

Falcon Lake Revisted

My case review of the Falcon Lake Incident has now been published, minus the bibliography that I compiled for the report. The review has been published in three parts in recent issues of Flying Saucer Review (V.27 #1-3 1981), and includes a summary of the case itself, which apparently never made it into FSR at all, although I had assumed that it had been, back in 1968.

I've been out to Falcon Lake a number of times, twice specifically to view the Michalak site. The first time, with a guide, I was able to locate the site with a few others, and took samples and photographs. Last year, I went back alone, and almost got lost a few times. I couldn't find the site, although by sundown on the day I was there, I believed I could see the rocky ridge it was behind. It's not that easy to find! Besides being a long hike through mosquito-infested swamp, a lot of the terrain looks the same around there. From personal experience, Menzel was certainly incorrect in criticizing Michalak for not being able to find the site. Admittedly, though, I am not a good hiker, so I can't really judge the difficulty as well as some good woodsmen.

Interestingly enough, the recent CE2 case in Texas where two women suffered apparent physiological effects from an encounter with a diamond-shaped UFO bears some resemblance to the Michalak case in some respects. The most curious similarity is the report of double-rotor helicopters chasing the UFO as it sped off. There exist unsubstantiated rumours of dark, unmarked helicopters overflying the Michalak site shortly after the encounter.

A key witness in the Michalak case is the RCMP officer who was reported to have encountered Michalak on the Trans-Canada Highway immediately after the encounter with the UFO. Queries at both the RCMP detachment in Falcon Lake and the Division Headquarters in Winnipeg as to the identity of the officer were to no avail. I was told that there were no records kept longer than five years, so there was no way to tell who was in Falcon Lake at the time (yes, yes, I know; I've just bought a nice bridge in Brooklyn from some guy I met in the back alley).

An RCAF officer, Sgt. Bissky, gave a statement to the effect that Michalak was lying. According to Bissky, Michalak was drunk one night, wandering in a stupor around the Falcon Lake campsites, falling onto a hot barbeque grill as an end result. As silly as the statement appears, if the RCMP officer could be found, he could substantiate or negate Bissky's claim. Unfortunately, the officer cannot be located. It was reported that Brian Cannon, the founder of CAPRO, had interviewed the officer. However, numerous requests of Mr. Cannon to produce this interview have not been met, so the information still lacks.

I sympathize with the Michalak's aversion to further publicity. They were pestered literally at all hours during the few months after the incident, and then frequently after that point. Even now, the case often crops up in the literature, usually in an incorrect form. This is why I wrote the case review, to get the facts together.

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Incidentally, Stephen Michalak is an excellent painter. His artwork is rich with images of Manitoba wildlife and flora, and is very visually appealing. He is a very talented individual, and one can only wonder why he had to go through the trauma of a close encounter.

I am still on the lookout for more information on the Michalak case, and perhaps will write a follow-up some time in the future. As I've stated several times, if the case is true as reported, it proves that unidentifiable disc-shaped craft do exist.

New Zines Received as of May, 1982.

Mapit Skywatch #41 Jan-Feb 1982 (ceased).
 Potpourri News #222-243 Feb 81-Apr 82 (John Schuessler).
 International UFO Reported V.7 #1, 2 1982.
 Each Time #2 Sept. 1981.
 AFU Nyhetsblad #22 Aug-Dec. 1981.
 New Canadian Fandom V.1 #4 Jan 1982.
 The Probe Report V.2 #3 Dec. 1981, #4 March 1982.
 Cambridge UFO Research Group V.2 #8 Dec. 1981.
 Close Up on the Far Out V.1. #2, 5, 1982.
 Aea V.1. #1 Dec. 1981.
 Neology V.6. #6 Feb 1982.
 UFO Newsclipping Service #151 Feb 1982 (Lou Farish).
 Center Investigators' Quarterly #11 Feb 1982.
 John Musgrave Mailing #339-350

A hearty hello and thanks to all who exchange zines.

New Books Received in the UFOROM Library.

Gibbons, Gavin. By Space Ship to the Moon
 Basil Blackwell Books, Oxford 1958
 (Fiction) A British-made Boys' Adventure
 featuring the Adamski saucers.

Packard, Edward. Inside UFO 54-40 (Choose Your Own Adventure #12).
 Bantam Books, N.Y. 1982. (Fiction) One of the most recent in the series where you choose the course and end of the story by making choices every page or so. Will the abducted young hero be returned safely to Earth or be placed in suspended animation for eternity or die in a crash or . . .

Thompson, Donald. The Next Encounter
 Fawcett Books, N.Y. 1982.
 (Fiction) A truly awful book that is poorly-written and padded with useless dialogue. This is an MIB story where you actually want the MIB's to kill off the boring humans.

Randles, J. & Warrington, P. UFO's - a British Viewpoint.
 Robert Hale, London 1979.

Jenny Randles, one of the few female ufologists, has been criticized for her own critical remarks about British ufology. Her comments have been the trigger for several volleys of letters and articles defending various aspects of ufology, and so to an outsider, this book comes as a nice surprise. Jenny and Peter give a historical perspective on British UFO investigation and the multitude of clubs in the country, giving reports on many cases. They comment on procedures and practices in current ufology, noting problems and current concerns. Let's see if you can find my name (misspelled) somewhere in the book.

Rutledge, H. Project Identification.
 Prentice

Rutledge, H. Project Identification.

Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 1981.

This is by far the biggest disappointment in UFO literature that I have yet encountered. Billed as a physicist's attempt to empiricize ufology, I looked forward to this book as an answer to criticism that scientists pay little attention to ufology. Unfortunately, the book is more of a blow-by-blow account of how Dr. Rutledge set up cameras and telescopes on hilltops in order to get photographs of nocturnal lights. Contrary to Dr. Rutledge's remarks, I doubt that the evidence he presents proved the existence of unidentified craft. He actually got grants for UFO research, but I don't think he really knew how to approach the problem. At one point he suggested that the observation of a distant light was that of an alien craft, because the noise he heard to accompany it was more like a "washing machine motor", obviously incapable of powering a flying saucer. The book contains several other presumptuous assumptions and deductions, and I hope the scientific community goes easy on Dr. Rutledge. At least, his physics was not at fault.

On the Track of Discovery. Translated from the Russian by Skvirsky, D. and Talmi, V. Progress Publishers, Moscow (undated) Volumes 1-3. These are a curious blend of science and (to use CSICP's term) pseudoscience, all in the form of essays, written by Russian researchers. The books contain the famous Agrest "ancient astronauts" article, predating Von Daniken by ten years, as well as Felix Ziegel's article on the Tunguska event. Also included are accounts of Soviet research into sunken temples in the Black Sea, biological curiosities and lost treasures in the Urals.

LoC's: Gary Lanham (Birmingham), John Schuessler (Texas), Berthold Schwarz (New Jersey), Dave Haisell (Mississauga), Tommy Blann (Texas), George Kriger (Ottawa), Sharee Carton (Edmonton), Tom Lind (Florida), Mr. X. (Kingston), Michael Sinclair (Toronto), Robert D. Barry (), Paula Harris (Colorado), Bertram Chandler (Australia).

Current Articles of Interest:

Extraterrestrial Intelligence: the Debate Continues.
Physics Today, March 1982 pp 26+

This collection of letters is in response to the publication of Frank Tipler's paper on the non-existence of extraterrestrial civilizations in the galaxy. Several support Tipler in his bold statement, others berate him for his negative attitude. Included are re-evaluations of the Drake equation and some genuinely witty critiques. Tipler, of course, has his chance to rebut his attackers' comments.

Oberg, J. Close Encounters of a Fabricated Kind.
New Scientist 24/31 Dec 1981 pp. 896-8.

Once again, James Oberg dazzles the scientific community by showing how silly the UFO proponents are. This time, he explains a case from a few years ago: the mysterious "jelly-fish" shaped object seen over Moscow, easily explained as a barium-cloud-type rocket effect.

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Shackley, M. The Case for Neanderthal Survival: Fact, fiction or faction? Antiquity V.56 1982 pp. 31-41.

"What is 'Antiquity' doing giving valuable space to a discussion of wild men in Outer Mongolia?" So begins the (necessary) disclaimer as a foreword to Shackley's article. The editors of this respected anthropological journal received much flak following the publication of the article, and probably will for some time. Essentially, Ms. Shackley has found that the survival of an early form of man is not entirely impossible, a probable location being in the wild mountain areas of Mongolia. She reviews accounts of Chuchunaa and Almasti in Asia, distinguishing them from Yeti and Snowmen by their lack of associated mythological data. Since science is leaning toward the gradual acceptance of Sasquatch-type creatures, as exemplified by the University of British Columbia Conferences, the article is not totally unexpected, although its appearance in Antiquity is a pleasant surprise.

Tipler, F. The Most Advanced Civilization in the Galaxy is Ours. Mercury Jan-Feb 1982 pp 5+.

If true, it proves that God definitely does have off-days.

Wallenhorst, S.G. The Drake Equation Re-examined. Q.J. Roy. Astron. Soc. V.22 1981 pp 380-7. A recalibration puts N between 1 and 100.

They Shall Return?

The beginning of 1982 came and went with no overwhelming surge of new UFO reports, much to the frustration of many ufologists. Several UFO clubs are finding their memberships waning (once again) as no new, exciting cases are found. Already there are murmurs to the effect that we have seen the last of the UFO's. CSICP members are no doubt elated that the UFO "fad" is finally over, and that another pseudoscience has bit the dust as the public has become educated into a state of objectivity.

First of all, I don't believe the public is any more educated against the reality of UFO's. Also, since the history of UFO reporting is full of hills and valleys, I see no reason to believe that a few years with a low number of reports is sufficient to forecast the end of investigational ufology.

If we believe that the Airship flap of 1896-1898 was a true UFO flap, then we had flaps in 1898, 1944, 1947, 1952, 1967, 1973, 1975 and 1978. Seeing the large gaps between some of the flap years, it is not surprising that we have been several years without a flap. In Manitoba, there were flaps in 1897, 1952, 1967 and 1975; how long will we wait for the return of Charlie Redstar? It must be remembered that flaps are also dependent on media influence and various other sociological factors. In order to predict new flaps, one must examine each factor in turn, comparing it to the past history of flaps.

There exists, of course, the possible contribution of "gut" feelings towards the prediction of new sightings. Several individuals I know "feel" that a new flap is imminent.

Actually, one can argue that the unpredictability of flaps points to their basis within a true unknown physical phenomenon that we do not understand. We don't know exactly where and when a UFO will be seen. Unfortunately, the same unpredictability can suggest a flap's relationship with human behavior. Obviously, a complex social phenomon is largely unpredictable, because of the complex nature of the individual human psyches involved. But let us take the example of ball lightning. It, too, is a largely unpredictable phenomenon. We can, however, define some conditions which are condusive to the formation of plasma balls, both mathematically and physically. Now,

the phenomenon may not occur each time these conditions are met, but there is a greater probability of it being observed if the conditions are met than if we selected a random situation. While the phenomenon is not predictable itself, its associated conditions can be defined. Can such associated conditions be identified for UFO reports?

Firstly, it is worthwhile to note that with the exception of the ghost rockets, UFO flaps have occurred largely during peacetime. This could indicate that the pressure and stress of war need to be absent for UFO flaps to occur. Secondly, there needs to be a series of aerial stimuli to give rise to UFO reports. If we adopt the view that all UFO reports are misidentifications, then we must show that misperceptions are more common during flaps than any other times. This is a complex psychological problem and may very well prove to be an algorithmic exercise.

Saskatoon Berry Pie

The annual meeting of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada was held on the May long weekend in Saskatoon, and I was finally able to attend a convention. I read a short paper on Lunar Transient Phenomena and listened with earnest attention to the others, which included reports on variable stars, supernovae and photoelectric photometry. I had the good fortune to meet Alan Blackwell, the director of MORP (Meteorite Observation and Recovery Program), and chat with him about the project.

I had gone down with Guy Westcott and Len Gamache, who, incidentally, won awards in Saskatoon for his photographic work on Ceres and the Northern Lights. We visited a total of four observatories, including a meteorological station. It seems they launch pibal balloons twice a day (causing some UFO reports) and gauge cloud ceilings by shining a spotlight upwards (causing UFO reports).

At the formal banquet in Saskatoon, I sampled Saskatoon berry pie, a local delicacy. The food was otherwise excellent everywhere in the town, and I recommend the beef dip at the Smitty's across from the university.

As for the bookstores, be sure to check out the University of Saskatchewan Bookstore (good selection); Northland Books (good selection, but overpriced); the Saskatoon Bookstore (new books only, with good selection); Books Unlimited (across from the University, with largest SF section in town) and the (Something) and the Orchid (one I can't quite remember the name of, but was a good collectors' shop).

A big hello and thanks to Joan, John and friends in Saskatoon, plus a special thanks to Gordon Patteron for putting up with us.

A Couple More

Two more books to watch out for:

Harrison, Harry

Invasion Earth,

Ace Books, April 1982

A UFO novel from one of the classic SF writers, with illustrations by Evan Steadman.

Harrison, Michael

Vanishings

New England Library, August 1981.

A very strange collection of anecdotes about people who have disappeared since historical times. He touches on practically all the infamous cases found in the literature, gleaning from Berlitz, Wilson and Fort. He frequently quotes a famous Manitoba

UFO case, the LeMarquands "levitation" (of which I have serious reservations, incidentally), suggesting it was a case of "the one that got away". The Bermuda Triangle is once again explored, and several lost boats gain back their "mysterious" labels removed by Lawrence Kusche. A good example of putting two and two together and coming up with five.

Chester's Collection

This section needs a little explanation. In the annals of Canadian SF fandom, there have been numerous references to the fabulous book collection owned by Chester Cuthbert of Winnipeg. Chester has been called his own library, not only because of the size of his collection, but because of its scope. Well, I have seen his collection, and can tell you my tale.

I first met Chester Cuthbert quite by accident; being an avid book collector myself, I was scouring all the stores in town for old UFO tomes, and found a Flying Saucers from Other Worlds pulp (or was it an Amazing Stories pulp?) At any rate, I saw a notice in the ad. section about a meeting of the Winnipeg Science Fiction Society, being held in 1952, with Chester listed as a person to contact. Well, since UFO's were linked to SF in a number of ways, I tried to get in touch with him. After a scan of the phone book, I found him and was invited over.

I remember that night in 1975 (1976?) when I was met at the door of that older, two-storey home in Crescentwood by a tall, thin man in his sixties. What hair he had was grey, and his glasses gave him a look of kindness. He spoke with a slow deliberation, and I found myself answering his questions without hesitation. It soon became apparent that he knew a great deal about flying saucers, but this through his knowledge of science fiction.

Then, he led me upstairs. You see, sitting in his living room, there is nothing to suggest what is contained in the other 75% of the house. The stairway was cold - very cold, since no one lived up there, why waste the heat? - and as you reach the top, you see books. No, let me clarify that. You see books everywhere. Books piled in boxes from floor to ceiling; books in bookcases stored two deep; books in bags within bags, and that's just the hallway. Actually in the study is a much similar sight, except there is just enough room for a table and chair in the middle. There were no walls visible, only boxes of books stored three deep, floor to ceiling on all sides. He also had newspaper clippings, journals and fanzines. Yes, Chester was my introduction to fandom, and I think it was only a few days after this that I was introduced to Decadent Winnipeg Fandom. (I wasn't accepted with open arms at first. After all, I was interested in UFO's, and UFO's weren't part of science fiction, they were part of, er, ah, science fiction. Classic Catch-22). On this upper floor is held Canadian SF, anthologies and books on (his hobby) paranormal phenomena. This floor alone was a book enthusiast's dream come true.

But then he took me to his basement. Again, cold was the first sensation. Then, as I reached the bottom of the stairs, I saw the scope of it all. Imagine a family-sized house with a basement. The entire basement, wall to wall and floor to ceiling, is boxes or bags of books. After I picked my jaw up off the floor, Chester led me (with a flashlight, of course) down a narrow foot-and-a-half wide passageway which went off in one direction. It was like one of those mazes you read about in gothic

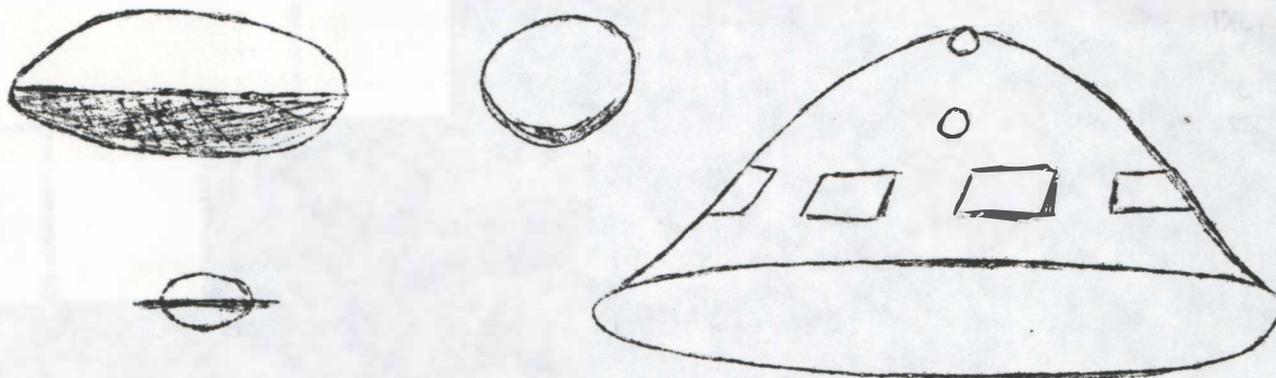
The Revenge of The Space Pet

by Chris Rutkowski.

Friday night, June 18th, 1982, found many Winnipeggers looking into the sky, bewildered. Reports started trickling in to the Planetarium on the next Tuesday, when the Planetarium's resident UFO investigator began receiving reports of an ovoid-type UFO travelling in a slow, flat trajectory over the St. Vital area in the vicinity of the shopping centre. After an appeal on the radio for additional witnesses, over twenty witnesses were eventually located. I interviewed a dozen of them, getting detailed descriptions and sketches of the object, while my co-investigator assisted with the investigation by taking individual witnesses aside, one by one to get an accurate narration, and asking for relevant information.

The sighting was far too good, and we were immediately suspicious. In addition to the large number of witnesses, there were three separate photographs taken by three separate witnesses. The object was thought by all witnesses interviewed to be quite small, perhaps the size of a beachball, pressed into an ovoid. It was silver-grey in color, slightly brighter on its top than its bottom.

By Friday morning, the Planetarium's spokesman had declared the object to be a "Space Pet", a helium-filled silver balloon often sold at fairs and exhibitions. They are currently being sold in Winnipeg at the Red River Exhibition, and someone came forward with the news that they had lost their "Space Pet". All descriptions of the UFO observed match the balloon fairly well, with some notable exceptions (see sketches). It has therefore been assumed that the UFO was the balloon. However, certain aspects of the descriptions of the object raise several questions. All witnesses agreed that the object flew in a level path. At speeds comparable to those reported, a space pet wobbles in the turbulent wind as it sails. Was this turbulence of small scale during the object's flight, and hence no wobble was observed? All witnesses, when asked about the suggestion that the object was a Space Pet, replied to the negative, saying it was "different". Did you see it? What did you think?



Actual Sketches by Witnesses

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novels. After twenty feet, you turn a corner, and there's another passageway leading off into the darkness. One branch opens abruptly into a decidedly compressed laundry room. Wow.

What is perhaps more remarkable is Chester's ability to find any single book. A question which begins, "Do you have ...", usually results in Chester going downstairs and returning with a box of books, containing the requested item. And not just SF (including zines, pulps, books and such) but also westerns, general novels and general science. The best part was that Chester had (at that time) many duplicates. My collection has grown exponentially since I have known him, but I don't think I've made a dent in his.

Oh, yes, how many books does he have? From a scientific sampling, I concur with other estimates of about 100,000 items.

The Winnipeg Science Fiction Society no longer meets regularly at Chester's home on Saturday afternoons. Its former members have moved or fallen otherwise out of touch. An I, admittedly, don't make it over every week myself. But I do go over and visit from time to time. Chester's unusually patient and understanding wife, Muriel, sits on the couch and knits or crochets, while Chester and I chat about books or the current economic situation. And then, once in a while, I take another peek at his collection, and sigh. I only have three or four thousand ...

Added comments: After showing this to Chester, he pointed out that only a "small fraction" of his collection is SF, perhaps one-tenth. The rest are in other fields. But his estimate of the total number of items in his collection is only 30,000. However, he admits that even he doesn't know how much stuff he has. "Would you include the six cartons of SF dealers' catalogs", he asked me, "or the (uncounted) boxes of fanzines?" I still stick with my original estimate, I keep telling people billions and billions of times - I don't exaggerate.

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