

# Honeymooners spotted UFOs

3464

No one is surprised when honeymooners report seeing stars.

So, when D.P. and his new bride said they had seen four moving objects in the sky while honeymooning in the San Juan Islands, apparently no one took their reports too seriously.

“They looked like moving stars —

three moving in tandem in a northeastern direction, and one moving in a southeastern direction. We observed these objects through field glasses and are convinced they are not airplanes,” D.P. wrote.

They called the UFO hot-line number and the University of Washington Department of Astronomy, but didn't really get an explanation, D.P. said.

“Is there any government or private agency, or group that keeps track of satellites and offers such information to the public?” D.P. asked.

It's likely the honeymooners saw some satellites.

## TROUBLESHOOTER



**SHELBY GILJE**  
Times staff columnist

But since there are thousands upon thousands of satellites in orbit, it would be difficult to tell exactly what they observed, said Bruce Margon, chairman of the UW Department of Astronomy.

The Soviets alone launch three or four satellites a week, Margon said. Counting these satellites and those launched by other countries, there is considerable “traffic” up there.

“So, asking if it's a satellite, why don't we know about it, is a little like asking if we know something about cars on the freeway,” Margon said.

The UW astronomer said in some cities, such as New York, planetariums do have a public-service line that takes calls about what's been observed in the sky. Margon knows of no such service in this area, but he did have a down-to-earth suggestion for D.P. and bride.

Why not check out astronomy classes offered at the UW, the Pacific Science Center and Bellevue Community College?

Hill Williams, The Times' science reporter, also guessed the honeymooners had observed satellites.

“The direction of travel would jibe with satellites in polar orbit. However, if they saw all four at once, it would be unusual,” Williams said.

The honeymooners noted they already had consulted the UFO hot line, also known as Phenomena Research, 5108 S. Findlay St., telephone 722-3000. That group also was suggested by Williams.

However, Williams, a veteran of science reporting and marriage, did have one suggestion for these star gazers:

“Perhaps they should not preface their queries by saying they were on their honeymoon. Then people might take ‘star sightings’ more seriously.”

(or, perhaps, stars in their eyes?)