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# UFOs: still in sight but out of mind

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CHICAGO — Just because you don't see frequent reports in the media any more of unidentified flying objects, don't get the idea they are not being spotted.

"We get several a week, but no one pays any attention," says J. Allen Hynek, director of the Center for UFO Studies, located in suburban Evanston. "It's not considered newsworthy any more, unless it involves some prominent person. People say, 'So, what else is new?'"

Despite the skepticism and lack of interest, reports keep flowing into the centre. Recent reports generally are of higher quality, and two-thirds involve witnesses, said Hynek, professor emeritus of astronomy at

Northwestern University. "Fewer and fewer people are being fooled by the Goodyear blimp," he said.

"Just this morning, we had a report of two deer hunters in the wilds of upper Michigan. There was a completely overcast sky and this light came along. They flashed their flashlight at it and it (the light) answered back. It made manoeuvres that were obviously guided by intelligence. They were so utterly scared, they abandoned the camp."

"Good" UFO reports tend to be from isolated rural areas. "For some reason, many, many of our reports come from people driving late at night and usually with witnesses."

And, no, he hasn't found any increase in sightings on Halloween. Nor on April Fool's

Day, holidays or even on weekends, when people are partying and might be expected to be somewhat more imaginative in what they see. In fact, he said, most sightings occur on weekdays.

Most sightings are "close encounters of the first kind," those that occur within a few hundred feet of the observer. Generally, the objects are tremendous concentrations of luminous energy, having a form that cannot be clearly defined and that manoeuvre as though they are "programmed."

He said he doesn't believe UFOs are visitors from some distant solar system because the huge distances involved make such a trip unlikely. "The only honest thing I can say is that we just don't have any idea, any more than the best physicist in the early 1900s could have told us why the sun shines. The sun is a nuclear energy device," he pointed out.

"You would think the scientific world would be agog" at inexplicable phenomena, he said. He is particularly nettled by the refusal in some quarters to treat his efforts as serious scientific inquiry.

Still, he encourages those who want reliable scientific information on UFOs or to file reports on sightings to contact the centre at P.O. Box 1402, Evanston, Ill. 60204.

## UFO? What UFO?

MAINZ, West Germany (UPI) — It was *War of the Worlds II* in Duisburg, West Germany the other day.

As a joke, the second of West Germany's three television channels flashed a message on TV screens Friday night that an unidentified flying object had landed in the Ruhr city.

And it announced there would be a special program on the landing at 9:15 p.m.

Astonished and fearful viewers made about 1,000 telephone calls to police headquarters in Duisburg, West Germany's 10th largest city, blocking all lines.

Many hundreds of others phoned newspapers and local sta-

tions carrying the nationwide TV program.

At 9 p.m., 30 minutes after the first report of the saucer landing, another message flashed across screens reading, "UFOs have not landed. There will be no special show."

That message produced hundreds of more phone calls asking where the saucers were if they had not landed.

Finally an announcer broke into the show, a detective comedy, to say it was all a joke.

On Halloween night in 1938, Orson Welles put on an adaptation of H. G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds*. The news-type account of Martians landing in New Jersey had Americans from Maine to Georgia running in the streets in fright.

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