

Additional winter UFO sightings revealed

by Michael Burke

What flies at night, low to the ground less than 10 miles per hour, is large, has lights, and makes no sound?

Jeff Zweifel, rural Belleville, doesn't know — but he knows he saw one.

A chance encounter last week and an overheard comment led to an interview with Zweifel, 21, who described a strange, lighted aircraft that passed over his head one dark evening Feb. 6 Zweifel, however, who said he was walking his bike home from his farm job that evening, is not the type to jump to the conclusion that he saw an extra-terrestrial craft.

"I saw a UFO," he said, "but I still don't believe in them."

However, Zweifel said he cannot explain what he did see that night, and he "absolutely" rules out it's having been an airplane or helicopter. He cites its silence and speed as evidence.

The conversation with Zweifel quickly led to two additional UFO sighting reports from that same area, including one in which two Belleville High School students tried to follow a low-flying object by car early one morning several months ago. The other sighting was reported by one of the girls and her father, Glen Morrck, a farmer who lives near Zweifel.

After finishing work about 7:30 p.m. that night, Zweifel said, he was walking out the driveway to Montrose Road for the quarter-mile walk home. He first noticed the object, perhaps 500 feet away, as a bright, white, directional light aimed at about a right angle to the direction in which Zweifel was looking.

"There was something big behind it, blocking out the other lights" that he soon saw, Zweifel explains.

"I saw one red light the whole time," Zweifel said. "Then a blue light came on — I'm not sure if it came on or if it was on the whole time (and had been hidden from his original angle of view)." Both lights were blinking.

As he walked west on Montrose Road, the craft approached him, following the road straight east, Zweifel

recalled. At the time, he was about 1.5 miles west of County Trunk PB, he estimated.

When the object was about 20 feet in front of him, a white light came on, Zweifel continued.

From the front, the blinking red light was on the and the blinking blue light on the right, he said. Between the two was the white light that started from the right, moved straight toward the left, and continued moving rapidly back and forth between the two outer lights.

"When I looked straight up at it, it looked like a short grey tail of smoke coming out the back or something long and narrow attached to the back of it," he said. However, he could not discern the shape or appearance of the object.

"When it was right overhead, I couldn't see what it was, but I could see lights," Zweifel said.

"I know it was pretty big because when I got behind it, I lined it up with the road," Zweifel continued. "I turned around and watched it go; there was something big blocking out the light." He estimated the width as about 25 feet.

The object continued on its easterly course at the same altitude and speed, Zweifel said. By the time he went into his house, he had observed it for about 15 minutes, he estimated.

On two other occasions, including several days later, Zweifel said he observed similar lights in the night sky. On both occasions his mother, Virginia, also saw them, she said. However, those times the lights were much further away. One night, he said, they saw two such objects "flying around" for at least an hour.

Upon hearing of Zweifel's description, Don Schmitt, co-director of the Center for UFO Studies (CUFOS) said, "His description is totally consistent with all the other reports we had from around there."

Schmitt, who was involved in the June 5 news conference/UFO program at Belleville High School, added that "about a half-dozen" people approached him afterward saying they had had UFO sightings this spring.

Zweifel said he called Belleville Police Officer Glen Kazmar, who made the first publicly known UFO sighting this spring in this area, after the first, close-up sighting. However, Kazmar's wife took the call and said Kazmar would call Zweifel back. "When he never called me back, I just sort of forgot about it," Zweifel explained.

Other sightings in same area

Zweifel's reported sightings does not go unsupported. A telephone call to one of his neighbors, Glen Morrck, quickly turned up at least two more incidents worthy of being called UFO sightings.

Morrck himself saw, along with his daughter, an unusual configuration of lights hovering in the night sky earlier this spring, he said. "My daughter one night said, 'hey, you want to see a UFO?'" he recalled. He then watched for several minutes three separate lights either blinking in series or on a spinning object.

Morrck said, "It was just sitting there (in the air)." With a pair of binoculars, he watched what he thinks were red and green lights, although he is not sure of the colors. They were north-northeast of his house and at about 60 degrees from the horizon, he said.

Could he have been observing a star or a planet? "Absolutely not," Morrck said, citing the different colors and that the object was "so much larger than a star." In addition, he was quite sure the lights were separate from each other and coming on from right to middle to left.

His daughter, who watched the object off and on for about a half-hour, said the object did move, although very slowly, as it was in a different spot each time she looked. She called it oval shaped, based on her memory of the light pattern, and said there were lights on top as well as blue and red flashing back and forth on the sides of it. Her impression was that it was rotating, she said.

"I think it could have been a weather balloon," she said. "I don't know if they do that."

A call to Ed Addison at Truax Field, Madison, eliminated weather balloons

as a possible explanation. He said they were not released around here, rise rapidly to great heights and then burst, carry only one small light if any, and arc only 30 inches across.

Morrck's daughter and a friend of hers', a junior at Belleville High School, had sighted yet another strange object before the sighting described by Morrck. The friend told how the girls tried to follow the object one night between midnight and 1 a.m.

The girl had just taken Morrck's daughter home that night, she said, when they spotted what looked like two red automobile taillights approaching them slowly at about the height of a utility pole. "We couldn't figure out what it was; it was like it was playing tricks with our eyes," she said.

The girls decided to follow the object in order to get a better look. As they got onto County Trunk PB, the object reversed its direction and headed north, for a while following the road. As they followed at about 55 mph, they neither gained nor lost ground, she said.

The two red lights stayed in the same configuration both as it approached and as it moved away from them, the girl said.

They followed the craft from about the bridge across the Sugar River to about the cemetery. As she sped up to about 60 mph, the object veered off to the left and was lost from view behind a hill. At no time did it change its elevation, she said. Nor did the girls ever hear it make a sound.

"We didn't think much of it, except 'what is this?'" the girl said. The incident was soon forgotten.

A call to Addison eliminated all possible explanations except perhaps that of a helicopter.

A person with the Air National Guard helicopter unit said the described sighting could not have been a helicopter. She said a helicopter can be heard at 1,000 feet, does not fly that low at night, and has one red light above and one white below.