

WEIRDOLOGY II

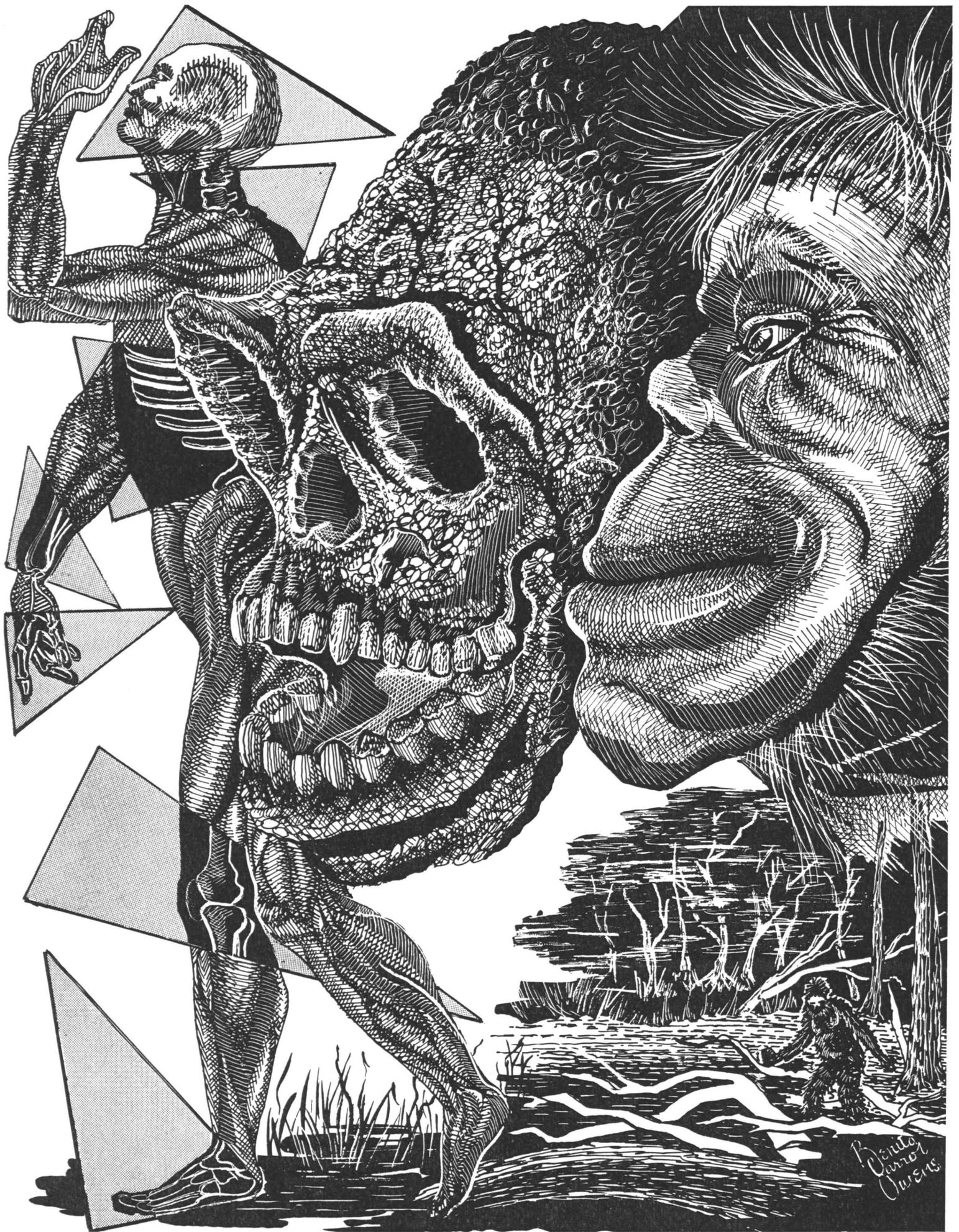


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A WORD BEFORE WE GET WEIRD

In publishing our *Weirdology* newsletter we constantly find articles and cases that are just too long to fit our four page format. We've kept them on file because they were just too interesting to forget about, hence we came up with the idea of coming out with another *Weirdology* booklet similar to the one that we did back in 1999. We hope that you will find this publication both interesting and useful in your fortean studies.

We must also thank the following dedicated "clippers" of ours for supplying us with useful and fascinating newspaper clippings: Martin Piechota, Gene Duplantier, Andy Etheridge, Richard Heiden and William E. Jones. Keep 'em coming, guys!

Rick Hilberg
March 20, 2006

FORTEAN FLASHBACK: THE WATERVILLE, WA "SPOOKLIGHT"

The first time he saw the strange light, Brad Knowles thought it was the headlight of a motorcycle streaking west on Highway 2 on some late-night mission.

Then the light did a funny thing: It bolted toward the wheat field where Knowles was in a tractor plowing, and stopped about a half-mile away.

Under the starry harvest sky, it hung there in the air like a watching eye.

"It made me a little edgy," said Knowles, who was 18 that August night in 1976. Folks here talk of a strange light - the "spook light" they call it - that roams the isolated wheat fields and country roads east of Waterville in summertime.

Those who've had close encounters describe the thing as a phantom head light or floating yellow lantern.

They say the spook light never gets too close, or does any harm, other than to frighten.

Local folklore says the light is a UFO, some super-secret government project, or even a wandering spirit from one of the many small cemeteries scattered throughout rural Douglas County.

Some folks insist it is a natural occurrence, like ball lightning, or lights from a vehicle, or a queer reflection - but perfectly explainable.

Real or imagined, the spook light has become a rural legend of sorts here in Waterville.

Townfolk have talked about it off and on for more than six decades.

"It's kind of a story that got around and everybody would go look for it and you'd get scared," said Helen Grande, 69, a lifelong resident of Waterville and curator of the Douglas County Museum.

"I don't know how it got started."

As a teenager in the 1940s, she remembers perching atop a hill near the local cemetery on a weekend night and watching for the spook light. She saw distant lights, but doesn't know if they were "it".

Spook light-hunting for years apparently has been an enduring pastime of high schoolers here.

"They'd take out their .22 rifles, drive around and find a light and shoot the rifle at the light," said Knowles, now 44 and an investment broker in Bellevue.

Knowles doesn't believe in the paranormal stuff, his light was probably some "atmospheric phenomenon," he said.

Still, his disbelief in the paranormal was put to the test - he saw the spook light three times.

He was cultivating a field the night after he first spotted the light when a brilliant blue light flashed from above his tractor.

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And the next summer, when he was driving home up Pine Canyon about 1 a.m., a "single white light" was hovering above Waterville. That night his mom went outside to have a look.

"It was a light in the sky and it kind of went around and we just watched it for a long, long time," said Mable Knowles, who spent 28 years as Waterville town clerk.

"It sauntered around a few hundred feet in the air," she said. "It would change directions and go fast, then it would kind of be still for a while then take off again. We watched it for a long time."

Still, there are some folks in town who aren't familiar with the spook light, and many who've never seen it.

"I've never experienced it," said town Councilman Bob Olin, who has heard of it. "It's one of those things that kind of runs through a community."

"Sometimes I think I have a spook following me, but I've never heard of the spook light," joked Councilwoman Gert Snyder.

But don't try telling Dick Osborne that there isn't a spook light out there.

One weekend night in the summer of 1965, he and a few of his pals drove east on Highway 2 looking for the spook light. They found it.

It appeared in front of them, then behind them, then on their side. At one point, the radio in the 1957 Ford Fairlane he was driving quit and the electric windows started moving on their own.

Osborne tried to lose the light. He sped up to 100 mph, but the strange light stayed with them about a quarter to a half mile to their side.

At one point, he said, it reappeared a few hundred feet in front of them.

"It kind of hovered above the road and went underneath it, but we were too afraid to stop," said Osborne, now 54, "I couldn't explain any of it other than I know what I saw."

"As people heard about it, they thought that we were drinking. But I talked to people who lived in the country who had seen it, too," he said. "It was too often and too real to be ignored." Source: Bremerton, WA *Sun* April 15, 2002.

1977 DANVILLE, IL "THUNDERBIRD" INCIDENT

The incident took 15 or 30 seconds. But it left an impression on John D. Walker for the rest of his life.

In 1977, Walker and a friend spotted a creature, which he describes as a giant bird, in the sky over Poland Road east of the airport. That image of a bird with a 20-foot wingspan gliding over the trees has stayed with him.

The experience has prompted him to do extensive research to find out exactly what the bird was.

When asked if it could have been a turkey vulture or condor, Walker said adamantly, "Absolutely not."

It had an eagle-shaped head, but it was so much bigger than an eagle or hawk, he said.

He suspects it was the man-eating thunderbird cited in Native American legends.

Walker was 17 when he and a friend saw the bird coming over a treeline. They were out hunting and had their rifles at hand, but didn't shoot. He estimated the bird's length from shoulders to tail as about 5 feet.

"The wings were so full you couldn't see the tail feathers," he said.

The bird was headed north and didn't look at the teens as it glided past. They just had a feeling to stay still so they wouldn't be attacked.

"It was the most bizarre thing to happen to me in my life as far as hunting. It was like walking into Jurassic Park," he said. "We didn't catch anything that day, but we came back with the biggest story."

"Even to this day, I can't believe it."

The boys didn't tell anyone except their close friends because they figured no one would believe them.

But now, at age 50, Walker wants to translate that experience into a children's picture book.

He already has completed most of the watercolor pictures showing the events of that late-summer day. He still needs a publisher, however.

His purpose is to share an interesting story with children and to warn adults that such a creature

could exist.

"It is a rare thing," he said, "but it can be a danger to either children or adults."

In 1977, a 10-year-old boy in Lawndale reported that a huge bird swooped down and nabbed him, carrying him a short distance. His shouts brought out his mother, and the bird dropped him.

Walker also wants to raise awareness and hopes to spur interest in research into the bird's habits.

Source: Mary Wicoff, Danville, IL *Commercial-News* May 21, 2005.

WEST TEXAS BIGFOOT

Bigfoot might be in our backyard.

Since 1977, the giant, hair-covered, foul-smelling gorilla like creature has been spotted in West Texas as least seven times, according to a small group of dedicated investigators.

You don't believe an 8-foot-tall creature is roaming the mesquite pastures and cotton fields of West Texas?

"Seeing is believing," said Craig Woolheater. Craig is director of Dallas-based Texas Bigfoot Research Center. The 6-year-old organization investigates sightings of the mysterious creature, which is also known as sasquatch.

Craig said they have confirmed seven Bigfoot sightings in West Texas from 1977 through 2001. Locations range from the Davis Mountains to San Angelo State Park and included Eldorado, Pecos County, Big Spring, Garden City and the Spence Reservoir area near Robert Lee.

According to reports, the creatures have thrown rocks at fishermen, stalked a horse rider, peered into homes and frightened motorists.

"I've never been spooked like that before or since," one witness told an investigator from the Dallas research group.

But don't panic.

"We're not dealing with a monster, a missing link or an extraterrestrial," Craig said. "What we're looking for is a flesh-and-blood primate."

Scientists have not found any proof that such a creature exists, but university researchers aren't exactly out beating the bushes looking for evidence, Craig said.

"Mainstream scientists don't want anything to do with it," he said. "they'd be risking their careers by sticking their necks out.

"It's the amateur scientists who are out there, trying to solve the mystery."

Craig said his group receives about 150 reports of sightings a year, most from Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana and Arkansas.

He said volunteer investigators, including some law enforcement and ex-military personnel, interview witnesses and gather evidence.

Some of the reported sightings "are bogus - obvious jokes," Craig said. Those are disregarded.

But if reports check out, they're published on the group's Web site.

While most of the Texas sightings occur in the eastern half of the state, Craig said, the creatures also seem to follow the Colorado River and its tributaries into West Texas.

Area sightings the group has confirmed include:

- **Near Big Spring, August 1996** - a man whose family lives out in the country 5 miles east of town was awakened by the sound of barking dogs about midnight and discovered an 8-foot-tall creature peering in the kitchen window.

"While I was loading the rifle, we heard a loud, weird howling sound come from the backyard, which finally got me moving as I thought it would be coming in the house next."

- **Imperial, in Pecos County, February 2000** - Two people spotted "a large hairy creature" while hunting rabbits. One witness said the beast was "unlike anything I have ever seen before," and it "stood upright like a person, but was not a person."

- **Eldorado, late summer or early fall, 1990** - a 5-year-old boy awoke in the night and saw something hunched over and staring at him through a window. The creature bared its teeth, and the child screamed for his mother.

- **Jeff Davis County, northeast of Marfa, October 1977** - Three men driving to Midland spotted a

creature alongside a two-lane highway.

"It had a very large head, large eyes and very long, thick hair," one man told an investigator. "The body was covered with thick, matted hair. It stood with a stoop, and the arms were very long. There was a very strong smell like garbage."

- **San Angelo State Park, October 1986** - A woman was riding her horse near a ridge when she spotted a large creature in the bushes. "It was very dark and scared me to death," she told an investigator. She said it was covered with hair.

- **Glasscock County 10 miles northeast of Garden City, July 2001** - A man, his mother and two nephews were hunting rattlesnakes when they spotted a couple of the creatures moving in a caliche pit.

"They were big and dark," the man reported.

- **Above Spence Reservoir, in Coke County, the fall of 1988 or '89** - Two men were fishing under the Colorado River bridge on Farm Road 2059 after dark when they had a close encounter with something that roared at them, threw rocks, then seemed to chase them to their pickup.

"I've never returned to that spot because it scared me," one fisherman told the investigator. "Problem is, it's some great fishing."

Scoff if you must, but Craig said he's convinced Bigfoot exists.

"If only one of the people we've talked to is telling the truth, then there's something out there," he said.

"There is certainly a mystery and we're trying our best to get to the bottom of it."

His advice for Bigfoot-seeking West Texans?

"Driving late at night on rural roads, keep your eyes peeled. You may be rounding a bend and see one standing on the side of the highway or cutting across the road.

"And that will make you believe." Source: R. Smith, San Angelo, TX *Standard-Times* Aug. 14, 2005.

THE ELVES OF ICELAND

HAFNARFJORDUR, Iceland - Do elves exist? Like many Icelanders, Hildur Hakonardottir considers the question to be more complicated than it appears.

"This is a very, very, very delicate question," Ms. Hakonardottir, a retired museum director, said. "If you ask people if they believe in elves, they will say yes and no. If they say yes, maybe they don't, and if they say no, maybe they do."

Hypothetically speaking, what does she think elves look like?

"Well, my next-door neighbor is an elf woman," she declared suddenly. "She lives in a cliff in a rock in my garden."

Despite having seen the elf only once in 15 years - enough time to determine that she was "bigger than life and dressed like my grandmother, in a 1930's national costume" - Ms. Hakonardottir, 67, has no doubt of her existence. "My daughter once asked me, 'How do you know where elves live?'" she said. "I told her you just know. It's just a feeling."

It is a feeling that many people in Iceland apparently share. Polls consistently show that the majority of the population either believes in elves - generally described as humanlike creatures who are fiercely protective of their rocky homes - or is not willing to rule out their existence. But while believing in elves is rooted in Iceland's culture, it remains a touchy subject.

"You have to watch out for the Nordic cliché," the Icelandic singer Bjork told *The New Yorker* magazine several years ago. "A friend of mine says that when record-company executives come to Iceland, they ask the bands if they believe in elves, and whoever says yes gets signed up."

Yet even Bjork cannot say no for sure. "We think nature is a lot stronger than man," she said in another interview when the Elf question came up. "A relationship with things spiritual has not gone away."

A belief not just in elves but also in the predictive power of dreams, in the potency of dead spirits and in other supernatural phenomena, is closely linked to Iceland's Celtic traditions and punishing, powerful landscape - especially the harsh weather and the rocks that appear everywhere.

"If there was a large stone in the garden, and somebody said to an Icelanders, 'That's an elf stone,'

would they blow it up? They wouldn't," said Terry Gunnell, head of the folkloristic department at the University of Iceland in Reykjavik.

"It's not like they think there are little people living in there who come and dance outside," he added. "It's more a sense that there are other powers, other forces around them."

This town, a port on the outskirts of Reykjavik, prides itself on its unusually high elf population. Tourists are invited to tour the known elf locations, including a large rock whose reputation as an elf habitat meant that a nearby road was diverted some years ago as not to disturb its unseen residents.

Elly Erlingsdottir, head of the town council's planning committee, said that made sense to her. Recently, she said, some elves borrowed her kitchen scissors, only to return them a week later to a place she had repeatedly searched. "My philosophy is, you don't have to see everything you believe in," she said, because many of your greatest experiences happen with closed eyes."

Recently, the planning committee considered a resident's application to build a garage. "One member said, 'I hope it's O. K. with the elves,'" Ms. Erlingsdottir related. Should the council determine that it is, in fact, not O. K. - usually this happens when a local mystic hears from the elf population, directly or through a vision - the town would consider moving the project, or getting the mystic to ask the elves to move away, she said.

Such occurrences are not unusual, in nearby Kopavogur, a section of Elfhill Road was narrowed from two lanes to one in the 1970's, when repeated efforts to destroy a large rock that was believed to house elves were thwarted by equipment breakdowns. The rock is still there, jutting awkwardly into the road, but it is unclear whether the tenants are.

"With the artificial lampposts, there's too much light for them, and there's also too much noise," explained Gurdrun Bjarnadottir, who has lived across the street for some 30 years. "A lot of people believe they still live there, but I think they've moved."

In the same town in 1996, a bulldozer operator, Hjortur Hjartarson, ran into trouble as he tried to raze a suspected elf hill to make way for a graveyard.

After two different bulldozers repeatedly and inexplicably malfunctioned, and local television cameras failed when trained on the hill, though they worked elsewhere, the crew halted the project. "We're going to see whether we can't reach an understanding with the elves," Jon Inji, the project supervisor, told *Morgunbladid*, a Reykjavik newspaper, at the time.

Local elf communicators were called in to arbitrate, and after a while, work resumed. "In my opinion, well, whatever it is, hidden people or elves, it has just accepted this and moved away from there," Mr. Hjartarson told Vladimar Hafstein, an academic researcher who in the late 1990's published "The Elves' Point of View," an article about elves and their effect on construction projects. "That's my opinion."

Although he found many similar cases, Mr. Hafstein has grown weary of the subject. For a while, the Icelandic tourist board cited him as a national elf expert. "I kind of feel that I've done my part," he said. He recently completed a doctoral thesis (on Unesco, not elves) for the University of California, Berkeley.

Although it is easy to find Icelanders who roll their eyes at elf conversations, it is not easy to find hardcore skeptics. But 73-year-old Arni Bjornsson is one.

"Today it is almost a fashion to say that you believe in supernatural beings, but I take this with a pinch of salt," said Mr. Bjornsson, who worked for 25 years as the head of the ethnology department at the national museum.

But even he is not saying no, exactly. "If you were to ask me, 'Are you sure there are no supernatural beings?' I would say I don't believe there are," he said. "But I wouldn't rule it out."

Source: Sarah Lyall, *The New York Times* July 13, 2005.

1974 OHIO MYSTERY SPHERE

Whatever it was, it frightened squirrel hunter Keith Hammerman of Bremen, O., so severely he set off at a fast lope for the Ollie Wagner home on Cats Creek near Lowell in Washington County, O. It also ended all his enthusiasm for his first squirrel hunt.

This "what ever," that fell from the sky Saturday morning between 10 and 11 a.m. landed no more

than 50 feet from Hammerman.

Out of breath, he told Mr. and Mrs. Wagner on whose farm he was hunting, "I was under a bank when I heard a noise like a sonic boom, then a sound like a shot followed by a long whistling sound.

"Something landed with a great noise on the bank above my head. I scrambled up the bank and saw something had landed with such force it had buried itself in the ground. It was hot, as steam was coming from the hole where it was and from the ground around it. I thought it might explode, so I took off."

That evening, Wagner and another man went to hunt for the mysterious fall.

"We finally found it," Wagner said. "In fact, we could smell it, a kind of sulphur smell which helped us locate the object.

"It was buried in the ground nearly three feet deep but we dug it out and brought it home. If it had rained before we found it, it would have been covered up and never found," Wagner added.

He estimated that the object, shaped like a basketball only larger, weighed at least 25 pounds.

It is of metal, probably steel and has a clear ring when tapped with a metal object, a ring as clear and high pitched as fine glass or china.

A ridge around the circumference of the dull grey metal ball may have been a weld done by an expert craftsman.

On opposite sides there is a hollow tube-like protuberance about a quarter of an inch long as though a narrow shaft might have been run through the object.

Sniffing these holes, we found that a trace of some unidentifiable odor still lingers.

"If it had fallen on a house or car - to say nothing of a person - it would have done a lot of damage and probably set them on fire, too," Mrs. Wagner observed, "as the heat was terrific."

The noise when the object fell was heard in Lowell and other places that are several miles distant. And, there was no aircraft overhead at the time.

Right now, it's anyone's guess as to what this mysterious object is, or where it came from. Source: Helen White, *The Parkersburg, WV News* September 9, 1974.

"MYSTERY BOOMS" IN WINSTON - SALEM, NC

The mystery booms that rocked much of downtown Winston-Salem, North Carolina Saturday night, March 5, 2005, may remain forever a mystery.

About 8:20 p.m., 911 dispatchers started getting a mass of calls reporting the booms, said Shawn Cline, the hazardous materials coordinator for the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Office of Emergency Management.

"The calls concerned an area downtown between Glade and Cherry Streets, from Brookstown Avenue to the south and West 24th Street to the north," he said.

Cline said he had not ruled out as of yesterday whether a small earthquake or sonic booms might have caused the noises, but by the end of the day he did not have a valid answer.

"There may not be enough earth-measuring equipment in the area to determine whether a small earthquake occurred," said Tyler Clark, the chief geologist at the North Carolina Geological Survey.

"This is likely to go down in the history books as a mystery," Clark said.

Saturday's booms were about the tenth event he has had from the Winston-Salem area in the past five years, Clark said.

"These are not anything new," he said, "They've happened to our state for a long time.

"There are more active fault lines in states that border North Carolina than there are inside the state," he said.

"In North Carolina, we sit in the quiet zone," he said. Because of this, there is not a network of seismic equipment to track local earthquakes.

It may be possible that the noises were a sonic boom, which is more likely to make the kind of explosive sound reported than an earthquake, Clark said.

"But a sonic boom could not have come from a plane leaving or landing at Smith-Reynolds Airport because the plane would be going too slow," said Dave Short, the air traffic manager at the airport.

"Smith-Reynolds air traffic controllers do not track anything else above its air space of 12,000 feet,"

Short said.

City public utilities officials considered the possibility that a methane explosion in a nearby sewer could have caused the booms but rules out the possibility.

"If the explosion had happened, there's got to be a release of pressure elsewhere," said Ron Hargrove, the deputy director of the City-County Utilities Division. There have been no such reports, which could include such things as blown manhole covers.

Loud noises and vibration that struck the Konnoiac Hills in 1994 turned out to be a small earthquake, the largest of which measured 1.7 on the Richter scale. Source: Joseph Trainor, "UFO Roundup" Vol. 10 No. 11.

OHIO MAN KEEPS UP BIGFOOT SEARCH

PARIS TWP. - It was a hot summer night in August 1978.

Evelyn Cayton was sitting at the kitchen table with family and friends. They heard a noise in her backyard on Lincoln Street SE, about two miles west of Minerva.

It wasn't the first time. The kids had heard strange noises before. They thought it was a hermit. Maybe a crazed mountain man. It made the dog go berserk.

Then they saw something in the woods - a 6-foot-tall, thickly haired beast.

The night of Aug. 20 was different. The beast got closer than ever, peering into the kitchen window, illuminated by an outside light, reeking of ammonia and rotten eggs.

Weighing 300 pounds, black-and-brown matted hair covered its head and body, making the face indistinguishable.

Earlier that night, the Caytons and their guests searched for it. They saw it in the headlights of a car. The manlike animal moved toward them. Everybody got scared and ran inside. A woman was so frightened she cried.

Twenty-six years ago this month, the stunned group reported what they saw to Stark County sheriff's deputy James Shannon.

Some details elude him, but Shannon remembers that night, the start of what he calls the most bizarre investigation of his 30-year law enforcement career.

"They heard something in the window, kind of clawing and pawing," said Shannon, who retired in 1997 as a captain in the department. "From what I remember, I don't think this creature, critter, whatever the hell it was, was trying to get in as much as it was saying 'Hey, look at me.'"

Shannon did not suspect a hoax. Not a hint of it.

The family saw something. He doesn't know what, though he's not convinced it was a Bigfoot.

Then again, "For all I knew, I could have been the first person to substantiate the existence of one."

The sighting was a sensation.

It made the front page of *The Repository* four times.

"Deputies seek 6-foot beast," trumpeted the headline on the first story, at the bottom corner, of the front page. A few days later, the story was bannered across the top: "Beast still, but noises, odor persists."

"Deputies will resume a stake-out tonight in efforts to spot a 6-foot hairy beast that frightened a Lincoln St. SE family earlier this week," the Aug. 24 story began.

Jim Hillibish gumshoed the story for *The Repository*.

It was those doldrums between the Hall of Fame (festival) and Labor Day," he said, laughing. "It was a good story, and we kept it going."

Overnight, the property became a Bigfoot outpost, attracting media from Akron, Cleveland and even outside the country. Wire services spread the story nationally. Bigfoot investigators from Florida and California and hunters armed with high-power rifles descended on 14186 Lincoln St. SE.

A van drove onto the Cayton's front yard one time. A group of hunters hopped out, flanked by Doberman pinschers, trekking into the deep woods and old strip mine behind the property. Bigfoot believers camped out in the woods.

It got so bad that the Caytons posted a fence to keep gawkers out. Evelyn Cayton was on the brink of a nervous breakdown.

"I think the hype lasted into the fall," Shannon recalled.

In 1983, Herbert Cayton, Evelyn's husband, recounted the Bigfoot buzz.

"One day there were 100 to 150 cars ... in my driveway, on my lawn and lining both sides of the road," he said.

Evelyn and Herbert Cayton are deceased. The remaining Caytons are publicity shy. Howe Cayton, a son, and Rebecca Manley, a daughter, declined to be interviewed about the Bigfoot.

The family took a lot of razzing. At a high school football game, local folks mocked them, chanting, "Bigfoot, Bigfoot." A local eatery spoofed the sighting, advertising on a roadside sign: "Bigfoot ate here."

Herbert Cayton took the skepticism in stride.

"There were doubters," he said. "Those who yelled things from car windows when they passed. It was weird ... The way I feel about it is if they don't want to believe, they don't have to."

"I think most people thought of it as a joke, as a lark," said Shannon.

But the Cayton report spurred claims of other sightings.

"Somebody claimed that they saw a Bigfoot running across Route 30 near the Caytons' house," Shannon said. "It was a fog-shrouded night and all of a sudden they saw this thing dart out in front of them."

Another sighting was reported on Liberty Church Road SE.

The woman "reported hearing strange noises in the woods surrounding her house since sometime in June," Shannon's August report said. It sounded like a cat fight or a woman's shriek, she said. Neighbors heard the noises.

Shannon took the Bigfoot report seriously, like any other investigation: a stolen car, a drug deal, a barroom scuffle.

On the night of Aug. 20, he spent an hour or two at the Cayton home, then returned when daylight broke.

Shannon and four other deputies scoured the area, searching for six or seven hours in Army surplus Jeeps and on horseback.

"A lot of people thought it was a bear, somebody thought it was a deer," Shannon said. "And I thought, 'These people ought to be able to tell the difference.'"

Herbert Cayton, who worked the midnight shift at Diebold, wasn't home that night, but said he had seen the creature twice before.

"It was shaped like a man and it walked like a man," he told *The Repository* in 1983. "When a bear moves away, it goes away on all four feet. This swung up over the (edge of the) strip mine on two."

Part of a skull was found in a pit behind the Cayton home, Shannon said; it appeared to be from a cow or other large animal. Tufts of fur were found on the remains of a chicken coop, where the Caytons had spotted the Bigfoot sitting.

The fur and skull went to Malone College for analysis. The skull also was taken to the pathology laboratory at Aultman Hospital, but the hospital refused to examine it.

Nobody knows what happened to them.

Suzie Thomas, spokeswoman for Malone College, said she's fielded questions about the samples before and has asked those who were on campus then.

"Either their memory is failing them, or they're just not admitting they were involved in a hunt for (Bigfoot)," she said, laughing.

Shannon and other deputies interviewed the Cayton family, friends, even a professional photographer in quest of a snapshot of Bigfoot.

The Caytons never used the word "Bigfoot."

Mrs. Cayton simply described a creature, more than 6 feet tall with stubby legs and hairy, indistinct features, that at one point turned to protect two "smaller things that were standing beside it," the report said. It eventually walked away into the strip mine.

Manley, 27, and her sister Vicki Keck, 25 were shaken.

Scott Patterson, 18, a family friend, also was rattled. Skeptical of past sightings, Patterson told Shannon he was now a "believer."

The sightings didn't end on Aug. 20.

Two days later, Mary Ackerman, another Cayton daughter, said she saw the beast standing on the edge of a strip mine when she pulled into her parents' driveway, and five days after the initial report, John Nutter, a photographer from Cuyahoga Falls, said he saw a bear about 30 feet away in a wooded area near Liberty Church Road SE. Nutter took a photo and retreated quickly. A deputy combed the area for 90 minutes and found what appeared to be bear tracks.

But Nutter's color film produced a "fuzzy" image, and he waffled on the bear story.

"I thought it over and now (I) don't think it was a bear," he told *The Repository* a few days later. "It made a sound unlike any bear I've ever heard." Source: Ed Balint, Canton, OH *Repository* Aug.20, 2004.

GHOSTS HAUNT TORONTO THEATRES

A bare light bulb burns all night, every night, on the Royal Alexandra stage to repel ghosts.

Since 1907, when the theatre opened, a light has burned from the same wrought iron stand at the stage's dead centre. As a result, perhaps, the theatre is free of the mean and jealous type of phantom said to haunt the Paris Opera.

Benign spirits, however, are reported frequently.

The enduring presence of Vic Egglestone, a stage technician for 40 years until his death seven years ago, can be felt at the old stage door, employees say. In 2002, a ghost-hunting team said it had identified others: an apprentice who fell to his death from the paint room high above the stage; an opera singer in a flowing gown who haunts the first balcony; a man who wanders the upper dressing-room corridor wearing a fedora and cream-colored jacket.

The Royal Alex is not unique. At the Winter Garden, a ghost known as the Lavender Lady and trailing a lavender scent can often be spotted, patrons say. At the Factory Theatre, footsteps of no clear origin and other unexplained noises can be heard.

"In ancient Greece, it was always felt that theatres were the natural habitat of spirits, partly because theatre arose out of a religious ceremony," says John Karastamatis, communications director for Mirvish Productions, which owns the Royal Alex.

"To ward off spirits, a light would always be lit. In older times it was a flame in the middle of the stage. When electricity came into being, it was a naked light bulb."

The Royal Alex, at 260 King St. W., is the only Canadian theatre still adhering to the tradition, Karastamatis says. Ironically, Mirvish's two other theatres have no ghost lights and no ghosts.

One is the nearby Princess of Wales Theatre. The other is the Canan Theatre at 244 Victoria St., formerly The Pantages, where Andrew Lloyd Webber's *The Phantom of the Opera* played for 4,226 performances over 10 years, ending on Halloween night, 1999.

The most detailed local story of a theatre ghost comes from Whitby.

Twenty years ago, a member of the Whitby Courthouse Theatre spoke of an apparition dropping from the balcony during a performance and approaching the stage. Psychics Stephen Welling and Shirley Richard went to investigate.

They knew the room had once served as the main courtroom for Ontario County, beginning in 1854.

They also knew that in 1873 the *Whitby Chronicle* had reported sightings of "the courthouse ghost ... a tall figure walking heavily with a cane, and frequently stopping to look up at the sky and groan."

The psychics confirmed its presence in seat G-10 of the balcony.

They also divined its story: Sometime in the 1800s, a youth went on trial, possibly for rape. Upstairs, in a room across from the balcony entrance, his father, or possibly uncle, paced anxiously, awaiting the verdict.

The judge re-entered the courtroom. The man raced through the balcony entrance. The judge pronounced, "Guilty." He cryptically shouted, "Right the wrong" and toppled over the balcony railing to his death.

One further mystery stands out.

The ghost hunters at the Royal Alex two years ago identified a presence in seat P-11, at the aisle

on the main floor.

Employees explained that an elderly woman died in the seat in 1996 during Henrik Ibsen's *The Master Builder*, starring Alan Bates. At intermission, ushers discreetly removed the body in a wheelchair.

Why the deceased woman continues to haunt the seat might be understandable.

How the ushers were able to detect anything unusual about a person sitting slouched over and stiff during a three-hour Ibsen play, however, has yet to be explained. Source: John Goddard, *The Toronto Star* December 19, 2004.

COLUMNIST RECALLS CALIF. STRANGENESS - by Tom Stienstra

At a late summer campout with my dad and brother, I remember being lined up in our sleeping bags, staring up and asking, "What's out there past the stars?"

My dad chuckled and my brother pointed to the sky. "You mean like up there in that black spot?" he asked.

"Yeah, and past that."

"More stars. You can see them with a telescope."

"But how far does it go?"

At age 10, it was difficult to accept that there wasn't a verified answer for all of my questions. After all, my dad and big brother seemed to know everything. In a career where I have traveled more than 1 million miles in California, I have more questions than ever about things I have seen and heard.

Here are three such cases, including one reported to me last week, which inspired this column:

The South Fork Pilgrims

Deep in Six Rivers National Forest in the northwest corner of California, a geologist, forester and two assistants were driving up South Fork Road on a fall day to assess salmon spawning habitat, as well as a landslide and the tree-planting program designed to stabilize it.

This was along the South Fork Smith River. From Highway 199, South Fork Road extends for about 20 miles along the South Fork Smith, a remote and beautiful canyon, and then forks off on other roads to trailheads leading to the boundary of the Siskiyou Wilderness.

As they drove in, the crew discussed the matrix of water volume, water quality, soil erosion and spawning habitat capacity, and the effects these factors have on salmon populations. The lead scientist was making a point when he glanced to the left and spotted some folks along the river on a sand bar.

"Look at those people," he said. "They're all wearing pilgrim clothes."

They continued their discussion as they drove on.

About five minutes down the road, while talking about how culverts can block passage of salmon to reach tributaries to spawn, the scientist stopped in mid-sentence.

"You guys all saw those people dressed in pilgrim clothes along the river, right?" the scientist asked. Everybody did, came the answers.

"There's something not right about that. Where did they come from? Did you see any cars parked anywhere?"

He jammed the vehicle to a stop, turned around and high-tailed it back to the spot. But the pilgrims were gone.

"We all know what we saw, some people dressed in pilgrim clothes long the South Fork Smith," he said. "When we realized what we saw, we went back to check it out and they weren't there."

The Klamath flat tire

On a trip to the most remote canyon in Klamath National Forest, my old buddy, the late Jeff Patty, and I were driving to the canyon lip of the headwaters of Blue Creek. This canyon has no roads to trails, and we were going to spend a week trekking on deer trails, fishing and playing tag with the bears.

From the Klamath River town of Orleans, we drove for more than an hour on logging roads into the forest interior. We saw no one. Then, as we neared the canyon rim, we got a flat tire. When we tried to jack up the rig, the jack broke into three pieces.

"This is bad," Jeff said, "real bad." We estimated we were about 30 to 35 miles from another person.

But less than 20 seconds after the jack broke, this ancient pick-up truck with old rounded fenders came around the bend. Without a word, a young man and woman, dressed in historic Native American clothing, got out, pulled out a jack and tire iron, and changed our tire. They said nothing and waved us off when we tried to help.

Each was an amazing physical specimen. The man was tall, slim and muscular, wearing a buckskin vest with no shirt. His hair was long and black, his nose hooked, with dark, clear eyes and perfect complexion. The woman was his match, a classic beauty, and what I remember best was her radiant brown eyes and perfect posture.

They never acknowledged us. After the spare was on, they got back in that old truck and drove off ahead of us.

After a few minutes reviewing our luck, we started our truck and drove on, and to our surprise, we hit the end of the road in about two minutes.

"Where'd they go?" I remember Jeff asking.

That old truck didn't pass us coming out. There were no logging spurs to turn on. And it wasn't at the end of the road.

Wild man of the woods

In the past 25 years, I received more than 60 reports of Bigfoot sightings. After being hired to lead a six-week Bigfoot expedition in the 1980s and after some 20,000 miles of hiking, I've never seen Mr. Bigfoot or anything in regard to the myth/legend that I couldn't explain.

But last week, I ran into a taxidermist friend who lives in rural Tehama County, a conservative, well-read, last-of-the-earth kind of guy, who told me this story:

"On the flank of a mountain (that I'm keeping secret for now until I check the area out) in Northern California, I was involved in a logging operation and was driving with my wife on a remote mountain road. Out of nowhere, what looked like a man covered with fur, about 6-feet tall, jumped out of the woods, ran across the road in front of us, and down into the canyon." The incident took a matter of seconds, he said.

"I got out and looked and it was like it disappeared. It went straight down a shale slope. We came back the next day and could not find a single footprint, trail or anything. But we know what we saw. It was something running upright."

He doesn't tell many people about this, he says, but confides it to me in a matter-of-fact style, and his wife, also a straight-ahead type, sitting alongside, never blinked. Source: *The San Francisco Chronicle* September 11, 2005.

"CHAMP" STILL VERY MUCH AROUND

Alas, it's safe to assume that whatever Dick Affolter and Pete Bodette saw and photographed in Lake Champlain on a clear, still afternoon in July will not provide the Champ-ologists and cryptozoologists of the world with anything resembling proof that there really is a mysterious sea creature living in the lake, which stretches for 120 miles between the United States and Canada.

It would be easier to roll your eyes and dismiss their murky video - and their vivid tale - of a huge, serpentlike sea creature that swam just beneath the surface for 45 minutes, if the two were not serious fishermen, upstanding citizens and people who know virtually all the critters in and around Lake Champlain and had no apparent motive for trying to pull off a hoax for the ages.

It would also be easier to be convinced that they had actually come up with something significant if the video they took on Mr. Bodette's digital camera showed something more revealing than a long, narrow shape moving for a very long time in the still waters of the lake.

But since people have been tantalized for 400 years, whether by reports of a terrifying Lake Champlain sea monster or the cute, loveable, Nessie-like "Champ" of car wash and restaurant signs in Vermont and upstate New York, why should we expect anything more definitive now?

So, for those thrilled by the thought of that 26-foot-long giant squid photographed for the first time off the Bonin Islands 600 miles south of Tokyo, consider the tale of two Vermont fishermen and the

latest chapter in upstate's longest-running wildlife adventure.

Like its spiritual cousin in Loch Ness, at pretty much the same latitude due east, whatever might be in Lake Champlain has proved elusive for centuries, despite hundreds of reported sightings and a small cottage industry of true believers. Alternately likened to an eel, a snake, a serpent, a sea monster, a prehistoric creature and Lord knows what else, it's a part of the Champlain mindset, a lure to local tourism, a source of fascination and an alluring riddle. In 1873, P. T. Barnum, not best known as a fisheries biologist, offered a reward of \$50,000 for "hide of the great Champlain serpent to add to my mammoth World's Fair Show."

Enter Mr. Affolter, 64, a retired defense attorney and a graduate of Cornell University Law School, and Mr. Bodette, 35, his step-son and a sales manager for a fuel company, who has spent most of his life near the lake. As the two tell it, they were fishing for salmon near the mouth of the Ausable River, about a third of the way down the lake, when they noticed something that looked like a log floating about 100 feet from their boat. Intrigued, they trolled toward it until, to their amazement, it submerged like a submarine only to resurface about a half-hour later, and they were able to watch it for another 45 minutes.

Neither can tell you for sure what they saw other than it was enormous, very clearly alive and unlike anything they had ever seen, at least 15 feet long, elongated like a snake or serpent. They saw it had a head shaped like a sledgehammer, produced a high bifurcated wake, lacked the familiar dorsal fins of a fish and apparently did not need to come for air like a dolphin or whale. They reject suggestions it was something familiar - mating snakes, a giant sturgeon, large otters.

"I'm not some guy who came fishing for a weekend and thought he saw something funny," said Mr. Bodette. "I've fished all over the world. I've been on this lake since I was a little kid. And I believe we saw something there that not many people have seen.

"I have no idea what it is. But I'm pretty certain what I saw isn't anything you'll find in any fish and wildlife books."

Unfortunately, the video, viewed at the office of Scott Shagin, an intellectual-property lawyer in Paramus, N.J., shows nothing more than a long dark shape impossible to categorize that floats at a distance and at one point seems to go under the boat. The men can be heard talking excitedly, describing it as being like a serpent. But no head emerges from the water, and in the end it's impossible to be sure what was seen.

Mr. Shagin took the video to Melanie L. J. Stiassny, curator of fishes at the American Museum of Natural History, and some of her colleagues there. They were seriously underwhelmed.

"The evidence I was presented was singularly unconvincing," she said. "We didn't see anything that led any of us to feel anything other than bemused as to what led these guys to think this was anything so special. It certainly wasn't any large vertebrate. We're sure of that."

A study in 2003 in the magazine *Skeptical Inquirer*, which tends to debunk claims of the paranormal, concluded that the tales over the years have been so contradictory as to be meaningless, and that there is no serious evidence any such creature exists: "One cannot draw a conclusion from a lack of knowledge, and so, until an actual specimen presents itself, the possibility that any large unknown animal inhabits Lake Champlain remains somewhere between extraordinary slim and none."

But some local scientists, including Ellen Marsden, a fisheries biologist at the University of Vermont, say the sightings are so numerous that it's certainly possible there's something intriguing and unexplained in the lake, if not necessarily a 10,000-year-old dinosaur.

And besides the multitude of sightings, believers tend to point to two bulwarks of the modern Champ canon.

First is a 1977 photograph, taken with a Kodak Instamatic camera by a woman named Sandra Mansi, of a large serpent neck emerging from the water of what she said was Lake Champlain. She does not have the negative and waited several years to make the picture public, so its authenticity is easy to question and impossible to prove. But her lawyer said that Ms. Mansi "could no more have constructed such a hoax than put a satellite in orbit."

Second is a 2003 study by Fauna Communications Research Institute, a nonprofit institute that studies animal communication. It conducted audio research in the lake and found evidence of

echolocation, a high-frequency signal that allows animals to detect sounds and identify objects underwater - a highly sophisticated response it said was associated only with dolphins and whales, neither of which live in the lake.

"What we can say is that there is a creature in the lake that produces bio-sonar, and we have no idea what it is," the institute's report concluded. On the other hand, a recent lake study by researchers at Middlebury College, in Vermont, found nothing similar.

As it is, the only thing people do agree on is that almost everyone wants to believe there is something unknown, magical out in the lake. Mr. Affolter, for his part, says he doesn't know what he saw in Lake Champlain, and part of him hopes no one else does either. "Everything gets demystified," he said. "We're all so jaded. Maybe this is better as a mystery that's never solved." Source: Peter Applebome, *The New York Times* October 12, 2005.

1965 NORTHEAST BLACKOUT AND UFOs - by Mike Hudson

While researching an article on Nikola Tesla, I came across a series of documents of undeniable interest, at least to anyone with a somewhat skeptical and perhaps twisted sensibility.

All of the documents pertained to the Great Northeast Power Blackout of 1965. Many were clippings from the old *Niagara Falls Gazette* and dealt with eyewitness reports - by city police officers, state troopers and Air Force personnel - of UFO activity in the vicinity of the power plants before, during and after that unprecedented event.

The basic facts of the incident are well known. At 5:16 p.m. on Nov. 9, 1965, 30 million people in eight U.S. states and the province of Ontario were suddenly plunged into darkness. Trapped in elevators, office buildings and on expressways, one-sixth of the continent's residents suddenly found themselves without electrical power.

A joint investigation into the disaster by the U. S. Federal Power Commission and the Ontario Hydro-Electric Power Commission ultimately discovered that a sudden surge of power had tripped a circuit breaker at the Sir Adam Beck generating station in Queenston. Line after line went down in Ontario and, by the time the surge hit New York, the charge amounted to some 1.1 million kilowatts. The chain reaction continued until the entire East Coast of the United States was blacked out.

Although experts were able to pinpoint the origin of the blackout, they were baffled by the cause of the relay malfunctions and the failure of protective systems to contain the overload.

Furthermore, the origin of the sudden power surge remained a mystery.

In a Nov. 19, 1965, *Ontario Hydro Hydroscope* article, system supervising engineer Jim Harris was at a loss to explain the incident.

"It's incredible! I would have said this was impossible if I hadn't seen the evidence," he said.

Just two weeks before the blackout, on Oct. 22, 1965, in an article entitled, "Many report seeing two UFOs," the *Gazette* chronicled the activity near the power plants.

"Dozens of persons Tuesday night watched two unidentified flying objects moving and hovering over this area for more than an hour," the article stated. "The objects, bright lights which changed color, were below cloud level and remained at a fairly low level during most of the period they were observed.

"Observers said the objects were not helicopters or conventional aircraft. At one point, about 8 p.m., the two objects, which had been widely separated when viewed earlier, approached each other on a collision course until they 'teamed up' and moved off close together toward Buffalo," the article added.

The objects were first sighted "on the Canadian side of the river, at a point opposite Lewiston." In other words, over Queenston and the Sir Adam Beck plant.

Among the witnesses named in the article were State Trooper John Riehl, Alden residents Roselle Simon and Leonard Butler, and V.D. Price and Raymond Bright, employees of the American Standard Division in North Tonawanda.

"This was not a satellite. Satellites travel in straight lines and within a few minutes they are gone," Bright told the *Gazette*. This hung in the sky for about half an hour. It would move off in one direction and then stop. Then it would change direction and move off again."

The relationship between the blackout and reported UFO activity wasn't lost on the scientific community.

In a statement prepared for hearings held on the blackout by the Federal Power Commission, University of Arizona physicist Dr. James McDonald contended that magnetic fields accompanying UFOs could cause sudden power surges and could, theoretically, trigger a blackout.

Writing about the event on April 2, 1968, *Gazette* reporter Joe Donaldson recalled the reports on the night of the blackout.

"After the big blackout, spokesmen for the power firms denied a strange light was spotted over the Beck Station the night of Nov. 9. Since then, however, they have admitted that sightings were reported by hundreds of people," the veteran newsman wrote.

But gradually, the "broken two-dollar switch" theory as to the cause of the disaster became the accepted version of events.

This would not mark the end of credible reports of UFOs in Niagara Falls, however.

On Aug. 4, 1966, the *Gazette* reported "Bright, high-flying, fast moving objects observed during the night and similarly described by three Niagara Falls residents."

This time the witnesses were Mrs. George Haberle of the Parkway Apartments and 91st Street residents Russell Sorenberger and Bill Nelson. Ironically, attempts by the paper to reach Capt. Harry Meir, chief of operations and training at Niagara Falls Air Base, were unsuccessful because Meir had been in Erie, Pa., investigating another UFO report.

Two Niagara Falls city policemen and a former Air Force radar chief had their own close encounters over a 48-hour period in August 1967.

According to an Aug. 25, 1967, *Gazette* article, the two officers, Patrolmen Anthony Caraglin and David Greene, saw a pair of UFOs while patrolling at 19th Street and Mackenna Avenue. They filed an official report of the incident.

"We saw two objects in the sky - one object went in an easterly direction then went northeasterly. As the object went out of sight it appeared to give off different colored lights. While the object was in sight it was a solid white light and appeared to be round.

"Object Two was the same as Object One but went from south to north and went out of sight. Both objects were in view for approximately 15 minutes and appeared to be very high," the report stated.

Howard Kay of Youngstown was working at DuPont that night. An eight-year Air Force radar chief, he told the *Gazette* the object he saw over the Niagara River near Buffalo Avenue looked like "an inverted cereal bowl and was lit up."

Perhaps predictably, USAF Information Officer Thomas White said he knew nothing about the UFOs.

"I have checked with the U.S. Air Force Station in Lockport, and the 763rd Radar Squadron there reports no objects logged by their radar screens at these times," he told the *Gazette*.

Eight months later, on April 2, 1968, no fewer than three NFPD patrolmen reported UFOs from two separate locations.

The pulsating lights hovered for nearly an hour in the vicinity of the Beck Station, the officers said.

Patrolmen Thomas Shumway and William Wells watched the lights from Lewiston Road and Hyde Park Boulevard.

"They were like something I had never seen before," Shumway told the *Gazette*. "They were in formation and they were pulsating."

Shumway said the red, white and blue lights did not come from an airplane and were motionless until they suddenly shot away to the northwest at a tremendous rate of speed.

At the same time, Patrolman Richard Adkins confirmed the lights were hovering across the Niagara River from the Robert Moses Power Plant and near the Beck Station.

He said the lights were about 1,000 feet in the air and that, from time to time, a red streak of light would pass through the formation.

While strange lights are still occasionally reported in the Niagara skies, it appears that 1965 to 1968 represented something of a golden age for UFO sightings here.

And in the presence of so much documentation and credible testimony by trained observers, it

seems difficult to deny that something was going on.

What - exactly - the mysterious objects were will likely never be known.

It is interesting to note that the Air Force employed a device to disrupt electrical power in the city of Belgrade during the Kosovo war. Could some early testing of a similar device have resulted in the 1965 blackout?

We'll have to settle for what it is. A page of Niagara history that you won't find in the history books. Source: Niagara Falls, NY *Reporter* October 25, 2005.

BIGFOOT IN THE OZARKS

Our story probably falls within the folklore category, considering we here in Missouri tend to be skeptical of anything that is not tangible. We have to be shown the absolute proof of the facts, as indicated by our nickname, the Show-Me State.

It is generally believed our state's nickname came from a speech by Congressman Willard Duncan Vandiver of Missouri in 1899. Speaking in Philadelphia, Vandiver said: "...frothy eloquence neither convinces nor satisfies me. I am from Missouri. You have got to show me."

Herein lies our problem. We have no proof about the validity of this story, only hearsay, but it originates from the deep hills of the Ozarks, if that tells you anything. Many tales of lore, old wives' tales, and superstition have come from the Ozark hollers, gullies and mountaintops.

To complicate the problem, it actually took place just across the state line into Arkansas - and as you know - they are a little more "easily" convinced. But then who knows, the story may very well be true.

It all began when the good doctor wanted for murder managed to hide out and elude the law for nearly 20 years along the banks of War Eagle River, in the woods of Peter Bottoms. The hill country gets pretty remote southeast of the Roaring River State Park. When the doctor was finally discovered and brought to justice, the judge branded him as a nut case, and he was sentenced to the state mental institution.

Toward the end of his life, in the early 1960s, the crazy doctor called in local reporters to warn them of a hairy, white, albino monster that lived in the cave of Peter Bottoms. His story did stir up a little interest - especially in the citizens of War Eagle - but was generally dismissed as a figment of the doctor's demented imagination.

In the spring of 1966, the story surfaced again when two young men in their late 20s went horseback riding down the steep, rocky road that led down into Peter Bottoms. Suddenly, they were almost run off the road by a farm tractor coming full speed up the trail.

The frantic farmer stopped long enough to warn the young men to stay out, as there was a horrible monster living down there. The man on the tractor had just begun his spring plowing when he encountered the doctor's notorious albino monster.

Of course, the two horseback riders had to check this out for themselves and hurried on down the road. As they rode farther into the bottoms, their horses became nervous and skittish and refused to go any farther. The men tied their horses and proceeded on foot. Soon, they spotted a huge white clump of fur lying in tall grass under a cedar tree, which they assumed was a dead cow. Not 10 yards in front of them, the clump of white fur stood straight up on its hind feet and started toward them.

The frightened men later described the monster as eight to 10 feet tall, with pure white hair about 3 inches long. It had a strong, offensive odor, similar to "day old coffee grounds." The creature's body and facial features were more human-like than ape-like. It's been called, "The Bigfoot of the Ozarks."

The tale soon spread throughout the community and search parties combed the area for months. However, no sign of the monster has ever been seen, and Peter Bottoms to this day, had never again been plowed. Source: Blue Springs, MO *Examiner* June 23, 2004.

THE PEDRO MOUNTAIN, WYOMING "MUMMY"

In the name of poking holes in the theory of evolution, a Syracuse, N.Y., man says he will pay \$10,000 for one of the most mysterious artifacts ever dug up in Wyoming - the Pedro Mountain Mummy.

John Adolfi says he wants the Pedro Mountain Mummy, sometimes referred to as Pedro, in order to conduct DNA tests, X-rays, and magnetic resonance imaging on the little fellow.

Conducting such tests, however, is no easy matter, as the mummy vanished in 1950.

Although the mummy has not been seen in public for 55 years, several photos and many descriptions of the anomalous artifact remain.

According to these descriptions and photos, it is the size and proportions that make the mummy freakish and pique Adolfi's interest in it.

In the seated position in which Pedro is frozen, he stands only 7 inches tall. If he were to stand up, it was estimated Pedro would only stand 17 inches. And seated or standing, he only weighs three-quarters of a pound.

Adding to the Pedro Mountain Mummy enigma is the fact that he is proportioned much more like an adult than an infant.

According to Adolfi's hypothesis, conducting modern scientific tests on the mummy will reveal that Pedro was an adult at the time of this death. This would mean he was one of the "little people" - a mythical tribe of savage pygmies who haunted Wyoming's mountains, according to Arapaho and Shoshone tales.

These little people, Adolfi postulates, were a species of hominid primates which current evolutionary paradigms fail to take into account.

Adolfi admits that proof of a previously unknown prehistoric relative of man would not disprove evolution, as the recently discovered remains of *Homo floresiensis*, the "Hobbits" found in Indonesia, did not disprove it.

But, Adolfi says, proof of a new hominid species would poke holes in the paradigm evolutionists have created regarding human origins.

Pedro is also a fun artifact, and offering a reward for it is a great way for Adolfi's Web site to kick off a worldwide treasure hunt in which rewards will be offered for all kinds of artifacts that go against the accepted scientific and historic paradigms.

The Pedro Mountain Mummy was first discovered by Cecil Mayne in 1932.

Mayne was prospecting for gold near Pathfinder Reservoir when an explosion he detonated revealed a small cave, according to a Oct. 21, 1932, article in the *Casper Tribune-Herald*. Inside the cave Mayne found the mummified remains of what looked like a tiny human.

Debate about the mummy's nature started soon after it was found. Some said it was a hoax. Others said it was the mummified remains of a baby. And others said it was one of the little people spoken about in Indian legends, according to *Casper Tribune-Herald* stories from 1932.

The mummy somehow made its way to Meeteetse, where it was displayed at Jones Drug Store for some years.

In the mid-1940s a Casper used car salesman named Ivan Goodman spied Pedro in the Meeteetse store and bought it for several thousands of dollars.

Soon Goodman was using Pedro to attract people to his lot. The mummy also served as a sort of mascot for Goodman's auto dealership, and its image was placed in advertisements, according to a *Casper Shopper* story from March 9, 1977.

While in Goodman's hands, the mummy attracted the attention of several Eastern scientists. And in 1950 these scientists conducted the most extensive scientific study of the mummy ever.

X-rays revealed Pedro to have adult-like vertebrae and teeth, according to a *Casper Tribune-Herald* story from March 5, 1950.

Based on these findings, it was apparently concluded the mummy was an adult.

"After an exhaustive study by the scientists it was agreed that it was the only specimen known of a human race of that type which perhaps dated back a million years," Goodman was quoted as saying in the March 5, 1950, edition of the *Casper Tribune-Herald*.

Perhaps the study turned out to be a bit too exhaustive for Goodman, as he died later in 1950.

When Goodman died the mummy passed into the hands of New Yorker Leonard Wadler, according to a July 7, 1979, *Casper Star-Tribune* article.

Soon after, Wadler and his mummy vanished.

According to Adolphi, Wadler moved to Florida and died in the Sunshine State in the 1980s.

If the Pedro Mountain Mummy is to be found, Adolphi said, it will probably be discovered in Florida.

Although Adolphi hopes Pedro will turn out to be a separate species of hominid, recent studies suggest the artifact, although odd, doesn't relegate the currently accepted account of human origins to the trash bin.

According to studies done by George Gill, an anthropology professor at the University of Wyoming, X-rays taken in the 1950s of Pedro reveal him to be an infant who suffered from anencephaly, a birth defect in which only the brain stem develops.

Further testing on a female pygmy mummy brought to Gill revealed it also was an anencephalic infant.

Although Adolphi is only offering the \$10,000 reward for the mummy unearthed in 1932, he is interested in buying other pygmy mummies for lesser amounts, he said. Source: Brendan Burke, Casper, Wyoming *Star-Tribune* Feb. 1, 2005.

THE "PAULDING LIGHT" - by "Buckshot" Anderson

I would suspect nearly everyone loves a good mystery, and heaven knows we earthlings have numerous mysteries to solve here on Earth without pondering all those that lurk in outer space.

For me, mysteries fall into two basic categories. Man-made mysteries, and those found in the natural world.

For example, several man-made mysteries include: "Why can't children be taught to turn lights off?" Another mysterious mystery is: "Why do most adult men retain much of their childish behavior (myself included), like buying many expensive toys, which they seldom use?" And perhaps the greatest man-made mystery of all: "Why do women spend hour after hour pounding the walkways of the local mall and have no idea what they intend to buy?"

If you are into contemplating mysteries found in the natural world, we in the Northwoods have one of international fame. Many of you have no doubt heard about, or viewed for yourselves, the famous, "Paulding Light," which inhabits an area just north of Watersmeet, Mich.

Back in the early '80s, our son, Chris, took Wiffee Poo and I to see the mysterious glowing orb. I was highly skeptical about such quackery, but reluctantly rode along to play the role of disbeliever.

The area from which the light can be viewed was, and probably still is, a gathering spot for high school kids and curious onlookers of all ages. Both Chris and Cherie, our two oldest siblings, had ventured to the site of the light numerous times with friends and high school classmates. So Peggy and I had heard much fanfare about the Paulding Light before our maiden encounter with it.

About five miles north of Watersmeet on Hwy. 45 we took a gentle left hand turn onto Robins Pond Road. A short distance to the north we parked on the crest of a steep hill overlooking a large, well-defined valley. Twilight was rapidly waning, and darkness fell with a resounding thud, as the night sky was heavily overcast with a threat of rain.

No other vehicles nor viewers were present, and I settled back against the plush front seat of our son's car with a bored expression on my face. The Paulding Light wiped my face clean several minutes later!

One moment we were looking at nothing but the total blackness which engulfed us, and the next moment, "Presto," a glowing, bobbing, yellowish-orange ball of light was slowly zig-zagging over the valley below us. I do not recall my exact colorful expression at the light's sudden and unexpected appearance, but even if I could recall my exact vocabulary, quite possibly it would be unprintable.

We watched in awe for several minutes as the light danced and floated before us like a puppet on a string. I estimated its distance to be about a hundred yards from our vantage point. I couldn't believe what I was seeing and announced I was going to get out of the car and walk down the hill for a closer look. Chris warned me my ploy wouldn't work, as the light would disappear if anyone attempted to approach it. I scoffed and got out of the car.

I hadn't waked but a few steps and "Poof" the light was gone! I got back in the car, we waited a few moments and "Poof," the light reappeared! Again we watched the spectacle for another fifteen minutes or so and it floated back and forth across the valley. Then a fine mist began to fall, after

which the light vanished. So Chris turned his car around and took his no longer skeptical parents home.

I first heard about the Paulding Light from a pal of mine when I was attending Eagle River High School way back in the '50s. Gene "Mose" Olson's dad, Ollie, related tales he had heard about the origin of the mysterious nighttime light. Legend has it that even before the white man arrived on the scene, the local Native Americans shunned the area, claiming the valley was inhabited by "evil spirits." If true, then the mysterious light has been around for a long, long time.

Another popular explanation for the light is that it is caused by the ghost or spirit of a railroad switchman who was run over by a train years ago. He still waves his light as a warning to others.

Several different groups of scientific "xpurts" have done extensive research into what the source of the strange light really is. They have come up with everything from "moonbeams" to "reflected lights from cars on Hwy. 45," to "lights from lighthouses on Lake Superior." One report even used the standard explanation frequently used by the government to debunk UFO sightings! The report claimed the Paulding Light was simply glowing "swamp gas!"

The light has been photographed from different locations in an attempt to triangulate and pinpoint its exact source. It has been viewed from the air, the ground, from hills, from the valley and all points in between. And still, the Paulding Light defies all efforts to allow mankind to explain its presence and its source. And maybe that's a good thing!

If you'd like a much more detailed account of this local mysterious mystery, I highly recommend a book entitled *The Haunted Northwoods* by the late, legendary, local author, Tom Hollatz. Besides a comprehensive chapter about the Paulding Light, Tom exposes numerous other tales concerning what the title of the book suggests. It's a good read for those of all ages, whether or not you're into natural or man-made mysteries.

All in all I guess I can safely confess I do not believe in "ghosts," nor do I disbelieve in them. I suspect it's also safe to suggest that "any and all things are possible." And despite the often smug attitude of many within the human race who claim everything can be explained, I disagree. Maybe, just maybe, there are things we humans are not supposed to know or understand. But we still have the right to try. And that's not a bad combination.

With all due respect to the Paulding Light, whatever it may be, the U.S. Forest Service has erected a sign to alert folks about its existence. The sign reads:

"Paulding Light - this is the location from which the famous Paulding Light can be observed. Legend explains its presence as a railroad brakeman's ghost, destined to remain forever at the site of his untimely death. He continually waves his signal lantern as a warning to all who come to visit.

"To observe the phenomenon, park along this forest road facing north. The light will appear each evening in the distance along the power line right-of-way.

"Remember, other people will be visiting this location. Please do not litter."

At the bottom of the sign is a likeness of "Casper, the friendly ghost." And so far, the ghost who lights his signal lantern nearly every night has remained friendly. My thought for the week: "He who laughs last, thinks the slowest." Source: *The Minoequa, Wis. Lakeland Times* Sept. 3, 2004.

OHIO'S "OTTERBEIN GHOST"

She ruffles papers as she swishes by the scene-shop bulletin board.

She pockets tools left high above the stage.

Just this week, she swirled through the light booth.

Some say it was Twyla, the resident ghost of Otterbein College's Cowan Hall theater.

Or was it imagination gone wild?

Maybe ghost-hunter John Zaffis will find out tonight.

That's when he stops at the Westerville liberal-arts college to give a talk and slide show about his three decades of hunting for ghosts, experiences that he says started at the age of 16 when he saw his grandfather's ghost.

After tonight's talk, at 8 p.m. in Riley Auditorium at Otterbein's Battelle Fine Arts Center, he'll meander through campus with whoever's brave enough to come along to find out whether Twyla - and

other spirits - are present.

Otterbein junior Jessica Jackson, 20, who often works amphitheater until the wee hours of the morning, believes they are.

"It gets really spooky here at night, and you think you see things," said Jackson, a theater-design-technology major from Columbus. "Twyla is kind of like a security blanket here at night."

Twyla supposedly was an Otterbein theater major (or a dance major, depending on who's telling the story) many years ago. Despondent after being rejected in audition after audition, she threw herself from the rigging above the Cowan Hall stage after everyone else had left one night.

Stephen Grinch, Class of 1998 and now Otterbeins' archivist, is a skeptic.

"There's no historical record of this person. Supposedly, she killed herself years before the building was built."

Others, including costume-shop manager Marcia Hain, have an open mind.

"It's an odd building. Any time you feel like you're alone and maybe you're not, it's a weird feeling," said Hain, who's worked at Otterbein for 17 years and volunteered in the theater for many years before that.

She vividly remembers when a man working with her in the scene shop about 25 years ago heard strange noises outside. When he tried to open the door to check, it wouldn't budge - as if someone on the other side were holding it shut.

The culprit, he believed, was Twyla.

Retired theater professor Fred "Pop" Thayer said students sometimes heard a hammer tapping far above them when no one was there.

"Most every theater is supposed to have a ghost; Twyla became our ghost," he said.

Zaffis said he hasn't researched Twyla or other possible Otterbein ghosts.

"I'm more intrigued with hearing the stories from the faculty and talking to the students, said Zaffis, 49, who's been in several television documentaries about haunting. "There's always the scuttle bucket of tragedies that might have happened on campus. I'll go through the buildings and see if there's paranormal activity in some of them."

Zaffis' investigations of ghosts and demons and his work with exorcists and psychics have convinced him that ghosts exist. He said he sometimes can feel the presence of ghosts and tries to document their existence with cameras and other equipment. He's documented his experiences on his Web site.

Interest in apparitions and spirits seems to be at an all-time high, he said, fueled by television, the Internet and - in October - Halloween.

"The ghost stories just come out of the wood-work this time of the year," he said.

Bradford Burton, Otterbein assistant director of student activities, said Zaffis' talk is directed at students, but members of the public may attend if space permits.

But, he said, "If you get there late, you might have a hard time scaring up a seat." Source: Kathy Gray, *The Columbus Dispatch* October 15, 2005.

CHINA'S LOCH NESS MONSTER

LAKE KANASI, China - The moon is barely a crescent in the sky as dusk darkens the milky green surface of Lake Kanasi.

Four people huddle on the edge of a floating wooden dock, eyes scanning this mountain lake near China's remote northwestern frontier with Central Asia.

In a soft voice, Yuan Guoying recounts his two sightings of the creatures. The first over there, from a cliff, Yuan says. Then again 19 years later.

From the group comes a squeal as tiny, silver fish dart at hunks of bread they have dropped in.

"Look! There are so many of them!" says one girl. "But where's the lake monster?"

They have come by the tens of thousands over the years - skeptical scientists, curious tourists - answering the lure of the mysterious "Kanasi Huguai," China's very own version of the Loch Ness monster.

On this particular trip, there are a handful of Yuan's university buddies and their wives, three

teachers, a nurse, a local reporter, a university student, a lab technician and her mother. They have flown thousands of miles to Xinjiang Province to commemorate the 20th anniversary of Yuan's first sighting of the monsters.

Yuan, a researcher at the Xinjiang Institute of Environmental Protection, hands out Monster T-shirts, and on the bus the passengers watch state television's elaborate three-part documentary on the myth of the beasts that supposedly have dragged sheep and cows from the shore and devoured them.

Yuan's photo's of the creatures flash across the screen. One, taken from a distance, features several blurry forms clustered close to shore, some looking as long as nearby fir trees. Grainy footage filmed in June by a tourist from Beijing shows frenzied bubbling in the water.

Yuan, 66, is featured in several interviews, along with other scientists and people who have witnessed the creatures. Some describe enormous shapes and shadows as big as trees and boats, sometimes tinged with red or white. In 2003, when an earthquake struck the area, witnesses reported seeing a silhouette as long as 70 feet leap out of the water.

"I said it was rubbish at first," says Yuan. "The next day, I saw them."

"It's fish. Giant fish, some about 15 meters (50 feet) long."

In 1980, Yuan was part of a team of 150 experts who launched the first scientific study of the lake's environment.

It was then that he met Chinese Mongolians living in the area known as the Tuwa people and heard the ancient legend of the monsters in Kanasi.

Five years later, Yuan headed another team to study environmental protection for the lake - and to search for the creatures of the Tuwa myth.

Within a day, he had his first sighting.

"They looked like tadpoles coming up for breath," Yuan recalls. "Their eyes were huge. Their mouths were gaping."

After weeks of study, Yuan and his team discovered dozens of huge red fish, each 30-50 feet long and weighing more than four tons, living in the lake.

In 1989, scientists concluded that the fish - a type of giant, freshwater salmon that thrives in frigid, deep, waters - were in all likelihood the monsters.

Despite that conviction, there remains a niggling doubt.

Lake Kanasi is 200,000 years old, roughly 15 miles by a mile. It is 603 feet deep at its lowest.

Throughout summer, up to 4,000 tourists a day flock here.

"Everyone in the country has heard of it," a visitor surnamed Zhou says. "It may be a rich fairy tale but the scenery is so beautiful - plus there's this mysterious creature. How can we not come?"

Surprisingly, there is scant monster publicity at the site.

"We believe there are unidentified creatures in the lake, but we can't say for sure what they are," says Zhao Yuxia, a spokeswoman for the reserve. "We've never seen them with our own eyes."

Even so, there are measures in place to protect the area's wildlife. Fishing and swimming are banned. Boats are under a strict speed limit.

As Yuan and his group stroll along the shores, he relives his second sighting, just last year.

"It seemed like they were trying to get some sun. Their whole bodies came up to the surface. Their shadows were like one huge roll of plastic - long and black. They shimmered. I couldn't tell at all that they were fish."

No monsters present themselves to Yuan's group.

But still, Qu Yuan, a 26-year-old nurse, is thrilled.

"I kept my eyes on the water," she says, beaming. "The waves were lapping at our feet. It was almost like we were one with the lake." Source: A. Ang, Springfield, MO *News-Leader* Nov. 6, 2005.

IRELAND'S "WEE PEOPLE"

Early this year a thorough analysis of the skull of a very small, extinct humanoid, discovered on the Indonesian island of Flores last year, was released. The study brought to mind the age-old stories about little solitary creatures who live in Ireland and avoid contact with today's humans: the

leprechauns.

Do leprechauns exist or not? There are many Irish who swear to have seen the little sprites and many more who believe that they exist. The leprechauns shun humans, who they believe have an insatiable hunger for wealth, are untrustworthy, thoughtless, and easily tricked.

The Irish have set up Leprechaun Watches in various parts of Ireland. One was set up at the request of a young wealthy landowner in the Glen of Cloongallon, town of Ballyseanrath, County Tipperary, near Thurles. The young man had destroyed stone walls, considered to be sacred, and had cut down a tree believed to be the home of local fairies. Immediately after, his family was hit by calamities, including the death of an entire herd of cattle. Locals are one hundred percent sure that his thoughtless actions angered the little people.

The Leprechaun Watch is a video camera in an area overlooking the aforementioned fairy ring. Chestnut trees surround the fairy ring, and among the trees is also one lone 600-year-old oak tree, protected by an Irish tree spirit, called a skeaghshee.

The camera is connected through a satellite phone to the Internet, located online. Many people have reported sighting leprechauns. Check it out! You may get lucky. One person reports to have seen three leprechauns over the years. Others have seen a light that could not be explained scientifically. One person saw a small figure with a tiny sack. Another observer's little brother saw a little man standing next to the tree.

The Irish have tried many ways to catch a leprechaun. Yet, it is not known if anyone has ever gotten lucky. Some suggest a painted green box makes a good trap. Put an old shoe, some pennies, or chocolate coins inside. Make sure the box blends into its surroundings. Hide it cleverly and once the leprechaun is inside, throw a net over the box.

Those who have seen leprechauns report that they are about 2-3 feet tall and look like little old men. They wear a green woolen waistcoat and knee breeches, long dark green stockings, and silver-buckled shoes. They also wear an apron with many pockets, and always carry a hammer. Their heads are covered with a red cap.

The leprechaun carries two leather pouches. One holds a silver shilling, considered to be a magical coin that returns to the purse whenever it is given in payment. The other pouch holds a magical gold coin to be used in difficult situations. It will turn into a rock if you accept it once the leprechaun is out of sight.

Leprechauns are hard-working creatures who make shoes for other fairies. They are self-appointed guardians of treasures left behind by the marauding Danes that are reported to be buried in pots. To the leprechaun's detriment, these pots generate a rainbow, showing humans where the gold is hidden. Source: Brigitte Wolfer, Toronto, Ontario *Epoch Times* May 12-18, 2005.

1909 MASSACHUSETTS "PHANTOM PANTHER" CASE

On November 26, 1909, Joseph Chandler of Fitzwilliam, New Hampshire took his dog rabbit-hunting in the woods of Winchendon, Massachusetts. He was a helpless witness as his dog was mauled by a creature resembling a black panther. The second sighting took place on December 14, 1909 when Mrs. George Wheeler spotted the animal crouching in the grass at the intersection of Otter River Road and Baptist Common Road in Templeton, Mass., 10 miles south of Winchendon. What's curious about this particular "panther flap" is that it ran concurrently with a major UFO flap that covered three New England states - Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut, a flap known to UFO history as "the great airship invasion of 1909."

Following Mrs. Wheeler's sighting, the panther flap swung into high gear. Said a local newspaper article: "Hunters in the Templeton area cleaned their rifles and shotguns and turned loose their dogs, but it was all in vain. The panther struck with impunity on December 17th in downtown Templeton itself.

"It was about 6 o'clock Friday night when one of the employees of the Brown-Hadley Company was driving home from his work in that factory when he heard some indescribable bloodcurdling scream issuing from a swamp beside the road. He hastily held up his horse for a moment, but soon plied the whip as a large, dark-bodied animal crept stealthily toward his wagon.

"Later in the evening, the animal was chased by an unterrified employee of Eugene Griffith, just south of the village.

"Saturday forenoon (December 18th) tracks which were not made by any known human habitants from the vicinity were found back of the houses on the South Road in Templeton.

"All day yesterday (Sunday, December 19th) various veterans of the chase were in pursuit of the animal but to date his pelt does not adorn the side of any barn in the vicinity."

With no more sightings, the Templeton panther was soon forgotten, overshadowed by the bizarre headlines coming out of Fitchburg and Leominster, Mass., 18 miles to the east - stories of strange lighted objects in the night skies. Source: Joseph Trainor, "UFO Roundup" Vol. 8 No. 47.

SASQUATCH IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

A Prince George man whose greatest passion has been hunting for big game admits he's hooked on proving the existence of sasquatch.

Leo Selzer, who has spent 41 years hunting in the bush around Prince George, is convinced the illusive creatures are around, and he spends as much time as he can in the bush area where he believes they live. He says he's had one pretty clear sighting and several occasions when he's convinced he was communicating with his "furry friends."

In the mid-1980s when Selzer was moose hunting in the Gregg Creek area west of the city, he did his loud moose calls that bring in the bulls during rutting season.

"After a few calls I heard a response - like someone banging on a tree about a kilometre away. I would call. Then right away, bang, bang. A small black bear appeared, wandering towards the banging sounds. The bear stopped and stood on its hind legs looking towards a tall fir tree, and then all of a sudden it hightailed it in the opposite direction toward me, veered off and went over the ridge."

It was then that Selzer saw a tall, dark-colored creature step out from the cover of the fir tree into the open, and then quickly stepped behind the tree and was gone, said Selzer, noting that logged-off area has little human activity. In 2000 Selzer was again hunting at Gregg Creek when, at about 400 metres, he spotted what he first thought was a large bear standing on its hind legs watching the hunters.

"It was standing next to a large, broken-off fir tree and was about the same dark color, maybe grayish around its shoulders and on its chest.

"Thinking it could be a grizzly, I kept a close eye on it, watching it shift its weight from one leg to the other a couple of times for about a half hour.

"All of a sudden it was gone, but later I realized a bear would never stand on its hind legs for that long without getting down and back up again," said Selzer.

After studying that area closely, he's concluded the creatures leave landmarks and directional signs by piling trees into X marks between closely knit trees, and bending and shaping spindly trees into arches and shaped pointers carefully threaded through willow tops.

He believes sasquatch eat bark from trees like aspens, and has seen markings showing large fingernails and teeth were used to remove bark.

He's also seen large footprints, but hasn't been fortunate enough to be able to photograph them fresh or complete.

"One footprint, going up a grade, was pretty clear, about 13 to 14 inches long, eight inches wide at the heel, and about six inches wide at the top of the ball of the foot. There were indications of possible toe impressions about one to three inches beyond the ball of the foot."

In 1994 on the Hoodoo Lakes road he could hear at least three individual voices give out a holler or two which was responded to by "jabbering type of language."

"I thought it must be some drunken people back there on a bush road or something, but I later found out there is no road or clearing in that area."

In mid-June, Selzer came across an area in the Gregg Creek, about 300 to 400 yards long, containing a series of blinds and shelters, and tepee-like frameworks he believes were built by a sasquatch.

The blinds are waist to shoulder height with logs and trees pushed or piled together to form a lean-

to like structure.

"The frameworks, up to 50-feet high, are made with long spindly trees intricately intertwined to form the structure," said Selzer.

Brian Vike in Houston, who reports on unidentified flying objects and such matters, has received reports from residents about sasquatch sightings in the Buck Flats area.

"Two Houston women, driving up Buck Flats Road, were startled recently when a large animal walked upright across the road in front of their vehicle.

"The animal, described much like a sasquatch, made long strides into the forest, but did not turn to look back at the women."

He said a camping party at Silverthorne Lake reported hearing chilling screams in the night coming from around the lake, which cannot be associated with the known animals in the region.

"One other sighting was reported on the Morice River Road when two people fishing witnessed a large two-legged animal on the opposite bank of a river walk slowly into the forest and disappear," said Vike.

American William Dranginis, said he saw a Bigfoot once - hairy, seven feet tall and sprinting through the woods of Virginia.

The 12-second sighting changed the life of Dranginis, who outfitted a 24-foot mobile veterinary clinic as a Bigfoot Primate Research lab.

Equipped with scopes, radios and a Night-Sight camera that can detect an animal in the dark at 800 yards away, he heads out at least two weekends a month.

But still no second sighting for Dranginis, who would like to push legislation to protect the creatures.

"Do not shoot it," said Selzer.

"They mean no harm, but they are curious, and incredibly intelligent beings."

Selzer's latest reported sighting on July 20 came from a visiting couple from Saskatoon.

They told Selzer that, while driving Highway 16 East at about 8 p.m. near Tabor Mountain, they saw what they first thought was a large man crossing the highway.

Describing the creature as about 7 ½ feet tall covered with hair, thick barreled shoulders and narrow waist, they said it crossed the road about 100 yards ahead of them in about three steps.

The couple, who have never believed in the sasquatch theory, were so haunted by the experience they couldn't sleep.

After they got home they contacted Selzer, who has added his investigation of the area to his website. Source: Bernice Trick, Prince George, B.C. *Citizen* August 15, 2005.

PENNSYLVANIA'S "THUNDERBIRDS"

This very fascinating and informative piece is by John Rasmussen of the Lach Haven *Express* in his "This 'n' That" column of April 8, 1991. It certainly appears that Mr. Rasmussen has done a large amount of research on his topic over the years:

About 20 years ago TnT ("This 'n' that" columnist) began writing up eyewitness reports of Thunderbird sightings in and around the Pine Creek and West Branch Valleys and the wilds of the Black Forest region and the surrounding rugged and forbidding terrain....the Thunderbird is a mythical winged creature believed by American Indians to cause thunder and lighting ...There was a military contingent back in World War II days named the Thunderbird division, out of Oklahoma, we think where Indian tradition is strongThe claims of eyewitnesses to huge birds flying across the skies of Lycoming, Clinton, Potter, Cameron and other counties of north central Pennsylvania were invariably countered by the doubting Thomases, yet after many generations of abiding faith in the reality in the phenomena, stories of Thunderbird sightings are still read in newspaper columns and notably in a new book, *Natural Mysteries - Monster Lizards, English Dragons, and Other Puzzling Animals* (Second Revised Edition)It is a fascinating work published by Mark A. Hall Publication...the book on lizards, dragons, Thunderbirds and whole lot more is worth the \$16.95 price tag on a softbound edition....Mr. Hall has taken several steps further than others in his probe of "Natural Mysteries," and the paragraph after paragraph, page following page of documented findings proves the existence of weird life forms

in the hinterland of many states, and teratology is by means the study of purely mythical creatures....TnT has talked and corresponded with Mr. Hall on occasion in the past, and remembers the Bloomington researcher in the Jersey Shore area during the period when reports of Thunderbird sightings from people with unquestioned integrity - and eyesight! - were frequent happenings here in this newspaper office.

Mark A. Hall is a patient, thoroughgoing, seasoned and methodical investigator in his field....His "Natural Mysteries" contains a chapter "Pennsylvania Thunderbirds," which brings his research "home" to the central West Branch Valley and surroundings....Hall prefaces his chapter out of Pennsylvania with the statement, "Gigantic birds of prey once were widespread inhabitants of North America"....(No lack of certainty here!)....Hall adds, "They have been identified by many names, but their image as 'Thunderbirds' among the North American Indians has become the best known"....Mr. Hall tells of a time in the 19th Century when John James Audubon, naturalist and artist, traveled by coach from Philadelphia to Mauch Chunk, the one-time colorful name for what is now Jim Thorpe, Carbon County, to observe wildlife in a land then known as the Great Pine Swamp of Pennsylvania.

Hall makes it clear that talk of the Thunderbird has been common for more than a century...."So large are these birds that they take deer and, some say, human beings as prey. Estimates give them wingspreads greater than 15 feet. A range of 20 to 30 feet is common."

The author states that from the heart of an area roughly described by Cameron, Potter, Clinton, Tioga and adjoining counties "have come most of the detailed accounts of modern Thunderbirds in the state"....Hall lists four persons (three deceased) "who took an interest in the birds the past few decades".... One of the four is TnT; two others were tireless workers in the cause, the late Clyde and Anna Mincer, of South Broad Street, Jersey Shore, and the fourth in the quartet, Robert R. Lyman, Sr., an historian and naturalist from Potter County, and author of such books as *Amazing Indeed - Strange Events in the Black Forest, History of Roulet, Forbidden Land* published in Coudersport....He once penned a note to TnT in one of his books, "Never say impossible to John D. Rasmussen. Thank you for your help"....Hall tells us he was a guest of Robert R. Lyman, Sr., and his wife in 1973....Mr. Lyman died in 1974 when Thunderbird sightings hereabouts were at their peak....Hall names Hiram M. Cranmer as another person with a lot to say about Thunderbirds....Cranmer was a lifelong resident of the Kettle Creek area....Among the many other accounts of Thunderbird sightings was that of Joseph and Wanda Kaye, who were driving Route 287, near the Oregon Hill ski area when they saw a fantastically large bird....the Kayes were en route from Lock Haven to Seneca Falls....An invaluable and convenient document is the chronological list of Thunderbird appearances in the Black Forest for which dates are known, and they range from 1892 to 1978....Truly significant sightings here have included: In 1968 - 69 Little Pine Creek, Mr. and Mrs. John Boyle, "in each of these years a bird was seen. The second time it landed in the creek. Its wings across the creek appeared to extend for 75 feet"....Clyde and Anna Mincer gave a description to the author Hall, "If I recall correctly, it was the 9th or 10th of Nov., 1970"....They have a description in a letter to the researcher: "my wife and I saw the first huge bird which I said had a 22 foot wingspread, and I have not changed my mind since. My wife called to me as I was painting spouting, and said to me, 'Look at the funny airplane.'"....August 7, 1971, Clair Koons, former president of Jersey Shore Borough Council, and Independent Hose Co., fire chief, and Wilson Frederick, also of Jersey Shore then, and son of ex-borough manager John Frederick, reported seeing a bird of some 12 - 15 foot wingspan up along Larrys Creek toward Sallakasburg....When TnT queried Koons, the eyewitness was even more positive about what he and Wilson had seen....Koons is an experienced and knowledgeable outdoorsman....Author Hall finds huge bird sightings have taken place in many locales, including Missouri, Illinois, New York State and up in the Abitibi region of Canada's Quebec Province.

Hall's studies in "Natural Mysteries" run to the Great Swamps, including the Great Kankakee Marsh in northwest Indiana and neighboring Illinois....another chapter deals with "Monster Lizards"....Hall published a drawing of a "Canip Monster Lizard"....the chapter on "English Dragons" tells of the part-griffin part-lion combination creature in dragon lore....A segment, "Big With Eight Legs" is startling....Mentioned therein is a period in June 1960 in Indiana when people were talking up "the Monster in Dan Craig's Well"....It seems "this thing in his cistern was an eerie beast with a dome-

shaped head, two bulbous eyes, and eight flailing tentacles as long as a man's arm" and Hall wrote of "encephalopods far from any ocean"....There is a world more to "wild" life than has been dreamed of by most of us and we will wager here with little prospect of contradiction that readers will find in "Natural Mysteries" revelations they'll read nowhere else.

BRITISH ENCOUNTER STILL Baffles INVESTIGATORS

It was a terrifying close encounter which led to the only case in British history of an alien sighting being the subject of a criminal investigation. Exactly 25 years later, the case is still open on forestry worker Bob Taylor's brush with mysterious alien spheres on Dechmont Law. Now, on the anniversary of the event, UFO enthusiasts are set to descend on the site, to show that the truth really is out there. They have arranged to visit the site today to mediate in silence at the exact time of Mr. Taylor's encounter.

The event has been organized by paranormal investigator Ron Halliday, chairman of Scottish Earth Mysteries Research, who believes the encounter to be one of the most significant events in the history of ufology. It is certainly one of the best-documented, and to this day defies rational explanation. On November 9, 1979, at around 10:30 a.m., Mr. Taylor, then a forestry worker employed by the Livingston Development Corporation, parked his truck at the bottom of Dechmont Law. He walked up the lower slope of the hill with his dog, and as he emerged into a clearing saw a large, circular, sphere-like object about 20 feet across. Mr. Taylor said it appeared to be made from a dark metallic material with a rough texture like sandpaper. As he approached the object, two spheres, each about three feet wide with protruding metal spikes like old naval mines, dropped from the object. The two spheres rolled towards him and despite his dog barking furiously, attached themselves to his trousers. There was an acrid smell that caused him to choke and he felt a sensation of being grabbed by the side of the legs and tugged forward.

The next thing Mr. Taylor remembered was waking up with his head pounding, a sore throat, and a bitter taste in his mouth. He later calculated that he had been unconscious for at least 20 minutes. "I was completely devastated afterwards," he recalled. "I couldn't walk and the doctor came to look at me. We went back with the police and found all these marks where it had been. The police found unusual indentations in the ground, ladder-shaped marks where the craft was said to have stood, and marks following the path of the mine-like objects. They said they were "completely baffled" by the incident, which was treated as an assault.

Now 87, Mr. Taylor moved away from the area after the event, but on the eve of the anniversary he revealed it was still in his thoughts. "I stand by every word of my account of the incident," he said. "I told it as it happened and it's as clear as yesterday. It is the most amazing thing that ever happened to me. I know what I saw and it looked like a spaceship, a huge flying dome. I'm not surprised there has been so much interest in it over the years as it was such an incredible thing to happen."

Mr. Halliday believes going back to the site on the anniversary could yield some clues to the nature of the encounter, and has not ruled out the possibility of once again making contact. "We want to go back to the site to mark this anniversary and perhaps by being there we will be able to make contact again with whatever it was Bob Taylor saw," he said. "It is possible that this was something from another dimension which for a short period of time appeared in our world. That fits with what Taylor saw, as he said the object appeared solid but at brief moments was shimmering and partially transparent. Even skeptics believe he is telling the truth about what he saw, and no explanation has been given to what it could have been." Mr. Taylor's encounter took place on the edge of the area known as the Falkirk Triangle, one of the most "visited" UFO hotspots in the world. Around 300 UFOs are seen in Scotland each year, the highest concentration of UFO sightings on the planet. Source: The Edinburgh *Scotsman* November 9, 2004.

EAST TEXAS BIGFOOT

JEFFERSON - It's dark deep in the Piney Woods.

In the stillness, on a moonless night, the silence is suddenly shattered by the dry snap of twigs under the weight of footfalls.

Ponderous steps. Two feet. *Bigones*.

A heartbeat - your own - is thudding now, pounding like a tribal drum calling Kong to the gates.

To most of us, it's folklore, tall tales best told beneath the stars, amid the flickering glow and swirling firefly embers of a crackling campfire.

Last year, one supermarket tabloid proclaimed "Bigfoot Baby Found."

What distinguished the account from other Bigfoot hoaxes was the claim that the infant creature had been left, of all places, outside Michael Jackson's Neverland Ranch.

But some reasonable people remain believers. Even though tabloid fiction makes them vulnerable to teasing and ridicule, they insist *something* is Out There.

What they have seen and reported, they say, isn't some Halloween prankster wearing a gorilla suit but a giant unclassified primate, curious and watchful, that walks upright and roams the woodlands and creek bottoms, mostly at night. Viewed for only a second or two, and rarely photographed, Bigfoot is as reclusive as Greta Garbo.

Sasquatch, or Skunk Ape, is mostly associated with the Pacific Northwest. However, the creature has been spotted in every state except Hawaii.

Most sightings in Texas occur in the backwoods of East Texas, where folks like the Carlsons live, alone, happily secluded behind "Private Property" and "Keep Out" signs.

Dressed in denim overalls, J. C. Carlson is a mountainous man, almost 7 feet tall, with a mustache and bushy white beard.

His work boots aren't as large as Bigfoot's print, but almost.

J. C., like others, has heard the raspy nocturnal howls. Carlson and his wife are certain that foxes or bobcats didn't steal the 28 chickens from their homestead on Big Cypress Bayou over three nights this summer. They found no carcasses. No trace of blood.

Taking a break from chopping timber, J.C. lit a smoke and leaned against the bed of his red pickup.

"There's somethin' out here besides us," he declared.

Katherine Carlson returned home late one night this spring, headlights splashing across the rutted one-lane dirt road that meanders through thick pine-scented woods. She stopped to open the crossing gate. Usually, her dogs jump out and play. Not this night. Sassy and Wally remained inside the cab.

In the darkness, Carlson encountered an overpowering foul odor.

"It wasn't a skunk." She knows the smells of the woods.

"Rancid," J.C. said of the stench. "It's like gettin' behind a gut wagon, in the summer."

"Worse," his wife said.

Katherine didn't glimpse a Bigfoot, but in the eerie moonlight she sensed a lurking "presence" that left her speechless.

She figures, why not tell her story? "People already think I'm crazy," she says.

The couple live near the dark waters and moss-draped cypresses of Caddo Lake, where the "B" movie *The Creature From Black Lake* (1976) was filmed. This summer, an alligator living in a slough near the Carlson's place disappeared. J.C. Carlson's place disappeared. J.C. observed that his cows and goats stopped grazing in the woods at night. They remained huddled near the house, beneath the glow of a mercury vapor light.

"Critters will tell you when somethin' isn't right," J.C. said.

His wife did the only thing she knew to do.

She telephoned Charlie DeVore.

The Texas Bigfoot Research Center implies a campus, or structure.

There isn't one, at least not yet.

TBRC is a network of about 40 people from all walks of life who are dedicated to finding Sasquatch living in the Lone Star State. The group was founded six years ago by Craig Woolheater, the 45-year-old office manager of his family's plumbing company in Dallas. He claims he saw a grayish-haired Bigfoot walking along a deserted highway in Louisiana one night in 1994.

The group has a Web site and telephone number that greets callers with a recording.

"If you have a sighting to report, please leave a message with your name, number and the best

time to return your call.”

About 150 Bigfoot sightings are reported each year.

“That doesn’t count the jokes, like people who say, ‘I got raped by Bigfoot,’ or those who are way out there, and think it’s an extraterrestrial,” Woodheater said.

“There are so many credible people who say they have seen the thing. They have absolutely nothing to gain by making up a story. If even one person is telling the truth, there’s something out there.”

Several times a year, TBRC investigators venture into the forests and conduct field studies, hoping to validate recent sightings. Dressed in commando camouflage, they carry night-vision cameras, listening devices and thermal imaging units. Deer hunters use deer fragrance, and bottled deer urine and deer calls (one is the K’Mere Deer, Model KM 100) to lure the animals. Bigfoot researchers put out pheromone chips designed to entice the great ape.

Late at night, they activate a call blaster, which emits loud recordings of Bigfoot “vocalizations.”

Charlie DeVore joined the group after a mysterious incident five years ago when, in Charlie’s words, he “had the stink put on me.”

Armed with a coon-hunting light, the 65-year-old retiree was walking through the woods near his home late one night, accompanied by five dogs. He felt safe - unthreatened - until the smell engulfed him.

DeVore looked down. His four-legged companions had fled.

“These are dogs that’ll attack anything,” Charlie said.

Two years later, he attended a meeting of Bigfoot enthusiasts in Jefferson and met several people who described similar incidents.

DeVore now feels certain the smell was that of some yet undocumented species of bipedal hominoid afflicted with a body odor problem no brand of drugstore roll-on or spray deodorant can eliminate.

After Katherine Coleman telephoned DeVore, her neighbor, Charlie and three fellow researchers camped for two nights near the site of the “smelling.” They turned on the call blaster. Bigfoot didn’t appear, but they heard its cry, and detected movement in the woods.

“You can hear it walk,” DeVore said. Charlie tried to re-create the experience, with sound effects.

“Crunch...(pause)...Crunch...It’s not a deer. It’s not a dog. Or a hog. It’s a two-footed somethin’.”

Bigfootologists estimate that at least 2,000 Bigfoot live in the United States.

That’s six times the population of Bigfoot, Texas, named after William A. “Bigfoot” Wallace, the 19th-century frontiersman and legendary Texas character. Bigfoot, it was said, never told a story he couldn’t later improve upon.

The Texas Parks & Wildlife Department requires more than anecdotal evidence before the state agency will take Sasquatch seriously.

“To conclusively prove...Bigfoot in Texas, we would need an image that included details to show us that it was not a doctored or edited image in any way, or we would want a body itself,” said Duane Schlitter, who oversees the TPWD’S Nongame and Rare and Endangered Species program.

“The latter would be the extreme, but many doubters will be hard to convince. As a romantic scientist, I would like to be around when and if one is ever found anywhere.”

No Bigfoot remains - bones or bodies - have been discovered.

Hunters have never shot and killed one.

Bigfoot, fortunately, hasn’t wandered onto a road and been struck by a car. Like the Sasquatch character Harry in the movie *Harry and the Hendersons*.

Another group, North Texas Skeptics, is, well, skeptical.

“Bigfoot is a great story, and a wonderful bit of folklore. Nothing more,” said John Blanton, a Skeptics member. “It’s a biological absurdity. Real creatures, unlike the fictional Bigfoot, do not exist alone. They have parents. Their parents have parents and so on. At the very minimum, there has to be a tribe...Where is the Bigfoot tribe?”

How could supposedly thousands of these critters have eluded captivity and remained hidden from human observation for a century or more?

Doubters say the cultural phenomenon is kept alive by misidentification of known animals, wishful thinking and fabrication of evidence.

DeVore is undaunted, committed. He patrols Big Cypress Bayou alone, paddling his canoe through the shallow murky waterways. One day, he hopes to get lucky and snap a clear photo of the enigmatic creature.

"I'm not trying to prove anything to the world," he said. "I'm proving it to myself."

Charlie's curiosity far outweighs any fears.

"If it wanted to hurt me," he said, "I'd been dead a long time ago."

Meanwhile, deep in the woods, the Carlsons wonder and wait.

"One night we'll find somethin' standing in the road lookin' at us," J.C. Carlson predicted. His wife said she hopes so.

"I'll say something next time."

Such as...

"I'll ask who he is, and if I can help him," she said. "I know what it's like to be different in this world."

Source: David Casstevens, *The Fort Worth Star-Telegram* October 31, 2005.

1881 MONTANA MYSTERY LIGHTS REMEMBERED

Helena's always had moments of weirdness. The following story was taken from the March 23, 1881, edition of the Helena *Daily Herald*.

For a long time past we have frequently heard that mysterious lights have been seen moving about, of their own accord apparently, over the farm and around the house and outbuildings of the late Charles Tacke, who was murdered last fall by Peter Pelkey who was hanged here in February for the crime.

For a while, no attention was given them, but so often have people who were passing the Tacke ranch in the night saw these lights and told about them on their arrival here, that night before last a party of our citizens, who have the organ of inquisitiveness developed to a little more than the ordinary, concluded to ride down to the ranch as witness for themselves the phenomena, of such there were.

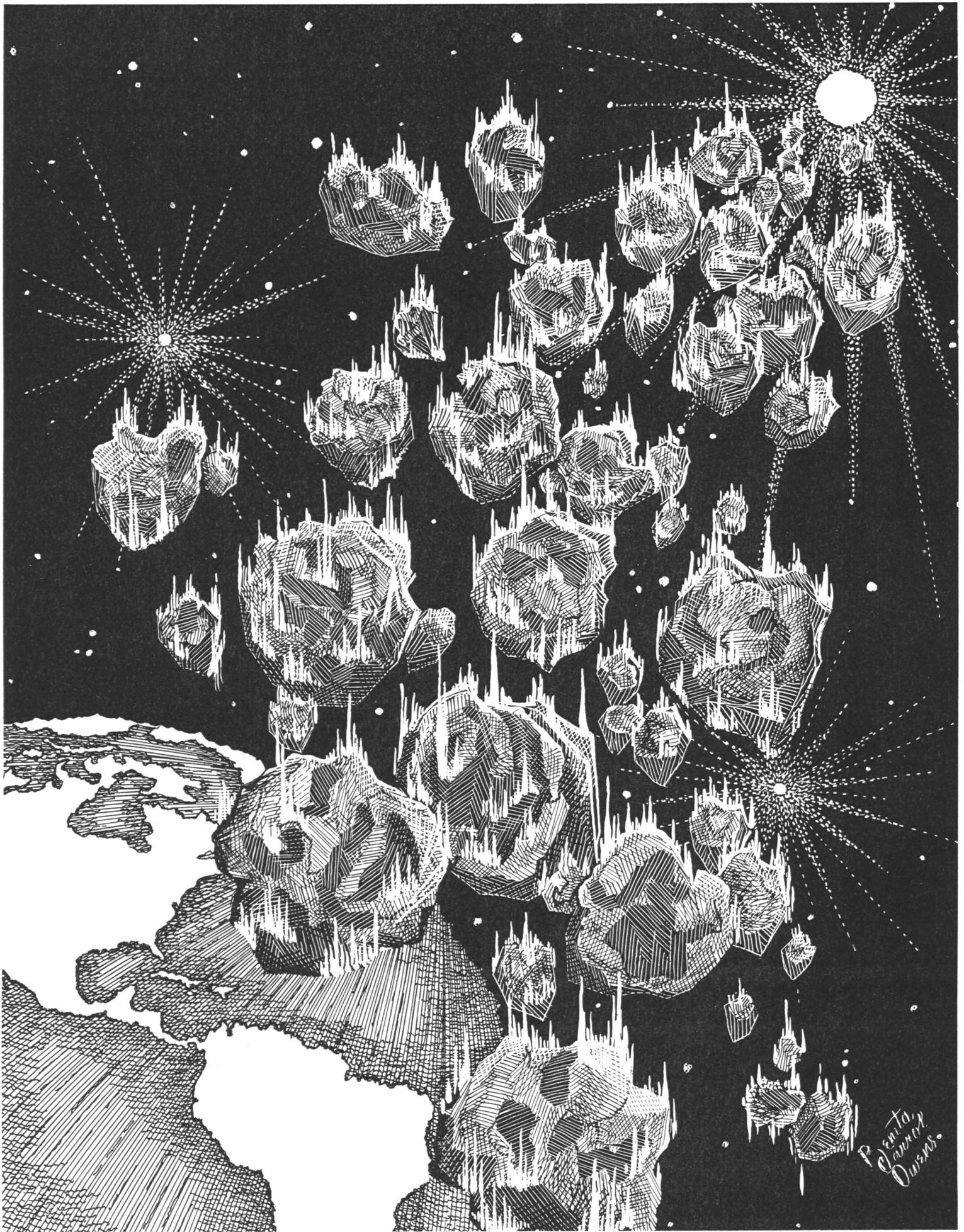
One stolid German farmer, who lives close by, and who told us his story with all gravity, and whose word we would not think of doubting, for he believes all he says, is sure he saw these lights about the time the snow began to fall. They looked like the light thrown from a red glass lantern at first, but have been growing paler and lighter in color ever since. He has seen from one to four of an evening moving about the place, some going up as high as twenty feet and moving around in different directions, and sometimes, apparently, settling on the corners of the fence; then moving around the house, barns, corrals, etc., then finally sinking down and disappearing in an instant, leaving darkness behind. He couldn't think what it was made them do so...

Another farmer, who lives near, says he has seen the lights ever since the nights began to close in early last fall ... We should believe this man fully if we did not know he takes a good deal too much stimulus sometimes to be a good judge of such wonderful sights as he describes, and think his imagination plays him tricks. Yet he is truthful and believes what he says.

The gentlemen of Helena who went down to satisfy their curiosity are all sober-minded, reliable men. They were a little belated on account of the bad roads, and had got off the direct track a little, and arrived there about 10 o'clock.

Two of them, who we happened to see first on their return, agreed that as they turned the corner and went into the road which led by the farm, and after riding awhile along the fence, all of a sudden they saw a large, bright light moving over the open field, somewhere from ten to forty feet above the ground; that it was apparently from four to six inches in diameter and from eighteen to twenty-four inches high, the body of the light being of an orange color, occasionally flashing off rays of a greenish or sometimes of a bluish tintage; that it moved up and down over the fields slowly, and gradually sank down and vanished. They also saw two other lights moving around which looked like a lamp light surrounded by a porcelain globe, the body of the light not being visible but white, mild and distinct ...

Source: Helena, MT *Independent Record* October 29, 2004.



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