

If you see UFO

# Don't embarrass yourself

By RICH FREEDMAN  
Times Staff Writer  
"Odd Green Lights Sighted in Salinas."  
"Walnut Creek Couple Sight 'Flying Saucer.'"  
"What Was It? Well — It Came From the Sky."

These are not sensationalized headlines from the National Enquirer. They are headlines printed in Bay Area newspapers — to the dismay of those who think UFOs are much ado about nothing.

UFOs. Unidentified flying objects. The words conjure up images of a saucer with blinking lights and little green people who stare outside their translucent windows saying things like: "Earth looks so much smaller in person."

So you aren't a believer in UFOs? But if you think every person who has spotted a strange object from another planet is either lying or hallucinating, you may be dead wrong.

Recent surveys have shown that most adults who sight UFOs have at least a high school education. Sixteen percent have dabbled in college. Doctors have seen UFOs, so have dentists, postmasters, accountants and even a news editor.

This survey, conducted by the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena also discovered that the most commonly reported UFO shape was, of course, a flying saucer or disc. This was followed by a torpedo or cigar-shaped spaceship, spherical-shaped flying object and balls of light.

When asked if they believe in UFOs, many people take the easy way out and say they'd believe it if they saw it.

But some will stand up

and be counted among the small group of people who actually claim they saw something in the sky that came from a planet beyond.

"When I went camping for four days, I saw some weird things," says 23-year-old Kim Rico of Castro Valley. "It was oval with different lights." There were eight people with Rico who also saw the flying object.

"Everyone was looking at it," she says. "It was going fast and hovered for awhile then left. Nobody could explain it."

A Valley Times reporter, Gary Peterson, is so con-

vinced he saw a UFO, he's earned the nickname "Spaceman." USA

Peterson's experience took place on May 15, 1979 when he was driving down Interstate 680 with a friend.

He saw a saucer with pulsating lights which "didn't perform like any typical craft I've seen. It would hover, then turn over on its side."

Linda Thomsen, a Stoneridge mall employee who lives in Pleasanton, has never seen an unidentified flying object, but she doesn't rule out the possibility of their existence.

"There's an awful lot of things people can't ex-

plain," she believes. "I keep an open mind. The closest thing I've come to seeing a UFO was a shooting star."

What if she actually saw the flashing lights of a hovering spaceship?

"I guess I'd be frightened at first, of course," she says. "But then I'd want to find out more about them."

So did a lot of people who attended the "UFO '80" symposium in Oakland last August. One attendee, Clarisa Bernhardt of Carmel, swears she is often visited by the "Space Brothers" who tell her when earthquakes will take

place. She says they have even warned her of attempted sabotage to U.S. missiles.

Richard Miller, who has investigated unidentified flying objects for 25 years, has no doubts about the existence of people on other planets in space.

"The people look much like you and I," he insists. "And you might not be able to distinguish them from you or I on the street."

So it's important not to jump to any conclusions when you're strolling down a city street and see someone in the middle of the road singing at the top of his lungs. That may be a visitor from another planet and you may be the first Earthperson it will meet.



Is this, or is this not, a real, live UFO? No one seems to know for sure.