

'Strange light' again reported by officials

10/30/81 S PARKER

GALVESTON — For the third night running, Galveston County officials and residents reported seeing a "strange light" hovering in the sky above the county.

Precinct 3 Constable Joe Scrofne said he saw the light in the sky Wednesday night as he faced south from Hitchcock. He said the object, which he viewed through binoculars, was white with red, yellow and green lights on the edges.

Since reports of the strange light in the sky began Monday, most persons have said the object remained stationary.

But Scrofne said the object appeared to him to drop lower in the sky for a time.

"I've never seen anything like it," Scrofne said. "I don't know what it was. It could have been just a reflection from the sun or something."

Scrofne said the light, which he first saw at about 6:45 p.m., remained visible for several minutes.

Scrofne added that he was glad other persons reported the object "so people won't think I'm crazy."

The Texas City and Hitchcock police departments each reported receiving several calls about the light in the sky.

The strange apparition was reported over Galveston Island Monday and Tuesday nights. But the mystery light was seen over the mainland part of the county by Scrofne and others Wednesday.

So far, no one has been able to explain what the light is.

A U.S. Coast Guard helicopter pilot said Wednesday that he thought the light sighted over Galveston Island was a reflection on clouds or haze over the island from the flames of an oil rig about a mile offshore. The rig's personnel were burning off natural gas.

Coast Guard officials have said the reflection of offshore flames has been known to appear on clouds many miles away from the sources of the flames.

It's not the Star of Bethlehem on Christmas cards; it's a UFO

12/20/81 H. CRONICKE S. PARKER

ST. LOUIS (AP) — That glowing object on Chrystal Jackson's Christmas cards isn't the Star of Bethlehem; it's a UFO that she says chased her car through a Wisconsin woods recently.

"It just looks like Christmas," said Mrs. Jackson.

"That very bright, glowing object peeking through the tall pines seemed to carry a very optimistic message," she said. "It's not a star, but the same feeling was there."

Mrs. Jackson, who recently wrote a book on painting, has been commissioned to paint in Bavaria for National Geographic magazine.

But the Christmas card she painted differed from her earlier work.

"My painting changed after we saw the UFO," she said. "Seeing it made a deep impression on me. I'm not afraid of what might be out there. I feel privileged to have seen it. I have a very optimistic feeling about it."

Mrs. Jackson said she was asleep in the back seat of her car when her son, Chris, first saw the object at treetop level over an empty field as he was driving north near Rhineland.

"He woke me up, and I was amazed," she said. "And then it followed us for about 10 minutes."

"I hope people don't make too much fun of me about this. I feel very serious about it. I think it may be the future."

Man gets unusual visitor from sky

11/25/81

S. PARKER

SEATTLE (AP) — Art Sala had an unexpected drop-in visitor to his back yard recently — an airplane door.

The 27-year-old University of Washington student said he heard "a thundering crash" as the door of a nine-passenger, turboprop airplane fell into his yard.

The door came from a Beech King Air 200 aircraft flying at 2,000 feet after taking off from Boeing Field. None of the passengers, who included three Rainier National Bank executives, were sitting near the door, said a bank spokesman. No one was hurt.

Sala said he was standing where the door landed only two minutes before the incident.

Bank officials said they did not know why the plane's door came off, but said the Federal Aviation Administration was investigating.

The plane returned to Boeing field after the incident, said Mike O'Connor, the FAA's regional duty officer. He called the mishap "definitely unusual, to say the least."

Space agency analyzes cylinder found in Africa

S. PARKER

11/20/81

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — Kennedy Space Center engineers are analyzing a charred metal cylinder found in southern Africa to see if it was part of a lost satellite.

The object, smaller than a human fist, was brought to the United States by an American missionary who said it seared trees and brush when it landed.

Space agency engineers said it likely was "space junk," possibly from a decayed satellite that disintegrated in the atmosphere.

Emory Pinkerton, 58, of Greer, S.C., a Baptist missionary, said native tribesmen, in a country he would not disclose, brought him the object. He said the tribesmen told him they dug it up after

watching it streak from the sky and smash into the ground.

Pinkerton said he brought it back because he believed it might have been part of the external fuel tank from the space shuttle Columbia's first mission in April. But engineers said the metal has a high iron content, leading them to believe it is from a satellite, possibly Soviet. They said the shuttle tanks broke up over the Indian Ocean, east of Africa.

Flying saucer spotted over Texas coast?

10/28/81

S. PARKER

GALVESTON (AP) — An eerie white glow described by some viewers as a "flying saucer" hovered over the Texas coast for several hours and then disappeared into the hazy sky, authorities said today.

Residents in an area extending from Winnie to this resort island of 60,000, inundated the Coast Guard and police with phone calls Monday, saying they had spotted a "flying saucer."

Several Galveston police officers and a night dispatcher also said they saw the unidentified flying object. One officer said he got in his car and attempted to move closer to the light, but he said it moved westward and then disappeared.

Similar sightings also were reported in Winnie and La-Porte, officers said.

"We started getting calls about 8 p.m. from people who said they'd seen a white flying saucer," said Coast Guard Petty Officer Matthew Walters. "The first calls we got had the thing near the airport, and then the last calls we got about 2 a.m. had it over a hotel on the seawall."

Weird light seen over

10/28/81

Galveston

S. PARKER
JERRY URBAN
News Staff Writer

No one knows what it was, but some kind of large weird light was seen over Galveston Island Monday night.

Several Galveston police officers saw it, whatever it was, and some citizens called police about the mysterious unidentified flying object.

Police were first alerted to it at 7:54 p.m. when they received a call from a citizen who saw it in the sky west of 32nd Street and Avenue H — it was a "white glow in the sky," he said.

Then several officers stepped out the back of police headquarters downtown and saw it.

Sgt. Dennis Langford said it looked like a large white light and was stationary west of the station, appearing to be just over the roof tops.

When Langford drove out to Seawall Boulevard, he said it seemed to slowly sink and move west down past the airport.

Langford said, "I don't know what it was."

It didn't look like any kind of aircraft and it didn't have blinking lights, he said. "If it was an aircraft, it hung there a long time."

No one knows what it was, but witnesses who saw it provided contradictory information.

The Coast Guard said a citizen described it as having flashing red and green lights.

Another Galveston police officer told a police dispatcher it looked like an orange star.

Anyway, whatever it was, it was last seen about 8:25 p.m., according to police reports.

More calls received on Galveston UFOs

10/28/81

S. PARKER

HOUSTON (AP) — An eerie white glow with red and green lights flickered over Galveston Island for the second straight night Tuesday, and residents who spotted it besieged local officials with phone calls.

"Each one said the same thing," said Suzanne Northcutt, a dispatcher at the Galveston Police Department. "They keep describing red and green lights on this thing."

Ms. Northcutt decided to take a look for herself, and she told a telephone interviewer that she saw it, too.

"But when I saw it, it was white, glowing like. It could have been the evening star."

She said she and other dispatchers went out to look for the unidentified flying object after calls began pouring in about 7 p.m.

She said the department had received about 25 calls about the phenomenon by 8:30 p.m. from "people all over the island."

Deborah Briggman, another dispatcher, said Tuesday's glow was not the same as Monday's because it stayed in one place off the coast of Galveston. Another dispatcher said a patrol officer tried to follow the Monday light but it moved west and finally disappeared in a hazy sky.

A Coast Guard helicopter pilot said his curiosity tempted him to fly to the area where some viewers reported seeing the UFO Tuesday. But his counter-parts aboard the UFO, if any, were shy.

"We didn't see anything unusual," said Lt. Dave Marks, who said he was aboard a helicopter training flight over the Gulf of Mexico off Galveston. "It might be some lights reflecting."

Petty Officer Martin Taylor at the Coast Guard's Galveston Operations office had a similar prosaic explanation.

"There's a gas rig out there, and they're burning off gas," Taylor said. "The glow is reflecting off the clouds. So that's my explanation for it, anyway, since it's stationary."

"I know when I was in the Navy, we could take our 24-inch carbon search lights and signal to people maybe 40, 60, 80 miles away" by bouncing the beams off clouds, he said.

It was the second consecutive night the glow was visible on the southeast Texas coast.