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THE NATIONAL UFO CONFERENCE: A NEW LOOK

by Robert S. Easley and Rick R. Hilberg

Now that the 30th anniversary of the UFO phenomenon is over, perhaps it is time that we took a long and hard look at ourselves and our groups in the light of being more aware of things around us. At the same time, we should strive to be completely honest in our assessment of the current state of affairs in ufology.

Take, for example, the 14th Annual National UFO Conference held this past August in San Francisco by Dale Rettig, the local Chairman. Public-wise, the Conference was a great success as over 450 people attended the public lecture to hear Stanton Friedman and Dr. James Harder speak on various popular aspects of UFOs. We certainly have to give credit to Dale and his local workers for generating massive local publicity to bring the public out.

Delegate-wise, some 75 people showed up for the closed session business meeting and open discussion. However, while there were several interesting and worthwhile prepared talks given, the vast majority of the delegates sat back tight-lipped and seemingly in a stupor. Several attempts were made by Chairman James W. Moseley to get the delegates to open up and discuss their opinions and theories regarding any aspect of ufology they wished, but very few spoke up.

Added to this problem, very few of the biggest - and most vocal - exponents of "Middle Ufology" were present in San Francisco for the meeting of this group, so often called the forum for this sector of ufology. Also, the bulk of the delegates seemed to be local people, so the "new blood" of "Middle Ufologists" from other parts of the nation did not attend and thus give the organization the revitalization that it so needs.

Perhaps Janice Croy was right a while back when she talked about apathy in the UFO field. As we look at this past year, convention-wise, we can see where maybe Janice had her head on her shoulders. Could it be that she was right and we were wrong? Were we foolish for believing that the Conference could be the vehicle for a unified "Middle Ufology"?

First off, we believe that the organization still has the potential to unify those of us in the field who consider themselves as "Middle Ufologists." This is rather obvious, as MUFON and CUFOC at the present

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COVER: Seldom-published frame of 8mm movie taken at Newark, Ohio on May 29, 1961. Original movie in our files.

are not structured to allow for the somewhat offbeat thoughts regarding the elusive disks held by many "Middle Ufologists" to be heard by the rest of their membership on an official level. This point can be seen by the many privately published zines around today that report material that would never have seen the light of day in the journals of "Official Ufology."

Now, as we see it, the much-needed "new blood" for the NUFOC is already out there: publishing, writing letters, exchanging theories, but when it comes to laying it on the line, staying home at convention time. These same "Middle Ufologists" give lip service to the NUFOC by supporting the organization in their publications, and in numerous letters to the con officials. Sometimes we even feel that it is time to give up, for those of us who have fought to make the con successful all these years have been constantly thwarted by these same armchair "experts" who have been waiving the banner of "Middle Ufology" so much in recent years.

However, the reality of the situation is that we only need determination on our part, and a small amount of cooperation on the part of the many "Middle Ufologists" presently outside our organization. If not, maybe "Middle Ufology" is destined to be swallowed up by the monolithic "Official Wing."

What will you be doing next August?

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NOTES FROM THE SAUCER'S CUP

by Robert S. Easley

The 12th Planet by Zecharia Sitchin (Stein and Day, 122 E. 42nd St., NYC 10017; \$12.95) is the fascinating story of the Nefilim - the inhabitants of the 12th planet - that landed here on earth some 450,000 years ago. Although hard to follow at times, this heavily-researched and scholarly work is well-documented from ancient Sumerian, Mesopotamian, Babylonian and other religious texts. Instead of wasting your time on von Daniken, you should read The 12th Planet.

Strangers From Space by Susy Smith (Manor Books, 432 Park Avenue South, NYC 10016; \$1.50) is a good book for the person who knows nothing about UFOs. However, if you've followed the saucer mystery for any length of time, this book would be a waste of time as it is a complete rehash of everything that's already been written to date.

First, Man, Then, Adam! by Irwin Ginsburgh (Simon and Schuster, 630 Fifth Avenue, NYC 10020; \$5.95) is an over-priced but interesting book asserting that the Garden of Eden was actually a spaceship. Well-written and well-documented, this book should be in the library of every "ancient astronaut" enthusiast.

Situation Red: The UFO Siege by Leonard H. Stringfield (Doubleday

and Company, Garden City, NY 11530; \$8.95) is an interesting book based primarily on recent UFO sightings that tend to indicate possible hostilities on the part of the Ufonauts. The most interesting part of the book is the chapter that deals with the ever-present rumor that the government has crashed saucers and their occupants hidden away at an Air Force base in the United States. Highly recommended!

A strange creature that may have been a plesiosaurus - a huge reptile thought to have been extinct for about 100 million years - was allegedly picked up by the 2460 ton Japanese fishing trawler Zuiyo Maru. The half-decomposed body was snagged in the fishing nets from a depth of 1000 feet in the Pacific Ocean about 30 miles off Christ-Church, New Zealand.

The creature was said to be about 32 feet in length with four flippers, long neck and tail and weighed two tons. After making the measurements and taking pictures, the creature was thrown back into the sea as the crewmen thought the bad smell would spoil their cargo of fish.

Professor Fujiro Yasuda of the Tokyo University of Fisheries stated that it was not a species of fish and that he had never seen an animal like it before.

Meanwhile, the Lake Okanagan, British Columbia monster known as Ogopogo was seen again, this time by a mother and her daughter. "It's hump came three feet out of the water. It must have been fifty feet long. He was dark green and shiny," according to Lillian Vogelsang.

Following this most recent sighting, 80 divers with \$30,000 worth of underwater photographic equipment spent 24 hours underwater in an attempt to prove the existence of Ogopogo. Since they failed to find the creature, it's existence is still a continuing controversy.

A meteorite entering the earth's atmosphere split in two and both chunks fell on the island of Tamanarive, off the southeast coast of Africa. One piece gouged a crater 787 feet in diameter while the other piece made a small crater. No injuries were reported.

If you have not seen the movie "Star Wars" yet, I heartily recommend it to everyone. It is indeed a fantastic science-fantasy adventure, and the special effects photography is absolutely breath-taking. It is also one of the few movies out today that you can take the kids to see without fear of them seeing violence or hearing four letter words.

"Star Wars" has been rightly called one of the best movies of the year, and it is expected to far out-draw "Jaws" as the all-time money maker in film history. Two sequels are already in the planning stages.

Sean Connery and Natalie Wood will star in "Meteor", a 15.8 million dollar science fiction movie in which the earth is showered with fragments from the collision of a meteor and a comet. Sounds interesting...

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OUR REASON FOR EXISTENCE : CIRCA 1977

by Edward M. Biebel

It has recently come to my attention through the pages of Jim Moseley's SAUCER "NEWS" that the National UFO Conference has come under attack. The charges are as follows:

- 1.) The conference is a closed clique
- 2.) That the Robert E. Loftin Memorial Award is meaningless, since it only goes to Conference members
- 3.) That any "new blood" attendees have been rebuffed by the regulars
- 4.) The Conference refuses new ideas
- 5.) The membership acts as if it knows everything about Ufology
- 6.) That there is too much partying at the Conference

To handle these points in order:

1.) The membership criteria of the Conference opens the group to all individuals and groups who have an interest in Ufology. The membership game that NICAP, APRO and MUFON each plays, claiming thousands of members is not played by the Conference. All of these groups play the numbers game sacrificing quantity for quality. Everyone is welcome, but not sought out, for his ideas.

2.) The Robert E. Loftin Memorial Award has traditionally gone to the person who has done the most in the previous year to promote or further Ufology. The Chairman of the Conference makes the final decision on the awardee after consultation with the Permanent Organizing Committee. In the last few years the award has predominately gone to a member of the Conference because these are the people whose contributions the membership is most familiar with.

3.) No new attendee to the Conference has been intentionally snubbed. In fact some well-known Ufologists have chosen not to attend for their own reasons. Anyone and everyone is welcome. The only criteria for membership is a willingness to listen to one another's ideas.

4.) The Conference does not refuse new ideas but does reject a single viewpoint; "a monolithic sphere of influence." In other words, each delegate is entitled to their own ideas and projects, but should not expect the Conference or individual members to jump on their bandwagon. One may find no one who is interested, or someone who will spend hours talking with you in the corner of a room until a new idea or project emerges.

The Conference has been down the road of projects before and found that only the original proponents see the advantages of such a program, and that these projects die aborning.

The Conference is an interchange of ideas. The best organized exchange has been Ron Pelger's idea of asking each delegate at the Closed Session to explain what he's done during the previous year. This has been expanded and institutionalized into various members presenting papers on their activities during the previous year.

5.) The members of the Conference do not know everything, but the history of Ufology is like all history and is cyclical. We have been down some of these same roads before in thirty years.

6.) At its best the Conference serves as an interchange of ideas, and at its worst as an overgrown beer party. One would have to be wealthy or exceedingly foolish to travel each year to a far flung city just to party.

Let the critics attend the next Conference. They will be heard out. But they shouldn't get upset if the delegates don't become wildly enthusiastic about their latest project.

Dr. J. Allen Hynek has said that the "secret of the saucers" will be a quantum leap of man's knowledge about the universe. Allen Greenfield has said that it will have to be subjectively interpreted.

The invention of the computer chip that makes our pocket calculators and digital systems so compact could have been interrelated from the work done on the transistor, but the answers to the UFO mystery will be little different from magic.

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Around And About The Saucer World
by Rick R. Hilberg

It was with a great amount of deep-set sadness that we heard of the recent death of pioneer UFO researcher Ray Palmer. Right from the start of the UFO mystery with Kenneth Arnold's sighting in the state of Washington in 1947, Ray set his talents to work writing about what has become the single most baffling mystery the world has yet seen.

Many UFO writers have come and gone in the years since the Arnold

affair, but Ray Palmer was always around with his FLYING SAUCERS or SEARCH magazines to present strange facts and speculation about the elusive disks. Sometimes I honestly wondered whether Ray really believed in his bizarre pronouncements, but then it didn't really matter because he always had one supreme talent: to make us think about the nature of reality and our universe!

I had the opportunity to meet with Ray some years ago at his home in Amherst, Wisconsin and found him to be one of the most fascinating people I have ever met. He will be greatly missed by his many readers and friends...

We recently received a letter from "Uncle Lou" Wiedemann of Vestigia (spelled it correctly this time, Lou) in New Jersey commenting on our running the photographs of the Washington County, New Jersey "spook lights" on the cover of our last issue. He also commented that he felt that the spook light phenomena may be somehow related to some aspects of the UFO mystery.

He also asked us whether we had any information relating to the "disappearing housewives" of the Akron-Canton, Ohio area. Since we have a large number of readers living in that area we'll publish that part of Lou's letter in the hopes that some reader might help him out in some way: "One of our local Vestigians visited Ohio last Autumn, where he was told a story which has been kept out of the press. Here's the story: Over a period of several months in 1976, upwards of 25 or more housewives mysteriously disappeared from shopping malls in the Canton and Akron areas. In one particular case, a man was waiting in his car in the parking lot of a shopping center while his wife shopped. He was suddenly surprised to see her walking away through the crowd, with a stranger. He ran toward them, and the strange man disappeared into the crowd. The wife was in some type of trance-like state; the man took her to a nearby hospital, where she was found to be either drugged or hypnotized. That's all I know, and I have been unable to run this story down, but there is some credibility because the source was a policeman who explained that the police are quietly investigating, and keeping it out of the papers..."

We ourselves checked into this story, and while we found some knowledge of the specific incident he mentioned, we were led to understand that the part of upwards of 25 women missing was merely some wildly generated rumor. We also learned that before the alleged instances of women disappearing from shopping malls, there were stories of young school children similarly vanishing. These particular reports were also attributed to rumor spreading. However, maybe some of our Akron-Canton readers can shed some further light on these reports. Write to Vestigia and "Uncle Lou" at RR#1 Box 64-B Kings Highway, Hackettstown, New Jersey 07840. May we also add that the VESTIGIA NEWSLETTER is an interesting and fact-filled publication, and we highly recommend it to our readers.

Soviet news agency Tass reported that a star-like ball of light showered shafts of light across the city of Petrozavodsk in Soviet

Karelia, "spreading over it like a jellyfish" on September 20th.

Tass said that the strange light was seen over the northwestern Soviet city about the same time a similar phenomenon was seen over neighboring Finland. So far Tass or other Soviet agencies haven't given any explanation to the strange sighting.

"A huge star suddenly flashed out of a dark sky, sending shafts of light impulses to earth," Tass said. "This star was moving slowly towards Petrozavodsk and spreading over it like a jellyfish. It stopped and hovered over the city, sending out numerous thin light rays like a downpour of rain.

"Some time later the illumination ended," the news agency reported. "The jellyfish turned into a bright semi-circle and resumed its movements toward Omega Lake, the horizon of which was covered with gray clouds."

Reports out of Helsinki tell of a bright ball of fire that was visible for about four minutes over the Finnish capital.

"Ballooning" baby spiders or "angel's hair", take your pick, as reports from San Francisco relate that on October 11th the Bay Area was filled with large amounts of falling "cobwebs."

Great blobs of silky filament drifted together and floated to earth from as high as 2000 feet. Law enforcement authorities said that troublesome, sticky strands of the cobwebs were reported clinging to windows, buildings and car windshields in lengths of up to six feet. Airline pilots also reported sighting the streamers.

"I don't mind flying through a spider web," reported one pilot after landing. "Just keep me away from the spider who made it."

Ron Knarr, playing tennis in Pleasant Hill, said that a web four feet across came down over his tennis ball. "I threw the ball up to serve and it went 'Whoop,'" he said.

Meteorologist Chuck Pucevich said he had been getting "cobweb reports" from as far away as Livermore, Sacramento and San Jose.

Deane P. Furman, a University of California entomologist, said that the reports were caused by spiders that were born in great numbers who were migrating to disperse their concentrated population.

"The spiders will climb to the topmost part of any vegetation, stick their back end in the air and spin silk from their spinnerettes," he said. "The silk gets carried skyward by the wind. When the buoyancy exceeds the weight of the spider, it is borne aloft."

Well, whether it was spider webs or angel's hair, it certainly had many people in San Francisco looking skyward. How about it Dale Rettig, did you run across any of that stuff?