

# Bright lights sighted in sky over Powell

By Leo Mueller  
Eastern Kentucky bureau

STANTON — A police scanner in the radio station cracked something about a UFO sighting out at Rosdym on Monday evening, so WKYV-FM disc jockey Jim Chadwick left the station and drove off into a crisp, clear Powell County night.

When Chadwick arrived at Cooney's Grocery, about 3 miles west of Stanton, nearly 20 people were already there, gazing into a twinkling southern sky.

"We have a lot of scanners in this area," he explained.

What Chadwick and the others saw among the stars about 7:45 Monday night remained unidentified yesterday. Some of them think they saw three flashing objects, one of which appeared to explode.

Chadwick, 36, said he saw a "real bright round light with multicolored surroundings."

Aune Albin said the light "appeared to be flashing red and green, but stars can do that because of the atmosphere."

Mrs. Albin is a professional folk singer who lives in Powell County and

serves as a field reporter for Mutual UFO Network, a private international organization that investigates and catalogs reports of unidentified flying objects.

Last July, Mrs. Albin said she received two reports of possible UFO sightings near Slade in the eastern part of Powell County. But she thinks the object seen Monday night from Cooney's Grocery may have been Sirius, the Dog Star, the brightest star in the winter nighttime sky.

"On one hand, it sounds like a cut-and-dried case of someone seeing a star and mistaking it for a UFO," she said. "On the other hand, some of the reports don't quite tally with that."

Mrs. Albin said a Rosdym couple, who reported the object to the Powell County sheriff's office, told her that there were three lights when they first spotted them.

Bill Hobbs and his wife said they spotted three objects about 7:30 p.m., "large and moving and flashing in the sky," she said.

Hobbs could not be reached for comment yesterday.

But Mrs. Albin said she described the objects as being "vertically oval, like an egg standing on end, with red lights flashing at the top, green lights in the midsection and a constant white light at the bottom."

"The witnesses described it as being really pretty, and as they watched, the center object exploded; a burning piece fell to earth leaving a trail of sparks," she said. "He (Hobbs) said it burned out before it disappeared behind a ridge, one to two miles southeast of Rosdym."

After the explosion, witnesses said, the third object "was off in the southeast portion of the sky" where another bright star, Procyon, the Little Dog Star, is positioned, she said.

Mrs. Albin said she thought the witnesses at Cooney's Garage were just looking at bright stars when she arrived. But she said the witnesses thought they were looking at something else.

"It's puzzling to me," she said.

Tom Boone, director of the Rauch Memorial Planetarium at the University of Louisville, said descriptions from Powell County convinced him that the folks at Cooney's Grocery were looking at Sirius, the Dog Star.

"I would venture my left ear on it," he said. "The area of the sky they say that (object) is in an area that is rich in first-magnitude stars this time of year."

Upper atmosphere disturbances could account for the changing colors, he said.

Conditions certainly were ideal for stargazing Monday night, one of the few clear nights so far this winter. And Boone said that Powell County was blessed with "the clearest skies in the country." The county is in the Appalachian foothills about 40 miles east of Lexington.

"How do I know what they saw in Powell County?" asked Boone. "I've been here for 20 years, and we've had thousands of calls, but I've yet to see one (a UFO)."

"We've heard of nobody else except people in Powell County who saw it."

Over the years, Boone said, he has become accustomed to UFO reports that have turned out to be everything from weather balloons to exploding meteorites to excess fuel being jettisoned from the rocket booster of a Japanese satellite.

Such fuel created a luminous cloud that was widely reported across the eastern half of the nation last Aug. 12. About the same time, there was a flash of light and explosion in Clark County — Powell County's neighbor to the west — setting off speculation about a UFO. The cause of the flash and explosion was never determined.

Boone said the Powell County report followed by a few days another possible UFO sighting in Alaska. "This is typical of what happens," he said. "It's like a disease. One person gets it, and it's contagious."



Anne Albin is a professional folk singer and serves as field reporter for Mutual UFO Network.