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'Biggest object we've ever seen'

Eugene-area couples report UFOs

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Of the Register-Guard

At least 130,000 Eugene-Springfield area people, including local police and night crews at the National Weather Service and Mahlon Sweet Airport control tower, didn't see any unidentified flying objects Wednesday night.

But they weren't in the car with

Wanda Johnson and her husband on their late-night drive home to Crow, from Eugene. And they weren't on the top of Skinner Butte with Dave Lauinger and his friend, watching the twinkling of stars in the southwest skies. They saw something.

"We've never seen anything like it before," said Johnson, who wanted to make it clear she and her husband

aren't the type who go around seeing UFOs all the time. But they were driving home at about 10:15 p.m., when there in the sky, about as high as small airplane flies, "the biggest object we've ever seen" shot out of the heavens and disappeared behind some hills in the distance.

"It was all colors, like red and blue and kind of yellow, and it had a tail,

like a shooting star might have."

At about 11 p.m., Lauinger and his friend, both from Eugene, were perched atop Skinner Butte, not drunk and not deranged, he says. They saw two "really brilliant bright orange lights" about small-plane level, "just hanging there in the sky, like they were tied together."

"There was no sound or anything," Lauinger says, "and they just floated off toward the south. They got dimmer and dimmer, and then they were just gone," he said. He isn't acquainted with the Johnsons.

Lauinger, 18, said he told his father about it this morning "because he's the only one who would believe me. And he told me to call the paper."

Johnson called the newspaper "because I didn't know who else to call."

The newspaper called around, but officials reported no sightings, and said the polite kind of things officials usually say about such things.

The operator on the national toll-free hotline for UFO sightings (1-800-323-6556) said she couldn't release information regarding any other calls received Wednesday night, and that all calls are reported in confidence to the national UFO Center in Washington, D.C.

The newspaper called there and got a recording that said everyone was out at the moment, but that the caller should leave a message at the sound of the tone. The newspaper left the message.