

...atory steps began the first time in
gushing water. It was the first time in
more than three years the fountains
... helped raise \$750,000 for the pu-
chase of 40,000 new books.

Wee balls of fire!

Jim Riecken

Brazil eyes UFOs

Air force chases 900-mph streaks

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

RIO DE JANEIRO— Brazil's air force ordered an investigation yesterday into the sighting of tiny balls of light that streaked through Brazilian skies at 900 mph and evaded planes sent up to chase them.

"We are looking for a technical explanation for these phenomena. So far we don't have any," the Air Force Ministry's press office said in Brasilia, the capital.

The objects were first sighted Monday night by a private plane near Sao Jose dos Campos, an industrial city 210 miles southwest of Rio de Janeiro.

The air force minister, Gen. Octavio Moreira Lima, said the objects soon "were saturating radar and interfering with air traffic" in Sao Jose dos

Campos and nearby Sao Paulo, Brazil's biggest city.

Mirages in air

Lima said the air force sent up three French-built Mirage III fighters and two U.S.-made F-5E jets to chase the objects, which he described as "multi-colored balls of light." Instead, the objects pursued one of the planes, he said.

"One of the pilots... reported that 13 of the objects accompanied his aircraft, seven on one side and six on the other," the minister said.

The air force jets confirmed the presence of the UFOs on their radar screens and reportedly chased the objects for three hours, until low fuel forced them to return to base. No further sightings were reported.

A television network

quoted a pilot as saying the objects were the size and shape of ping pong balls and flew at a speed of 900 mph.

Lima was asked in a televised interview to explain what had occurred, and answered: "Don't ask me. We don't have any explanation."

Astronomer Larry Brown of the Hayden Planetarium in New York yesterday said, "It could be anything. There's a whole lot of phenomena that take place on the Earth all the time that we don't know about."

He said there were no major meteor showers on that day, but did offer one possible explanation: "It may have something to do with the recent passage of Halley's Comet. There's a lot of dust in the air, and when it hits the Earth's atmosphere it burns brightly."