—he thought he'd only been gone a few minutes, but the clock indicated he'd been gone 25 minutes.



Photo by Joseph Guisti

Joseph Guisti of Mohegan Lake says he took this Polaroid snapshot of footprints the morning after encountering two strange objects outside his home. He says the prints on the left are each about a foot long, the ones on the right about two feet long.

Guisti tried to sleep but he couldn't. Finally, at 7:30 a.m. he got up, went down to the kitchen for a glass of milk, and as he looked out the window noticed two sets of footprints in the snow.

When Guisti went outdoors to examine the prints, he noticed that one set resembled circles, each about a foot in diameter with a V cut into it. The others were two feet long, oval shapes with a circle at either end. The tracks led across a blacktop area to the gate of the neighborhood swimming pool and ended. Guisti noticed his flashlight on the ground with pieces of granite, part of a "circuit board" and wood chips beside it.

Alarmed and suspicious, Guisti called the police. When a state trooper arrived at his house, he listened to the story, examined the tracks and left. The trooper was skeptical and attributed the encounter to an active imagination.

But Guisti was all but completely convinced the incident really happened and that he saw two wide forms, one 10 feet tall and the other half that

size. The events of the following night, however, erased any of his lingering doubt that he had had a close encounter.

"I went to sleep that night and woke up at seven the next morning, soaking wet from a nightmare," explains Guisti. In his dream, he was in front of his house, talking to the two objects he'd seen the night before. As soon as he awakened, he wrote down what he remembered of the conversation in his dream.

"Who are you?' I asked them.

"No time to answer in depth except that we are from what you call another time period, another so-called dimension. We came here due to a meteor shower,' the objects responded." Guisti's notes indicate they then asked, "Where is main headquarters for your kind?" and that he responded, "Washington, D.C."

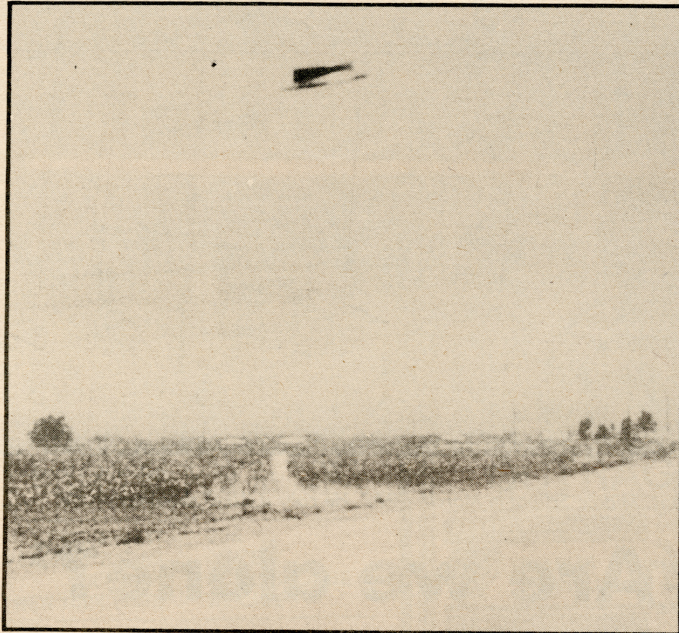
Guisti says the objects told him they had learned his language through radio airwaves and that they knew an Egyptian-type language as well. In his notes they asked him if the dates Dec. 2 and 15 meant anything to him and ended by saying: "We are leaving at 7 p.m. tonight your time off the shore. We will be in touch with you soon again."

The time lapse, the dreams of interrogations by creatures and the encounter Guisti reported are similar to others reported around the world. In the past decade accounts of close encounters with humanoid (human-like) creatures have been increasing with regularity. The accounts vary somewhat, and many are connected with UFO sightings, but almost uniformly witnesses notice a time lapse, a block of unaccountable time such as the 20 minutes in Guisti's experience. Clues to what may have happened in that time period usually surface through the subconscious, in dreams or in regressive hypnosis.

Like Guisti, "contactees" who experience such encounters consider themselves sane people. Guisti says he wasn't seeking an encounter,

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JOAN J. CIRILLO is staff writer for Sunday magazine.



AP wirephoto

Rex Heflin reported taking this photograph Aug. 3, 1965, in Santa Ana, Calif. Investigators still strongly disagree over what is shown.

hadn't seen *Close Encounters*, and "never believed in stuff like that before." He adds that two things are very strange:

First, that the dates he remembers the objects asked him about coincide with the mysterious offshore booms reported up and down the east coast during December. (Scientists have been trying to determine the caused of the strange sounds, but are still baffled.) Guisti claims they are connected with the arrival and departure of the space people.

Second, that the two objects will contact him again. "As long as it's on a friendly basis, I'm willing to go along with it," he says, adding that he hopes to go through regressive hypnosis to determine what else may have happened during his time lapse.

Stories like Guisti's are indeed strange, and UFOlogists' attitudes towards them range from intolerance to puzzlement. Some discredit the reports as hoaxes, publicity stunts or the fabrications of madmen. They say that such reports reinforce the notion that UFOlogy is the territory of kooks. Yet others, like Allan Hendry, chief investigator for the Center for UFO Studies and Dr. J. Allen Hynek, founder-director of the Center, note the encounters are very real for the people who report them. The majority of contactees are with someone when they have the encounter, reducing the possibility of a hoax, they assert.

But Hendry adds: "There's no compelling evidence that there are extraterrestrial visitors. Humanoid reports may be a sophisticated fantasy symptomatic of the times, a projection of a collective fear of technology."

Though Guisti hasn't contacted UFO investigators about his experience, he

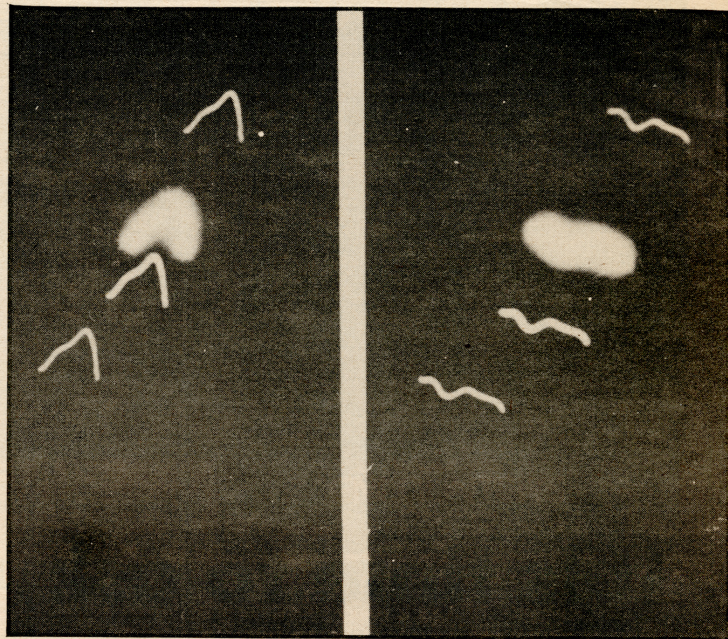
was called by Mark Brinkerhoff of Mahopac, a 24-year-old artist and self-described loner who says he's developed telepathic powers. Last year Brinkerhoff founded the Mahopac UFO Skywatchers Association, a group of a dozen northern Westchester residents interested in UFOs as well as spiritual healing. He and other contactees believe that extraterrestrial beings are contacting humans in encounters such as Guisti's and programming them to save the world and the universe from nuclear destruction.

Brinkerhoff contends that he lived in another galaxy in an earlier life, and that his mission in this life is to teach love to his fellow man. Brinkerhoff says he's communicated with beings from his earlier life, beings from the constellation surrounding the star Bootes. He says he mentally talks to them at the Mahopac Middle School field near his home and that last July they appeared to him there in the form of a white, glowing light from which seven human-like forms emerged. He says they surrounded him for 10 minutes to infuse him with love and then disappeared.

Since then, Brinkerhoff says he's been taking photographs of spaceships from the field on the instructions of the beings. Though many of his negatives are blank, three show images of what Brinkerhoff says are spaceships, one with what he says is a humanoid looking out a porthole.

UFOlogists generally discredit such photographs since they're so easily fabricated. But Frederick Dennis, a freelance photographer and one of 100 investigators for the Center for UFO Studies, contends that Brinkerhoff's photographs are not fakes. "The images are there, there's no question about it. They're very mysterious," he asserts.

Dennis doesn't know what the im-



AP wirephoto

Ken Chamberlain Jr. reported shooting these two night time-exposures of moving points of light near Columbus, Ohio, in October, 1973. The lights were seen by 150 persons, and their source remains a mystery.

ages are, and suggests that Brinkerhoff may be transmitting a thought pattern onto the film. Brinkerhoff denies this theory and says that the film is picking up images that can't be seen with the naked eye. Like Guisti, he says he doesn't care if people think he's crazy—he knows what he's experiencing.

As intriguing and strange as stories such as Guisti's and Brinkerhoff's are, they are only a segment of UFO phenomena. Only one per cent of all UFO sightings involve a close encounter, a term coined by Dr. Hynek of the Center for UFO Studies to refer to UFO sightings or encounters within 200 yards of the witnesses.

Hynek established three levels for these close encounters: An encounter of the first kind, where there is no interaction between the witness and the UFO; the second kind, where the UFO interacts with the witness or the environment and leaves physical traces such as radiation burns; and finally, as Steven Spielberg dramatized in his film, an encounter of the third kind, where human-like creatures (humanoids) appear.

Many would argue that close encounters are psychological rather than real experiences and therefore should be discredited. (The bulk of the reports have emerged only in the past decade.) But they are part of phenomena that go back centuries. And with the emergence of the field of UFOlogy in the past 30 years, astronomers and scientists have been recording and researching thousands of UFO sightings around the world. The simple fact is that sane people—well-respected members of their communities, people who aren't looking for spaceships—are reporting seeing UFOs.

Consider events in the recent past in Westchester and Putnam counties. In

the 1950s and '60s, bobbing white and blue lights in the sky puzzled observers and once sent Mount Pleasant police scrambling around the Rockefeller estate in Pocantico Hills and a Westchester County Airport-based National Guard fighter squadron on a wild goose chase. Most unusual were the reports in 1976 when a bizarre string of UFO reports persisted for three months.

The 1976 reports began the evening of Aug. 4 when Robert Jankowski was walking with three friends near his Carmel home, and they spotted something in the sky. Recalls Jankowski, "It was brighter than a star, oval-shaped, with all different colors going around it in a circular motion." The 16-year-old Mahopac High School student ran into his house. His mother told him not to bother the police, but Jankowski called them from a friend's house. Carmel patrolman Kenneth came to the scene and watched as the light hovered in the distance for a half an hour and then moved across the sky. Two other Carmel policemen later reported seeing the light.

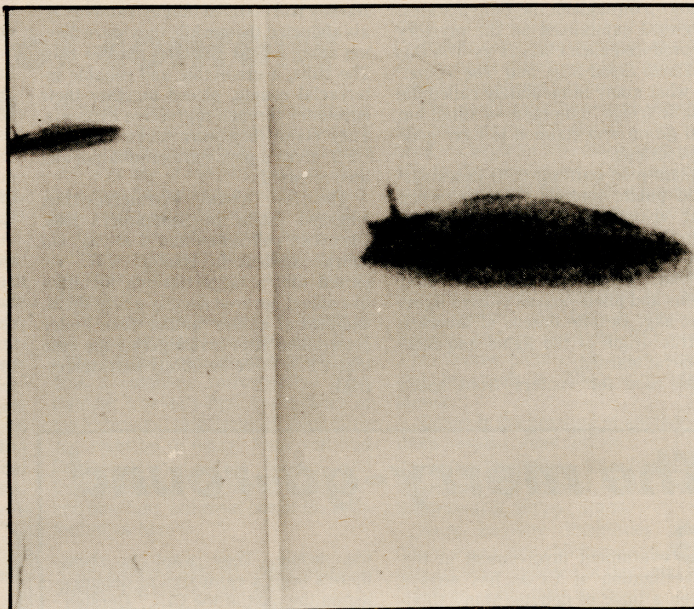
The mysterious light disappeared, but that wasn't the end of it. Two weeks later, on Aug. 19, it reappeared on the horizon. This time Jankowski's whole neighborhood marvelled at it. CBers spotted it, spreading the news excitedly while police and residents of Carmel, Putnam Valley, Yorktown, Mohegan Lake and Mahopac reported the same sighting. The light remained in the sky from 10 that night until three the next morning. It disappeared but returned once more: A motorist in Port Chester reported seeing the flickering light travelling across the sky on Sept. 7.

The lights weren't the only UFOs reported that summer and fall. On Aug. 25, six days after the northern Westchester siting, residents in Irvington and Tarrytown reported a strange object over the Tappan Zee Bridge. Rich-



AP wirephoto

Ralph Ditter of Zanesville, Ohio, took this picture in February, 1967, and originally reported that it showed a UFO. He later admitted to creating a hoax by throwing a cake tin-like object into the air.



AP wirephoto

Dan and Grant Jaroslaw, two brothers who lived near Detroit, originally said these photographs were taken of a UFO they saw in January, 1967. They later admitted they had fabricated the story and the pictures.

ard Cross, a 45-year-old school teacher and Tarrytown resident, remembers it clearly. He was relaxing on his patio with his six-year-old son, a neighbor and his neighbor's daughter around seven that summer night.

"I looked toward the east and I saw this object. It was a uniform greyish color, not illuminated. It sort of looked like a turtle shape. I had honestly never seen anything like it," he recalls.

He says that the UFO remained over the access to the bridge for about 10 minutes, then slowly moved toward the east, disappearing over the horizon. An Elmsford woman, driving along the Cross Westchester Expressway, says that she saw the same object, and when she read the account of Cross's sighting in the newspaper, called him to say, "You're not crazy. I saw it too."

Three days later, a silver oblong object was reported in the sky near Mohegan Lake. Four days later, on Sept. 1, there were reports of two more sightings. A northern Westchester resident, whose name was withheld by UFO investigator Bill Blades of Valhalla, said he looked out the window that night about 9:30 when his dog wouldn't stop barking. He said that about 500 feet above a nearby reservoir there was a disk-shaped silvery object with white lights beneath it. Shortly before two that morning, a balloon-like object was reported over the Hudson River near Nyack. Both reports said the objects hovered for a short time and then disappeared over the horizon.

And then on Oct. 11, Don Mecca of Port Chester, in the company of Officer Alex Rovello of the Port Chester police department, reported a sighting. They say they watched in amazement as two silver disk-shaped objects whisked across the sky high above Mecca's auto-repair shop at 55 Purdy Avenue.

Investigator Blades notes that a few days before the flashing lights were reported throughout northern Westchester, an alarm went off at the pumping station in Jefferson Valley. The same day as the Mohegan Lake sighting, unexplainable loud explosions were heard in Yorktown, and the day of the Sept. 1 sightings in northern Westchester and Nyack, Yorktown had a power failure. Blades says he can't prove there were any connections between the power failure, alarm and explosion and the UFO sightings, but he says UFOs have been known to trigger electromagnetic effects such as these in surrounding areas.

What were all these strange objects and events? Witnesses guess they were either secret probing devices or true UFOs. Some refuse to speculate, but many say they know they saw something strange, whatever it was. Nearly all have developed an interest in UFOs since their sighting. Interestingly enough, none of the witnesses was frightened at the time of his sighting.

Blades, a 45-year-old New York Telephone Co. project manager, and Phillip J. Imbrogno, a 30-year-old Greenwich, Conn., astronomy teacher and founder of the National Observers of Aerial Phenomena, a national UFO group, researched the sightings. Both are volunteer investigators for the Mutual UFO Network, one of the largest of hundreds of private UFO groups.

During a typical investigation, the two men interview witnesses, check their background and police reports on their sightings, study astronomical data to eliminate the possibility of misinterpreted natural phenomenon, and check to make sure the objects were not satellites or aircraft. Both judge the 1976 witnesses reliable and believe the sightings authentic. They consider the local collection of sightings the largest and most significant in this area. To them, the in-

cidents were true "unknowns."

"Unknowns" are a category that UFO investigators don't take lightly. They are the sightings—a mere 10 per cent of those reported—that cannot be explained.

As chief investigator for the Center for UFO Studies, Hendry has monitored closely trends within the UFO phenomena. The Center is the first non-profit corporation under the direction of scientists devoted solely to spreading information and studying UFOs. Researchers have assembled a data bank consisting of the 60,000 sightings reported to date around the world—only a portion of all sightings, since 90 per cent of UFO encounters go unreported. Witnesses often fear ridicule or don't know where to report a sighting. (The Center has a hotline (312/491-1870) open to the public, and police departments have access to the Center's 24-hour answering service.)

Nine of 10 sightings are explainable, says Hendry. The majority are misinterpreted natural phenomena—a high-flying bird that reflects the sun; airplanes in the distance; the planet Venus or Jupiter; weather balloons, satellites, or aircraft; a star transformed into an array of pulsating colors by atmospheric refractions. (Hendry speculated that some of the local 1976 sightings were the result of atmospheric refractions.)

And pranksters have been known to launch home-made spaceships or fabricate photos and stories. Just three years ago, Ossining residents and police were sure they'd seen UFOs. It turned out they were the handiwork of local teenagers who'd enclosed a lit candle in a cellophane bag. The heat sent the contraption drifting across the sky, like a strange balloon.

Pranks aside, UFOlogists find that

the most common report is a nocturnal light, with sighting times peaking between 9 p.m. and 3 a.m. A daylight sighting of an oval or disc-shaped metallic-like object constitutes the next most frequent report. Radar visuals—unidentified blips on a radar screen that coincide with visual sightings—follow third. And then there are the close encounters.

Though more than 300 UFO sightings were recorded prior to the 20th century, it wasn't until 1896 and 1897 that the first major wave of sightings was fully documented. That wave occurred when Americans from California to West Virginia reported seeing a mysterious airship. There were those who believed the airship was a prank or the product of the popular imagination, but "The Great Airship Mystery" was never solved.

The era of modern UFOlogy did not begin until 1947 when businessman Kenneth Arnold of Boise, Idaho, spotted nine disc-shaped objects as he flew his plane above Mount Ranier in Washington. Arnold likened the objects' undulating motion to a "saucer skipping over water"—and the term flying saucer was born.

Sightings that year were serious enough to prompt the Air Force to collect reports on UFOs and open investigations to determine if UFOs were a threat to national security. In 1952, they expanded the study into Project Blue Book and compiled data on 13,134 cases before ending the project in 1969. Even though they listed 701 cases as "unknowns," the Air Force claimed that UFOs didn't threaten national security and bowed out of the UFO controversy.

But many individuals weren't satisfied. Major concentrations of reports in this country in 1952, 1966 and 1973, along with sporadic groupings throughout the world, piqued the public's curiosity. In

Please turn to next page

the 1950s, private UFO organizations sprang up throughout the United States. Hollywood capitalized on the mystery and produced such classics as *The Day the Earth Stood Still* and *The Thing*. And what many immediately called the "lunatic fringe" emerged—a small but vocal group who claimed to have gone on spaceships.

Meanwhile, baffling UFO cases sustained public interest. In 1952, when radar visuals were spotted over the White House, the question of whether or not UFOs really existed seemed to be resolved: Blips appeared on radar screens and pilots chased elusive lights in the sky. Despite dozens of theories, the true origin of the lights and blips was never learned.

The case for visitors from space

seemed strengthened when Betty and Barney Hill claimed that extraterrestrials abducted them while they were driving along a New England road in 1961. The Hills, a creditable and reliable interracial couple, pieced together their encounter through regressive hypnosis. They claim they were taken aboard a UFO, given a physical examination and then released.

Theories about extraterrestrials emerged again in September, 1965, when two policemen and a 19-year-old college student in Exeter, N.H., reported that a large flashing metallic-like object hovered silently above them. *Incident at Exeter* author John Fuller determined after investigating the case that UFOs were definitely extraterrestrial.

Whether UFOs are the product of extraterrestrials or the human mind, no one really knows—no one has ever "captured" a UFO or a humanoid. In the absence of any hard evidence, UFOlogists can only continue to study UFO reports and theorize about the origins of these spaceships—if they do exist. Extraterrestrial intelligent life probably does exist, they contend, but the great distances between that life and the Earth would seem to preclude any contacts. UFOlogists question why beings would travel such distances and then act in such an elusive fashion. As Ken Savary, curator of science at the Hudson River Museum planetarium, notes: "They could learn more about us by simply listening to the radio and television waves in the air than by taking somebody for a spaceship ride."

Some noted skeptics, like Philip J. Klass, senior editor of *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, contend that UFOs are a psychological phenomenon,

nothing more than misinterpreted natural phenomena, or hoaxes. In fact, Klass formed a committee of skeptics six months ago to investigate reports and, as he puts it, lend balance to the UFO controversy.

Still others, like Dr. Hynek, suggest UFOs might be from another dimension: "They might be closer to us than we think. They might be all around us in the same way that television pictures are passing through your room right now, but if you don't have a set you don't see them."

It's a chilling thought, but one that Dr. Hynek emphasizes is only a thought. For no matter how many theories and how many UFO reports exist, it's only recently that UFOlogy has become a professional field of study. UFOlogists don't have enough facts yet to determine what UFOs are all about. And they admit that even with the facts, they may never know the answer to the UFO mystery. □

The merry-go-round

Government involvement in the investigation of UFOs has always been a topic of debate. Many UFOlogists contend the American government is still involved in UFO study, though federal officials say it isn't.

This fall, three separate actions in Washington, D.C., and New York City furthered the debate about the extent of government intervention.

The Air Force had investigated UFO reports from 1947 to 1969 through its Project Blue Book, and UFOlogists have argued that extensive research and interest in UFOs have been behind Blue Book's official position—that nearly all reports are not true or easily explained.

Ground Saucer Watch, an Arizona-based UFO group, has accused the Central Intelligence Agency of the same concealment and "official" skepticism—but this time it happened in federal court. Represented by Peekskill resident Peter A. Gersten and his New York City law firm, Rothblatt, Rothblatt, Seijas and Peskin, the 300 members of Ground Saucer Watch are suing the CIA under the Freedom of Information Act.

The group wants all CIA documents about UFOs. The CIA has said that it doesn't have separate files on UFOs, and that it can't release certain materials for security reasons, according to Gersten.

At issue is the Robertson Panel report (the findings of a panel of scientists the CIA commissioned in 1953 to investigate UFO reports) and data on a 1952 case the group is researching. Ground Saucer Watch members believe the CIA didn't give them the original Robertson Panel report when they requested it, and they're challenging the Agency's refusal to supply further information. The CIA contends that releasing the 1952 material threatens national security, even though the Robertson Panel found that UFOs weren't a threat to national security, Gersten says.

"I have documents in my possession that show the CIA has kept UFO reports in specialized files ... Ground Saucer Watch members don't believe the government has a right to keep this information from

the people. They want to show there's been a campaign of debunking on the part of the CIA," Gersten asserts.

The CIA and government authorities say the government hasn't investigated UFOs since the Air Force closed Project Blue Book, which also reported that UFOs didn't threaten national security. But in Washington, D.C., this fall, the issue of government study once again became a focus of attention.

Sparked by reports that President Jimmy Carter was sympathetic to the UFO cause, UFO enthusiasts sent a flood of inquiries to the White House and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). President Carter had reported seeing a UFO when he was governor of Georgia and remarked that he would do everything he could to make public all government information. UFOlogists wanted him to keep that promise.

In response, the White House requested that NASA reopen the study of UFOs, a request that NASA turned down because, they said, there is no physical UFO evidence to study. NASA, however, did agree to answer any inquiries about UFOs and offer its laboratories for research should evidence become available. A spokesman for the President contends that all information about UFOs is already public.

Meanwhile, in an unrelated move in New York City, the delegation of Grenada proposed that the United Nations establish an agency to study UFOs. Prime Minister Eric M. Gairy has advocated such an agency, and a Special Political Committee of the General Assembly will be debating the proposal shortly.

Whether all this will lead to renewed government interest in UFOlogy is debatable. But, as noted UFOlogist Dr. J. Allen Hynek commented: "I think that NASA was wise in turning the study down. I think UFO investigations belong in the private sector. The public itself, if it wants the answers about UFOs, is going to have to organize."

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