

**Briefly**

## Oneidians still seeing UFO's

Residents in the Oneida area are still seeing what they term as "unusual" spacecrafts as more sightings of unidentified flying objects (UFO) are being reported.

Even though flight specialists at the London Airport said the UFO's were indeed airplanes of unusually large sizes, area residents still refuse to believe them.

"This was no airplane I saw," said Roosevelt Spurlock, a forestry ranger with the Peabody Ranger Station.

Spurlock, who resides in Oneida was one of several Oneidians who reportedly seen the strange craft hovering over Oneida in July.

Flight officials said the plane was a CSA Galaxy, the world's largest airplane, but Spurlock and other Oneida resident refuse to believe what they seen was indeed a plane.

Since the initial sightings Oneida residents who reported they saw the unusual structure have taken a lot of joking, according to one resident who asked not to be identified.

But a Catlettsburg man says he knows what type of jokes can be made and what it is like to see a UFO and have nobody believe you.

In fact Bufford Ratliff wants to know more about UFO sightings.

Ratliff, a 50-year-old unemployed steelworker from Catlettsburg, said he knew of at least five sightings of unidentified flying objects in July, and that prompted him to write to the Ashland newspaper, appealing to the public for information about other sightings.

"I am interested in reports from 12985 and 1986" read Ratliff's letter, which was published Sunday in The Sunday Independent. Ratliff wants those who have made "one or more UFO sightings or have a newspaper clipping of UFO sightings" to send a copy of the clipping or written report to him.

"I think they should be studied, and what can be learned remains to be seen," said Ratliff, who has been studying UFOs for 19 years.

Ratliff, a lifelong Boyd County resident, said he saw his first flying saucer in the 1940s. Actually, there were two cigar-shaped

objects "dog-fighting" in the sky near the tiny community of Durbin, he said.

"I didn't know what to make of them," said Ratliff, who was about 10 years old at the time. "I just filed it in the back of my mind."

Ratliff said he later saw a UFO in the 1950s that "flew faster than any flying machine I'd ever seen in my life," and could make 90-degree turns without stopping.

But Ratliff said he didn't begin actively studying UFOs until 1968, when, he said, he saw two objects fly over the parking lot of Kentucky Electric Steel, where he worked for 18 years until the mill closed last year. Ratliff said heat from the objects burned him.

"I knew something should be done to let people know about them," he said.

So Ratliff formed a local group of UFO buffs. The group also attracted members from outside the region, and Ratliff named it the National UFO Research and Investigating Committee.

Through the group, Ratliff made contacts with others interested in UFOs. Today, Ratliff has two looseleaf notebooks filled with the sketches, notes and newspaper accounts of UFO sightings. He also has a shelf lined with paperback books about UFOs.

"I've had more books than that," he said, nodding toward the shelf. "I've had every book ever written about UFOs."

Ratliff said the five sightings that occurred in July were in Kentucky, West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana and Tennessee. He said more sightings usually occur during the summer because more people are outdoors at night then, gazing at the sky.

One of those sightings was reported by Ratliff on the night of July 24 in Western Boyd County. He said he had made about 50 sightings over the years.

As for those skeptical about flying saucers and extraterrestrials, Ratliff doesn't mind their snorts of disbelief. He said his friends and family had encouraged him to pursue his study of UFOs.

"They're fascinating because they're so unusual," he said. "But there's not enough work going on in the field to learn more about them."

Ratliff said the names of people providing accounts of UFO sightings would be kept confidential. His mailing address is 7930 Paddle Creek, Catlettsburg, Ky., 41129.