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Dr. James E. McDonald

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COVER — Dr. James E. McDonald in his office in a rare moment of ease.
Photo courtesy of Betsy McDonald & Ann Druffel.

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JAMES E. McDONALD'S UFO FILES

by Ann Druffel

The voluminous UFO research files of a fearless scientist, Dr. James E. McDonald, have lain in a special "UFO room" at his home in Tucson, Arizona for twenty-five years, lovingly protected by members of his family. McDonald was a high-profile contributor to scientific UFO research, beginning in the Spring of 1966 and continuing until his tragic death in June 1971.

Jim McDonald was a top atmospheric physicist. His official title was "Senior Physicist" at the Institute of Atmospheric Physics (IAP) at the University of Arizona in Tucson (Figure One). He had originally been appointed Co-Director of IAP when he first helped found the Institute in the mid-fifties under the auspices of the University of Chicago. However, he found that administrative work was not to his liking, and voluntarily stepped down to a position where he could be free to do his research at will. His voluminous contributions to Cloud Physics and Climate Modification were widely acclaimed, and his reputation was renowned worldwide. He was active on many government research commissions and many of his projects were funded by grants from the National Science Foundation (NSF), the Office of Naval Research (ONR), The National Academy of Sciences (NAS), NASA and other top agencies.

McDonald was unique. He had quietly studied UFO sightings in and around the Tucson area for eight full years before he decided to go public with his interest. He was fully aware that "going public" might bring controversy and scorn upon his head from scientific colleagues who had never studied the UFO phenomenon and who accepted the government's "explanation" of the problem as the final word. He forged ahead, adding UFO research to his already crowded research/teaching schedule. At first he managed to use partial ONR funding for his UFO research, but political maneuvering soon cut this off. He continued untroubled,

speaking sometimes as often as two to three times a week before scientific conferences, symposia and colloquia, giving hundreds of such talks between 1966-1971. He traveled incessantly around the U. S. and into foreign countries on this quest (Figure Two). The main thrust of his research was to convince other scientists of the necessity for Science to accept the UFO phenomenon as an appropriate, and even urgent, field of study. He wrote many papers on the subject, many of which were based on various classic and current sightings which he had studied in depth (1).

McDonald, if not a genius, was a near-genius, although he never admitted to anyone that he was anything else than a scientist who was seeking truth. He was also a remarkably sociable and charismatic man with a finely-honed sense of humor. He was friend to many researchers in the field, both scientists and non-scientists. He treated all objective investigators with respect. Many of these were not scientists or engineers, but professionals in other fields such as sociology, public relations, and numerous other fields of expertise. His unique contributions to UFO research were so voluminous that it is impossible to list them here, but much of it involved constant interaction with administrators and investigators of the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP). His contact with NICAP was mutually beneficial: he re-investigated classic cases which NICAP and other objective groups had studied and freely gave input into on-going investigations conducted by NICAP's nationwide network of Subcommittees. He was loved and respected by hundreds of NICAP people, including Donald E. Keyhoe, NICAP's Director, who was considered the "dean of ufology" by the majority of early UFO researchers. McDonald's frequent visits to NICAP Subcommittees in various states were occasions of great anticipation, resulting in a free exchange of information and fascinating interaction.

James Edward McDonald, one of the most interesting — and one of the most tragic — figures in the history of the UFO controversy, was born on May 7, 1920, in Duluth, Minnesota. He earned a B.A. at the University of Omaha in 1942; an M.S. at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1945, and a Ph.D. at Iowa State University in 1951.

— Jerome Clark, *High Strangeness*, 1996, p. 292

(1) Among these were four articles in the British journal, *Flying Saucer Review (FSR)*. See *FSR: Flying Saucer Review 1955-1994: An Index, Compiled by Edward G. Stewart, Sacramento, 1995*. Most of McDonald's other UFO writings were published privately and distributed widely in the UFO field.

* After the Condon Report... rumors ran rampant that the Air Force was going to destroy the Blue Book files. Dr. Edward Condon tried to use his influence to do just that. Carl Sagan... circulated a petition and letter to the scientific community to prevent their destruction... Condon was livid...

Also, it was due to Carl Sagan and Thornton Page that the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) held its symposium on UFOs against a lot of political pressure not to address the subject. The symposium gave Hynek and McDonald a forum to present their viewpoints and cases.

— Ed Stewart



Figure 1. University of Arizona

Shortly before McDonald died, he wrote a series of letters to his wife Betsy, stating his concern that his voluminous UFO files not be simply burned after his death, but archived in some form so that capable researchers could use them in further studies of the UFO phenomenon. Of particular concern to him were a collection of hundreds of Blue Book radar-visual (R-V) sighting files, which he had acquired in 1970 at Maxwell AFB, a few months after Project Blue Book was officially ended by the Air Force. Dismayed by the possibility that the Air Force would simply destroy all Blue Book files* (because the Condon Report had brushed off the entire subject as not being of scientific value) McDonald spent two weeks studying the R-V files archived there. These particular files had never before been available to him or any other civilian researcher, even though he had made four prior trips to Project Blue Book when it was housed in Wright-Patterson AFB in Dayton, Ohio.

He was astonished and excited by the unexpected wealth of data in the Blue Book R-V files and photocopied about 580 of them. He brought his treasure trove back to Tucson and spent another two weeks of his 1970 vacation time arranging them in apple pie order. He planned to take a sabbatical and write a book on the UFO subject the following year; he expected to glean the data from the R-V files and include them as

part of his book. His book was to be a full rebuttal of the Condon Report, as well as a general text outlining the extreme urgency that UFO phenomena be accepted by the scientific community as a legitimate subject for interdisciplinary study. He regarded the UFO problem as one of the most serious scientific problems of our times.

McDonald died before he had a chance to write his book, but he had taken the time to arrange all of his UFO materials into three file cabinets, which he kept in his IAP office. He marked these cabinets "UFO," hoping that his family would save them. Even in their grief, his family fully realized the importance he had placed on his UFO research. His two sons, Lee and Kirk, went directly to his office at the Institute and retrieved the three file cabinets, his UFO library, and other UFO materials. They were placed in a small bedroom at the back of the family's rambling Tucson home; this became known as "the UFO room." There they stayed, accessed in the early 1970s only by three or four carefully-screened researchers.

McDonald died by his own hand in June 1971, the result of a deep depression brought on by personal problems and other difficult events which seemed to tumble upon him, one after another, during the last few months of his life. Chief among these was direct ridicule he sustained at a public Congressional hearing on the SST contro-



Figure 2. James E. McDonald, Ph.D. on the right on left John Pearse on radio station 2GB in Australia.

versy. McDonald had carefully researched the subject. He had gathered substantial data that fleets of supersonic transports, overflying the American continent, would damage earth's fragile ozone layer beyond recovery, and was among the very first scientists to sound the clarion call that the ozone layer must be protected at all costs. Even though his testimony was scientifically sound in all respects, McDonald was deliberately ridiculed by a certain Congressman who, oddly, sought to discredit his testimony by ridiculing his interest in UFOs.

NICAP personnel, and the UFO field in general, never recovered from the great loss of this man. All that was left of their remarkable colleague were his files. At first, Betsy McDonald permitted a few UFO researchers limited access to them. The first was Richard Greenwell, who was associated with the Aerial Phenomena Research Organization (APRO). Greenwell assisted her in arranging the files and books into more convenient form. Paul McCarthy then accessed some of the files for a doctoral thesis, and shortly afterwards David Jacobs used some of the files while writing his book, *The UFO Controversy in America*.

During this period, a scientist from Australia came to Tucson and inquired specifically about the Blue Book R-V files about which McDonald had been so excited.

Betsy, herself a highly educated person, required proof from this scientist that he possessed the necessary expertise in atmospheric physics, astronomy, and radar systems which McDonald had felt was necessary to extract the data effectively. The scientist demonstrated his expertise in these fields, and Betsy McDonald allowed him to copy the R-V files. The scientist took them back to Australia and at first it seemed he was actually going to go ahead, study the files, and attempt to extract the data which McDonald felt could provide a type of "physical evidence" so badly needed in the field. Suddenly, however, the scientist was offered a large grant, apparently from the Australian government, to pursue an entirely different project, and he dropped his interest in UFOs.

By this time, Betsy McDonald had become engrossed in her own work pursuits, which took her to various out-of-state cities for years at a time. She could no longer screen the numerous persons who requested access. NICAP had essentially been destroyed by 1970 by government agents who had wormed their way into top administrative positions; she had no one she could trust to help her. By the mid-1970s, she cut off access even to scientifically-oriented researchers who approached her, because the changes which were occurring in the UFO

Having known and worked with McDonald in conjunction with NICAP activities, I had adequate information about him but wished to research more deeply. I contacted Betsy McDonald. Coincidentally, it turned out, she was at the time working in the Los Angeles area and lived only a few miles from my Pasadena home.

Some of the requests came from cultists and other non-objective persons, including various old-style "contactees," the claims of which McDonald himself had always considered completely unverifiable.

field disturbed her. She felt that the field had become chaotic, that too much attention was being paid to "abduction" reports which could not be verified, and that the strictly objective approach which McDonald had employed was no longer dominant in the field.

The members of the McDonald family who remained in the home continued to receive many requests for access, for McDonald's work in the UFO field was widely recognized by researchers, even those who had never had an opportunity of knowing him personally. Some of the requests came from cultists and other non-objective persons, including various old-style "contactees," the claims of which McDonald himself had always considered completely unverifiable. Now engaged in her own career pursuits, which took her away from her Tucson home sometimes for years at a time, she could not take the time to determine which researchers seeking to access the files would use them with the same scientific care her late husband had employed. They lay unused for over fifteen years.

The events which led to their eventually being archived and accessible to researchers perhaps involves synchronicity. In early 1993, a movie-for-television producer contacted me for advice regarding experiences she'd had, which she felt involved possible "UFO abductions." During our interviews she learned that, besides being a UFO researcher and author, I had written several screenplays, some of which were based on UFO themes. She asked me to select one I thought she might like to read, and I sent her *The Red Hand of the O'Neill's*, a sci-fi treatment based loosely on the UFO landing in Socorro, New Mexico. She read the script, commended the writing, but explained that she was looking for scripts with strong female leads, which were at the time very saleable in the television production field. However, she was interested enough in the lead character of *Red Hand* to ask me who I had based it on. It had been loosely based upon McDonald. She became fascinated with McDonald's UFO research, about which she had previously known nothing, and asked me to write a docudrama on his involvement in the field.

Having known and worked with McDonald in conjunction with NICAP activities, I had adequate information about

him but wished to research more deeply. I contacted Betsy McDonald. Coincidentally, it turned out, she was at the time working in the Los Angeles area and lived only a few miles from my Pasadena home. She knew me through my prior contacts and correspondence with McDonald, in conjunction with the Los Angeles NICAP Subcommittee (LANS). After several preliminary meetings, during which Betsy McDonald met the producer, she came to the conclusion that my objective approach to the problem of UFOs was compatible with her late husband's. She granted me access to his files.

Because of the complexity of McDonald's research in the UFO field, the docudrama script, as first written, proved unsatisfactory. The producer suggested that a biographical account, incorporating all of the elements of McDonald's intense involvement in the field, be written first; the docudrama could then be based on the biography. Betsy McDonald was agreeable. She authorized a biography based on her husband's UFO research and granted me three years' exclusive access to the files (later extended to four).

In the course of my trips to Tucson to access the files, Betsy McDonald, who also journeyed home on these occasions, expressed the wish that the files could be archived and presented to a suitable source where they would be readily available to other qualified researchers. She had worried about the files for twenty years, knowing that her late husband had expressed the same wish. He had written a letter to Betsy shortly before his death, rather wistfully expressing his hope that the University of Arizona Library at Tucson might be their final repository. He wrote:

"... That UFO material remains of very real scientific significance. The batch of Xeroxes I spent a good many hundreds on at Maxwell AFB are extremely useful, to the right person... I don't really know just what to say about it all... My present best suggestion is that it be archived at the UA Library, though maybe they'll view that as presumptuous... That stuff is the one part... that really bothers me at this stage. Its scientific value is, I think, quite large... I'd sure hate to see that stuff burnt. Maybe you could store it till Lee and Kirk might sense its significance... & dig into that mine (morass?) of material and write "my book." Think it over (2)."

McDonald was confident that his scientific work on cloud physics, climate modification, and other related scientific research would be carefully archived by the University. His conviction, of course, proved true. His major published works and accompanying research notes were tenderly placed in a special cabinet in a room at the IAP, which was dedicated to his memory and known for many years as "the McDonald room." Other thick files containing some of his other research were kept in the IAP library. His remaining unfinished research on various scientific subjects was archived in the James E. McDonald Special Collection University storage facility in South Tucson. A few items, such as his bio, were kept in the University Library's Personal Collections Section where hundreds of scientific collections are archived.

McDonald, however, was rightfully concerned about his UFO files. His University colleagues, with two or three exceptions, had displayed no real interest in the subject, even though many scientists to whom he had spoken at scientific conferences and symposia were very interested, indeed. Though most of his University colleagues listened when he spoke privately to them about specific cases he was investigating, many of them thought that he was wasting his time pursuing the subject so intensely, positioned as it was on "the fringes of science."

Betsy McDonald was reluctant to approach the University of Arizona Library to see if McDonald's wish might be carried out because of a general agreement among family members that the Library probably wouldn't be interested. However, in the course of my interviews with a dozen of his scientific colleagues for the McDonald biography, Dr. A. Richard Kassander, former Director of the IAP, made initial contact with the University of Arizona Library, suggesting that the UFO files be archived there as part of the James E. McDonald Personal Collection. Curator Roger Myers of that Section agreed that McDonald's UFO files could be housed in the Library on the campus grounds, instead of in the less-accessible satellite facility in South Tucson.

The Fund for UFO Research graciously extended a \$2400 grant (later extended to \$3,500) to archive the files. The Special Collections Section required acid-free file folders, plastic Mylar sleeves for photos, and special storage boxes for other materi-

als in order to insure their preservation. When the archiving first began I estimated that two five-day trips to Tucson would give me sufficient time to archive the "UFO room-full" of materials, at the same time accessing them to write my biography (3). However, the complexity of McDonald's contributions to UFO research proved even more conglomerate than researchers at the time realized. All together, there were about 1,200 files, each on a different subject, the alphabetization of which was incomplete, even considering Richard Greenwell's initial assistance. It quickly became apparent that considerable re-assembling of the files was needed before they could be placed in the special archival receptacles.

In addition to this problem, Betsy McDonald and McDonald's former secretary, Margaret Sanderson-Rae, who still works as a publications editor at IAP, found many other UFO-related items which were added to the original collection, including four handwritten journals dated 1958 through 1971. Some of his scientific colleagues who are still at IAP, such as Drs. Benjamin Herman and William Sellers, searched out other items in IAP storage which were added to McDonald's UFO files. Due to the complexity of the work, the archiving process required five trips to Tucson instead of two.

Added to the above exigencies, an arson fire occurred in June 1995 at the McDonald home, which also severely delayed the work, since most of the materials in the "UFO room" were smoke-damaged to varying degrees. The entire collection had to be transferred to other sites, first to be professionally ozoned, at the insurance company's cost, to prevent rapid deterioration. Most of the inside of the house was burned or severely damaged, and Betsy McDonald had to move into an apartment for a year while her home was being re-constructed. Fortunately, the walls of the home are made of perlite, a lava-type rock, and remained intact.

As a result of the delays, the archiving took four years instead of the estimated two. As the complexity of the files became clearer, additional archival materials had to be obtained. The June 1955 fire destroyed some of these materials, which were stored in an adjacent room. The insurance company at first promised to reimburse their cost, but later reneged on their promise. The

(2) Letter from James E. McDonald to Betsy McDonald, March 22, 1971.

(3) The biography, tentatively titled *Scientist vs. the System: James E. McDonald's Fight for UFO Science*, is now finished and will probably be published in 1997.

In the spring of 1971, McDonald shot himself in the head. The shot did not kill him, but it left him blind. He was committed to the psychiatric ward of the V.A. Medical Center in Tucson. In June his family signed him out...

On the morning of Sunday, June 13 [a family] found a body of a man under a bridge. He was lying on his back, and a .38 caliber revolver rested in the sand to the left of his head...Papers on the body identified the dead man as James E. McDonald.

— Clark,
1996, p. 300

Fund for UFO Research generously extended the grant to cover these unexpected expenses.

The final archiving trip was in May 1996. As always, Betsy McDonald enthusiastically helped with many of the multiple tasks. By this time, she had been able to move back into her refurbished home, and the twenty-nine boxes which comprised the McDonald archives filled a big corner in her living room. My husband, Charles Druffel, paying all of his own expenses, accompanied me on this trip and helped with some of the final archiving duties. The Personal Collections Section personnel came a few days later to take the 29 boxes to the University's Library. In addition to the research materials, we provided computer catalogues of McDonald's UFO library and an itemized catalogue of the 1200 file folders (Figure Three).

Beginning the collection, as delivered to the Personal Collections Section, are hundreds of files containing McDonald's research on UFO cases, classic and otherwise; correspondence and other materials connected with his numerous seminars and symposia talks before scientific groups such as the AIAA, AAAS, AMS, etc., arranged alphabetically from "A" to "Z." This section filled fifteen record storage boxes provided by the University. The file names, for the most part, are those originally selected by McDonald. The collection continues with approximately 580 Project Blue Book R-V files photocopied by McDonald at Maxwell AFB in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1970 after the termination of Project Blue Book. These comprised four boxes and are filed chronologically by date, as McDonald originally arranged them.

Although they follow immediately after the alphabetized files, these R-V sighting files constitute a distinct and separate section. As stated above, McDonald placed great emphasis and value on them. It was his opinion that the data in them, if properly retrieved, could constitute a type of "physical evidence" verifying UFO phenomena. The chronological dates on these R-V files begin with "June 1947, Hamburg, NY" and end with "July 11, 1968, Nielson AFB, Alaska."

Also in the McDonald archives are four handwritten journals detailing McDonald's activities in the UFO field from 1958 to 1971. There is also a collection of sixteen large vinyl binders. Binder #6 of this collec-

tion may be of special interest, as its contents seem to be a preliminary outline of the book McDonald planned to write. The other binders contain lists of Projects Sign, Grudge, and Blue Book sightings and a variety of materials, ranging from USAF regulations concerning UFO sightings to alphabetized "Case Notes" handwritten or typed by McDonald. Box #21 contained eight thick magazine holders, in which McDonald had placed miscellaneous information ranging from propulsion theories to various Australian and NICAP materials.

The remaining materials were put into a very large cardboard box, #29. These include a professional record of a Canadian radio documentary on UFOs in which McDonald participated and his Sony tape recorder/case on which many of his own reel-to-reel tapes were recorded. These tapes include numerous witness interviews, talks at scientific conferences and symposia, Q & A sessions following his talks, private conversations with colleagues, and other recordings. McDonald's tapes were plainly audible when I played some of them on his small, portable recorder at his Tucson home, and this recorder was also archived. During a search for recorders which would play three McDonald tapes I brought home for further study, it was discovered by MUFON State Director Vince Uhlenkott that these three, at least, were recorded in four-track mode, at a speed of less than 3 1/2 inches per second. It is possible that many more, if not all of his tapes, were recorded at this low speed.

Sixty-one of McDonald's reel-to-reel tapes are in a Steelmaster File, which McDonald had labeled "No. 1." Most of these are interviews with UFO witnesses, although the last ten are undated and/or the subject unidentified. A second Steelmaster File Drawer labeled "No. 2" contains a few dozen more, with subjects ranging from radio/TV appearances, conference/symposia talks, taped letters, suspected "UFO sounds" and data relating to specific sightings. These are alphabetized "A" to "V," although the subject matter is not alphabetical. Some are dated and identified; others are identified but undated, others are neither identified nor dated. Several of McDonald's tapes are in the possession of a Tucson transcriber, who will use a portion of FUFOR's grant money to transcribe them; the transcriptions will then be added to the archives. McDonald's tape list is included in the archives, and

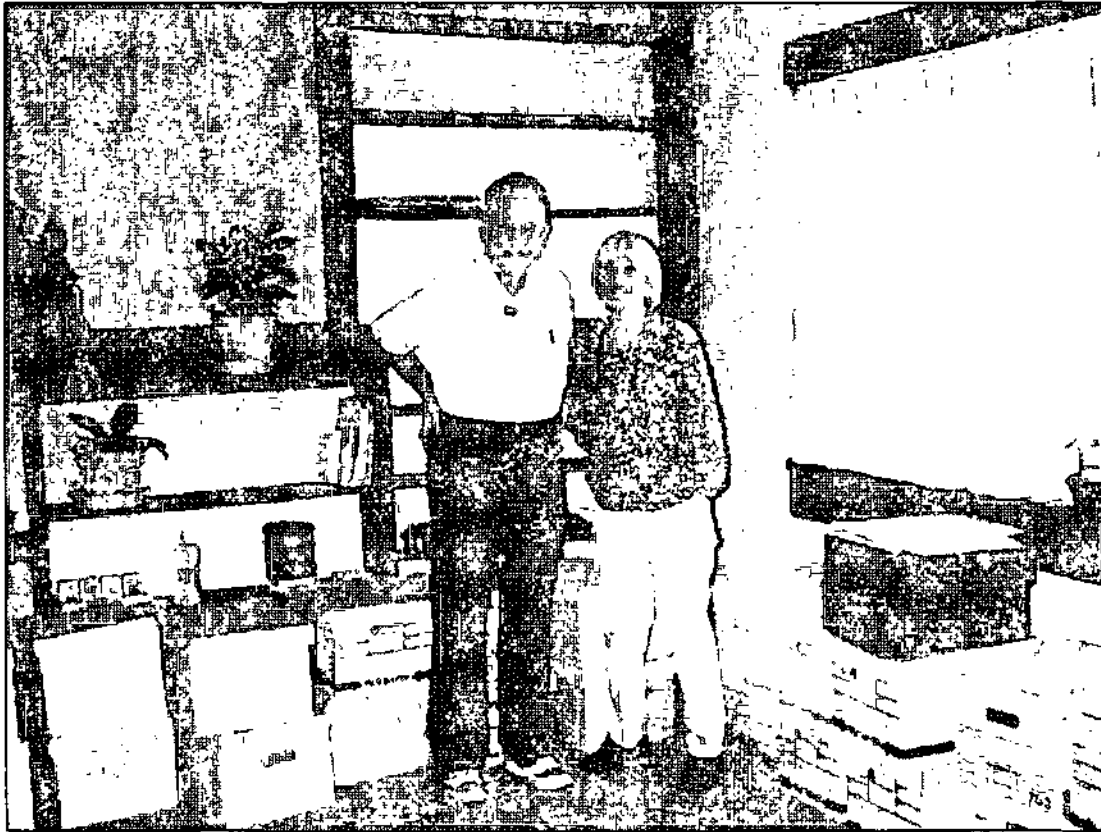


Figure 3. Mrs. Betsy McDonald on right and Charles Druffel, husband of the author, among the 29 boxes of archival material.

The collection continues with approximately 580 Project Blue Book Radar/Visual files photocopied by McDonald at Maxwell AFB in Montgomery, Alabama in 1970.

those in the transcriber's and my possession are noted on this list. For the time being, however, Curator Roger Myers has determined that, since these 25-year old reel-to-reel tapes are fragile, they will not be available to the public at this point. Most of McDonald's papers are now ready to be accessed, however, including his correspondence and the R-V files. They are listed online at the Library and will eventually be available on the Internet.

The McDonald UFO archives will be carefully monitored by the Personal Collections Section staff. A special "Reading room" is provided for persons wishing to study them. Each item will be carefully checked in and out by the Curator's staff.

It has been a privilege and a joy to archive the precious UFO materials which our friend Jim McDonald left behind. Special thanks go to all at FUFOR, who granted the monies necessary to complete the work. The gratitude of the entire UFO field is due Betsy McDonald for her constant interest, cooperation, and help in the archiving process. We are also indebted to all the members of McDonald's family who

protected these irreplaceable items until they could be made accessible to all who treasure them.

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The Gosford Files

UFOs over the NSW Central Coast

by Moira McGhee and Bryan Dickeson

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Abstract

Over the 1995-96 New Year period a series of UFO events occurred on the Central Coast near Gosford, just north of Sydney. People on the Central Coast tend to keep such things very much to themselves and these events were almost missed altogether by UFO investigators in New South Wales.

However, around New Year, a young woman mentioned to her father that she had seen something weird a few evenings before on her way home from a party. Her father mentioned the incident to his local newspaper reporter, who began checking whether anything odd had been reported to local Police. The Police had in fact received numerous calls from the public about unusual phenomena at that time.

From there, the story grew until the reporter was ready to run a report in the Central Coast *Sun Weekly* in February 1996. Some days before publication, he contacted Moira McGhee of the Independent Network of UFO Researchers (INUFOR) based in Sydney, for comment.

Moira McGhee has been following the matter very closely ever since. During 1996 she organised several visits by UFO investigation teams from Sydney to interview witnesses, and a series of very successful public meetings.

Background

The Central Coast is a favoured retirement destination for people from all over Australia, with an immense reservoir of human experience. Investigating a UFO "flap" in such an area is like taking the cork off a cola bottle. Once INUFOR started to follow up leads and familiarise ourselves with the community, the project rapidly expanded and we found all manner of valuable UFO phenomena.

The Gosford file has become huge. Our investigation has provided much extra material which requires follow-up in other parts

of Australia. It also becomes impossible for us to do justice to all the material so kindly provided in a series of articles or a UFO newsletter.

Therefore, we decided to condense as much information into a book and to make it as readable and as accessible as possible to those who made it all possible — the people of the Central Coast.

To ensure confidentiality, the names of all witnesses have been changed.

Environment

The NSW Central Coast is a long, narrow coastal strip of ancient sandstone located between Sydney to the south and Newcastle to the north. Deeply eroded by ancient river valleys, these have been flooded by the rising ocean since the ice ages and now include a series of large, sometimes deep, lagoons (which local people call "lakes") edged by hills and mountains to the West, and sand dunes, peninsulas and beaches to the east.

Gosford itself is situated at the end of Brisbane Water, off Broken Bay, the estuary of the Hawkesbury River. To the north lie a series of brackish lagoons or lakes — Tuggerah Lake, Budgewoi Lake, Lake Munmorah, Colongra Lake, Mannering Lake, and Lake Macquarie.

The Central Coast was originally populated by Aborigines, who have left a rich legacy of legends and cave and rock art.

The first European to explore the Central Coast was Governor Phillip, who discovered Brisbane Water in the late eighteenth century. The area was slow to develop due to difficult access. Except for a few timbermen and farmers, the area remained largely undeveloped for nearly a century, until the Hawkesbury River Bridge was built.

Gosford and Kincumber were developed during the nineteenth century. However, once access became easier many Sydney families built holiday homes in the area. The journey remained difficult until the new

Sydney to Newcastle freeway was constructed and the railway line north was electrified.

Newcastle, to the north, was first settled by Europeans soon after 1800. For many years access was primarily by boat. The early administrators of NSW recognised the value of the area's natural resources, and in the early nineteenth century, convicts were sent to mine coal and fell timber, especially the highly prized cedar. Their small camp soon became the permanent settlement of Newcastle, and before long a school, hospital and gaol were built.

The settlement expanded so quickly it was officially declared a city in 1847. In the following 150 years Newcastle has grown to become one of New South Wales' largest cities with a population of over a quarter of a million.

At present, the Central Coast is a thriving area housing thousands of workers who commute to Sydney on a daily basis. The area has a population of around 1,500,000, including a large number of retired residents who live in what were holiday homes, established in the 1950s and 1960s. Most people are concentrated around lake shores, and on the coast.

The inland region includes vast national parks and state forests, and only comparatively small areas west of the main north-south freeway are settled. There are many collieries mining the vast reserves of coal in the region, and several large coal-fired power stations on Lakes Macquarie and Munmorah.

The terrain of the Central Coast is such that radar installations at both Sydney and Newcastle can only detect objects flying more than 300 feet above the top of the mountain ridges, thereby allowing aerial objects below that altitude to operate undetected.

The area includes a major defense facility — the Air Force Base at Williamtown.

New Year 1996

In mid-December 1995, Gosford was coming alive for the summer. Students had begun their summer vacations and holiday-makers were gathering to enjoy the sun, sand, surf and ambience of the Central Coast. Local shops, laced with festive decorations, were crowded with shoppers and the general din of Christmas.

Summer evenings on the Coast are more peaceful. Couples dawdle along the sea's edge, the warm sand and surf providing a relaxing and romantic backdrop. Fishermen on the rocks at the lake's edge relax against the velvet, starry sky. In the distance you could hear an occasional car, and the musical remnants of parties and family reunions.

Everyone was gearing up for a good time, and flying saucers, UFOs and all that "weird" stuff seemed a universe away. Within a couple of weeks, many locals would find their contentment severely dented, their sense of "normalcy" outraged.

The 1995 festive season would be a time to remember.

On the Wednesday before Christmas, 20 December, Carla Snow was walking along Ocean Beach, Umina. It had been a hot day, and Carla and her boyfriend were enjoying a bit of fresh air. At 8:10 pm it was getting dark and the night was clear and beautiful. They looked up to see what they thought was a "falling star." Suddenly the object reversed direction and shot straight back up into the sky.

They watched for over an hour as the strange, pulsating object zigzagged backwards and forwards across the sky. At times it spun, and Carla likened it to a large white light with rays of rainbow-shape color wrapped around it. The very outside perimeter appeared to be an aura of light. Carla raced back home, and brought three more friends out to watch. After an hour of erratic activity, the object hovered for about 20 minutes, and the rainbow colours subsided. Eventually they returned home, and noticed several military-type aircraft overflying the area.

A week later, on Thursday 28 December, another resident at Ocean Beach reported watching a strange object hovering some 450 meters over the water. She watched it for about 15 minutes, then it changed color and "was gone."

At 8.30 p.m. Jack Elliot, a Central Coast retiree, was fishing with a friend from Lakes Beach. Suddenly they both saw a huge glowing light descend very fast at a 30 degree angle across the sky.

"It was as large as the moon," Jack said, "and a strange, pulsating amber-greenish color." It was out over the sea, travelling in a southerly direction, between 6 and 8 kilometres away. Jack didn't hear any noise but noticed a few particles seemed to be separating and "burning up in a bright red

Everyone was gearing up for a good time, and flying saucers, UFOs and all that "weird" stuff seemed a universe away. Within a couple of weeks, many locals would find their contentment severely dented, their sense of "normalcy" outraged.

When shown a video of UFOs, she claimed during one particular sequence she could hear that same unusual noise. While we could not detect any sound, Pauline became very distressed and ran from the room with her hands over her ears.

colour." Jack said he has seen meteors before, but never anything like this. While IN-UFOR suspects this may have been space junk, we could not find any records of a satellite re-entry for this time.

Later that night Pauline Davies of Point Clare was dozing in front of the television when she became aware of an intense low-frequency humming sound, which seemed to go on forever.

Since that time Pauline has experienced an inexplicable fear when walking around the nearby waterfront. When shown a video of UFOs, she claimed during one particular sequence she could hear that same unusual noise. While we could not detect any sound, Pauline became very distressed and ran from the room with her hands over her ears.

A short time later, in the early hours of Friday 29 December, Ellen Monkhurst, a 63-year old nurse from Umina, retired for the night. She tossed and turned for a while, then at about 2 a.m. was suddenly jolted awake. The whole bed was shaking and there was a strange noise. It was like nothing she had heard before — "a humming throb." She told us later the only time she can recall a similar heavy, pulsating, humming thud was when, years ago, she was skin-diving, and a ferry passed overhead.

Ellen sensed a strange atmosphere "as if something was wrong." She hesitantly went to the window — the sky outside was nearly light as day. She felt a surge of fear when the house vibrated intensely as the noise and light passed slowly overhead. Ellen said the object was travelling from the sea towards Gosford, but she was too scared to go outside for a better view. Instead, she raced to the other side of the house, and peeked out a rear window as the light and noise moved slowly into the distance.

Further up Brisbane Water, Mr. and Mrs. Duncan of Woy Woy were suddenly awakened from their sleep to find the bed vibrating and the walls pulsating with a slight glow coming from the heavily curtained windows.

Saturday 30 December 1995

Saturday evening 30 December 1995 in Gosford began quietly. As usual, the Central Coast's population had swollen with holiday makers for the summer season. Residents and visitors alike had almost recovered from the excesses of Christmas week and were preparing to celebrate the New Year.

Mrs. Stead was tired. She had put her two children into the back seat of the car to sleep and was on her way back to Newcastle from Gosford. Driving up the hill at Kariang to the motorway north, she noticed a strange, bright object up in the sky, just slightly ahead of the car. Feeling nervous, she sped up a little. The light seemed to be pacing the car, keeping an equal distance in front at all times. After what seemed like ages, but what was probably less than a minute, she slowed the car and pulled over to the side of the road for a better view.

After several minutes of apparent mutual admiration, and some trepidation on Mrs. Stead's part, the object departed. She immediately called the Police in Gosford from her mobile phone.

The officers on duty at Gosford Police station were also enjoying a quieter than usual Saturday evening — unusually "incident-free." Suddenly, every phone started to ring. Agitated motorists were calling on their mobile phones to report that a large craft was hovering above the Mooney Mooney bridge on the main freeway south of Kariang. There were no plane flights or helicopter activities known for that area between 9 and 10 p.m., so two officers were sent to investigate. After a short while, these officers returned, reporting they had seen nothing unusual in the vicinity of the bridge.

Following this brief flurry of activity, a relative calm returned to the police station.

Many kilometres southwest of Gosford, in the western suburbs of Sydney, the Jensen family were driving northeast along the freeway from Penrith to Parramatta. It was nearly midnight, and they too felt tired after a long day. Suddenly, they saw a large, flat, bright white light hovering over the road ahead. Feeling more curious than scared, and now very awake, they spent the rest of their trip home unsuccessfully trying to decide what it was.

Just after midnight, early Sunday 31 December (New Year's Eve), Mary Larkin was relaxing in the back seat of a friend's car. She was grateful for the lift home as there were no buses or taxis around at that time. As they passed The Broadwater, Gosford, she was absent-mindedly looking out the window across the water. When she noticed an unusual "boat" over the water,

near the Aquatic Club and Floating Restaurant, she sat up with a start.

The vessel was brightly lit, hovering about 4 to 5 meters above the water. At first she thought it must be a catamaran, ferry, or hovercraft. Mary watched closely, noting every detail.

The object was "big, very big," and shaped like "a conventional flying saucer," with sides sloping down to a broader round base. It was metallic, with a polished surface which reflected the light. Bright light — "whitish with an orangey-yellow tint" — surrounded the base of the object. There was "an area of reddish light" shining down onto the water. She could clearly see water spraying up underneath the craft and around it. Without warning, it shot up — away from the lake and hovered; she realised it was too high above the water to be a boat.

Her friends kept driving and she was unable to see what happened to the strange craft. As soon as she got home, she told her father what she had seen. He later contacted INUFOR with the account and we were able to talk to Mary.

Back at Gosford Police Station, just after Mary's sighting, the quiet was shattered once more when "dozens" of calls flooded in from worried residents, all describing a similar occurrence.

"I've experienced nothing like it," one police officer said, "People were woken by an intense humming noise, and were genuinely frightened when they saw a huge cylindrical object hovering over the water. It had a polished, ball-like bottom, and as it hovered over the Lake, its lights shone down onto the water, apparently turning it to steam."

Callers also reported a brilliant light which "turned night into day," and shone through their bedroom windows.

Patrol cars were sent out to investigate, but when the police officers came within 50 meters, the craft seemed to "shut down" and disappear. They returned to the station, only to find more frantic residents calling from another part of Brisbane Water. As soon as they arrived at the new location the strange object repeated its previous frustrating behavior.

For the next two hours, all available patrol cars were fully occupied in a futile pursuit of the elusive craft. Gosford, Point Frederick, St. Huberts Island, Woy Woy, Ettalong, Umina — all reported visits from the object.

One frightened resident from East Gosford was wakened by a loud humming noise and the sound of dogs howling. Noticing the bright white light outside he walked down to the lake's edge of Brisbane Water and observed a large metallic disk about 100 meters offshore. He counted five columns of white light underneath shining down to the water. The disc was just above the waterline and water was splashing up around the edge, but he could not tell if it was actually taking water on board. He sped back to his house and rang the Police in sheer terror.

Other residents described four or five cylinders of bright white light shining down from the craft that seemed to penetrate the water rather than just reflect off it. Most had been woken by the loud humming noise. Some described the noise as being "like a thousand bees," while others likened it to a deep "sonic throb." All mentioned the frothing foam or water splashing back down onto the lake surface.

It seemed that every time car headlights got close, the craft would turn off its own lights and shoot up into the air and out of sight. One officer reported that it didn't fly away in a straight line — "It was as if you had a torch beam and whipped it around."

These troubles for local Police were further compounded when seasonal parties, previously well behaved, suddenly erupted into anti-social behavior. All criminologists are familiar with "moon madness," but one besieged officer suggested this was evidence of "UFO madness." Was the UFO affecting the behavior of intoxicated locals nearby? Residents also reported their animals began behaving strangely. They cowered and hid, and many dogs began howling for no apparent reason.

Two other interesting reports we received placed the UFO further afield than just Brisbane Water:

Mrs. Long of Budgewoi, some 30 km away, was woken between 2 and 3 a.m., by a loud humming noise, "like a huge swarm of bees." Thinking it must be a very low flying helicopter nearby, she hurried to the window. Unable to see anything, she went out her back door and was astounded to see a huge fluorescent white light coming towards her. It was flying very low, just above the treetops. As it passed over the house, she could see orange/red flashing lights underneath it.

Residents continued to report vibrating windows and beds, strange noises, and an intense white light flooding through their windows. Some, who had the presence of mind to get up out of bed and look outside, saw a brightly lit disc hovering over the lake.

Unable to see anything, she went out her back door and was astounded to see a huge fluorescent white light coming towards her. It was flying very low, just above the treetops. As it passed over the house, she could see orange/red flashing lights underneath it.

She raced through the house to her front window, The object was heading towards Gosford. As it reached some distant trees near the Munmorah Power Station it shot up into the air and out of sight.

During the initial sighting period, a retired policeman living at Mangrove Mountain saw a large object hovering over the back of his property. It was a highly-polished circular or cylindrical craft. On going outside to investigate, he had been bathed in its brilliant white glow.

These two incidents suggest there may have been more than one object in the Central Coast area at the same time.

For the next four hours the Gosford Police experienced a night they will never forget. Car patrols were despatched from one spot to another as the object moved from one place to another. One officer noted that the earliest sightings came from the northern end of Brisbane Water, whilst reports after 2 a.m. seemed to be centred around the southern regions such as Woy Woy, Ettalong and Umina.

All gave the same account of a saucer-type craft, 20 to 30 meters across, surrounded by bright white light. All detailed the intense shafts of light which penetrated the foaming water below. Those who saw it in flight, or away from the water's surface, reported that once the shafts of white light were "turned off", all that could be seen underneath was a red glow or flashing red/orange lights.

By 5 a.m. it was over. The calls from startled residents had dwindled to a trickle. After sending his men out on over 35 calls, the duty officer at the police station gladly prepared to hand over to the incoming shift.

It had been a night that many would remember. It was also an important night for local UFO investigators —and one which UFO investigators could have missed completely as people on the Central Coast tend to keep such things very much to themselves.

Fortunately, Mary Larkin's father mentioned her sighting over the Yacht Club to a local newspaper reporter who began checking whether anything unusual had been reported to local Police. Once he received confirmation, the reporter pursued various leads and interviewed witnesses until he was ready to run his story in February 1996. A few days before publication, he contacted INUFOR in Sydney for comment and we

have been conducting in-depth research since that time.

INUFOR's Involvement

Our first field trip to Gosford was convened at very short notice, and we were astounded at the response. Most witnesses were reliable and intelligent. Many were retirees with professional and academic backgrounds.

The INUFOR investigation team realised that the phenomena encompassed more than these recent reports from New Year 1996.

During January 1996 there were many sightings of strange lights in the sky and the elusive "disc" continued to make unexpected appearances from time to time.

Two very successful public meetings were held in February and July 1996, and many residents came forward with details of sightings from previous years.

With so much material to document and report, the investigation team decided the only way to adequately present the results of its research would be to produce it as a book — *The Gosford Files*.

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Minuteman Missiles Shutdown

by Robert L. Salas

This incident happened almost thirty years ago. Until about two years ago, I had not given it much thought. In the spring of 1967 I was stationed at Malmstrom AFB, Montana. My recollection of the incident was that, while on duty as a Deputy Missile Combat Crew Commander (DMCCC) at a Minuteman Launch Control Facility (LCF) during the morning hours, I received a call from my NCO in charge of site security topside. He said that he and other guards had observed some unidentified flying objects in the vicinity. He said they had overflown the LCF a few times before he phoned. He could only distinguish them as "lights" at that time.

I did not take this report very seriously and simply told him to keep observing them and report back if he saw anything more significant. At the time, I believed the first call to be a joke. Five or ten minutes later, I received a second call from my security NCO. This time he was much more agitated and distraught. He stated that there was a UFO hovering just outside the front gate! He wanted to know what he should do. I don't recall what I said except to secure the fenced area. As we were talking, he said he had to go because one of the guards had been injured.

I immediately woke my commander who had been taking his rest period and started to relate the phone conversations. Within seconds, our missiles began shutting down from "Alert" status to "No-Go" status. I recalled that most, if not all, of our missiles had shut down in rapid succession. Normally, if a missile went off alert status, it was due to a power outage at a particular site and the site power generator would come on line and pick up the power load and the LF would come back on line. It was extremely rare for more than one missile to go off line for any length of time. In this case, none of our missiles came back on line. The problem was not lack of power; some signal had been sent to the missiles which caused them to go off alert.

After we reported this incident to the command post, I phoned my security guard to determine what had transpired topside. He informed me that the guard who had approached the UFO had been injured — not seriously. The guard was being removed by helicopter to the base. I do not recall the nature of the injury or how it was incurred. We were relieved by our scheduled replacement crew later that morning. The missiles had still not been brought on line by on-site maintenance. Once topside, I spoke directly with the security guard about the UFOs. The only additional detail he added, that I recalled, was that the UFO had a red glow and appeared to be saucer-shaped. I do not recall any other details about its appearance. He repeated that it had been immediately outside the front gate, hovering silently.

When my commander and I returned to the base, we discussed the incident with our squadron commander and an Air Force investigator from Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI). The Colonel was just as shocked about the incident as we were. Neither he, nor anyone else we talked to that day about the incident could explain it or indicated that it was some sort of readiness exercise. After that day, and through the time of my transfer from the base in June 1969, none of the crews, including ours, ever received any additional information on the incident. There was never a report of investigation that was released to the missile crews or any other explanation given of the incident. This was also unusual because we were given regular briefings about any technical areas of concern regarding the readiness of our weapons. These were my recollections at the time the FOIA requests were submitted to the Air Force in January 1995. After nearly a year of submitting these requests and waiting for responses, USAF declassified an incident which appeared to be the one in which I was involved. I will refer to that as the Echo Flight incident.

This is the only reference to UFOs regarding this incident in any of the documents received from the USAF and the statement is simply untrue. None of the reports we received from guards or maintenance personnel were ever retracted.

Since the termination of Project Blue Book, the Air Force has maintained the position that no reported UFO incident has ever affected national security. But the incident described here clearly had national security implications.

Jim Klotz, the investigator who had submitted the FOIA requests, and I had previously narrowed the time period by retrieving news reports from the *Great Falls Tribune* about UFO sightings during the early part of 1967. I had recalled reading such reports after my incident. In fact there were many news articles about UFO sightings a few weeks before and one week after the Echo incident. We requested USAF to release any information they had of such an incident that occurred during the spring of 1967. We made no reference to UFO sightings in our request. As a result of these FOIA requests USAF sent us copies of the unit histories for the 341st Strategic Missile Wing, Great Falls, Montana for 1967. The histories, which included the Echo incident, had been classified. In addition, USAF sent copies of some previously classified messages regarding the incident. One message was sent from SAC headquarters. The Echo incident, as related in one of those messages, is described as loss of strategic alert of all ten missiles within ten seconds of each other for no apparent reason and a "...cause for grave concern ... [to SAC headquarters]". The date of the Echo incident is March 16, 1967. When we received this information, I assumed that I was in the Echo capsule during this incident because the events of the incident were very similar to my recollection.

The first unit history (January - March 1967, pg. 38) also has a brief statement suggesting reports of UFO activity. It states the following: "Rumors of Unidentified Flying Objects (UFO) around the area of Echo Flight during the time of fault were disproven. A Mobile Strike Team, which had checked all *November Flight's* LFs (launch facilities) on the morning of 16 March 67, were questioned and stated that no unusual activity or sightings were observed." This statement was informative in that there would be no reason to query the *November Flight* strike team (security) about rumors of UFOs in the area of Echo Flight. This is the only reference to UFOs regarding this incident in any of the documents received from USAF and the statement is simply untrue. None of the reports we received from guards or maintenance personnel were ever retracted.

After reading this statement I recalled something my commander had said during our incident. After we reported the incident to the command post, he had received a call

from another LCC. After that call he turned to me and said, "The same thing happened at another flight." With this "new" recollection, I began to question if I was at Echo during the time of our incident since I knew I was assigned to the 490th Squadron, which did not have responsibility for Echo Flight. We did however, occasionally, man LCCs outside our own squadron.

With some assistance, I was eventually able to contact an old friend who had served with me at Malmstrom. He recalled the Echo incident and was certain that I was not in that LCC at the time of the incident. He also recalled the names of the Echo crew and the name of my commander. With some additional effort, and a lot of phone calls, I was able to locate and speak with both crew members of Echo, the commander of the Echo relief crew, and my own commander.

As a result of these conversations, more information was revealed. The Echo MCCC related to me that prior to the shutdown of all his missiles he had received more than one report from security patrols and maintenance crews that they had seen UFOs, one was directly above one of the LFs in Echo Flight. The Echo crew confirmed that they had spoken to my commander that day and told him of their incident. They also told me that they were flown to SAC headquarters, Omaha, Nebraska the next day and had to brief CINCSAC (Commander in Chief, Strategic Air Command) about their incident. The Echo DMCCC also informed me that he had written an extensive log of the Incident and turned that over to staff officers at SAC headquarters. They certainly did report the UFO sightings and their guards and maintenance personnel were interviewed about their sightings by Air Force investigators. The MCCC of the crew that relieved the Echo crew also confirmed that the Echo crew had spoken to him about the UFO sightings during the time immediately preceding their shutdown incident.

My own MCCC confirmed my recollection of events with the exception that he recalled that about five of our ten missiles shut down in rapid succession. My own recollection is that it was more than five. However, he did add something I had not recalled. We sent a security patrol to our LFs after the shutdown of our missiles and they reported sighting another UFO during that patrol. They also lost radio contact with our site immediately after reporting the UFO.



Robert L. Salas

To summarize the events of that morning: UFOs were sighted by security personnel at our LCC (probably November Flight), at one of our LFs, and by other security personnel at Echo LFs and these were reported separately to the capsule crews at both LCCs. These reports were made at or about the time Minuteman Strategic missiles shutdown at both sites. USAF has confirmed that all of Echo flights missiles shutdown within seconds of each other. There was no apparent reason for these shutdowns.

Further discussions with individuals from Boeing who had provided technical assistance and performed additional tests during the investigation into the cause of these shutdowns, confirmed that there was never a resolution as to cause or explanation for these incidents. The unit histories for 1967 also confirm that conclusion.

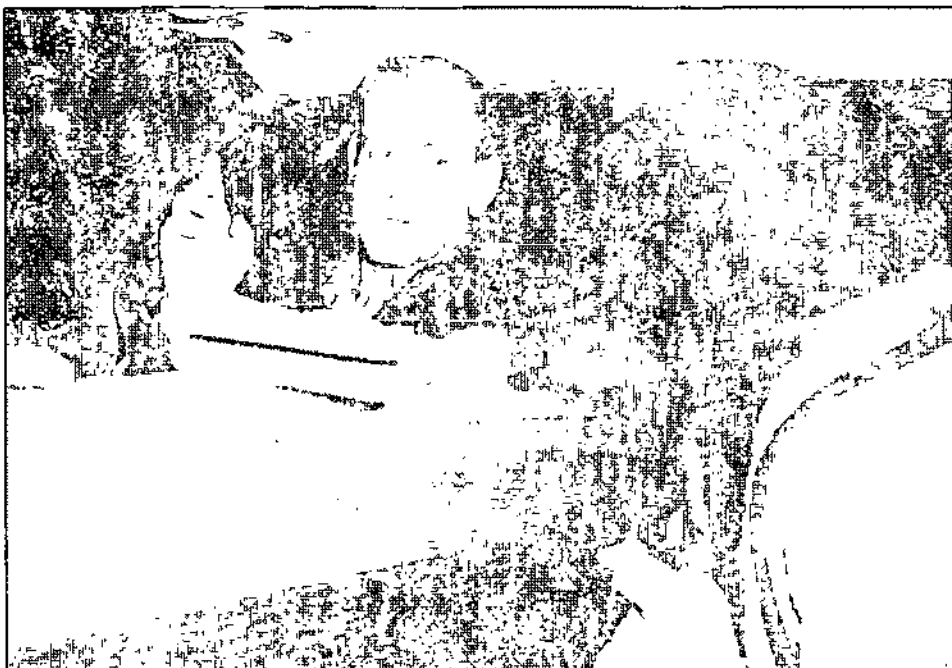
Since the termination of Project Blue Book, the Air Force has maintained the position that no reported UFO incident has ever affected national security. The incident I described above clearly had national security implications. The Air Force has clearly and deliberately hidden the fact that a large number of Air Force personnel reported sighting UFOs at the time many of our strategic missiles became, unaccountably, disabled.

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One message was sent from SAC headquarters. The Echo incident, as related in one of those messages, is described as loss of strategic alert of all ten missiles within ten seconds of each other for no apparent reason and a "...cause for grave concern ... [to SAC headquarters]".

Great Falls Tribune Sunday, March 26, 1967

(Montana)



I SAW THE DOME-SHAPED LIGHT — Ken Williams, Laurel truck driver, explains to Carla Beck, Tribune staff writer, the appearance of an unidentified flying object he saw hovering near the top of Belt Hill Friday night. The interview was made at Belt Hill, where law enforcement officers, photographers and reporters gathered hoping to get a glimpse of the UFO.

Continued on Page 22

MUFON FORUM

Letters to *Mufon UFO Journal*

Long Island's Ordeal

■ "The Ordeal of John Ford," by Elaine Douglass, appeared in the November 1996 issue of the *Journal*, pp. 7-9.

When my friend Herb Taylor sent me a copy of the *MUFON UFO Journal* containing Elaine Douglass' article pleading for funds for John Ford, he enclosed a note. It read, "I don't know whether to laugh or cry!" My reaction was one of rage at MUFON's publishing such a biased piece of inaccurate drivel by someone obviously enamored of Ford (or "John" as Ms. Douglass endearingly refers to him).

For a number of years, I had been an investigator for the Aerial Phenomena Research Organization. In 1988, I was broadcasting an all-night radio program in the Long Island, New York area. The director of the news department, Joel Martin, informed me that there were two guys who claimed to have seen some strange lights in the Moriches Bay area. Would I care to join him and drive out to meet them? If only I could travel back in time and change my answer!

Despite the fact that John Ford knew nothing about UFO history, I, along with several other people, including Professor Ted Benitt, formed the Long Island UFO Network with John Ford. The year was 1988, not 1985 as Elaine Douglass states in her article.

Ford's background was as a jail guard and his partner Ritchie Stout, was a garbage man. They played war games in Mr. Ford's basement with toy soldiers. They now added flying saucers on strings to the miniature "battlefield." Ford would now expand his games with real people, secret files, walkie-talkies, binoculars and stake-outs. Now the "battlefield" was all of Long Island. What fun!

It soon became obvious that Ford was only interested in "proving" whatever pre-conceived hypothesis he had in mind at the moment. He insisted there were flashing lights from alien ships and screeching spacemen in the neighborhood, even when we discovered reports of police cars trying to capture an escaped monkey. He claimed alien craft out at sea were causing flashes and rumbles even when we discovered the Navy was conducting gunnery tests fifty miles out to sea. His video of a UFO over

Moriches Bay was a mast light on a boat travelling at night. John Ford saw what he wanted to see and never let the facts get in his way.

As Chief of Investigations for L.I.U.F.O.N., I had copies of all reports. I began to notice that Ford would immediately grant confidentially to anyone reporting a sighting, whether they asked for it or not! He was later to violate this trust by offering anyone with \$750.00 a look at the files. So much for integrity and honor.

Ms. Douglass, in her article on Ford, claimed he was "a law and order advocate." If this translates into a gun nut who illegally carries his piece across the city line, then so be it. Ford became a dime store Napoleon who, like Hitler, used the law as a weapon to harass and punish his enemies, real or imagined. If the law didn't suit his needs, he'd ignore it.

Our Board of Directors meetings at L.I.U.F.O.N. operated according to Robert's Rules of Order. A majority vote would be needed to pass a motion or expell a member of the board. The meetings were closed except for board members. Ford *unilaterally* decided to invite Ali-HaSidi, a retired cop, because he was his friend. The rest of the board protested and the man was asked to leave. A few days later, Ford *unilaterally* tried to dismiss the rest of the entire board with the exception of his garbageman "lackey" Richard Stout. Ford then proceeded to harass all of us with phone calls, surveillances and a series of lawsuits. He lost all of them. Ford was more secretive and threatening than the government agencies we were founded to counteract. He used his police friend and his access to the courts through his job as a means to gather information on us and succeeding members of L.I.U.F.O.N. Our lawyer asked us if we wanted control of L.I.U.F.O.N., since what Ford had done was illegal and we were the majority of the board. We declined. Ford was quickly becoming a laughing stock on Long Island and ufology in general was suffering because of his antics. The organization was being referred to as the "Loon Island I Don't Know Nutwork." Who needed it now?

Ford continued. He forbade investigators to also be members of MUFON. He was worried about "leaks." Douglass' article being published in the *MUFON Journal* is inexplicable. This sycophant claims Ford was arrested "simply to ruin John's reputation."

Ms. Douglass, take off the blinders. Ford's reputation was well known in 1988! Even one of the brothers at his high school (Chaminade) referred to him back then as "an odd duck."

Ford continued to find "crashed saucers" which were conveniently only a short distance from his house where he lived with his mother Catherine. Whenever the local press would tire of giving him any publicity, up would pop another "crashed" UFO! Soon he would get his publicity. First it would be reports of John Ford walking his dog through his modest suburban neighborhood in his underwear. Later it would be attempting to murder local politicians.

Finally, Ford's actions became too much for his boss. An "arrangement" was made and Ford was let go as a court officer. "He is no longer our responsibility," was their position.

Elaine Douglass has fallen for the John Ford pipe smoke screen. She feels he has lived a moral life and never threatened anyone. Tell that to Virginia Stevens, who worked in the same building with Ford. She tells of Ford violating confidentiality in her abduction report to him. He not only gave the press her material but later she said Ford tried to run her down with his truck in the parking lot of the court building. She feared Ford would shoot her and her child and tried to stop him with an order of protection. Tell her about the moral John Ford, Ms. Douglass! Tell UFO investigator Bill Knell, who Ford threatened by phone and at his front door, frightening his wife and children. He and his family eventually moved to Florida to escape Ford's evil. Tell Lee Ann Wilson, who also moved to escape John Ford.

Elaine Douglass has trouble believing Ford would hatch a plan to murder people by poisoning their food with radioactive material. That's your mind trying to grasp such a plan, Ms. Douglass. The mind of John Ford does not work like most peoples'. I don't know if I believe the stuff on the Internet about threatening letters being sent about releasing Ford or there will be another TWA Flight 800. There were supposedly references to a pot smoking rocket builder with security clearance who was a rabid follower of Ford's. Who knows? All I know is there was celebrating up and down Long Island when Ford was finally led away in handcuffs and thrown in jail where he be-

longs. Those prisoners just love imprisoned jail guards. I trust they'll do to him what he's been doing to the rest of us all these years.

As Stanton Friedman stated to me, "With friends like Ford, who needs enemies?"

— Harry Hepcat
Huntington, NY

Sagan & Blue Book

Not a well known fact regarding Carl Sagan's role and the UFO phenomenon:

After the Condon Report and the Air Force announcement that they were discontinuing Project Blue Book, rumors ran rampant that the Air Force was going to destroy the Blue Book files. Dr. Edward Condon tried to use his influence to do just that. Carl Sagan on hearing of this circulated a petition and letter with the assistance of Thornton Page to the scientific community to prevent the destruction of the Blue Book files. He gathered a lot of support from his colleagues and placed pressure on the Air Force not to destroy the files, but to make them available for future access and study to the public.

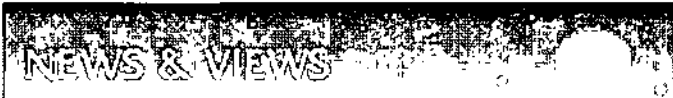
For whatever reason, the Air Force then stated that they would not be destroying the files and that they would be kept for future public access. Condon was livid and campaigned very hard to prevent the entry of the "renegade" Carl Sagan from membership into the prestigious Cosmos Club in Washington, D.C. Thus Sagan paid a personal price for his opposition to Condon.

[Ironically, then,] ufologists have Carl Sagan to thank for the preservation of the Blue Book files.

Also, it was due to Carl Sagan and Thornton Page that the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) held its symposium on UFOs against a lot of political pressure not to address the subject. The symposium gave Hynek and McDonald a forum to present their viewpoints and cases.

Received via E-mail from Ed Stewart, compiler of the MUFON Journal Index.

■ **Want to get something off your chest? Address letters to Dennis Stacy, Box 12434, San Antonio, TX 78212.**



SAGAN'S STAR FLICKERS OUT

Carl Sagan, Ph.D., who rhapsodized about a universe populated by "billions and billions" of stars was a rare star himself; a celebrity astronomer who helped make the vast unknown a little less mysterious. Born November 9, 1934, Sagan died of pneumonia on December 20, 1996, at the Fred Hutchison Cancer Research Center in Seattle.

He had suffered from the bone marrow disease myelodysplasia for two years and had a bone-marrow transplant in 1995. He leaves behind a generation of Americans inspired by his enthusiastic lectures, books and documentaries about space and life. "Sagan understood the need to bring science into American living rooms, to show its relevance to our everyday lives and to share the excitement of discovery," said Neal Lane, director of the National Science Foundation.

Sagan, who lived in Ithaca, NY, is survived by his wife, Ann Druyan, and young children. A Cornell University professor with more than a score of honorary degrees and a decorated NASA advisor, Sagan had the rare gift of being able to communicate his enchantment with science to the masses. Sagan's research focused mostly on the chemistry of the planets. But he also contributed to the search for habitable worlds and intelligent life beyond the solar system.

Once asked to explain the public's interest, he said: "They're not numbskulls. Thinking is as natural as breathing." It is unfortunate that an astrophysicist as brilliant as Carl Sagan took such a negative view toward unidentified flying objects and abductions. It may be speculated that had he devoted even a small percentage of his valuable time to looking at and evaluating the UFO evidence, his ability and respect as a spokesman within the scientific community would conceivably have been a giant step forward in achieving scientific respectability for ufology. Ufology still needs a man of Carl Sagan's talent as a positive spokesman.



Carl Sagan, Ph.D., Astrophysicist



*Carl Sagan and his wife, Ann Druyan
(Piretti/The Cornell Daily Sun)*

— Walter H. Andrus, Jr.

READER'S

THE ANOMALIST 4

Articles by Colin Wilson ("An Egyptian State of Mind"), Hector Quintanilla ("Project Blue Book's Last Days"), Montague Keen ("Crop Circles"), Michael Cremo ("Forbidden Archeology"), Steven Mizrach ("Wired Spirits"), Paul Schlyter ("Earth's Second Moon"), Larry Dossey, Loren Coleman and others. Only \$9.95 plus \$2.50 s/h. Checks payable to Dennis Stacy, Box 12434, San Antonio, TX 78212.

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MARCH 21-23, 1997: 5TH ANNUAL GULF BREEZE UFO Conference. Beachside Resort directly on Gulf, Pensacola Beach, FL. Featuring Courtney Brown, Whitley Streiber, Stanton Friedman, Brian O'Leary, Travis Walton, Nick Pope and others. For info call 904-432-8888, Fax 904-438-1801, E-mail UMRB73A@prodigy.com, or write Project Awareness, Box 730, Gulf Breeze, FL 32562.

ATTENTION MILLENNIUM PROJECT: Seeking abductees/experiencers willing to fill out a lengthy survey for the AMP (anonymously if desired) about their experiences. For further information or survey forms, write: Brenda Denzler, Graduate Program in Religion, Duke University, Campus Box 90964, Durham, NC 27706. Or e-mail me at bdenzler@acpub.duke.edu

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UFO DANGER ZONE:

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Continued on Page 23

The NIGHT SKY

Walter N. Webb

February 1997

Bright Planets (Evening Sky):

Mars, in Virgo, doubles its brightness during the month (from magnitude -0.2 to -1.0) and increases its apparent diameter (from 10 to 13" of arc) as the Earth approaches it. For telescopic observers, the prime Mars observing period begins. Rising in the E around 9 PM on the 1st and about 2 hours earlier at month's end, the ruddy planet crosses the southern sky during the night. It is 3° above the gibbous Moon on the 24th.

Saturn (1.0), in Pisces, lies in the SW at dusk and then sets about 8:30 PM in mid-February. The crescent Moon poses near the ringed planet on the 10th.

Bright Planets (Morning Sky):

Mars progresses to the SW by dawn.

Jupiter (-1.9), in Capricornus, reappears in the morning sky, rising in the ESE shortly before 6 AM in midmonth. Its position steadily improves during the month. Observers in the southern states may be able to spot Venus less than 1° from Jupiter very low in the sky before sunrise on February 5 and 6.

Comet Hale-Bopp:

During February Hale-Bopp continues to brighten at an altitude of more than 20° above the eastern horizon (at lat. 40°N) at the start of morning twilight. Between about 5 and 5:30 AM local time, look almost due E. Note the rising Summer Triangle lying nearly on its longest side (Deneb-Altair leg). During the month the comet moves right to left, from NE (upper left) of Altair to SW (lower right) of Deneb. The best dates to observe are between February 4 and 18 when there is little or no Moon interference.

Hubble Service Mission:

Since a space shuttle crew corrected the flawed optics of the Hubble Space Telescope in December 1993, the space observatory has performed beautifully, coming up with continual discoveries and returning stunning images and data that have revolutionized almost every aspect of astronomy. This month astronauts are scheduled to recapture the HST and replace two instruments with an imaging spectrograph and an infrared camera. The former will study the composition of galaxies and search for large planets orbiting nearby stars. The second instrument will observe remote galaxies and the birth of stars.

Moon Phases:

New moon—February 7



First quarter—February 14



Full moon—February 22



The Stars:

Orion and the Winter Circle stars reign supreme in the southern midevening heavens. High in the S astride the ce-

lestial meridian is Gemini the Twins, the sons of Zeus and Leda in mythology. Look for two stick figures side by side, with the Twin Stars Pollux and Castor marking the heads of the legendary brothers. The two stars were regarded by sailors as their patron or protective deities.

Leo the Lion, harbinger of spring, already shows above the E horizon at 9 PM. And in the NE the Big Dipper balances on the end of its handle.

GREAT FALLS, MONTANA - Continued from Page 17

This truck driver didn't have to blink running lights at oncoming rigs, adjust his seat or keep the radio going to break the monotony on a Laurel-to-Great Falls run Friday night.

An extremely bright UFO hovering over a gully near the crest of Belt Hill made Ken Williams, trailing a loaded car carrier Friday about 9 p.m., sit up and take notice.

"I was going up the hill toward Great Falls when off to the left I saw this dome-shaped light — pure white — land in a gully about three-fourths of a mile off the highway, he related.

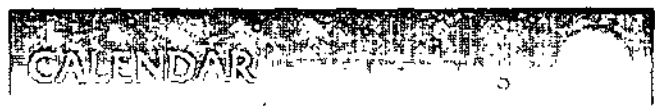
Williams took his load to the top of the grade and then stopped to flag down a car. A passing motorist called the Cascade County sheriff and Highway Patrolman Bud Nader arrived at the stop just as Williams spotted the UFO a second time.

"I had been watching it for maybe 30 seconds," Williams said, when Nader arrived.

"This second time it was farther away," Williams continued. "It started up into the air. Then it seemed to drop right back down. I couldn't tell if it landed or not."

Nader said Saturday morning: "I noticed a light off to the right as I approached the top of the Belt Hill and then it went down out of sight and I couldn't see it any more."

Continued on Page 23



March 21-23 — 5th Annual Gulf Breeze UFO Conference at Beachside Resort, Pensacola Beach, Florida. For information write Project Awareness, P.O. Box 730, Gulf Breeze, FL 32562 or telephone 904-432-8888, FAX 904-438-1801.

April 11-13 — Ninth Annual Ozark UFO Conference at the Inn of the Ozarks Conference Center in Eureka Springs, Arkansas. For further information contact Ozark UFO Conference, #2 Caney Valley Drive, Plummerville, AR 72127-8725 or (501) 354-2558.

June 26-28 — 18th Rocky Mountain UFO Conference at University of Wyoming, Laramie, WY. For information contact Institute for UFO Research, 1304 So. College Ave., Fort Collins, CO 80524 or call (970) 482-3731.

July 11-13 — Twenty-eighth annual MUFON International UFO Symposium, Amway Grand Plaza Hotel, Grand Rapids, Michigan Theme: "The Fiftieth Anniversary of Ufology."

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE - *Continued from Page 24*

UFO RELATED HUMAN PHYSIOLOGICAL EFFECTS

John F. Schuessler, Deputy Director, Administration for MUFON and head of MUFON's Medical Committee recently published a 105-page book, 8 1/2 x 11 soft cover, titled *A Catalog of UFO-Related Human Physiological Effects*. Nearly four-hundred case listings have been accumulated worldwide, starting in 1873 and continuing through 1994 of people that have suffered physical effects in the proximity of a UFO. The purpose of the catalog is threefold: (1) It provides a chronological listing of UFO events involving physiological effects on humans; (2) It provides source information for other researchers desiring to do work in this important field, and (3) It is the first step in systematizing the medical injury data base. This catalog may be purchased from MUFON Seguin, Texas, for \$15 plus \$2.00 for postage and handling in U.S. dollars.

FINAL REPORT ON AMERICA WEST AIRLINE CASE

The UFO Research Coalition has published the *Final Report on the America West Airline Case*, May 25-26, 1995, dated July 1996. A copy may be obtained for \$10 plus \$1.50 for postage and handling by writing to MUFON in Seguin, Texas. A preliminary report was published in the April 1996 issue number 336 of the *MUFON UFO JOURNAL*.

MOTTO CONTEST

The recent Motto Contest created more interest and entries than any such MUFON promotion in the past two and one-half decades. Receiving more than one-thousand entries, the selection committee has been overwhelmed by the work in finding a motto that best exemplifies the goals and objectives of MUFON. Obviously, the motto or theme of the TV program "X-files" cannot be accepted. The revelation of MUFON's motto and the winning entry will be announced in the *Journal* in due time.

MUFON HAS NEW ADDRESS ON THE INTERNET

In order to get MUFON's World Wide Web page closer to headquarters, whereby more current information can be installed, the new address from "The Internet," "CompuServe" or "America On-Line" is simply "mufon.org" and not the detailed former address listed in our communication numbers box in the *Journal*. We want to thank **Charles McGrew** at Rutgers University, who was so kind as to establish MUFON on the World Wide Web over a year ago, working with **Dennis Stacy**.

Ansen Seale, MUFON's staff photographer, is also our new net manager in San Antonio, TX for mufon.org. **Tom Deuley**, MUFON's Corporate

Secretary, handles our e-mail. We are indebted to **Bruce Widaman** and his computer team in St. Louis, MO for transferring "mufon.org" to MUFON headquarters and adopting MO MUFON for their new address, which better identifies their state organization. Other states may want to use the same idea for their addresses, such as TX MUFON, etc.

GREAT FALLS, MONTANA - *Continued from Page 22*

He said he and Williams walked back down the hill and saw a light at the head of a coulee.

Sheriff's deputies covered on foot the sighting area and found nothing unusual other than freshly broken twigs on bushes and branches as if cattle had wandered through. One of the deputies, however, was quick to point out that there were no cattle in the area and no cattle tracks on the ground.

Airmen at Malmstrom Air Force Base reported sighting a UFO about 5 to 10 miles northeast of the base at 3:30 a.m. Saturday.

FAA radar picked up the object at 3:42 a.m. to the northwest and reported it was off the radar at 4:26 a.m.

Airman 2C Richard Moore, a communicator-plotter at Malmstrom, observed the object and said it couldn't have been a satellite because of its jerky movements in crossing the sky.

An aviation weather forecaster on Gore Hill said the Weather Bureau radar didn't pick up anything, but noted their radar was adjusted to pick up mostly clouds and precipitation.

The Associated Press in Helena reported sightings from all parts of the state Friday night.

CLASSIFIEDS - *Continued from Page 21*

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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Walter Andrus

NEWS FROM AROUND THE NETWORK

NEW OFFICERS

Joining MUFON in 1992 in Ohio where she was a field investigator, **Cheryl Ann Gilmore** (Summerville), a State Section Director in South Carolina, was elected State Director for South Carolina. **Charles L. Hawes, M.S.** (Summerville, SC) will continue as Assistant State Director and again be assigned State Section Director for Dorchester and Charleston Counties. Other State Section Directors appointed this past month were **Dale L. Platenik, Ph.D.** (Holyoke, MA) for Hampden and Hampshire Counties; **Robert H. Hair** (Eden, NC and former North Carolina State Director), for Guilford, Rockingham, Caswell, and Alamance Counties; **Robert A. De Franco** (Greenwich, CT) Co-State Section Director for Fairfield County; **Robert A. Fennig, D.O.** (El Paso, TX) for El Paso and Hudspeth Counties; **Jerry Glass, M.A.** (Redlands, CA) for San Bernardino and Riverside Counties; **Larry A. Deshner** (Great Falls, MT) for Cascade, Meagher, and Judith Basin Counties; **Rob Roy, B.S.** (Friendswood, TX) for Galveston County; and **Deborah A. Hagar, M.A.** (Huntsville, AL) for Marshall, Madison, Limestone, and Morgan Counties.

NEW CONSULTANTS AND RESEARCH SPECIALISTS

Two new Consultants volunteered their expertise this month. They are **Hasan M. Syed, Ph.D.** (Augusta, GA) in Biochemistry and **Richard L. Matthesen, J.D.** (Sherman Oaks, CA) in Law. The following two Research Specialists joined MUFON: **Tracey Ann Roy, M.A.** (Joppa, MD) in Biological Anthropology and **Deborah A. Hagar, M.A.** (Huntsville, AL) in Mathematics.

MUFON 1997 UFO SYMPOSIUM

MUFON's twenty-eighth International UFO Symposium will be held July 11, 12, and 13, 1997, at the elegant Amway Grand Plaza Hotel in Grand Rapids, Michigan, hosted by Michigan MUFON. **David E. Toth, Ph.D.**, is the symposium coordinator. The symposium theme is "The Fiftieth Anniversary of Ufology." Several of the speakers will address the monumental events of 1947 to recognize the anniversary of the modern era of ufology.

Speakers confirmed are **Cynthia Hind** (Zimbabwe), **Dan Wright, Jan Aldrich, Stanton T. Friedman** (Canada), **Vincente Juan Ballester Olmos** (Spain), **Bruce S. Maccabee, John S. Carpenter** and **Warren Aston** (Australia).

UFO INFORMATION CENTER

The MUFON UFO Information Center has been open for nearly two years in an office complex at 628 North Highway 123 Bypass in Seguin, Texas. Visitors from the far corners of the U.S.A. and ten foreign countries have viewed the photo exhibits, UFO models, sculptors of entities, library, closed circuit TV programs, and sales items. On November 17, 1996, the *Houston Chronicle Magazine*, Texas section, devoted four pages plus the cover to "Encounters in Texas," featuring your international director and exhibits at the center. The article by Marty Racine included interviews with **John Schuessler, Tom Deuley, David Spencer,** and **Dr. Leo Sprinkle.** The photo editor at the *Houston Chronicle* donated the theater poster of the motion picture "Aurora Encounters" to the center. The cover photo and an article photograph prominently displayed the UFO model built by **Paul C. Cerny** and the entity plaque produced by **Robert Taylor.** In addition to the space shuttle crew patch decals and paintings of the Space Station "Freedom," donated by **John F. Schuessler,** a major display is a large relief plaque of two abduction scenes done in an Egyptian motif by **Robert S. Turner.** In the Roswell section, we have a personally autographed portrait of Brigadier General **Roger Ramey.** Obviously, we are very proud of MUFON's UFO Information Center, however, we are making an appeal for additional display items to be either donated or exhibited on loan by our members or friends of ufology. Please contact **Walt Andrus** if you have an applicable item so MUFON can arrange for the shipping costs to Seguin. The exhibit area constitutes MUFON's second priority—public education.

FIELD INVESTIGATOR'S EXAM

Anyone who has purchased and studied the 4th edition of the *MUFON Field Investigator's Manual* is eligible to take the exam via mail when they feel qualified. The 100-question test may be secured from MUFON headquarters in Seguin and returned to **Kathleen F. Marden,** 103 Willow Road, East Kingston, NH 03827, for grading. In localities where field investigator training classes are conducted, the instructor may order sufficient quantities of the test and administer the exam at the conclusion of the training classes. However, the majority of people will study the manual like a correspondence course before taking the exam. It is an open book test and other references may be utilized to broaden the scope of your knowledge. For current members, the new manual may be purchased for \$25.00 plus \$3.50 for postage and handling from MUFON in Seguin.