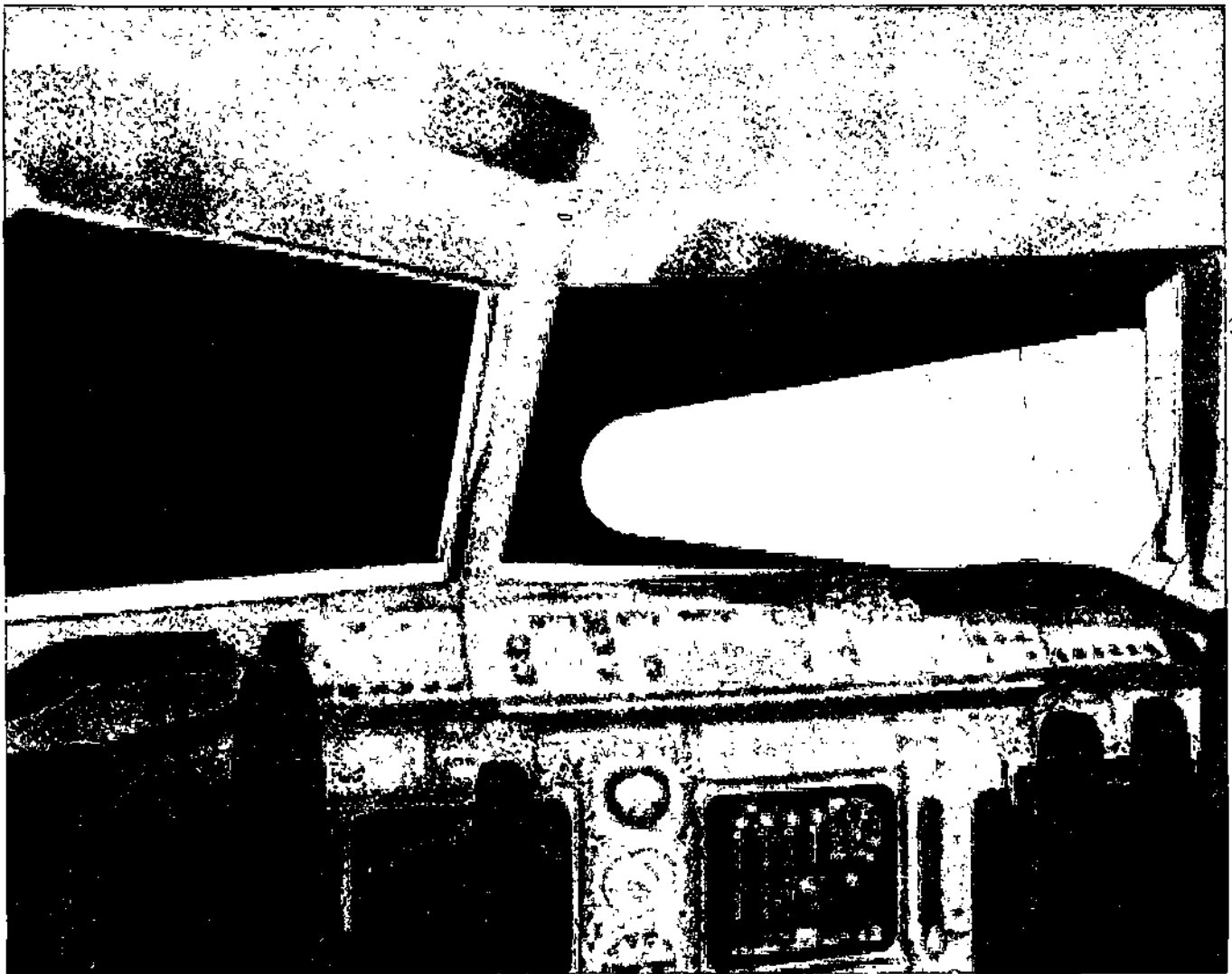


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***View from the Swissair pilot's perspective of a
"near miss" with a UFO over New York.***

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

September 1999

Number 377

The Cover: View from the Swissair pilot's perspective of a "near miss" with a UFO over New York.

In this issue

Swissair UFO encounter by R. J. Durant.....3
French document released by Gildas Bourdais.10
Summary of COMETA cases by Gildas Bourdais.....13
Second view of COMETA report by Jean Sider.....13
Journal survey results by Wood & Connelly14
MUFON Forum17
UFO Press18
Perspective on August issue by Richard Hall.....20
Readers' classified ads.....21
The Night Sky by Walter N. Webb.....22
Filer's Files by George A. Filer.....23
Director's Message by Walter Andrus.....24

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Swissair jet has 'near miss' with UFO

By R. J. Durant

At approximately 5:07 p.m. EDT on Aug. 9, 1997, a Swissair Boeing 747 experienced a "near miss" with a cylindrical "glowing white" object traveling almost directly toward the cockpit at very high speed. The airliner was in level flight at 23,000 feet and cruising at 340 knots (390 miles per hour) indicated speed in a cloudless sky.

Six weeks after the event, the story was disseminated by the Associated Press (AP) news service. According to the AP account, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) identified the object as a weather balloon, citing a report from another airliner of a weather balloon in the same general area.

The NTSB explanation seemed plausible, but the Center for UFO Studies (CUFOS) and the Fund for UFO Research (FUFOR) decided that it would be prudent to conduct at least a preliminary inquiry. After six months of investigation, we have concluded that the "weather balloon" explanation is impossible, and that no other prosaic explanation for the sighting is available: the Swissair flight encountered an Unidentified Flying Object.

Flight 127

The airplane was a Boeing 747, a wide-bodied, long-range airliner with Swiss national registration. The flight left Philadelphia International Airport at 4:50 p.m. and landed at Boston Logan International Airport 57 minutes later.

The cockpit crew consisted of Capt. Phil Bobet, with 15,000 hours of flying time, First Officer (copilot) G, with 7,500 hours of flying time, and Flight Engineer K, whose total flying experience was not listed in the various reports.

Capt. Bobet was sitting in the left pilot's seat, and First Officer G was in the right seat. The Flight Engineer's seat swivels so that he can face forward to share the pilots' view, or sideways toward his instrument panel and aircraft system controls. Ordinarily, the Flight Engineer is facing forward during takeoff and landing, but turns sideways at other times during the flight.

The flight proceeded along airways in accordance



R. J. Durant

Editor's Note: Although this report is rather long, and the event is not particularly unusual, it is being run as an example of a thorough investigation – as well as an interesting account of the unusual interest shown by government officials (the ghost of TWA Flight 800?).

with its planned route. Sixteen minutes after takeoff it was over New York's Kennedy Airport, and turning to a northeasterly heading toward Boston.

The Captain, who had been at the controls, transferred control of the airplane to the First Officer and keyed the microphone on the public address system to make a routine passenger announcement. The weather was clear, and the passengers sitting on the left-hand side of the airplane could see New York City and its environs. Capt. Bobet advised them of the sights beneath the airplane. As he was talking about New York City, he was looking at it through the left side cockpit window. With that portion of his announcement finished, he turned his head forward.

While Capt. Bobet was making his public address announcement, First Officer G was leaning forward, concentrating on adjusting the volume on his radio receiver panel. At the same time the Captain's gaze turned to view the expanse ahead of the airliner, the copilot, now satisfied with his audio panel setting, moved to scan forward and outside. The time was 5:07 p.m. Thus it was that the two pilots almost simultaneously saw the UFO.

Report to Traffic Control

The following dialogue is from the tape recording made by the FAA. All air traffic control communications are taped and archived. This permits later investigation of communications where violations of regulations are alleged, or where there is an accident or other unusual event.

SW = Swissair Flight 127, probably Capt. Bobet
 ATC = Boston Air Route Traffic Control Center, Danbury Sector 22, radar controller.

SW: Swissair 127

ATC: Swissair 127, go ahead.

SW: Yes sir. I don't know what it was, but it just over flew just like a couple of hundred feet above us. I don't know if it was a rocket or whatever. But incredibly fast. Opposite direction.

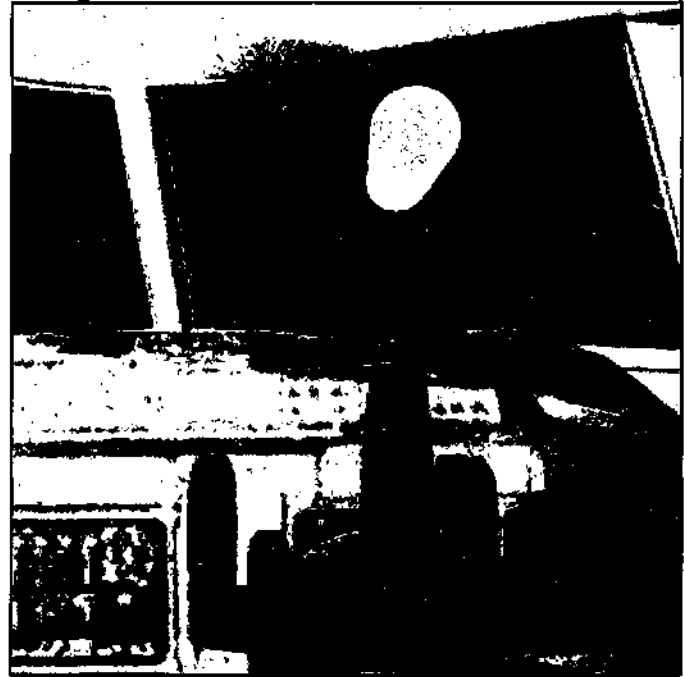
ATC: In the opposite direction?

SW: Yes sir, and the time was two-one-zero -seven [5:07 p.m. local time]. It was too fast to be an airplane.

ATC: OK, thank you.



View from the pilot's perspective.



View from the first officer's (co-pilot) perspective.

ATC: (To Houston (?) 986, another airplane in the vicinity of Swissair 127): Did you see anything like a missile in your area, perhaps off to your right?

986: I'll take a good look, but if it's going that fast, I probably won't get a chance. We just saw Swissair go by a minute ago.

SW: Swissair 127. We had no ... warning. It was way too fast.

ATC: Swissair 127, thank you.

ATC: Swissair 127, how far above you was it?

SW: It was right over us, right above, opposite direction. And I don't know, 200, 300, 400 feet above.

ATC: OK, thank you.

SW: All I can tell is that three of us saw a white object. It was white and very fast.

ATC: Swissair 127, thank you.

ATC: (To another airplane, phonetically Opus 550, also in the vicinity of Swissair 127): Opus 550 (?), did you see anything in regard to a missile, a UFO, in your vicinity, maybe about three minutes ago?

Opus 550: I was getting ready to ask you if you heard that report. We haven't seen anything.

ATC: US Air 1800, you didn't see anything either?

US Air 1800: Negative

ATC: Hey, Chris, that Swissair 127, he had a UFO or a rocket, something, almost hit him in my airspace. (Chris is the first name of the air traffic controller in the next radar sector who will take the "handoff" of Swissair 127 from the controller who has been talking on the radio. Chris and this controller are talking

on a telephone "hot line" which is also being recorded.)

Chris: (repeat above)

ATC: went right above him, 200 or 300 feet, he says ... some kind of white object. They're checking into it here, but if he says anything to you. Just to let you know.

Chris: OK.

Meeting the "Feds"

Ordinarily, a "near miss" or other serious violation of safety regulations by an airliner results in a request that the pilot telephone the air traffic control supervisor after landing to answer detailed questions. On a few occasions the pilot will be asked to make a written report. And on very rare occasions the crew will be met and interviewed by an official of the Flight Standards Division of the FAA.

The radio report by Swissair 127 was so provocative that the Boston Flight Standards office was notified while the airplane was still airborne, and sent an officer to meet the crew. Underscoring the importance of the incident in the eyes of the FAA, a security specialist from the FAA's Civil Aviation Security Office was dispatched to Logan Airport to assist his Flight Standards colleague in the interview.

Subsequently, the FAA notified the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), and both agencies assigned officers to attend the meeting with the Swissair pilots. Informal inquiries among individuals with long experience in the airline industry reveal that such a "welcoming committee" is unheard of.

The following day, Aug. 10, Captain Bobet and First

Officer G were interviewed separately by the four government agents, with the NTSB representative taking the leading role. The Flight Engineer was not interviewed because he had not seen the UFO.

The FAA and NTSB officials completed extensive reports on the interviews. These were obtained by aviation journalist Don Berliner of the Fund for UFO Research.

Swissair Internal Report

Immediately upon their return to Zurich, Capt. Bobet and First Officer G met with Swissair flight operations officials to discuss the incident. An internal report was prepared by Capt. Bobet, and distributed within the company by the Chief Pilot in charge of all Boeing 747 flying. The following is excerpted from the Swissair report.

"Flight conditions—Visual Meteorological Conditions, excellent visibility, blue sky ... smooth air, no turbulence, Cumulonimbus clouds over New Jersey (left of track) and approximately 80 nautical miles ahead."

Captain: "...when turning head from left (looking at NYC) to straight ahead (towards aircraft nose), and while talking to passengers on PA, I spotted an Unidentifiable Flying Object—UFO (see description of UFO below)

"The path of the UFO was from opposite direction, slightly right. Estimated horizontal distance—between First Officer's seat and engine #3, vertical distance between 100 and 200 feet above aircraft.

"At the same time, I saw the First Officer-plunging his head down towards his knees. The F/O mentioned later that he thought he would get hit by the object. UFO speed appeared to be very high. The object was sighted for about one second."

"First Officer: "...after working at the audio panel, I went from head down to head up, looking outside my front windows. Suddenly, I saw an object in opposite direction. Its path seemed like it was going to hit me. Once past, I estimated—horizontal distance: between my seat and engine #3, vertical distance—a few feet above (less than 100 feet).

The Swissair report listed questions asked of the pilots by the federal officials during the Boston interview. These included "Shape of UFO?" and the answers given: Captain—"Cylindrical, rather long, a bit smaller than a single engine aircraft fuselage, no wings. White color." First Officer—"Round, but looked different than a previous encounter with a weather balloon. White color."

Weather Balloon

The FAA Report contains the following language: "United Airlines flight # 176, traveling in-bound to Boston, at approximately 2219 GMT (1819 EST), in-

dicated they were 10 miles South/Southwest of Swiss Air # 127 location, at an altitude of 24,000 feet. United # 176 reported seeing a light colored object below them, which appeared to be a WEATHER BALLOON.

"Three members of Swiss Air Flight 127, a B-747, reported passing an object at FL 230 while enroute to BOS from PHL. There was no evasive action reported.

"Update: A UAL- 176 flight reported a weather balloon at FL 250 after the report from SWR-127.

"2157 E [9:57 p.m. local time] 8/9/97, Washington Air Traffic are calling the sighting a WX (shorthand for weather) balloon and consider this a closed issue. Security will handle any further questions and investigate."

Over six weeks later, when the press inquired about the Swissair sighting, they were told by the NTSB public affairs office that the "UFO" had been identified as a weather balloon, and that this identification was based on the sighting of a weather balloon by another airline crew at nearly the same altitude and in nearly the same location.

Interview With Capt. Bobet

The following is excerpted from a transcript of an interview between Capt. Bobet and me held in Boston on March 28, 1998. At his request, only parts of the discussion were tape recorded.

As the tape begins, Capt. Bobet is talking about how a weather balloon would appear to an observer at 23,000 feet, the altitude of the Swissair 747 when it encountered the UFO. He was well aware of the official "weather balloon" explanation for his sighting, and was clearly dismayed by that explanation. He thought it preposterous. This interview was his first public commentary, and will probably be his last.

Capt. Bobet's "native" language is French, but the interview was conducted in English, and, as is apparent, he is fluent in this language.

B is Capt. Bobet, D is Durant, ** indicates unintelligible word. Punctuation is arbitrary.

B: ... between four and five meters, it is 5 to 6 meters at 30 thousand feet so it should have been somewhere around 4 or 5 meters diameter. That would have been definitely larger than what we saw. That's for sure. If you can imagine a fuselage of an Airbus 320, right in front of you, you can tell the difference. It was definitely smaller than that. And second, we all fly within 500 feet of other aircraft, of other jet airplanes, and the speed of that was incredibly fast, very, very fast, much faster than what we are used to seeing. Even though, I think, it was pretty close.

D: You're comparing this with other airplanes that came straight on. It was faster?

B: It was faster. It was much faster. I would agree that it was so close that it appears to be much faster

when it is 100 or 200 feet away from you, compared with an airplane or traffic 500 feet or 1,000 feet away from you, but it was very unusual. However, if it was that fast, it was like over the speed of sound, and we should have heard the sound barrier.

D: Now, the report says that you were making a PA announcement. And you saw this out of the corner of your eye, or you were staring straight ahead?

B: What happened is my partner was at the controls, and he was working at the audio panel, and all of a sudden he looked through the window, just looking outside. I was talking to the passengers. New York City was right down below to the left. I said, New York is on your left, and so forth. While I was talking on the PA I just turned around, and at the very same moment I saw this. It lasted for maybe one second. So it's just a coincidence that the two of us were looking outside. We never do unless we're at low level or coming in, looking for traffic. So it's really a coincidence that the two of us were looking at the same moment in the same direction. Now, regarding the shape of the object,...

D: Can I stop you right here? Is that the shape we're talking about? (I am referring to the Swissair Report summary of the shape of the UFO as reported to the federal officials.)

B: That's one thing I didn't have too much on, the information they asked. They were talking about the different perception, my perception and the First Officer's perception of the shape of the object. The explanation is very simple. The object was on the First Officer's side. It was almost straight ahead.

D: A conflict between your story, or the report of your story, and the First Officer's.

B: You're right on my report. We agree on the high speed. We agree on **. We saw a different shape, because it was coming right in front of him, on his side, which could explain the round form of the object. But I saw it from a 45 to 60 degree angle, when it was just passing by. So I could see the size (side?). That would explain why I saw a cylindrical shape, because it was coming right at him, so I saw it from a certain angle.

D: It also means it was pretty damn close

B: It was very, very close. What they say is very correct. I mentioned two, three, four hundred feet and it was very difficult to tell at the time, and afterwards, thinking about it. First of all I think it's impossible to tell exactly the distance because it was so fast. I would say two hundred feet. The first officer believed at the end it was 100 feet or even less. It's very difficult to tell. But it was close, definitely close. We both agree regarding the ** aircraft, regarding the horizontal distance, we both agree it definitely passed over the wing. Very, very close. It was almost right over his head.

D: Which would explain why he saw only the circular shape. I was just wondering what's with the writ-

ten report? I guess what you're saying is they claim that your account, your version was different from the copilot?

B: Yeah, they insisted on that. I don't know whether they were looking for an excuse or whatever, but they insisted on a different perception. I don't know why. I told the, Mr. H, the NTSB man, that we saw it from a different angle, so obviously we couldn't see the same form. Two things that make me not believe any weather balloon story is the speed and the size. And the form. I saw it long, I'm absolutely sure, absolutely sure. I will never ever say that it was a missile, unless I would be 100% sure.

D: That's fair. But the size, you would estimate as the size of a great white shark?

B: Yes

D: And there was no surface, no fins, no wings?

B: No, that's something we're absolutely sure about. An interesting question. I didn't fly fighters in the Air Force. I flew slow moving aircraft. But, I don't know if you know, but in Switzerland the military system is very different than most countries. Pilots, unless they work full time for the Air Force, they fly to the age of 40 or 45, while they are Swissair pilots.

So they fly six weeks a year on fighter aircraft, Tiger F-18 or Mirage. That's interesting. We have many of those guys. And I questioned quite a few of them. And I said, if you are in an opposite direction from another fighter aircraft, I was thinking of a Lear Jet for instance, because I was flying Lear Jets, and I crossed other Air Force jets. You could barely see the wing. It was very, very thin. But you see it.

And then I asked them, in combat, at a very high speed, do you see the wing? And they were all positive and said we definitely see the wing. I thought it was an interesting question. Going 400, 500 knots in the opposite direction, very, very thin wings. And especially with the sun in the back, I don't know. Anyway, they all said, you can see the wings, no doubt about it. We didn't see any wing. The two of us are positive.

D: And how about any panels or rivets or any surface?

B: none

D: Totally smooth surface, and white?

B: White. We both were amazed how white it was. I mean, a really bright white.

D: OK, would you say it was glowing?

B: Well, kind of, yes. But now remember the sun was right behind us. Exactly behind. So if the object was, like new paint, you would have that glowing effect. It was white, white. We didn't see any markings or, you can't see markings ** anyway.

D: (Asks Bobet to make drawing of the UFO)

B: Well, I don't see how I could draw this.

D: All right, and the object itself was so simple, by your description.

B: Yes. Cylindrical, and white, white. We saw it really, like you said, glowing. Like a brand new airplane, you know, a brand new one coming out of the factory? That was it.

D: (Asks if the UFO could have been some ordinary airplane)

B: ... and I don't think someone would be silly enough to be flying on one of the busiest crossroads, because New York is busy. You have all the north-south traffic, plus all the flights going to Europe. So, I don't think anyone would be silly enough to fly with no flight plan, with no transponder at 23,000 feet in that area. And then you would see it on the primary radar anyway. So, he (NTSB investigator) sort of agreed to that. I don't think it was an airplane, because of what I just said.

D: It seems extremely unlikely. Impossible.

Notes on the Interview

The expanded diameter of a weather balloon at 23,000 feet would be approximately that of an Airbus A-320 fuselage. This is a medium-size jet in common use. The point Bobet is making is that, thanks to this data furnished by the Swiss meteorologists, he has a point of comparison for the diameter of the UFO. It tells him that the UFO could not have been a balloon at 23,000 feet.

Note the remarks about the whiteness of the UFO. He seemed at a loss for words to describe the almost extreme whiteness. This makes one think in terms of an ionized glow rather than simply a good paint job. This aspect of the interview revealed something missed in the written reports. Under good weather conditions, such as those that obtained in this encounter, the condition of the paint and the relative cleanliness of airplanes within several thousand feet are very obvious. Pilots are accustomed to seeing paint jobs in various stages of decay, and I think this is why Bobet talks about an airplane fresh from the factory.

Bobet makes the point that the sun was nearly behind the Swissair 747, and thus playing directly on the UFO, and he thinks this may have enhanced the whiteness. At the very least, this would have made the UFO very easy to see, including any details on its skin.

A Weather Balloon?

From the data found in the FAA and NTSB reports, it is clear that no balloon could have been in the vicinity of Swissair Flight 127 at the time and place of the UFO encounter. The balloons are launched at 7 a.m. or 7 p.m., and last only one hour. The UFO encounter took place shortly after 5 p.m.

The closest launching point was near the tip of Long

Island, 43 nautical miles to the East of the encounter, and the prevailing winds would have blown the balloon away from the track of the Swissair airplane at a rapid pace.

The color of the balloons is, depending on the type, either "black and red," or "light tan or brownish." The UFO was an almost extreme white, unblemished.

By the time it reached the thin air at 23,000 feet, the diameter of such a balloon would be much larger than the reported diameter of the UFO. As the balloons rise into thinner air, they expand. The expansion rate is known, and the diameter of the balloons at given altitudes had been found to be 7.5 feet at sea level, 18 feet at 30,000 feet, and 37 feet at 100,000 feet, which is the altitude at which they explode.

Other aircraft in the vicinity did not see the "balloon," but did see the Swissair jet.

Their inability to see the "balloon" is inconsistent with the weather balloon hypothesis, but entirely consistent with Capt. Bobet's insistence on the extraordinarily high speed of the object he saw. In this latter interpretation, the object simply flew out of the area before other aircraft could see it.

The data on hand at the FAA and the NTSB within days of the incident was entirely sufficient to draw the inescapable conclusion that a weather balloon could not have been the object seen by the Swissair pilots.

The United Airlines "Weather Balloon"

One hour and twelve minutes after the Swissair encounter, at nearly the same altitude and in nearly the same location, a United Airlines flight reported what the FAA Report calls "a light colored object below them, which appeared to be a weather balloon." Unfortunately, no additional data, such as the exact words of the United pilots, is furnished. The implication is that the pilots thought it could possibly be a weather balloon, but were not sure. One can only assume that it was round, and thus the tentative conclusion that it was a balloon.

The weather balloon explanation for this incident suffers from the same deficits that apply to it as an explanation for the Swissair encounter. Namely, no weather balloon could have been airborne at that time because they last for only one hour, and by the time of the United report, a total of eleven hours would have elapsed since the last launching. The distance and prevailing winds difficulties that applied to the Swissair sighting apply equally to the United report.

The closest thing to a specific quality mentioned is the vague "light colored" feature, but that can be contrasted with the extreme whiteness of the Swissair UFO. The United Airlines sighting raises more questions than it answers. In any event, it does nothing to elucidate

the nature of the Swissair UFO.

A Missile?

A year and a month before the Swissair incident, a Trans World Airlines Boeing 747 disintegrated off the coast of Long Island, killing all aboard. The FBI and NTSB continue to investigate that accident. Preliminary conclusions issued by the NTSB are to the effect that some unknown source of ignition caused an explosion in the center fuel tank of the airliner, and the force of the explosion caused a series of structural failures culminating in the catastrophe.

From the outset, there have been rumors that a missile was fired at the TWA jet, and that denials from U.S. government agencies are a cover-up. Those rumors, whether they have any basis in fact or not, have become firmly planted in the professional aviation community.

While researching this UFO case, we were surprised to find how deeply rooted the "missile" theory is. *Every* party to whom we spoke mentioned TWA 800. The presence in the Swissair investigation of an NTSB field agent, an FBI agent, and of an agent of the FAA's Civil Aviation Security Division probably resulted from the persistence of the "missile" theory, and the extreme sensitivity, even after the passage of so much time, to any observation that could be connected to a missile.

Swissair 127 flew within 25 miles of the site of the TWA 800 disaster. The passengers could easily see the location off the coast of Long Island where the wreckage fell. Of course that was not part of Capt. Bobet's public address announcement, but it lurked in the back of his mind, as it does in the minds of all pilots and aviation specialists who work in or pass through the area.

The ghost of TWA 800 seems also to have affected the testimony of Capt. Bobet, at least to some small extent. He said that he was very reluctant to provide drawings of the object he saw because they could so easily be construed as a missile. Where he could have told the federal investigators in plain language that what he saw was an un-tapered cylinder, instead he chose words like "white shark" and the "fuselage of a light airplane."

There are cogent reasons to believe that the Swissair UFO was not a missile. Both witnesses, and in particular Capt. Bobet, could easily have seen fins or wings, but saw none. To the best of our knowledge, there are no small to medium sized missiles without such flight control surfaces.

Nor was there any evidence of an exhaust, although only Capt. Bobet would have been in a position to see an exhaust trail. The other aircraft in proximity to Swissair 127 that had been alerted to look for a UFO should have seen the exhaust trail, but did not. A mis-

sile would have been "seen" by the radar that was tracking Swissair 127 and the other air traffic in the vicinity, but no image that could be correlated with the UFO was seen by the controller, or later during careful examination of the tape recorded radar system data.

Perseid Meteor?

Other than the original NTSB claim that the pilots had seen a weather balloon, only one other "prosaic" explanation has been offered. Philip Klass, author of four books debunking UFOs, wrote as follows concerning the Swissair sighting:

"Capt. Bobet said the UFO was moving very fast, and he described it as being cylindrical, and white in color. The incident occurred near the peak of the Perseids meteor shower. Meteor-fireballs invariably are reported to be very much closer than they really are. For example, on June 5, 1969, two airline crews and a military pilot reported that they had nearly collided with several UFOs near St. Louis. Thanks to an alert photographer in Peoria who managed to get a photo, the objects were identified as meteor fragments whose flight path was roughly 125 miles north of St. Louis." (*Skeptics UFO Newsletter*, November, 1998)

The annual Perseids meteor shower peaked on Aug. 11-12, 1997, two days after the Swissair sighting. It is extremely unusual for such astronomical phenomena to be seen in daytime, but the Swissair sighting took place in "broad daylight," shortly after five p.m. in the middle of summer. A meteorite of sufficient intensity to be seen in daylight would have been spotted by hundreds of other observers throughout the densely populated Eastern Seaboard. But the American Meteor Society, which maintains a database of "Bright Meteors," lists only one on Aug. 9, from an observer in Alexandria, VA, at 9:30 p.m. In the case cited by Klass, the fireball was seen by observers over a vast area of the relatively unpopulated Midwestern U.S., including the states of Indiana, Illinois, Kansas, Missouri and Iowa.

James Richardson, Operations Manager and Radiometeor Project Coordinator of the American Meteor Society, had this to say in reply to our inquiry about the possibility that the Swissair pilots had seen a Perseid display:

"The event you are reporting might possibly have been an early Perseid fireball, but I cannot verify this based only upon the information given. At that time of the evening, the Perseid radiant is just below the horizon, so that any meteors from that source would have very long paths across the sky, tracing backwards to the N to NE horizon area. However, such fireballs, visible in the evening, are quite rare. Not only are Perseid rates still rather low on Aug. 9, the rates are extremely attenuated when the radiant is near the hori-

zon, and those that do occur would rarely be visible in-daylight. Daylight fireballs are quite uncommon, although they do occur." (Richardson is in error about the position of Perseus at 5 p.m. It was below the horizon in a direction of NW or NNW, not N to NE. Perseus rose above the horizon in a NE direction at about 10 p.m. See comments below by Mr. Martino.)

The Constellation Perseus, which is the source or "radiant" from which the Perseids appear to emanate, did not rise above the horizon until 10 p.m., five hours after the Swissair sighting. Thus the object, even if it were a meteor, could not be a Perseid. Moreover, a Perseid seen at 5 p.m. would have a trajectory from left to right of the Swissair aircraft, 90 degrees off its 60-degree heading. (Recall that the pilots reported the object approaching head-on.)

We also consulted Robert Martino, Assistant Director of the Perkins Observatory in Delaware, OH. He told us, "The 1997 Perseid shower was only average in intensity, and Aug. 9 is four days before the time of maximum intensity. At 5 p.m., Perseus was a bit below the NW horizon." We asked Martino if two meteor observers (the captain and copilot) were separated by less than six feet, could that separation provide enough parallax to cause the pilot to report "a long cylinder" while the copilot reported a foreshortened globular structure. Martino's reply was, "God, that would mean it was on the windshield!"

Concluding Remarks

An attempt was made to gather data from Capt. Bobet and his copilot in order to further refine size and distance estimates. The copilot refused our attempts to contact him. Capt. Bobet answered some of the questions, but left others unanswered.

A video simulation of the UFO sighting was made. This shows a view of the event from a point external to the airplane, and another view from the captain's (left) seat in the cockpit. Four speeds for the UFO were incorporated in the simulation. The goal of this exercise was to get Capt. Bobet and his copilot to adjust the parameters of the video by advising us if the object was too large, not large enough, too long, too fast or too slow, lined up correctly or incorrectly with the fuselage, and so on.

It was hoped that with this simulation and appropriate adjustments we could get a more accurate idea of the size and trajectory of the UFO. Unfortunately, Capt. Bobet has made no comment with respect to this video. We do not have reason to believe that the copilot has seen it.

During the same time frame, the National Transportation Safety Board finally responded to Swissair's repeated requests for a definitive statement on the Flight 127 incident. According to Capt. Bobet, in a letter to

Swissair the NTSB said it was no longer their belief that the crew had seen a balloon. However, the NTSB did not have a conclusion about the sighting, and considered the case closed.

It appears that Capt. Bobet does not intend to cooperate further in this inquiry. In a meeting with me in early August, he reiterated his intense anger caused by the NTSB and FAA "weather balloon" explanation for his sighting. However, it now appears unlikely that either he or his colleagues will furnish further information. Rather than wait indefinitely for data that may not be divulged, we thought it best to release this report to the research community without further delay.

Postscript

Since the modern era of UFOs began in 1947, a climate of ridicule has enveloped the topic. In the main, this has been crafted by officials of the U.S. government charged with investigating UFO reports and conveying their results to the public. Instant solutions to reports have been the rule, and often those solutions were an affront to the facts and to intelligence. The press has rarely followed up, opting instead to print the official conclusions as unimpeachable.

The Swissair UFO report is a case in point. Its trivialization began with a kneejerk conclusion that the pilots had seen a weather balloon. Six weeks later, when queried by the press, the NTSB, which by then knew better, passed off that extremely improbable explanation to the reporters. Implicit in that "explanation" was that the witnesses were feeble-minded, inept and so forth—just like the myriad UFO witnesses before them. This is how the climate of ridicule was generated and how it is perpetuated.

When I asked Mr. H of the NTSB if a "near miss report" had been filed, H arrogantly and belligerently replied, "Near miss with what?" One answer to that question, which is so revealing of the official mind-set, might be, "With a glowing white cylindrical object, about five feet in diameter and 25 feet long, that nearly rammed through the cockpit of a Boeing 747 passenger plane. That's what."

In the meantime, it is extremely unlikely that further comment will be made by the witnesses. Both they and the Swissair Corporation are sensitive to the climate of ridicule. They have nothing to gain, and if past is prologue when it comes to the media treatment of UFO stories, they have much to lose.

Editor's Note: This article is an abridgment of a much longer report on the Swissair incident prepared by R. J. Durant and Don Berliner which contains the full texts of the FAA, NTSB, and Swissair documents, plus extended analysis, commentary, and many illustrations. The report is available from the Fund for UFO research.

Quasi-official French document looks at defense issues related to UFOs

By Gildas Bourdais

On July 16, 1999, an outstanding document called "UFOs and Defense. What must we be prepared for?" ("Les OVNI et la Defense. A quoi doit-on se preparer?") was published in France. This 90-page report is the result of an in-depth study of UFOs, covering many aspects of the subject, especially questions of defense, by qualified experts from various fields.

The study was carried out during several years by an independent group of former "auditors" at the very serious Institute of Higher Studies for National Defense, or IHEDN ("Institut des hautes etudes de defense nationale"). Before its public release, it was sent to French President of the Republic Jacques Chirac, and to Prime Minister Lionel Jospin,

This Report is prefaced by Gen. Bernard Norlain of the Air Force, former Director of IHEDN, and it begins with a preamble by Andre Lebeau, former President of the National Center for Space Studies ("Centre national d'etudes spatiales," CNES), the French equivalent of NASA.

The group itself, collective author of the report, is an association of experts, many of whom are or have been auditors of IHEDN, and it is presided over by Gen. Denis Letty of the Air Force, former auditor (FA) of IHEDN. Its name, "COMETA," stands for "Committee for in depth studies."

A non-exhaustive list of members is given at the beginning, and it is impressive enough. It includes Gen. Bruno Lemoine of the Air Force (FA of IHEDN); Admiral Marc Merio (FA of IHEDN); Michel Algrin, Doctor in Political Sciences, attorney at law (FA of IHEDN); Gen. Pierre Bescond, engineer for armaments (FA of IHEDN); Denis Blancher, Chief National Police superintendent at the Ministry of the Interior; Christian Marchal, chief engineer of the national "corps des Mines," Research Director at the "National Office of Aeronautical Research" (ONERA); and Gen. Alain Orszag, Ph. D. in physics, engineer for armaments.

The committee also expressed its gratitude to outside contributors, including Jean-Jacques Velasco, head of SEPRA at CNES; Francois Louange, President of Fleximage, specialist of photo analysis; and Gen. Joseph Domange of the Air Force, general delegate of the Association of auditors at IHEDN.

Gen. Norlain tells in a short preface how this committee was created. Gen. Lefty came to see him in March, 1995, when he was Director of IHEDN, to dis-

cuss his project of a committee on UFOs. Norlain assured him of his interest and addressed him to the Association of Auditors (AA) of IHEDN, which in turn gave him its support. (It is interesting to recall here that, twenty years ago, it was a report of that same Association which led to the creation of GEPAN, the first unit for UFO study, at CNES.)

As a result, several members of the committee from the Association of Auditors of IHEDN were joined by other experts. Most of them hold, or have held, important functions in defense, industry, teaching, research, or various central administrations. Gen. Norlain expresses hope that this report will help develop new efforts nationally, and an indispensable international cooperation.

Gen. Letty, as president of COMETA, points to the main theme of the report, which is that the accumulation of well documented observations compels us now to consider all hypotheses as to the origin of UFOs, especially extraterrestrial hypotheses.

The committee then presents the contents of the study. The First Part features the presentation of some remarkable cases, both French and foreign. In the Second Part they describe the present organization of research in France and abroad, and studies made by scientists worldwide which may bring partial explanations, in accordance with known laws of physics. The main global explanations are then reviewed, from secret crafts to extraterrestrial manifestations. The Third Part examines measures to be taken regarding defense, from information of pilots, both civilian and military, to strategic, political, and religious consequences, should the extraterrestrial hypothesis be confirmed.

Part I: Facts and Testimonies

Many of the cases selected are well known to most researchers, and need only to be mentioned here. However, some of these are outlined at the end of this article. They are:

Testimonies of French pilots. M. Giraud, pilot of Mirage IV (1977); Col. Bosc, fighter pilot (1976); Air France flight AF 3532 (Jan 1994).

Aeronautical cases world wide. Lakenheath (1956); RB-47 (USA 1957); Teheran (1976); Russia (1990); San Carlos de Bariloche (Argentina, 1995).

Observations from the ground. Tananarive (1954); observation of a saucer near the ground by a French pilot, J.P. Fartek (1979); observation at close range over a Russian missile site by several witnesses (1989).

Close encounters in France. Valensole (Maurice Masse, 1965); Cussac, Cantal (1967); Trans-en-Provence (1981); Nancy (so called case of the "Amaranth") (1982).

Counter-examples of elucidated phenomena (two cases).

Although the selection is limited, it seems to be sufficient to convince an uninformed, but open minded, reader of the reality of UFOs.

Part II: "Present State of Knowledge"

The second part, entitled "the present state of knowledge" ("Le point des connaissances"), begins with a survey of the organization of the official UFO research in France, from the first instructions given to the "gendarmerie" in 1974 for the redaction of reports, to the creation of GEPAN in 1977, its organization and its results: collection of more than 3,000 reports from the gendarmerie, case studies, statistical analyses. It then surveys agreements passed by GEPAN and, later, SEPRA with the air force and the army, the civilian aviation, and other organs (such as civilian and military laboratories for the analysis of samples and photographs).

Regarding the methods and results, we are reminded of some famous cases (Trans-en-Provence, l'Amarante), and emphasis is made on the catalogues of cases, notably of pilots (Weinstein catalogue), and "radar/visual" world wide. A historical note appears here with a quotation of the famous letter of Gen. Twining of September 1947, asserting already to the reality of UFOs.

Hypotheses and modeling

The following chapter, called "hypotheses and attempts at modeling" ("OVNI: hypotheses, essais de modelisation") discusses some models and hypotheses which are under study in several countries. Partial simulations have already been made for UFO propulsion, based on observations of aspects such as speed, movements and accelerations, engine failure of nearby vehicles, and paralysis of witnesses.

One model is MHD propulsion, already tested successfully in water, and which might be achieved in the atmosphere with superconducting circuits in a few decades. Other studies are briefly mentioned regarding both atmospheric and space propulsion, such as particle beams, antigravity, and reliance on planetary and stellar impulsion. The failure of land vehicle engines may be explained by microwave radiations. In fact, high power hyperfrequency generators are under study in France and other countries. One application is microwave weapons. Particle beams, for instance proton beams, which ionize the air and become therefore visible, might explain the observation of truncated luminous beams. Microwaves might explain body pa-

ralysis.

In the same chapter are next studied "global hypotheses." Hoaxes are rare and easily detected. Some "non-scientific" issues are put aside, such as conspiracy and manipulation by very secret, powerful groups; parapsychic phenomena; and collective hallucinations. The hypothesis of secret weapons is also regarded as very improbable, the same as "intoxication" at the time of the cold war, or just natural phenomena.

We are then left with various extraterrestrial hypotheses. One version has been developed in France by astronomers Jean-Claude Ribes and Guy Monnet, based on the concept of "space islands" of American physicist O'Neill, and it is compatible with present day physics.

Survey of research in U.S.

The organization of UFO research in the United States, Great Britain and Russia, is surveyed briefly. In the United States, the media and the polls show a marked interest and concern of the public, but the official position, especially of the Air Force, is still one of denial, more precisely that there is no threat to national security. Actually, declassified documents, released under FOIA, show another story, one of surveillance of nuclear installations by UFOs, and the continued study of UFOs by the military and intelligence agencies.

The report stresses the importance in the United States of private, independent associations, such as MUFON. It mentions the "Briefing Document: Best Available Evidence" sent in 1995 to a thousand personalities worldwide, and the Sturrock workshop in 1997, both sponsored by Laurance Rockefeller. The "Briefing Document" has obviously been welcomed by the authors of the COMETA report. The committee also notes the public emergence of alleged insiders such as Col. Philip Corso, and considers that his testimony may be partly significant as to the real situation in that country, in spite of many critics.

The report describes briefly the situation in Great Britain, with a special mention for Nick Pope, and poses the question of the possible existence of secret studies pursued jointly with American services. It mentions as well research in Russia, and the release of some information, notably by the KGB in 1991.

Part III : UFOs and Defense

The third part, "UFOs and Defense" ("Les OVNI et la defense"), states that, if it is true that no hostile action has been proved yet, at least some actions of "intimidation" have been recorded in France (case of the Mirage IV for instance). Since the extraterrestrial origin of UFOs cannot be ruled out, it is therefore necessary to study the consequences of that hypothesis at

the strategic level, but also political, religious, and media/public information levels.

The first chapter of Part III is devoted to prospective strategies ("Prospectives strategiques"), and it begins with fundamental questions: "What if extraterrestrials? What intentions and what strategy can we deduce from their behavior?"

Such questions open a more controversial part of the report. Possible motivations of extraterrestrial visitors are explored here, such as protection of planet Earth against the dangers of nuclear war, suggested for instance by repeated flying over nuclear missile sites.

Secret contacts?

The committee then ponders the possible repercussion on the behavior, official or not, of different states, and focuses on the possibility of secret, privileged contacts which might be "attributed to the United States." The attitude of the U.S. is seen as "most strange" since the 1947 wave and the Roswell event. Since that time, a policy of increasing secrecy seems to have been applied, which might be explained by the protection at all cost of military technological superiority to be acquired from the study of UFOs.

Next the report tackles the question, "What measures must we take now?" At the least, whatever the nature of UFOs, they impose "critical vigilance," in particular regarding the risk of "destabilizing manipulations." A kind of "cosmic vigilance" should be applied by the elites, nationally and internationally, in order to prevent any shocking surprise, erroneous interpretation, and hostile manipulation.

Nationally, COMETA urges the strengthening of SEPRA, and recommends the creation of a cell at the highest level of government, entrusted with the development of hypotheses, strategy, and preparation of cooperation agreements with European and other foreign countries. A further step would be that European states and the European Union undertake diplomatic action toward the United States within the framework of political and strategic alliances.

A key question

A key question of the report is, "What situations must we be prepared for?" It mentions such situations as extraterrestrial moves for official contact; discovery of a UFO/alien base on the territory or in Europe; invasion (deemed improbable) and localized or massive attack; and manipulation or deliberate disinformation aimed at destabilizing other states.

COMETA devotes special attention to "aeronautical implications," with detailed recommendations aimed at various personnel, such as air staffs, controllers, weathermen, and engineers. It also makes recommendations at the scientific and technical levels, aimed at developing research, with potential benefits for de-

fense and industry.

The report further explores the political and religious implications of UFOs, using as a model the perspective of our own exploration of space: how would we do it, and how would we handle contacts with less advanced civilizations?

Such an approach is not new to the well-informed readers of the abundant ufological literature, but it has a special value here, being treated seriously at such a level. The media/publicity implications are not forgotten, including the problems of disinformation, fear of ridicule, and manipulation by certain groups.

In its conclusion, COMETA claims that the physical reality of UFOs, under control of intelligent beings, is "quasi certain." Only one hypothesis takes into account the available data: the hypothesis of extraterrestrial visitors. This hypothesis is of course unproved, but has far-reaching consequences. The goals of these alleged visitors remain unknown, but must be the subject of speculations and prospective scenarios.

In its final recommendations, it stresses again the need to 1) inform all decision-makers and persons in position of responsibility; 2) reinforce the means of investigation and study at SEPRA; 3) have UFO detection taken into account by agencies engaged in space surveillance; 4) create a strategic cell at the highest state level; 5) undertake diplomatic action toward the United States for cooperation on this "capital question"; and 6) study measures which might be necessary in case of emergencies.

Seven Annexes

Finally, this document is accompanied by seven interesting annexes which are worth reading, even by seasoned ufologists: 1) Radar detection in France; 2) Observations by astronomers; 3) Life in the Universe; 4) Colonization of space; 5) The Roswell case—The disinformation (an interesting text which will be criticized by some readers, and welcomed by others, including myself); 6) Antiquity of the UFO phenomenon—Elements for a chronology; and 7) Reflection on various psychological, sociological, and political aspects of the UFO phenomenon.

The importance of this report should not be missed by all informed ufologists around the world, considering not only its contents, but the personality of its authors, and in spite of criticism which may be addressed to it. In fact, some sharp criticism was made soon after the release of the report, both on the Internet and in the French press, with an article by sociologist Pierre Lagrange curiously denouncing an operation of disinformation by way of ridiculing the subject (*Liberation* of July 21, 1999) Let's hope that the present summary will help clarify the debate.

Summary of some cases noted in the COMETA report

By Gildas Bourdais

M. Herve Giraud, pilot of a Mirage IV bomber (7 March 1977). A French Mirage IV atomic bomber was flying at night at an altitude of 31,500 feet and at a speed of Mach 0.9 in the area of Dijon, France, when the pilot and his navigator saw a very bright light coming fast toward them. Soon the light was tailing them at a distance of 1500 m, although they made a sharp turn. The light sped away at supersonic speed, but less than a minute later the same scenario occurred again. The account is based on recorded radio with a military radar, which did not see the UFO on its screen. No sonic boom was heard on the ground.

Col. Claude Bosc, fighter pilot (3 March 1976). At the time a trainee pilot, Claude Bosc was flying a T-33 aircraft for a night training flight. He observed in the distance a bright light, which came suddenly at a very high speed on a collision course. His plane was surrounded by a green phosphorescent light. He saw a sphere with very bright white light at its center. The radar controller had no scope return, but two other pilots saw the phenomenon in a distance, which lasted a few seconds.

Air France flight AF 3532 (28 January 1994). Capt. Jean-Charles Duboc and his co-pilot were flying an Airbus 320-111, at 13 h 14, at an altitude of 39,000 feet with good visibility above clouds, near Paris. They noticed a very large and strange craft at a distance of about 50 km (30 miles) and altitude of about 32,800 ft. Almost still, it seemed to change shape, from a bell to a thick disc, of brown color. A record by military radar has led to a precise estimate of the diameter: about 750 ft.. This case has been mentioned in the "Briefing Document," but with an overestimate of the diameter by the pilot (3,000 ft.). After 50 seconds, it suddenly disappeared, and on the radar scope as well.

Tananarive (16 August 1954). This multiple witness case took place in the island of Madagascar (former French colony). Several members of Air France, among whom former officer Edmond Campagnac (main witness), saw around 17 h a green ball cross the sky at great speed. At closer range it looked like an oval shape (rugby), metallic, big like a DC-4, preceded by a "green lens" and with flames behind. As the "craft" flew over the city of Tananarive at low altitude, (150 to 300 ft.), all lights were turned off. A similar UFO was seen a few minutes later at another place, 150 km away.

Russia, Kapustin Yar (28-29 July 1989). This multiple witness case over a Russian missile base was revealed by the release of KGB documents in 1991. It is

described in the "Briefing Document."

Nancy, "Amaranth" case (21 October 1982). This remarkable case has been well studied by GEPAN/SEPRA, which issued a report (No. 17) in March 1983, like the famous case of Trans-en-Provence (1981). A scientist (anonymous) saw a small disc in stationary flight in the middle of his little garden for 20 minutes in full daylight (12 h 35). Silent, motionless, with no heat, no light, the disc suddenly went away and shot in the sky at great speed. The witness tried to take a picture, but his camera failed. Intriguing effects on plants (amaranth) which were close to the disc have been analyzed. They showed the presence of a powerful electric field (of above 200 kV/m).

A second view of COMETA report

By Jean Sider

In spite of some minor mistakes and inappropriate hints, this report is nevertheless a document making quasi-official the UFO phenomena. It is the first time in France, even in Europe, and maybe in the world, that these unusual manifestations are admitted publicly under the cover of a body close to the Ministry of Defense (the IHEDN), as being possibly created by an unknown intelligence, maybe extraterrestrial.

I am rather surprised by some of the unexpected data included, especially in a report to the President and the Prime Minister. For example, the mention at length of the Roswell incident and Col. Corso is not in line with the extreme care that some other senior officials would have had in a purely scientific environment. But the military is more sensitive to UFOs than scientists, because they are inclined to consider these phenomena a possible threat.

Also quite exaggerated to me are the explicit accusations against the U.S. Air Force, singled out as the only group responsible for UFO disinformation in the world. In the same vein, the "sociopsychologists" like Pierre Lagrange (named in the report) are considered as "victims of this disinformation." The guilty changed into the victims? Please note that for several years Lagrange and the group SOS OVNI have been acting in France like Philip Klass and CSICOP are in the USA.

It seems the report didn't mention the disinformation organized by the French government through some of its scientific officials. For example the Nov. 5, 1990, wave of unexplained phenomena in the French skies was attributed by Jean-Jacques Valasco, head of the SEPRA, to the reentry of a Russian rocket, in spite of numerous clues showing how grotesque such an explanation was.

(Sider, a long-time MUFON member, has written numerous articles for *Lumieres Dans La Nuit*, as well as nine books about UFOs.)

MUFON UFO Journal **survey results tabulated**

By Bob Wood & Dwight Connelly

Editor's Note: In the fall of 1997 readers were asked to complete a survey regarding the *MUFON UFO Journal*. Although the surveys were used by MUFON during the following months in modifying the *Journal*, the results were not formally compiled and reported. At the 1998 MUFON symposium in Denver, the Board of Directors asked Dr. Robert Wood, Director of Research, to organize the extensive material and report the results to the MUFON Board at the Arlington symposium this summer, which was done, and to assist in preparing an article for the *Journal*. This involved, time-consuming work, and we are grateful for his efforts.

In looking at the results of the survey, completed by 577 of the *Journal's* readers, some general observations can be made:

(1) A majority (75%) of readers felt the *Journal* needed "some" to "major" improvement.

(2) All regular writers and columnists received positive evaluations by a majority of readers.

(3) The types of stories covered by the *Journal* were satisfactory to a majority of the readers, except for "Bigfoot" articles, which were approved by slightly less than half the respondents, perhaps reflecting a low confidence of association with UFOs.

(4) A majority (74%) of readers wanted more current, more detailed, and/or more scientific articles.

(5) A majority (62%) felt that the editor (Dennis Stacy) was satisfactory, while some (24%) thought he was negative.

(6) A majority (59%) liked the appearance of the *Journal*, but 29% wanted color.

(7) Readers did not like bickering and backbiting articles and book reviews, and felt that disagreements should be handled professionally.

Answers to survey questions and a total of 47 pages (small type size) of individual comments indicated that *Journal* readers are a diverse group with varied preferences and, frequently, opposite ideas of how the *Journal* should be improved.

A number of these reader concerns and suggestions have been addressed over the past few months, including more efficient use of space, a feature profiling ufologists, articles on subjects specifically suggested, and less bickering and backbiting. Some of your concerns have not been adequately addressed, and

some mistakes continue to be made. For example, proofreading is still inconsistent. Your continued input is solicited. Obviously, every suggestion cannot be taken, but every suggestion will be considered.

While the charts provide a good visual summary of the survey results, the 47 pages of individual comments probably reveal feelings, interests, positions, and attitudes more adequately. Following is a sampling of those comments:

"What is wrong with MUFON and other organizations like it is not the layout of their journals but their lack of conviction. In a vain attempt to appear objective and scientific, we have started to behave like the narrow-minded scientists and media professionals who ridicule us on a daily basis. We continue to ignore our own evidence."

"Kent Jeffrey's article should never have been published. Not because it proposed that there was nothing extraterrestrial that crashed at Roswell, but because his claims were completely unscientific and unsubstantiated. His article should have been recognized for what it was, a clear attempt at sabotage by infiltration, carefully orchestrated to coincide with the Roswell anniversary."

"Article like Kent Jeffrey's on Roswell was excellent—courageous of you to print it."

"Not so much arguing and bitterness."

"Crash retrievals. More foreign reports. UFO link to psychic phenomena."

"Focus less on nuts and bolts and more on consciousness."

"Don't gloss the cover. I bind mine and use only one of the covers for a year's set. Make the cover the same paper grade as the contents. Don't cheapen paper quality."

"MUFON should concentrate more on helping people deal with the phenomenon. This is essential to the survival of MUFON."

"More on current abductions."

"I like everything. Any authors as long as they are interesting."

"Mail the *Journal* in an envelope (people like to take it)."

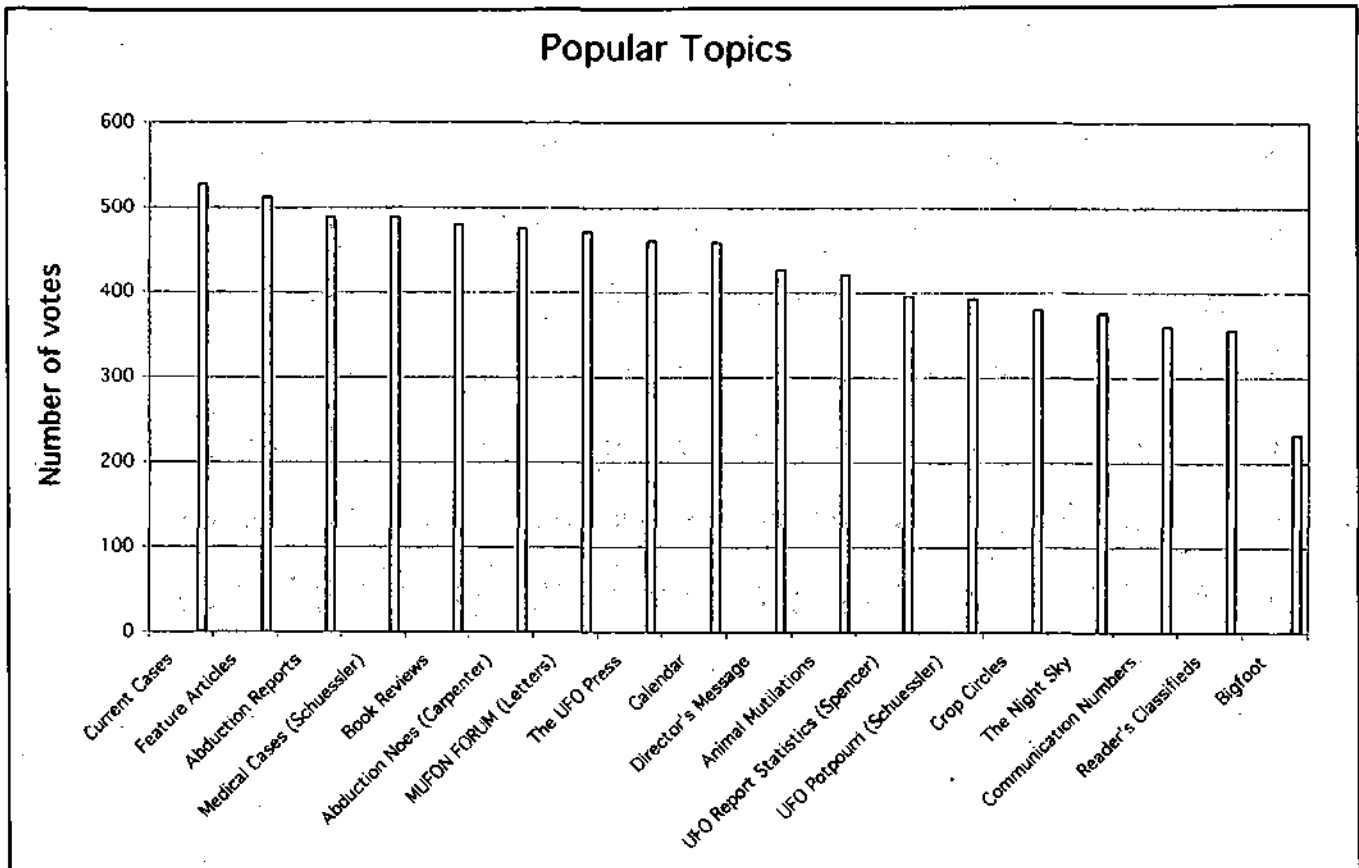
"Would like to see directors of different states becoming more active by presenting updated articles of latest UFO sightings (researched)."

"Tell us how different states' MUFON meetings, field investigations, etc. operate."

"While it's good to have a 'nuts and bolts' approach—you must—we must—come to grips with the fact that the study of UFOs is not black and white—and most of it may, indeed, seem absurd!!"

"Abductees who hear buzzes or tones."

"MUFON headquarters must receive reports from



all over. The membership, I think, would appreciate reading about these in detail."

"Don't accept advertising that is not related to the mission of MUFON."

"Once a year it would be nice to have a brief update of status and whereabouts of major UFO researchers."

"MUFON, dedicated to the scientific exploration of UFOs, should have the *Journal* reflect scientifically-oriented papers."

"Save money. Do away with the glossy cover. It's hard on the eyes anyhow. Please keep the covers serious and scientific. Many of us could receive the *Journal* on-line, thus greatly reducing your printing and mailing costs. Foreign subscribers would not really be so foreign if on-line, would they?"

"Government cover-up and disinformation. Military abductions of abductees. Alien implants. How to encourage Congressional hearings."

"Remote viewing and UFOs. UFO hot spots."

"Make the *Journal* more colorful, more exciting! I see these colorful UFO magazines at the newsstands and I think why can't MUFON be like that!"

"Women staff writers. Recent case study with some analysis or theory."

"More information on current symposiums."

"Revisit old cases, i.e., how do these cases stand today? Roswell updates (other than debunkers). Subjects on the WWW. Biographies of past and present notables in the field."

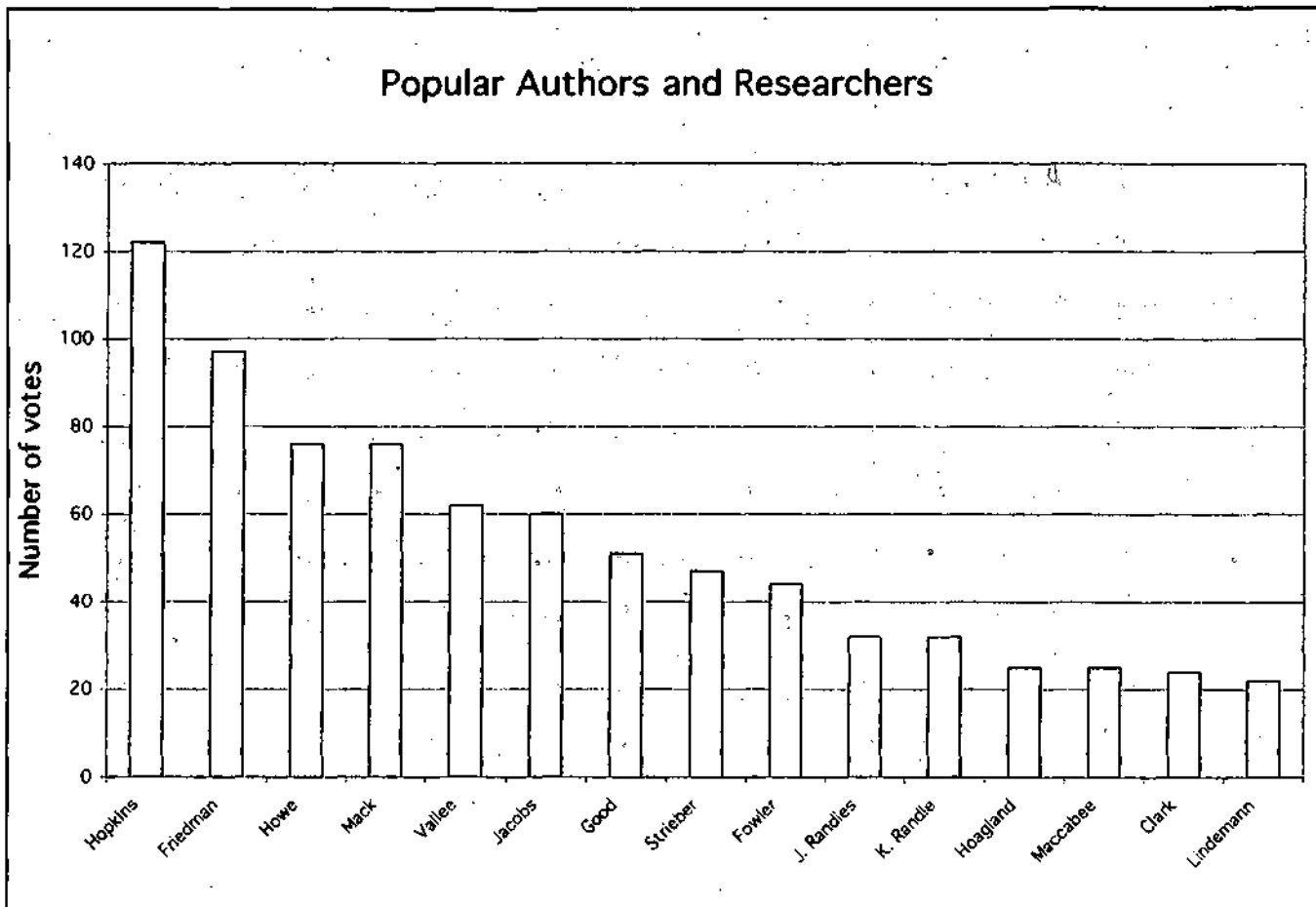
"Varghina, Brazil case. Phoenix lights. Interviews of Edgar Mitchell, Gordon Cooper, Jimmy Carter."

"A format that does not waste so much space."

"Eliminate pictures on cover that are known hoaxes."

"More attention to specific techniques of gathering data on UFOs with low cost to moderate cost equipment and acceptable protocols. The *Journal's* primary purpose seems to be to entertain and inform at a news level rather than a highly technical level. It would be useful to offer financial incentives for quality articles on important topics. Such an approach might help the *Journal* 'scoop' other publications for new information and fresh insight. A column referencing important articles in other publications would prove most helpful to serious researchers."

"I can only say that since subscribing in mid-1994, I have been satisfied with the *Journal's* articles and viewpoint. What I find unsatisfactory is the low standard of copy editing. There are errors of grammar and punctuation in every issue and, indeed, in almost ev-



ery major article.”

“No article length letters.”

“The issues of the *Journal* that have upset me are those that only have a couple of articles in them and especially when they are debunking articles that need counter argument, but it isn't there.”

“More scientific info. Descriptions of type of vehicles seen (compare with known or assumed U.S. experimental craft). Leave out the debunkers, the jealous, and the obviously-biased writers.”

“More crop circle coverage. Sightings.”

“More Dan Wright, Project 1947, history, etc.”

“Quantum physics research relations with UFO study.”

“Stacy hit the nail on the head with his recent review of *Beyond Roswell* when he asked, doesn't anyone ask questions anymore? Doesn't anyone want to see evidence? Let the chips fall where they may. And who knows, maybe someday we'll get answers we can believe in. Format wise, there is a lot of waste space in the *Journal*...go to three columns, smaller margins. Photos of 'personalities' need not be so big. You might check on a slightly smaller typeface. Vertical lines between columns, newspaper style, in place of wide white space. Color isn't needed until we actually have

some aliens, dead or alive, and vehicles (now IFOs).”

“I think at least one color photo of some UFO or UFO-related subject—especially something spectacular—would be good.”

“Detailed reports. Good cases from other journals. Physical effects reports. Scientific analyses. Translations of foreign reports.”

“I would like to see articles by MUFON consultants and research specialists writing about UFO topics involving their individual areas of expertise. The *Journal* could exercise quality control by instituting a peer-review system for these articles.”

“Enlarge the Night Sky column and add pictures of constellations; good for field investigators.”

“Stop publishing that abduction garbage.”

“Abductions outside the U.S.”

“Propulsions theories. Physics and UFOs. Time travel theories.”

“More international coverage of reports.”

“Your proofreading needs improvement.”

“Psychological studies of abductees. After effects in homes of abductees.”

“The *Journal* is a buy at (almost) any price.”

“I don't think you should 'fix' things when they

(Continued on Page 19)

MUFON FORUM

Letters to Mufon UFO Journal

Balls of light

Dear Dwight,

I would like to comment on the article in the June *MUFON UFO Journal* about Brazilian balls of light and subsequent comments by people.

Since all phenomena described as "balls of light," "orbs," "rods," etc., interest me, I pay special attention to those kinds of reports. I am especially familiar with what is called "Mae de Ouro" (Mother of Gold) here in Brazil and wrote an article for *Fortean Times* (Number 40) on the subject, as there have been many such sightings of the phenomenon on my land. The recent MUFON article (June 99) and related comments made me aware of two things, both to do with precision.

It's perhaps a question of semantics. Maybe I'm way behind on standard descriptions, but when the author says "football"-sized, was he referring to American footballs, which are NOT round, or to the "football" of other countries, which is to Americans a soccer ball?

If Heseman, the author of the article, actually lives in Germany and is German, he probably means a round ball of light. Basketball or volleyball or even sphere would be a better and less confusing description, as now we have reports from all over the world.

My second comment is more of an appeal!

As people become more and more observant of phenomena (and I phrase it that way because I'm convinced the phenomena themselves have always been around, it's our perceptions that have shifted), I think it is time to make an effort to examine the attributes of these energy manifestations – if I can be allowed to define Mae de Ouro, rods, orbs etc. as such.

Mae de Ouro (Mother of Gold, as it is still popularly believed here in Brazil that if you follow the light and pan the first body of water it crosses you will find gold) is a glowing more or less volleyball-sized light (usually yellow/orange or blue/white) that is rarely more than 1.5 meters off the ground and moves rather slowly like a meandering butterfly. The rods are not usually visible to the naked eye, are not round, and cluster high off the ground usually and jiggle about. The orbs are still different.

These are not definitive descriptions, but I am pointing this out to suggest that since there are so many types of light phenomena reported we should, somebody should, study the situation in a more systematic way. Perhaps a research structure could be set up where researchers or anyone with data could register data and in the end the pooled data could be studied and ideas

exchanged and conclusions reached. Perhaps such a situation exists. If so, I, and others I know, would like to know.

I submit my e-mail for those who would like to respond. cynthia@compuland.com.br

P.S.: ...Just a few weeks ago a friend in a nearby city was awakened in his house by a ball of light that seemed to explore his bedroom and then go through the wall into the bedroom of his two daughters and a visitor, waking them, and they began to scream. In the morning they noticed that the tough creeper on the walls outside was burned. And this is the second time this has happened to this family. The first time was in another house in the same city and the ball of light burned the garden, scorched the roses!

–Cynthia Newby Luce

Information on USSR needed

Dear Colleagues,

I wonder can you help me? I am attempting to research the UFO subject in the former Soviet Union. I have obtained a wide variety of UFO data from colleagues in the former USSR, Europe, and the USA, but my search for more information continues.

It is my hope and intention to publish my research in the not too distant future, but this remains only a possibility.

I am looking for any and all information on UFOs in the former USSR or any contacts with researchers who might have access to such information.

If you can assist me I would greatly appreciate it if you could contact me direct at: pmufo@dial.pipex.com

–Philip Mantle, British UFO Research Association.

Disk with 'figure U' reported

By Stan Gordon

On Aug. 16, I received a report from a woman whose young son had related to her details of something strange he had just observed. The incident took place about 5 miles from Reading, PA, in Berks County. I talked with the lad, who sounded very mature for his age.

He says that the sighting occurred at 2:12 p.m. He was outside watching some birds when his attention was drawn to a silver disk-shaped object above him and high in the sky. The object appeared motionless. He stated that at the bottom of the disk he could see what looked like a figure U that was dark green in color. As he watched, the object suddenly zoomed off at a high rate of speed towards the South, making a low rumble.



How to Defend Yourself Against Alien Abduction, by Ann Druffel. Three Rivers Press, New York, NY 1998, 5x8 paperback, \$12.00.

Reviewed by Dwight Connelly

When I first heard of this book, I was put off by the title, which seemed more appropriate for a supermarket tabloid than serious ufology. Only the fact that Ann Druffel was the author gave me much hope for its contents.

Ann is a serious researcher who has investigated all sorts of UFO cases since 1957, working with CUFOS, NICAP, and MUFON. She has written numerous articles for publications here and abroad, and is the co-author (with D. Scott Rogo) of *The Tujunga Canyon Contacts*, and the author of *Scientist vs. The System: Dr. James E. McDonald's Fight for UFO Science* (which she discussed at the MUFON symposium in Denver last year). She also contributed to Ron Story's *UFO Encyclopedia* and Scott Rogo's anthology, *UFO Abductions*.

Perhaps a better title for this book would be *Resisting Greys: A Case Study*, since the account is based on actual cases, yielding a data base of 72 "resistors"—abductees who have seemingly found ways to ward off unwanted visits and abductions. This is a serious look at the available evidence.

Druffel acknowledges that not all abductees want to resist, a fact that many researchers have discovered (and perhaps encouraged). "Some readers may feel that the motives of the greys are benevolent," she notes, "or they may have faith in researchers who contend that the so-called aliens are here to 'evolve' us. If these readers do not want to try resistance for any reason, they have a perfect right to refuse."

This book—and Ann's years of specific research into this question—is for those experiencers who want to end their encounters. As such, it is certainly a welcome and unique addition to the literature.

Druffel notes that the techniques in this book can work, "even if all abduction scenarios prove to be some type of psychological aberration, as some skeptics and debunkers conclude."

She also answers those who say that the entities may just be allowing the abductees to believe the technique is working while the abductions continue: "Until we know for certain," she agrees, "this possibility must be considered, of course, but those experiencers who feel they have been successful experience a peace and freedom which, for them, is equivalent of success."

Druffel also acknowledges that as the entities are fended off, they may change their tactics. This factor may make combinations of techniques advisable, she says.

Druffel has arranged abductees from her cases into six groups:

1) Witnesses who appear rational, honest, socially productive, cooperative, and open to investigation.

2) Individuals who seem to be reporting real events, but the trauma resulting from their abduction experiences causes them more psychological damage than Group One.

3) Witnesses who appear to be extremely damaged, both emotionally and mentally. Their behavior is consistently neurotic.

4) Psychotic individuals who probably hallucinate or imagine their abduction experiences. Even though a real abduction might be at the core of their statements, their stories are complex in the extreme, and new details constantly emerge. They crave attention and belief.

5) Hoaxers. They constitute perhaps 1 or 2 percent of the cases.

6) Those have been able to break off the traumatizing experiences and prevent further contacts. The techniques utilized by this group form the basis of Druffel's book.

Just what are the techniques which, singly or in combination, have apparently worked for the 72 resistors in the study, and how were they developed? The development, it seems, was mostly accidental, since there were, prior to this book, few suggestions or guidelines for resisting.

It should be pointed out that underlying the idea of resisting these entities is the belief—again based on Druffel's case studies—that the greys are not so all-powerful that they cannot be resisted, and Druffel points out clearly that this book is focused on resisting mainly the type of bedroom visitors termed greys.

The nine successful techniques described are: (1) mental struggle, (2) physical struggle, (3) righteous anger, (4) protective rage, (5) support from family members, (6) intuition, (7) metaphysical methods, (8) appeal to spiritual personages, and (9) repellents. Obviously, some of these methods, such as righteous anger, are very natural reactions, while some of the others require the ability to focus on a technique while being subjected to a very trying situation.

Some of the techniques are best used with the initial approach of the visitors, while others may be used during or after the encounter, according to Druffel. As noted, a combination of techniques may be more successful than a single technique. Each of the nine techniques is discussed in detail in a separate chapter.

I found it interesting that Druffel has also analyzed

why the techniques may not work for some abductees:

- (1) Their resistance was not focused.
- (2) Their resistance contained an element of "hatred" toward the creatures.
- (3) They lacked a firm sense of their own inalienable rights.
- (4) They did not consider themselves capable of fighting successfully for their rights.
- (5) They had been instructed by researchers to think that the aliens are here "to evolve us," and that abducted human beings are obligated to go along with the visitors' demands.
- (6) They have been advised by researchers that the greys are extraterrestrial, and therefore technologically and intellectually superior to humans and cannot logically be resisted.

Of these six, I found number two the most fascinating. Druffel's research indicates that, for resistance to be successful, "there must be a total lack of hatred and negative emotion toward the entities...in other words the focus must be totally positive, and "the intruders must be treated as just another order of intelligent creation that has no God-given right to harass us, but is stepping out of line." She acknowledges that remaining positive—and not hating the creatures—can be very difficult for some experiencers.

In dealing with problem number six, it is clear that Druffel does not believe the greys are extraterrestrial, or that they are occupants of UFOs (which, she says, may be extraterrestrial).

She is inclined to consider greys as "intruding into our earthly space-time continuum from their own space-time, or dimension. They do not belong here. If they did, they would be physical as we are physical." Druffel notes that the entities have the ability to materialize and dematerialize, as well as to pass through solid objects in a parapsychical manner, "so they are not physical as we normally define the word."

In attempting to discover who or what the greys may be, she looks at creatures from other cultures, a fascinating chapter which I will not attempt to review, since a surface treatment would not do it justice. Briefly, she finds many striking similarities between the abducting entities, the jinns of the Muslims, the faeries of the Celts, and other creatures in other cultures, much as *Flying Saucer Review* Editor Gordon Creighton first suggested back in 1983.

This book is recommended primarily for those experiencers who find their confrontations frightening, and who would like to end them for themselves and their children. However, anyone with an interest in ufology will find the book interesting, especially the chapters "What on Earth is Going On?" "What Abducting Entities in Other Cultures Tell Us About

Greys," and "The Bitter Controversy."

I especially like Druffel's conclusion: "The abduction phenomenon seems to be a mixed bag, with benevolent entities intermingled with deceptive ones. No one at present has all the answers...Individuals—and researchers and experiencers alike—who claim they know all the answers should be careful, for certainty in the midst of uncertainty leads to chaos." Amen.

Journal survey...

(Continued from Page 16)

aren't broken..."

"MJ-12 analysis ongoing... Less on Roswell, more on others."

"Classic UFO cases reviewed. Discussion of issues by experts without name calling. Analyses of reports having commonalities—any patterns? Credibility ratings for controversial cases, e.g., Cortile abduction."

"Chupacabras of Puerto Rico. Yeti of the Himalayas. Cattle mutilations."

"I believe the *MUFON UFO Journal* should be distinguished from other UFO periodicals, such as those available on newsstands. The current format is far more respectable than those and even lends it an air of being a 'scientific journal.' So please do not seriously consider 'enhancing' it with flashy colors and glossy pages! And whatever you do, please refrain from altering the perfect cover."

"I feel that the *MUFON Journal* should reflect what is happening with MUFON. As such it should be more of an in-house forum. We in the field know little or nothing of what is happening at the headquarters level, and the magazine mirrors less of what is happening at the state and international field levels."

"Articles of high strangeness factor."

"I think we can all agree that whatever the *MUFON Journal* has been reporting in its pages, it has not been science. A casual glance at any of the established scientific journals such as *Nature*, *Science* or the *Astro-physical Journal* will make that abundantly clear."

"We can never compete with scientific journals, because we are not a science. We share an interest in a phenomenon that has a variety of scientific aspects which are more properly reported in their own journals. What we can do—and perhaps only we can do—is get the news of what is actually happening now (here and elsewhere) out to as many people (scientists or not) as possible. They don't have the information, and they don't have anywhere else to get it. Let's do the news, and get it to bookstores, newsstands, college campuses, local media offices, and everywhere else that people are looking for the news that can't be found."

Perspective

On the August *MUFON UFO Journal*

This symposium issue includes good reporting on that exceptional event. In reading Dwight Connelly's summary I was struck by the fact that the four female abductees who gave presentations could not have been more different in their "takes" on what the experiences meant or portended.



Richard Hall

Two felt that the presumed aliens were highly manipulative, for better or for worse; one found her religion enhanced; and one found her religious views totally shaken.

Other presentations ranged from the very specific (case studies) to the very general (philosophical and theoretical musings).

Otherwise the issue is a potpourri of news and views.

Chipping in briefly on the 1989-90 Belgian interceptor cases in Filer's Files, anyone who has read the SOBEPS (Belgian) coverage of these cases, and past coverage in this *Journal*, would have a hard time rationalizing the UFO as a secret aircraft. There is no known propulsion technology that can power an aircraft through the accelerations and decelerations, the abrupt turns, and the rapid up and down elevator-like motions of this UFO.

The June 20, 1999, Idaho sighting(s) sound superficially like a fireball meteor, especially the pilot's brief observation. But no meteor (fireball or otherwise) hangs around long enough for a witness to "sit there for several minutes," go inside the cabin, then turn to go back out and still see it. A duration of 10-15 seconds normally would be the approximate upper limit. Nor do fireball meteors cast light of such brilliance on the local terrain. Even in a fairly thinly populated area, one can hope that there were other witnesses who will come forth.

The report by Stan Gordon and Jim Brown of the magnetic anomaly detector incident on April 27 is scientifically intriguing. When the witnesses to a coincidental UFO were able to reconstruct the sound they heard and show that it fit the recorded magnetic signature, this demonstrated the potential for use of instruments in recording UFO data for study by scientists and engineers.

Knowing nothing about Donald Burleson's quali-



Producer/director/writer Kevin Barry, left, with Geri and Dennis Weaver, as Barry interviews Dennis Weaver for this fall's "Celebrity Believers" production on A&E. The one-hour documentary spotlights public figures who share beliefs in the paranormal and extraterrestrial life. Hosted by Bill Kurtis, interviewees also include Robert Wise, Patricia Neal, Brad Steiger, Joe Firmage, Gordon Cooper, Seth Shostak, Bernard Haisch, Billy Gray, and Wendy Connors.

fications for photoanalysis (some biography would have been appropriate), I hope qualified analysts do provide commentary on his report. If his methods are valid, then a fresh look at the Lubbock Lights using new technology would be of great interest. And if his approach is valid for this photograph, it should also be valid for other historical photographs. I do think the commentary comparing an enhanced photographic image to the alleged structure of the Roswell crashed craft is way premature. All sorts of artificial apparent "structures" can be introduced in photo enlargements (as we have seen with the Carswell AFB Roswell debris photos). Furthermore, what witnesses described a "beehive" arrangement of "cells" on a recovered craft? That is news to me.

In the "too-good-to-be-true" category, we have Lloyd Pye's "Starchild skull" (one wishes he had chosen some less New Age sounding label for it). Okay, I can hardly wait for a report from the "world-class DNA lab." It had better be a fully documented analysis report with all names and details that can be peer reviewed, not someone flashing a paper and running out the door to avoid questions. "Secret science" is an oxymoron.

READER'S

CLASSIFIEDS

SAN ANTONIO UFO CONFERENCE

36th Annual National UFO Conference in San Antonio, TX. September 25-26. Speakers include Walt Andrus, Whitley Strieber, Joe Firmage, Kevin Randle, Patrick Huyghe, Constance Clear, Jim Mosley, Karl Plock, others. For more info call (210) 828-4507, e-mail dstacy@texas.net or SASE to Dennis Stacy, Box 12434, San Antonio, TX 78212.

THE ANDREASSON LEGACY

Ray Fowler's latest book *The Andreasson Legacy* (UFOs and the Paranormal: The startling conclusion of the Andreasson Affair), hardback (463 pages) personally autographed, is now available from MUFON for \$24.95, P&H included. Send orders with check, postal money order, or cash to MUFON, 103 Oldtowne Rd. Seguin, Texas 78155. (For orders in U.S.A. only)

ABDUCTED! The Story of the Intruders continues...

By Debbie Jordan & Kathy Mitchell with introduction by Budd Hopkins. If you liked Mr. Hopkins book *Intruders*, here is the personal experience of Debbie Jordan and her sister Kathy Mitchell. 268 pages, hardback for \$10 plus \$2. P&H from MUFON, 103 Oldtowne Rd., Seguin, TX 78155

SUMMONED

Now Available: *Summoned: Encounters with Alien Intelligence* by Dana Redfield. Personal Account. Foreword by Linda Moulton Howe. Info on genetic alteration of humankind, 280 pgs. ISBN 1-57174-126-7. \$13.95. Order at Hampton Road Pub. Co., Inc. 1-800-766-8009 or local bookstore.

UFO PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE

The following books are still available from MUFON that you may have missed: "Final Report on the American West Airline Case" by Walter N. Webb, \$10.00 plus \$1.50 p/h. "UFO-Related Human Physiological Effects" by John F. Schuessler, \$15.00 plus \$2.00 for p/h. "Project 1947: A Preliminary Report on the 1947 UFO Sighting Wave" by Jan L. Aldrich, \$20.00 plus \$2.00 for p/h; and "MUFON UFO Journal & Skylook - An Index 1967-1996" by Edward G. Stewart, \$59.95 plus \$3.50 for p/h. MUFON, 103 Oldtowne Rd., Seguin, TX 78155-4099. (Check, money order, traveler's checks or cash in U.S. dollars)

CASH-LANDRUM UFO INCIDENT

Three Texans are injured during an encounter with a *UFO and Military Helicopters* by John F. Schuessler. 323 page softcover book now available from MUFON, 103 Oldtowne Rd., Seguin, TX 78155 for \$19.95 plus \$2 for postage and handling.

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A MILLENNIUM OF CONTACT

November 12-14, Clearwater Beach Conference at Hilton Clearwater Beach Resort, Clearwater Beach, FL. Hear in a rare public appearance, the Steigers-Brad & Sherry, Delores Cannon; Lloyd Pyc; William Buhlman; Kit Frankovich and husband, David Taub; Jim Marrs; Michael Lindemann; and Joe McMoneagle. Call 850-432-8888 or 334-621-5750 for free program guide or write 7262 Highpointe Pl. E. Spanish Fort, AL 36527.

MUFON MERCHANDISE

Wear official MUFON T-Shirts (royal blue printing on white cotton), sizes: S, M, L, & XL. Two styles of baseball caps (royal blue with white logo or dark blue with blue logo on white front). T-shirt price \$12.00 and baseball caps \$8.00. S/H for each is \$3.00 or if both ordered together is only \$3.00. MUFON, 103 Oldtowne Road, Seguin, TX 78155-4099. (Check, money order, traveler's checks or cash in U.S. Dollars).

MUFON 1999 INTERNATIONAL UFO SYMPOSIUM PROCEEDINGS

Theme: Transcending Politics and Comfort Zones in Ufology. Arlington, VA. Thirteen speakers. 201 pages, softback. \$25 plus \$1.75 for P&H. Order from MUFON, 103 Oldtowne Road, Seguin, TX 78155.

SHARE MY HOBBY

I would like to share my video library of eleven years. I have rare clips of Kenneth Arnold, Ray Fowler, & Minute Man missile commanders. Also clips from Hard Copy, Inside Edition, Sightings, & Unsolved Mysteries. Please contact Patrick Kelly (316) 682-8181.

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The NIGHT SKY

Walter N. Webb

October 1999 Sky

Bright Planets (Evening Sky):

Mars (magnitude 0.7), moving from Ophiuchus into Sagittarius, remains low in the SW sky, setting about 9:30 p.m. in midmonth. Don't mistake the red star Antares (to the lower right) for Mars. The Moon lies near the red planet on Oct. 14 and 15.

Jupiter (-2.9), shifting back to Pisces, rises in the ENE about one hour after sunset on the 1st. Three weeks later, on Oct. 23, the big planet rises at sunset opposite the Sun and is visible all night. Jupiter is its closest to the Earth in 12 years, shining at its maximum brilliance and presenting its maximum possible diameter. The planet can even be seen as a tiny disc with binoculars. The full moon is near Jupiter on the 24th.

Saturn (0.4), in Aries, rises in the ENE about three-quarters of an hour after Jupiter. The ringed world stays visible the rest of the night. The full moon stands near Saturn on the 25th.

Bright Planets (Morning Sky):

Venus (-4.5) rises in the E about 3 a.m. not far from the star Regulus. (The pair are only 3 degrees apart on Oct. 8.) Our nearest planet neighbor dazzles the eye in the eastern dawn. On the 5th, Venus, the lunar crescent, and Regulus form a pleasing triangle in the sky. The next morning the Moon still is in the vicinity of the other two objects.

Jupiter can be found in the W at dawn, with Saturn to its upper left.

Space Update:

An emergency Hubble Space Telescope servicing mission was inserted into the shuttle launch schedule for October. Three of the telescope's six pointing gyroscopes have failed. All six will be replaced by spacewalking astronauts. Other parts of the satellite are to be replaced at the same time, including HST's computer, a failed spare transmitter, and worn insulation.

The Chandra X-ray Observatory (formerly Advanced X-ray Astrophysics Facility) was launched July 23 from the shuttle, the heaviest shuttle payload ever. The much postponed Chandra is expected to revolutionize our x-ray view of the universe, just as the Hubble Space Telescope has for optical astronomy. (See Night Sky in December 1998 and March 1999 *Journals*.)

Finally, after mapping the Moon's gravity and magnetic fields and surface composition for 18 months, Lunar Prospector was deliberately crashed into the Moon's south polar region July 31. The hope was to release water vapor from ice believed to exist in the

shadowed lunar craters at both poles. At this writing, results from the impact were still being analyzed. (See Night Sky in August and December 1997 *Journals*.)

Moon Phases:

Last quarter—Oct. 2; New moon—Oct. 9; First quarter—Oct. 17; Full moon—Oct. 24; Last quarter—Oct. 31

The Stars:

The stars of autumn increase in prominence this month, although the Summer Triangle remains high in the SW. Observers can find the Great Square of Pegasus well up in the SE at 9p.m. Pegasus, of course, is the famous winged horse of mythology. The group of stars does look something like a horse flying upside-down if you identify the stars outlining the head, neck, and front legs.

What looks like the hind legs of the horse is really another constellation, the Princess Andromeda. In fact, the NE corner of the Great Square marks the head of the woman, and two strings of stars extending outward form her body.

Just NW of Andromeda lies her mother, the W-shaped Cassiopeia the Queen. And W of the queen we find the faint and obscure Cepheus the King, shaped like a house with a peaked roof.

Walter N. Webb
5 Willow Street
Westwood, MA 02090-3713



CALENDAR

Sept. 11 – The 4th Annual John Carpenter UFO/Abduction Conference at Holiday Inn Convention Center, Eau Claire, WI. For tickets or information call (715) 833-4639.

Sept. 25-26 - National UFO Conference at the Seven Oaks Resort & Conference Center, 1400 Austin Hwy., San Antonio, Texas. For further information contact Dennis Stacy, Box 12434, San Antonio, TX 78212 or e-mail dstacy@texas.net.

Oct. 8-10 – "Planet Earth at the Crossroads" UFO Conference at the Cavalier Resort Hotel in Virginia Beach, Virginia. For further information contact Seven Stars Communications, Inc., P.O. Box 7, Midlothian, VA 23113 or www.sevenstar.com

Oct. 29-31 – The 10th UFO/ET Congress to be held at the Days Inn, Route 206 in Bordentown, NJ. For information contact Pat Marcattilio at 609-631-8955 or Tom Benson at 609-883-6921.

November 12-14 - Clearwater Beach UFO Conference at Clearwater Beach Hilton, Florida, sponsored by "Project Awareness." For free program guide call (334) 621-5750 or (850) 432-8888 or write to 7262 Highpointe Pl. E., Spanish Fort, AL 36527.

Nov. 16 – John E. Mack, Ph.D. speaks on "Passport to the Cosmos: Human Transformation and Alien Encounters" about his new book. Location: Academy of Medicine, 1216 Fifth Ave. at 103rd St., New York, NY. For further information call (617) 497-2667 or www.peer-mack.org or e-mail: peermack@aol.com

Director's Message...

(continued from page 24)

advising your facilities and qualifications for hosting a symposium. To be successful, a strong local group is essential for hosting the affair, plus a city in a large population center.

MUFON Transition Planning

Since the MUFON Board of Directors has adopted dates for moving the MUFON headquarters from Seguin, TX, to the Denver, CO, metropolitan area, we want everyone to know that as far as our members are concerned, it will be business as usual. The transition will be accomplished in a professional and business-like manner without creating problems for our loyal members or disruption to the organization.

John Schuessler and I have been working together in a cooperative and congenial manner for nearly 35 years; therefore we are dedicated to making this transition as smooth as feasible. We recognize that it will be a monumental task. However, with efficient planning it can be done.

Our members will be advised through the *Journal* whenever changes or revisions in operations will affect them personally, through specific instructions. Until such instructions are published, everyone should continue to deal directly with the Seguin headquarters office.

I will retire officially on July 16, 2000, and the physical move to Denver will be completed by Sept. 1, 2000. John and I seek your cooperative support in making this transition a resounding success.

Director of Communications

In the Board of Directors agenda, **John Schuessler** proposed adding a Director of Communication to coordinate all MUFON's electronic and computer related activities. During the State Director's Meeting, **Irena Scott** introduced **Donald A. Weatherby** (Springfield, OH) an employee of AT&T, as a candidate for this position.

I interviewed Don at the symposium and later secured an extensive resume of his qualifications and experience. His resume and proposal to produce a "live" computer on-line UFO database were shared with the transition committee to assist in their five-year planning recommendations.

A member of both MUFON and Ohio MUFON, Mr. Weatherby has already placed his proposal into operation within the state. He comes highly recommended by **Bill Jones** and **Irena Scott**.

Filer's Files

By **George A. Filer**

Mutual UFO Network Eastern Director
Majorstar@aol.com 609-654-0020

Discs reported in Australia

CAPE HAWKE, FOSTER—Steven Gammage, his wife, sister, mother, and father observed a disc shaped object moving very fast from the north moving south on July 10, 1999. The disc was seen north of Newcastle, New South Wales at 6 p.m. from an elevated viewing platform. Steve and his father were looking at Venus to the northwest that was very bright. Suddenly low down on the horizon a fast moving disc stopped and hovered at an increased elevation.

This object was followed by another similar object, but less bright. The colors were red-orange. The second object moved to a position over the first object, and they both hovered together. At this point the rest of the family came out to view the objects, and Steve brought out his reflector Telescope (114mm diameter and 900mm).

He was able to view the first bright object and noted that it was disc-shaped with a row of white lights across the middle of the disc. The disc was rotating, but not so fast that he could not pick out the individual lights. He and his family watched the two objects for about 5 minutes. Both objects then shot off north at very high speeds and disappeared. Thanks to Peter Turner and Diane Harrison (UFO Research NSW)

BUNDABERG, QUEENSLAND—Further north along the coast, Ross Dowe of the Australian National UFO Reporting Center writes, a witness reported a daylight sighting of a domed disc on July 14, 1999. The witness wrote:

"Myself and two others observed what appeared to be a disc hovering in the sky at 10:15 a.m. As we watched, the object slowly began to glow very brightly, so bright that it seemed to grow to about 4 times its original size, then returned to 'normal' in about 2 to 3 seconds. This glowing was repeated every 4 to 5 seconds. It was 1-2 miles away, about the size of two jumbo jets. It slowly began to move away until it was about a quarter its original size, then abruptly disappeared. The whole sequence took about 3 to 4 minutes. It was disc-shaped with a slight bulge at the center top and bottom, a metallic color, no visible wings or means of propulsion, nor vapor trails." Thanks to Ross Dowe (ippoz@eisa.net.au)

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Walter Andrus

NEWS FROM AROUND THE NETWORK

New Officers

When **Anastasia Wieterzychowska**, Connecticut State Director, retired, she recommended **Mark S. Cashman** (Windsor), her assistant, to become the new State Director. **Jeffrey W. Goodrich** (Great Falls) was promoted to State Director for Montana when **Rod Penrod** moved to Washington state. **Warren M. Holdenbach**, Ph. D. (Gulfport) presently a Consultant in Electrical Engineering also became the State Director for Mississippi. A UFO pioneer from the NICAP days, **Ernest T. Jahn** (Lebanon) accepted the additional responsibility of Assistant State Director for Pennsylvania. **Ricardo A. Atristain**, Virginia State Director, selected **Richard R. Lang**, B.S. (West Palmyra) to be the Assistant State Director for Virginia. **Beverly J. Trout**, (Truro) State Director for Iowa, appointed the following two new State Section Directors: **Richard England** (Des Moines) and Ms. **Dana K. Mosher**, B.S. (Ottumwa). **Daryl K. Stangl**, B. A. (Fremont) will continue as Mrs. Trout's Assistant State Director.

Two other new State Section Directors designated this month were **Joseph L. Lantz** (Oswego, IL); and **Stewart I. Hill**, B. S. (Elkhart, IN). Florida State Director, **G. Bland Pugh** (Gulf Breeze), reassigned two State Section Directors to new or additional counties. They are **Mark E. Blashak**, B. S. (Lake Mary) and **Fred R. Saluga**, B.S. (Tallahassee).

The following two ladies have volunteered their talents as new Consultants: **Judith L. Cameron**, Ph.D. (Fullerton, CA) in Clinical Hypnotherapy and **June R. Steiner**, Ph.D., (Los Gatos, CA) in Hypnosis.

New Field Investigators

Kathleen F. Marden, Director of Field Investigator Training, congratulates the following people who recently passed the Field Investigator's exam: **Virginia L. Payne** (Asheville, NC), a former associate member; **George C. Parks** (Tucson, AZ); **Marian Yancey** (Amissville, VA); **Tom Yancey**, B. S. (Amissville, VA); and **Leigh A. Addleson** (Dallas, TX).

MUFON UFO Ballot Initiative

MUFON has established a checking account at the Frost National Bank in San Antonio, TX to deposit

checks made out to "MUFON UFO Ballot Initiative," a fundraising project for supporting this program and chaired by **Larry Bryant** and **Robert H. Bletchman**. Checks should be made payable to the above account and mailed to MUFON in Seguin, TX for deposit. We thank you in advance for your contributions.

Most people in ufology have been critical of the federal government and the U.S. Air Force for trying to cover-up the existence of UFOs for more than fifty years. Now we have the opportunity to express the will of the citizens in the sixteen designated states to place the issue on their state ballots to proclaim the year 2000 "The Year of UFO Awareness," and to pressure Congress to have open hearings to end government secrecy regarding UFOs. Missouri will be the first state to test the viability of the ballot initiative.

St. Louis UFO Symposium

Bruce A. Widaman, Missouri State Director, is proud to announce that the new millennium will be celebrated with MUFON's 2000 International UFO Symposium on July 14-16, 2000, at the Sheraton West Port Inn, Lakeside Chalet, 191 West Port Plaza, St. Louis, MO 63146, located at I-270 and Page Ave. in northwestern St. Louis.

Start making your vacation plans to visit not only the massive golden arch in downtown St. Louis, named "Gateway to the West," but the many other tourist attractions, such as their world-renown zoo in Forest Park. Due to its central location in North America, this will be the third time that MUFON has conducted its annual symposium in St. Louis, the others being 1971 and 1985.

Future MUFON Symposia

The 2001 MUFON symposium will be held in Orange County in Southern California, coordinated by **Jan C. Harzan** and supported by **Vincent Uhlenkott**, the Southern California State Director. The event for 2002 is scheduled for Atlanta, GA., under the direction of **Walter "Tom" Sheets**, Georgia State Director.

Bids are now open for hosting future MUFON annual symposia for the years of 2003 (Central Region), 2004 (Western Region) and 2005 (Eastern Region). Please mail your written bids to me in Seguin, TX,

(Continued on Page 23)