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Fear of ridicule stifles many UFO tales

LEOMINSTER — Janet Labor, of 77 Howard St., lost a babysitting job after publicizing in the newspaper that she lives in the former home of Betty Aho Andreasson, a woman who claims she was visited on Howard Street by extraterrestrial beings.

Labor's loss would not be a surprise to several area residents attending Tuesday's UFO presentation by Raymond E. Fowler, national UFO expert.

At least five people in the audience claimed to have made UFO sightings. Only one, James DuBois, 36, of Athol, would give his name. The others refused for fear of being ridiculed by friends, neighbors and co-workers.

Jules Vaillancourt, section director

of the Worcester County Mutual UFO Network, says this fear of ridicule is a normal reaction among UFO observers. Statistics estimate that only 20 percent of actual UFO sightings ever get reported.

Many people attended the presentation because they were curious and would like to believe other beings do exist in the universe.

Ina Larsen, of Lunenburg, feels "there must be some portion of truth (in the reported encounters) or else everyone has an over-active imagination."

Larsen's daughter, Loni, said, "So many people have seen something, there's a good possibility (other beings do exist)."

Some of Andreasson's old neighbors

came to find out "what happened in their own backyard."

Elizabeth Faley, of Leominster, owned the house at 77 Howard St. in 1944 when Andreasson had her first alleged encounter.

Faley said she never heard anything about the incident until she heard about Fowler's book just over a month ago.

Molly Kelsner, of Leominster, grew up in the same house years later. Kelsner said she was skeptical about UFOs and it's related drama, but now finds the story "hard not to believe."

"I never thought I'd say that," Kelsner laughed, amused at the possibility of the existence of extraterrestrial beings.

Jerry Gallant, of Leominster, was

disappointed that Andreasson was not in attendance Tuesday. She is reported to be on vacation in Bermuda.

Gallant said, "Because she's not here it leaves a really strong doubt as to the validity of the whole situation."

He added, however, that he does believe "there's a possibility of extraterrestrial beings existing because, when you look at the size and scope of the galaxy, (earth) can't be the only place where there's some type of being around."

Rocco Ranieri, of Lancaster, said he "can't get enough" information on UFOs and alien entities. He terms himself a "UFO enthusiast" even though he has never had a personal sighting.