

# Lights hover again over Anchorage; still no explanation of what they are

Continued from Page A-1

called Anchorage police, the United States Air Force and the FAA.

On Monday night, police got even more calls. Randi Goode, communication supervisor at the Anchorage Police Department, said about 30 people reported the lights Monday night.

"Some of the same officers who saw the lights Sunday night saw them again tonight and said, 'Yep, that's them.'" Goode said.

Chris Hanson, who spotted the lights Sunday night when driving through Spenard, said he saw "distinct balls of light" moving over town. At first, he said, he thought they

were something from the Fur Rendezvous celebration, perhaps flares or a child's trick.

"I thought it might have been little kids putting candles in paper bags," Hanson said.

But seconds after the first lights appeared, another moved silently across the sky, slowed, and joined the first group, he said. Then another came and hovered near the glowing flock.

"That was something that little paper bags and candles can't do," Hanson said.

"I've never seen anything like it," said Jim Minton, a commercial pilot. Minton and his wife were driving with Hanson Sunday when all three spotted the lights. "We

all felt it was extremely out of the ordinary."

Following Sunday's sightings, FAA officials declared the lights were perfectly ordinary.

"The controllers spotted hot air balloons, with their burners going on and off," said FAA spokesman Paul Steucke. Because of the distance, those controllers were unable to identify any individual balloon Sunday night, he said.

Local balloonists dismissed the FAA's findings. Many balloon pilots Sunday night were attending the yearly banquet for Alaska Air Musers Association. The banquet was in Rabbit Creek and was still going when the lights were

spotted, balloonists said.

"Virtually all the commercial operators were at the banquet," said Mike Carnevale, owner of Balloon Central Station. "I heard that there were 10 to 12 lights. There is no way that many balloonists could have gone unaccounted for Sunday night."

Balloonists flying in controlled airspace are required to radio flight officials and report their movements, Steucke said. No such radio contact was reported Sunday night.

Night-flying balloons are required by the FAA to carry strobe lights, pilots said. Flying without one could cost a pilot a flying license.

"It's too easy to get caught," Carnevale said. "A balloon at night lights up the sky. But it looks like a seven-story light bulb, not like a group of street lights."

Although witnesses contacted Monday about the sightings were anxious to talk about the lights, they were reluctant to guess what the lights might have been.

"One part of me still feels it was a prank with kids and paper bags and candles," Hanson said. "But another part of me said it was something else."

"But I tell you, I'm going to go to the library and check out everything I can on UFOs. I'm interested now."

## Amber lights appear again over Anchorage

By GREG GADBERRY  
Daily News reporter

West Anchorage skies Monday were dotted with a flock of bright and unexplained amber lights.

The lights, which appeared at about 9 p.m., were apparently very similar to those that floated over Spenard Sunday evening. But spectators and officials were at a loss to explain the source of the lights.

"There were a couple lights but we couldn't tell what they were," said Roger Carpenter, team supervisor at the Anchorage International Airport control tower. "We didn't see anything on the tower radar."

Federal Aviation Administration reports that the Sun-

day lights were from hot air balloons were denied by balloonists.

As many as 12 lights appeared in the western sky Monday. Some of the lights glowed alone in the sky while others appeared in crude designs or in straight lines of three or four lights each.

The lights appeared to climb slowly into the sky before hovering and then disappearing. They faded about 30 minutes after they appeared.

A number of Anchorage residents apparently spotted the mysterious lights both Sunday and Monday night. On Sunday, skywatchers

See Back Page, LIGHTS

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