

Special Issue #5

Fish Stories, From the Horse's Mouth and Cults:
What I'm working on during the summer ...

As a special bonus for devoted readers of the SGJ, I am presenting some recent stories concerning research and correspondence from the past few months. Maybe this will make up for the lateness of the main journal ...

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A Whale of Tale: July 11, 1997

It was after 11:00 pm and I was just settling into bed to watch the last quarter of a football game. The phone rang and I had the fleeting thought to let the machine take it. But something told me to answer this one.

It was my friend S_, who used to work with a TV station and with whom I had written and produced a show about lake monsters in Manitoba. S_ apologized for calling so late, but then told me he had heard such a fantastic story he felt I should know about it immediately.

He said that an hour earlier, he had received a phone call from B_, a sport fisherman whom we had interviewed about his own Manipogo sighting of several years ago. B_ told S_ that he had received a call tonight from a friend named A_.

A_ said that earlier today, someone named R_ on the Sandy Bay Reserve had shot and killed a 'giant snake' near Lake Manitoba. He said that many others had seen this creature, and that its body was now being preserved and awaiting examination by authorities.

S_ was certain that there was something to this story and that B_ would not be making this up. The story was consistent with other claims of encounters with a large, snake-like creature called Manipogo that is thought to inhabit the lake.

I thanked S_ for the tip and then called the Sandy Bay RCMP office right away. I spoke with a Constable A_ who told me he had "heard the rumours" but didn't know any details about the incident. He said he would be checking with another detachment in the morning and would have more information then.

I then called a friend at a radio station newsroom in the hope that he had heard of this story already. He hadn't, but quickly did a live interview with me about what I had heard so far.

I called my associates Brian and Dave in Brandon, somewhat closer to Sandy Bay. They are avid Fortean investigators, and I rely on them to help investigate cases in Western Manitoba. I told them the story. They were very appreciative of the info and said they would investigate and call me back the next day.

It was a nice story, but was there anything to it? I went to bed, with a funny feeling that there was more to the tale than what I knew. The problem was that there really is a large creature that may be inhabiting the lake, namely a giant sturgeon. Although rare, these natural monsters can grow to 15 feet or more and some had been recorded and caught in

Manitoba. My guess was that this was what had been found, and, although it wasn't really mysterious, was certainly unusual enough to warrant an investigation.

In the morning, I called the Sandy Bay RCMP and spoke with another officer who said she knew about the story but that the duty sergeant was out at the time. It seems that a tremendous thunderstorm was hitting the area and was keeping the police busy with other problems, although they were planned to go out to the lake to investigate the shoreline for any sign of a monster.

I then called B_ and spoke with him. He told me the entire story as he heard it from A_. Supposedly, R_ had been swathing hay on his lakeshore property near a swamp when he saw a large, snake-like creature near the shore. He quickly dashed to his truck for his rifle and shot the creature as it was rearing up out of the water.

Roulette then dragged the monster's body out of the water and ran to notify others of his find. According to A_, "half the town" came out to view the creature and some took photographs with it. But the story gets better.

As the tale goes, RCMP were called and came out within a short time. They examined the carcass and called for a large, flatbed truck transport. Villagers watched as the creature's body was loaded onto the trailer and covered with a tarpaulin.

As described to A_, the creature was 50 feet in length, with the diameter of a barrel and "a head like a horse."

B_ said that he and A_ went out at 1:30 am that morning to see if they could intercept the transport on its journey southward to whatever destination it was heading for. They said they saw a West way trailer leave the reserve and go south along the main access road about that time.

Wanting to get closer to the story, I asked B_ for A_'s phone number. This took a while because the thunderstorm kept knocking out the phone line, requiring me to call back several times.

I then called the Sandy Bay Band Office, and asked if anyone there had heard of the story. The person who answered said she had, but that no one knew who Randy Roulette was. She said the band office had been trying to get details but had been unsuccessful.

Next, I called A_ at his work, and he told me exactly the same story as B_ had related. He was amazed that the RCMP knew nothing about the incident, because he had spoken with some residents who had seen the creature on the ground. Furthermore, he could not believe that the tribal office didn't know anything about it because many officials there had been present to view the monster's body.

A_ told me that R_ was difficult to reach because he didn't have a telephone, but that he knew where his property was located. I asked him if he knew the names of any others who had seen the creature, and he gave me the name and number of K_.

I phoned the number and waited while the person who answered called K_ to the phone. The sound of a baby crying grew louder and soon K_ came on the line, obviously wrestling with a cranky youngster.

K_ admitted he had seen the long, black body of "something" loaded onto a truck. He affirmed that many people were present including police and that someone was taking photographs. He seemed honest and straightforward about what he had seen.

As I hung up the phone, I heard a radio news broadcast from the station I had called last night. They had been trying to follow up on the story, too, with no luck, and a reporter was complaining that he had been unable to locate a witness.

I quickly called the station and told them I had just spoken with an eyewitness. I gave them the phone number and they thanked me and hung up.

I continued to listen to the radio and was shocked to hear after a few minutes that they had reached a witness but he "was drunk and wasn't in any condition to talk" with them!

With stark disbelief, I called the station back in a mad panic. That reporter told me she had called the number and that, although K_ admitted he had seen the creature's body and that someone had indeed taken photos, he had "acted weird" and didn't want to be interviewed. The reporter agreed that perhaps K_ wasn't drunk, but that it was her impression that something odd was going on because he didn't want to talk with her!

I got off the phone and tried to assess the information. Had something happened, or not?

I continued to listen to the radio and soon heard a live interview with Sergeant W_ of the Sandy Bay detachment. He said that he and his officers had just returned from braving the elements and could not find any sign of a carcass on the lakeshore. He said that he had been unable to locate anyone who had seen the beast and that he compared the story to that of a "six foot bird" which had been reported six weeks ago in the area. The radio announcer had a good laugh with the sergeant, and dismissed the case.

That effectively killed the story, for the time being. I decided to clear my head and go for lunch. But when I got back, things had become more complicated.

There was a message from W_ on my voicemail. I returned his call and he told me that yes, he was unable to verify any of the story. He says he even had spoken with R_, who had told him he had been swathing his grass along the lake but had not shot any creature or seen anything unusual.

I asked W_ if he had spoken with K_ and he said he had not. I asked W_ why people would start such a rumour. Were they in the habit of lying? Surprisingly, W_ said, yes, people in the area "like to tell stories and sometimes they put themselves in the stories, too."

I then mentioned to W_ that I had heard him on the radio, and noted his remark about the "six-foot-bird" in the context of tall tales.

He laughed, but noted, "Well, of course, that was true."

I blinked. "What?" I asked.

W_ explained that a month or two ago, residents in the area had reported seeing a giant birdlike creature. The RCMP had dismissed the stories until it was caught. It was an emu. Unbeknownst to the general population, including the RCMP, a farmer had purchased a number of these large birds and was raising them commercially. Sure enough, one had escaped. Therefore, the tall tale which was used to help dismiss the lake monster story was true itself!

I got off the phone with W_, still a bit confused. Was there any truth to the story at all? Why would no one talk openly about their observation of the monster, and how did the truck transport figure into all this?

Then, I got a call from Brian and Dave in Brandon. They were using their cellular phone and were in their truck on the way to Sandy Bay. They said they had spoken with W_ and were going to meet him there.

"But why," I asked them. "He said there was nothing to the case."

A shocked silence answered me. "Are you sure?" came the reply. "We just talked with W_ and he told us that he knew for a fact that the carcass was definitely put aboard a transport truck. He's even offered to introduce us to the people who saw it."

Amazed, I asked them to call me as soon as they knew more.

Could this case get any weirder and have more twists?

Well, no.

Brian called me from Sandy Bay about 4 pm. He said they had spoken with RCMP and many of the so-called witnesses and had come to a conclusion. There had been no monster.

What had happened, in their view, was that there *had* been a major drinking party along the lakeshore last night, and people got a little drunk. It seems that there *had* been some stories circulating during the past few weeks that someone had in fact seen Manipogo, but wasn't talking. This didn't stop the partiers from jokingly starting their story about shooting and killing the monster. The truck and the cover-up was added as a nice touch.

I can imagine that K_ told me he had seen the monster because he figured the story was safe to tell, but when the media started calling, he backed off. And when the RCMP came calling, he had to 'fess up.

I guess the real culprit in this instance was the person who told A_'s sister about the monster. If she hadn't told A_ about it, he wouldn't have called B_, who believes strongly in the existence of the creature and who has a solid reputation. We would never have heard anything about it.

Brian and Dave are owed a great deal for dashing out to investigate the case. If it weren't for them, we'd still be wondering about it at this point. They're a little downhearted, apparently, because the case turned out to be a dud, but I look at it a bit differently. They *succeeded* at an investigation and *solved* a case. That's what investigators are supposed to do, right?

Of course, a few things still are left hanging. Why did the RCMP tell Dave and Brian that the case was legit? And what about the story that someone really did see a lake monster earlier this month?

The Monster of Lake Manitoba lives on ...

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Next, I present some correspondence I received from a person who had some personal experience in dealing with American Cold-War paranoia and also how UFOs were *really* viewed within the upper echelons:

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View from the inside: One American's examination of early US UFO docs by I.M. Anon

[Note: In the fine tradition of other UFO "experts," I am following their lead and *not* exposing the identity of the American "insider" who responded to my request and e-mailed me his story. You know how it

is.]

Chris Rutkowski has asked for documentation of my account of "how I got interested in UFO's" for his files and possible publication, which I am happy to provide on the condition anonymity is preserved until my demise!

As a lifelong student of astronomy and fan of aerospace development and Science Fiction, I was aware of "flying saucers" even as a child in the early 1950's, but was unable to take the then-widely-circulating rumors of "crashed saucers" complete with bodies of aliens, or George Adamski, both topics being widely discussed on playgrounds in those years, very seriously at the time. It did occur to me to wonder why news broadcasts such as the Flatwoods monster/sighting would appear intriguingly in the media and then vanish without follow-up.

My only "sighting" was in the summer of 1957, just before Sputnik: a flashing electric-blue light, apparently very high, moving silently & quickly across the night sky in long straight lines & making instant more-than-90-degree turns without pause or curves. It just suddenly started, danced thru the "summer triangle" making several of those sharp turns without slacking speed or varying intensity, and vanished. Aside from being puzzled by this classic "nocturnal light" sighting, I've never felt I'd ever seen a "real" UFO & in fact never associated this with a "flying saucer" until reading more about it much later.

In 1965, interest was stimulated by a "mystical-type" woman friend (the wife of a graduate student at the University I was then attending and a neighbor in their "married Students' housing") who announced one night that "the word was out" that the aliens were going to turn off the power over a wide area of the USA to convince the government to cooperate with their plans. We laughingly asked what those plans were, and she actually said essentially that the aliens were offering bits of technology in exchange for letting them observe & experiment secretly, but gradually letting more information out over the next 30 or 40 years thru movies, advertising, TV shows etc. before revealing themselves fully. She got a good laugh that lasted until the Northeast power blackout that fall, with the associated rumors of UFO's over the Niagra power stations as it happened. Unfortunately the couple had moved and I couldn't ask her how she'd known, or what else she knew!

This stimulated further reading, and when the Condon Report was issued I pounced on it avidly; I felt confused and betrayed by the conflict between the contents and conclusions; and decided something very weird was indeed occurring. By then I was working as a professional librarian in a NASA think-tank with a VERY large aerospace library cleared through "Secret: Restricted Data" and went into that level of information to see if there was anything. There was indeed, even on that low level, evidence that the government was blatantly lying about its disinterest: I quickly found a classified USAF document advising pilots what to do WHEN (not "if") they encountered a UFO, with such advice as "DO NOT SHOOT!!", "Use gun-cameras" and even advice on what to do if their electrical system cut out, "as often occurs". Of course this made me wonder what was also available at higher security classifications, but our facility had no access to that data.

So, naturally, since then I have never doubted there is a government cover-up, that their claim to have no interest etc. was phony, and (in

retrospect) began wondering about things like those rumors of crashed saucers & bodies we'd been discussing on school playgrounds in the early '50's. Consequently, the emergence of the Roswell stories was hardly a surprise, except for the part about people asking how such a "secret" could be kept so long. Could something widely discussed by gradeschool kids on playgrounds be considered a secret?

Well, it's over 30 years since our friend described essentially what's been happening since: she was either a prophetess, or really did get inside information somehow, since everything to do with the phenomenon seems to confirm her description. I'd like to live long enough to see if the rest of it occurs (open contact after all the "preparation"), but cheerfully admit that if the US Government openly admits there is contact with aliens, UFO's are real, etc. I'd have to begin to doubt: since everything else seems to have been lies, how could one believe them even if the President appears in a news conference with a Grey?

Could THAT psychological orientation be one of "their" goals? Who's in charge here anyway? Can anyone ever have any realistic idea of what's really going on or why? How did that woman know that stuff?

Well, it's interesting, anyway!

Part 2:

The TOP SECRET Librarian: American security in the stacks
by I.M. Anon

[This is the second document e-mailed to me by an American researcher who wishes to remain anonymous. And so it goes.]

Chris Rutkowski has requested an account of my experiences as a professional librarian dealing with US Government "classified" information in the 1960's for his files and possible publication. On the condition I remain anonymous, I am willing to describe some of the adventures and absurdities that were associated with this.

I was a professional librarian in a NASA "think-tank" for several years handling information classified through "Secret: Restricted Data" but as everything happened 30 or so years ago and therefore almost everything I ever saw should have been de-classified by now (not to mention I will not be discussing any specific documents) I feel confident there is no harm in describing a few associated adventures, as Mr. Rutkowski feels this will add insight into some of the concerns about classified data in the UFO-Research community, especially as my experiences often are at variance with other stories about classified information. As we never discussed such things, I had no idea everyone else wasn't doing it the same way until I read others' stories about classified documents in the UFO literature and noticed discrepancies. What does THAT indicate?

The process of getting cleared even to the level needed for the facility in which I worked, involved a "security check" including fingerprinting, interviewing old neighbors, etc. As a naive and innocent person with no criminal or communist connections, never

having been out of the country in any of the controversial places around the planet, etc. there was no problem with this, although having a foreign-sounding name evidently caused some concern even though my grandparents were US citizens even before WWI. This became clear when a man identifying himself as an FBI agent (even showing credentials) began showing up at regular intervals, several times a year, to interview me. This man looked so much like the "Mr. Glad Bags" fellow in the commercials (tall, well-built and dressed, wavy grey hair and toothpaste-ad teeth etc. and even talking like him) that it was hard to resist asking if he was any relation or was moonlighting, although I managed, due to paranoia over causing offence and becoming therefore a suspicious fellow! After all, it appeared I was already "suspicious" due to my name, since the interviews would consist of his asking if I knew that a table-tennis team or folk-group or poet or whatever from the area of my ancestors' origin, had been visiting a neighboring city. In every case, having no personal interest in such things, I was able to honestly say "No!" but he would always follow up with further questions on whether any had tried to contact me, if I'd visited with any of them, etc. Rather than becoming annoyed, I was amused, even when he showed up at my apartment one day, hovered at the door until I invited him in, and went thru the same routine yet again. That, however, began to make me feel a bit paranoid, I confess: in the library was one thing; at home quite another!

Of course, as a librarian in a technical library but having no technical training, I was able to find documents as needed without understanding what they were about, except that for various reasons many were classified at various levels as "security information". This material was kept in a vast vault and as it became obsolete or unnecessary, had to be burned in a kiln and the ashes well-stirred. Security Officers assigned to the company were always about, would accompany me to the document-burning "parties" etc. There was little sense of humor about it, and my requests to toast marshmallows etc. were met with frowns.

The company for which I worked often generated such documents, and their greatest concern was to avoid anything that would result in any sort of classification in their research reports, as it would limit their distribution. A few times, a document they generated would inadvertently be judged "classified" at some level and also had to be destroyed, although I recall one occasion in which the reason was a reference to a specific component, innocuous in itself, being mentioned in that context. The solution was to carefully snip out, with scissors, each occurrence of that word from the document, and carefully burn those snippets. This "sanitized" that document and enabled it to become "unclassified"; note that magic-marker-ing it out of legibility was considered insufficient. The only time we ever magic-markered out anything was when a document was declassified and the original security markings were then crossed out thoroughly: very tedious as they were all marked at the top and bottom of every page, front & back, even if blank (although the blank page would also state "This page is blank.") In almost all cases the declassified documents were also then burned.

I never understood why we crossed out the markings of declassified documents before burning, while leaving the markings on those still

classified when burning them! Only rarely were any declassified documents kept. (Obviously, they were burned instead of just being thrown away, because they didn't want the garbage collectors to see what classified data had been around previously.) We never kept any such documents not actually still needed.

The most absurd adventure involved a researcher who was also a foreign national (from a VERY neutral country, but not a US citizen). His own projects, of course, were not classified & he was officially not to be informed about any classified work or to see any classified documents. Imagine the consternation when he generated a report later declared to be classified! He was then not allowed to supervise his own work or to see his own notes! He continued to direct his project, however, by telling his assistants what to get, what to do, etc. and dictating his notes and reports, which were then classified and locked away.

Although everyone took it all very seriously & behaved most officiously it was clear opportunities for "leaks" etc. were not eliminated; but after all, we were only classified to "Secret: Restricted Data" which was not a very high level at all. Everyone knew there were much higher classifications that were not even widely known to exist, but as we had no access, such levels were almost never even mentioned. Occasionally, some researcher would mutter about how we should have a higher facility clearance to facilitate our work, since they clearly felt they had a "need to know" beyond their level, but this was always denied.

I was glad to get out of that business.

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Finally, a paper I prepared originally in the 80s, but was asked to update it in 1997 after the Heaven's Gate incident. It's my view on UFO and alien cults.

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>From Heaven Above: Saved by the Aliens
by Chris Rutkowski

Of the many different cores around which a cult can form, possibly the most curious is the phenomenon of UFOs. Fanatical UFO belief is basically an anti-science movement. It rejects the scientific evaluation and rational explanation for UFOs in favor of a more mystical and religious view. It becomes cult-like when adherents become closed to any interpretation of UFOs as conventional phenomena. Further, fanatical UFO believers often alienate themselves from other UFO buffs, who are interested in a search for "the truth" but do not "know" the truth as fanatical followers claim.

There are two basic forms of such fanatical groups:

- 1) spiritual/religious UFO cults; and
- 2) obsessive UFO belief cults.

The spiritual UFO cults embrace omnipotent beings known often as the "Space Brothers," closely akin to deities. They are always much more advanced than humans, and their levels of advancement are such that they almost always have apparently magical or mystical powers, often including ESP and other psychic abilities. In some cases, they are also more "spiritually-attuned" than us.

They are extraterrestrial in the same sense that God is "not of this world," and come from distant planets. Each sub-cult names a different planet of origin for their alien brothers and sisters, including Clarion, Korendar and Zanthar. In UFO cult mythology, for example, Clarion is said to exist "on the other side of the Sun." Some groups select planets within our Solar system as their aliens' homes, including Mars, Jupiter, Saturn and Venus, although some have located their aliens on or inside the Earth.

The belief-based cults usually have no spiritual relationship with the Space Brothers, but simply believe that extraterrestrials are visiting Earth. They reject scientists' explanations of UFOs, and often insist that there is some sort of grand cover-up of the knowledge that aliens are among us.

One of the early, well-known spiritual UFO cults was the Aetherius Society, founded in Britain by George King in March 1954. One day, King said that he heard a voice from heaven, telling him: "Prepare yourself; you are to become the voice of Interplanetary Parliament."

Eight days later, King said a man in white robes walked through a door into his room and delivered the aliens' message that mankind is spiritually unwell. King was advised he was to become the terrestrial representative of the Interplanetary Parliament, which meets regularly on Saturn. He was told to prepare himself for his important duties by practising yoga and leading a healthier lifestyle.

A few months later, King was contacted again, this time by the aliens' leader, Master Aetherius. Aetherius was from Venus, where an advanced civilization rules the Solar system. King's body was taken over and controlled by Aetherius, who began proselytizing as he was the "primary terrestrial channel." His mission was, simply, to "alert the world."

King attracted a considerable number of followers. His meetings usually took the form of a public channelling display. King went into a trance and began speaking as a "lesser agent," telling of upcoming natural disasters as well as happier occasions such as sightings and landings of flying saucers. Then, Aetherius himself would get channelled, and inform the gathered crowd about esoteric teachings, describing "cosmic energies" and the need for more "positive ions" in the world.

Occasionally, another entity would get channelled, including such individuals as Jesus Christ. Jesus explained that He had been born on Venus and had come to Earth in a flying saucer which was disguised as the Star of Bethlehem. Jesus is now on Mars, where He continues His teachings. Channelled, Jesus recited from the New Testament and led the group in prayer.

King commended that his followers needed to "charge" mountains in order to prevent cataclysms. He would often lead groups into various mountainous regions where they would pray in circles, thus charging "energy batteries" which could be used by the aliens to prevent disasters.

Another UFO cult leader was George Adamski. His mission on Earth began on November 20th, 1952, at 12:30 p.m., near the town of Parker in the California desert, when he and some friends saw a UFO apparently land nearby. He instructed his friends to remain with their car while he went to investigate.

Adamski said that he came face to face with a space being who had human features and long, light-colored, shoulder-length hair. (Later, such aliens were called blondes.) Communicating in sign language, Adamski

learned that the visitor was from Venus. Later, he was told that the Space Brothers were very displeased with human behavior and had enlisted Adamski to carry their message of peace and goodwill to all mankind.

Adamski published three books describing his encounters with the aliens and their messages. They each were financial successes, allowing him to travel widely and attract a huge following. He referred to himself as 'Professor George Adamski,' and claimed that he lived and worked at Mount Palomar Observatory. In reality, he ran a small cafeteria halfway up the mountain road leading to the astronomical institution. He did have a small portable telescope, through which he took several photographs of aliens and their spaceships hovering nearby, all of which were out of focus or of dubious heritage. One widely-published photograph, showing a closeup of a flying saucer with portholes and ball-like objects underneath, has been dismissed by skeptics as the top part of a vacuum clear, a bottle washer or a chicken brooder.

Adamski's followers formed groups in many cities around the world, including Canada. Adamski died in 1965, but his groups continued meeting as recently as the late 1970s.

George Van Tassel founded the "College of Universal Wisdom" in 1953. Van Tassel is best known as the organizer of the Giant Rock Flying Saucer Convention, which was held annually for nearly two decades on a desert airfield near Giant Rock, California.

The night of August 24, 1953, Van Tassel was sleeping with his wife and was woke up at about 2:00 a.m. to find a man standing at the foot of his bed. The human-appearing entity said that his name was "Sol-ganda" and insisted that Van Tassel come with him aboard his spaceship. Van Tassel noted that his wife was in a deep sleep which Sol-ganda said was because of a "spell." Outside, Van Tassel saw a bell-shaped craft that was powered by an "antigravity beam."

Van Tassel didn't receive any direct message from his alien contact, but simply was shown things which he interpreted as directions and information to pass on to others. For example, during one of his later contacts, he was visually shown the true history" of the human race, as observed by aliens. Typically, Van Tassel would go into a trance at a meeting and channel information from Sol-ganda or other aliens.

Van Tassel was often attacked by skeptics, and one of the most memorable incidents was the action of a lawyer who set out to show that Van Tassel's stories were hoaxes. He sent Van Tassel faked UFO photos, which Van Tassel quickly adopted as true and proof of his own experiences. However, when both the lawyer and Van Tassel appeared together on a popular UFO-related radio talk show, the lawyer revealed the photos as his fakes.

Despite such damaging evidence, Van Tassel remained popular and his Giant Rock convention attracted many thousands of devotees and contactees annually. Near the convention site, he built the Integratron, a wooden dome-shaped temple, from plans he said were supplied by the Space Brothers and similar to Solomon's Temple from the Old Testament. The Integratron was designed for 'rejuvenation' of the human body, through 'omni-beams' directed from above.

In September of 1944, Amazing Stories magazine editor Ray Palmer received a letter from Richard Shaver. Shaver detailed how he had learned of an "ancient alphabet" from a lost race that had once thrived on Earth and

had battled evil aliens. Palmer had his reservations, but he published the letter and was surprised to receive hundreds of requests for more information.

Shaver replied with a long story titled: "A Warning to Future Man," which Palmer edited and rewrote as "I Remember Lemuria." It was published in March, 1945. The piece received an unprecedented response from the magazine's readership. More than 50,000 letters flowed in from people who praised the work but also added their own personal experiences which supported the story.

Basically, Shaver's story relied on "racial memories" about a race of subhuman creatures called deros (detrimental robots) living in underground cities with the Earth. The deros had once been slaves of an advanced civilization which had once existed on Lemuria, but had perished during the cataclysm that destroyed Atlantis.

Deros had control of the Lemurians highly-advanced technology, including mind-rays which they directed at humans on the surface of the Earth, causing mental, emotional and physical problems. Other devices caused earthquakes, volcanoes and droughts. Their sole pastime was to annoy and persecute the human race. Occasionally, they would kidnap humans and torture them, sometimes returning them to the surface, but most often hiding them forever, such as the case of Jimmy Hoffa and Judge Crater.

Ray Palmer continued to publish the Shaver stories as fact, which eventually led to his firing from Amazing Stories, but he then began his own science fiction pulp magazine, called first Other Worlds, then Flying Saucers from Other Worlds and then finally Flying Saucers. The stories continued being published until the 1970s.

MARK-AGE is a quasi-religious group that still exists today. Its basic set of beliefs is that mankind was once part of an interplanetary spiritual communications system, but has turned away from spiritual matters. Because of this, the Hierarchical Board of the Solar System "drew the veil" over our consciousness. However, some of the aliens, being benevolent, are trying to increase our spiritual consciousness, using mental communications with certain members of our society, projecting their own bodies or actually making themselves seen in their flying saucers.

Mark is the chief contact for Earth, and has been assigned to make mankind "space-conscious" and ready to meet other life forms. Mark-Age devotees believe that God is helping the United States space program because it was defined as "one nation under God." The Soviet Union was not given such help because it was in their opinion atheistic.

A similar group is the Universal Link, which is concerned that our spiritual understanding is not at the same level as our technology. They view our society as plagued by injustice and strife. They also hold that the Chinese are "breaking the power balance of the world" and may lead us into atomic war.

Flying saucers are the "links" in the aliens' operation to Earth which is designed to create a paradigm shift towards more spiritual matters. The Universal Link is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ to Earth, Jesus being an alien whose real name is Orthon.

According to the Raelians, aliens are really the "Elohim" referred to in some biblical teachings, meaning literally, "those from the sky." They

created humans in a laboratory on their own planet and put us on Earth. We accidentally gained intelligence through interbreeding, and became self-conscious. The aliens left us to our own affairs, but they occasionally send messengers to check on us, such as Jesus, Mohammed and Buddha. The latest alien messenger is Rael, born as Claude Vorhilon, who has been to their home planet and met all the other messengers there.

Raelians believe that all of the miracles and visitations recorded in the Bible were performed or caused by aliens and their UFOs. They have about 10,000 members worldwide, based in France but with satellite groups in other countries including the USA and Canada.

Raelians made the news this year for two bizarre developments. One is that they have developed and will soon open a "theme park" like Disneyland where children can ride on "exact" replicas of alien spacecraft and animated characters will assist visitors in understanding the nature of aliens and the UFO phenomenon. The other story is that the Raelians have sponsored a car entered in the Grand Prix, in order to generate some awareness of their cause.

Robert Barry founded the 20th Century UFO Bureau in the late 1960s. He stressed that the public had been lied by the government about the existence of UFOs and aliens on Earth. Basically, an anti-coverup group, Barry also taught that UFOs were spaceships piloted by angels, although a few are driven by Satan and his forces. The angel-piloted UFOs assist the Israelis in their battles in the Holy Land. In the 1970s, Barry held public meetings in a number of cities and towns, promoting himself in "bible belt areas such as Steinbach, Manitoba and in Pennsylvania.

Vonnetta Chouinard was born in 1935 in Oxford, Nova Scotia. When she came out of her mother's womb, she had a caul on her face, considered a lucky or fortunate omen. She claimed that at age 7, she died from pneumonia, but "rose again on the third day" after sulfa drugs were administered to her. At age 10, she walked into another dimension and began having visions.

In 1968, space creatures took her in their craft to other planets, and even inside the Earth. While on board during one of her journeys, they used an x-ray device to look inside her body. They found several tumors in her body and they operated on her with such advanced surgical techniques that they left no scars.

Vonnetta says she was chosen by beings from the fourth dimension to carry their message of peace and sanity to the world. She was directed to help convince mankind to stop pollution, cease atomic testing and repent to God. She was interested in educating children in the aliens' message through UFO comic books and TV shows.

In 1975, a "scout craft" burned a cross into a field in Nova Scotia. No snow stayed on the cross, which remained warm to the touch all winter. In spring, no grass grew. A spring nearby turned reddish, then cleared, but Vonnetta began holding religious ceremonies at the site. She claimed that people could be healed by water from the spring, and her "services" were attended by many devotees who were healed of ailments such as arthritis, lameness and blindness.

However, some local residents who were skeptical of the activities attempted to put an end to them by hiring a bulldozer to plow the cross over. Vonnetta and her group made a public demonstration of solidarity by laying in front of the bulldozer and stopping the plan. But, as Vonnetta

noted, the bodies of those who wanted to plow over the cross were found soon after at the bottom of a lake, with many bones broken. She said that this showed how bad things would happen to those who got in the way of the plans of Space Brothers.

Vonnetta said she could sense "vibrations" emanating from the UFOs flying overhead, and also from radiation left behind after they took off from their landing sites.

The Society of Unarius was directed by Ruth Norman (Archangel Uriel) for several decades until her death in the 1990s. The group owns dozens of acres on California where each year they await the mass landings of spaceships which will save selected spiritually-attuned individuals. They believe that Earth needs to become the 33rd member planet of the Interplanetary Confederation. Jesus, Mohammed and Einstein were channelled by Norman, giving further teachings to the Society's followers. The Society holds parades and meetings for which members dress up in costumes representative of other planets in the Confederation.

Finally, the Kosmon Church believes that Zoroaster (Zarathrustra) was the first Great Teacher; he was an emissary of KOSMON, a spiritual entity/life force. They hold that mankind is unaware of anything off its ethereal plane, and are ignorant of the danger from lower, evil planes which are pressing on Earth, disturbing humanity. The Kosmon Church is warning us that the Ethereans are coming,

Discussion

We can see recurring themes present in most of these groups:

- 1) Mankind's spiritual awareness is missing or weak.
- 2) Space Brothers are trying to coax us back onto the path of spiritual understanding.
- 3) There will be a Second Coming.
- 4) Salvation is possible.

It appears that, for the most part, UFO religious cults and groups are all concerned with the welfare of the human race. They are trying to spread the teachings of their "masters" in hope that mankind will be saved from itself.

Therefore, they are basically "normal" religious groups which simply replace God with a physical being from another planet. They reject science's dismissal of UFO reports, and in doing so, adopt an anti-science attitude that is impressed on their followers.

(However, the Heavens Gate cult used technology itself to spread and interpret spiritual and mystical teachings, an interesting combination of beliefs.)

The groups usually receive instructions directly from their masters,' usually through channelled missives. Unfortunately, this sometimes led to many "unauthorized" readings and messages by individual members, since there was no control over the depth to which members could become immersed in the particular group's ideology. This sometimes led to their own contacts with the alien masters, distorting the original teachings. Since individual members could themselves become "in tune" with the aliens, they could obtain their own ego-enhancing, spiritual high.'

But as we have seen from the Heavens Gate incident, there are personal dangers from becoming too involved in one's faith. In 1982, two people waited in their car for more than a month in North Dakota. They spent the entire time in their car, waiting for a spaceship to arrive. They were drawn by a "higher power" as they sat in below-freezing temperatures, snowbound in their vehicle. Eventually one of them died of a combination of hypothermia, dehydration and starvation, which spurred the other to seek help. (Source: Winnipeg Free Press, November 19, 1982)

Some UFO-based religious groups' concepts probably reflect anxieties about our present society and more specifically, the possibility of nuclear war or the general angst felt by those oppressed or otherwise "left out." Other themes are the role of religion in a technological society, the need for peaceful international relations and the possibility of extraterrestrial visitation.

According to most groups, the Space Brothers come from planets free from war, poverty and need. They also have achieved immortality through an emphasis on spiritual matters. In short, they exist in a idyllic paradises much removed from terrestrial problems. The Space Brothers also have come to Earth to stop arms proliferation and to prevent further war. Many early UFO religious cults were anticommunist but were paradoxically socialist in their structure. This was ironic, because both the FBI and CIA monitored the groups because they were deemed "dangerous." often infiltrating the groups in order to keep watch on them.

Cult members' fear of death is lessened or eliminated by the belief that the aliens will prolong their lives or reincarnate them on another planet. The groups often made Jesus a spaceman, but still defined him as a true messenger who died trying to teach us truth and love.

Since Earth was not "ready" yet, the groups had to have human leaders to act as go-betweens. All groups shared their mission to educate mankind in order to save us from destruction. Hence, they sought public exposure in order to transmit their leaders' messages.

Furthermore, it should be noted that UFO cults almost always promulgated a "Christian" philosophy of love, peace and reconciliation. Most taught that we should be kind to one another, respecting all life and caring for the Earth. Many had strong environmental convictions.

Bo and Peep (or Te and Do) first formed the Christian Arts Centre in Houston in 1972, to promote religious artistic activities. Only three years later, the families of 20 people were panicked when they received postcards from their children informing them that they were "leaving this Earth" and would not see them anymore. Police investigation uncovered the cult commune in Oregon. It was learned that at that time, dozens of people had left their jobs, families and even their children to follow "The Two."

That was in 1975. In 1997, we learned that the cult was still operating, with tragic consequences. Their message was the same, and people still were being recruited into its membership. We know that in 1997, 39 people died. In 1975, dozens of people joined the cult, and many were never heard from again.

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(Come to think of it, no one here has noticed me yet.)