

NEWS- STAND

Airplane's sighting of UFO has seasonal significance

by Steve Dunnington
Special to The Times

One of the stranger stories at the newsstand surfaced last November when a Japan Air Lines flight crew who reported they were accompanied by an unidentified aircraft for nearly an hour. The Federal Aviation Administration investigated the sighting but things quieted down when they dismissed it as the official equivalent of swamp

gas.

This is what bureaucracies are supposed to do. They're supposed to hold people's hands and tell them everything is all right. In a surprise move, the New York Times reported this week that the FAA is reopening the investigation. An FAA representative explained that there was no new evidence but "we've gotten a lot of public interest, so we went back and reinterviewed the pilot."

The public is interested and that interest is manifested in the tabloids that show up in full color at the north end of the stand every single week. The tabs get a little carried away sometimes, but they don't claim that all UFO's are crafts from outer space piloted by little green men. "They're definitely not green," explains UFO expert Stanton Friedman to the Weekly World News. "Mostly, they are tan or gray."

There's also talk that the tabloids are irresponsible in their UFO coverage. If that's true, then how do you explain the restraint of the Sun in suppressing one of most shocking UFO stories in history until after the holidays? They ran it just this week under the headline — "Santa is a space alien and he travels in one of these . . ." — then there's an artist's rendering of a flying saucer.

UFO expert Whitney Kaseton, who has spent a decade unraveling the mysteries of Santa's visits, reveals in the Sun that the jolly man in red has been visiting the pinnet for thousands of years and that his means of transportation is really a sophisticated UFO which primitive people mistook for a sleigh and eight tiny reindeer.

You can call it coincidence that the JAL crew saw strange lights near the North Pole at the end of November, but you can't call it swamp gas.