

'They turn on end, then they're gone'

Steve Hamm is a Harrison County Sheriff's deputy. He was on duty the first time he saw the lights.

He got a call on the evening of March 9 from Mickey Shawler about strange lights in the sky. That first night, at Shawler's place southeast of Corydon, he saw "12 different objects," very bright, just over the tree line.

Since then he has seen them several times, the latest just three weeks ago.

"I've seen them as early as 9:30 p.m. and as late as 4:30 a.m.," he said. What he sees are lights, sometimes orange, sometimes white or blue, that rotate.

He's watched them, at a distance, come together and spread out. He's even watched the white lights pick up orange lights.

Describing the flight habits of the object, he said, "When they move at an extreme rate of speed, they turn on end, and then they're gone!"

One night in April, Hamm said, he followed it for two hours between New Middletown and Elizabethtown, "just trying to see where it would go."

His latest encounter, three weeks ago at about 2:30 a.m., was his closest.

"I came over a hill in Central Barron on my way back towards Corydon, and the headlights of my



Steve Hamm

truck hit it. I have halogen headlights, and when they're on high beam they're extremely bright.

"I came over the hill," he continued, "and there it was, close to the ground, maybe within a hundred feet of the roadway."

Hamm said the object was about one-half mile in front of him at the time.

"It's shaped like a boomerang and it's huge," he said.

After his first look at it, the object disappeared, Hamm said, but he saw it again about two minutes later.

"When I first hit it with the headlights, the orange lights were the only ones visible. When it reappeared, it was pretty well straight up from where I first noticed it, but it was way high." The lights had gone to blue, he added.

'The subject is denigrated to the point of ridicule'

"UFOs are the Rodney Dangerfield of science," Connecticut lawyer Robert H. Bleichman said in a recent "OMNI" magazine article.

"If we're being contacted by extraterrestrial intelligence, it should be a monumental historic event," he continues. "Instead, the subject matter is denigrated to the point of ridicule."

Bleicher is a consultant for Mutual UFO Network (MUFON), which sent a representative to New Middletown to investigate Mickey Shawler's March 9 sighting.

There is an accepted school of thought that all UFO sightings can be explained logically, that none are mysterious.

Another "OMNI" writer, however, maintains that official records prove the existence of UFOs.

Howard E. Goldfuss, acting justice of New York state's supreme court, who obtained government documents through the Freedom of Information Act, said the most revealing information came from an Air Intelligence Division Study. It listed the experiences of several trained scientific and military personnel who

observed objects not known to exist in any technology of the time. The documents include incidents that happened in 1947, 1948, and a spectacular one in 1955, when one of the witnesses was a U.S. senator.

An encyclopedia entry on UFOs, however, takes a slightly different view. It claims that many thousands of sightings have been reported in the last 30 years, but 90 percent of them can be identified as conventional objects. Some of the rest can be attributed to faulty reporting, hoaxes or hallucinations, the entry said.

The U.S. Air Force investigated UFOs from 1947 until 1969, when it was determined that the sightings posed no threat to national security.

During that time period, the Air Force received 12,618 reports. Only 701, or 5.5 percent, of them remained unexplained.

Since 1969, no agency of the U.S. government has investigated UFOs.

While scientists do not dispute the possibility of other intelligent life in the universe, they point to the fact that no clear, irrefutable photographs exist of an extraterrestrial craft, nor is there scientific evidence to support any belief in their existence.