

# UFO sightings on rise near Wis. community

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BELLEVILLE, Wis. — Police officer Glen Kazmar was on night patrol Jan. 16, when he reported seeing a cluster of lights in the sky. He saw them earlier and ignored them, he said, because the area is on a flight path. But hours later when he looked again, Kazmar was startled. "It's not moving," he later recalled.

Kazmar picked up Jeff Furseth, his partner, and drove to a high bluff southwest of town. What they said they saw there, a mile or two south and a thousand feet or so up, were flashing red, blue and white lights arranged horizontally.

The cluster was motionless, the lights intense, more like spot lights than aircraft running lights, Kazmar said. There was no sound, and it was too dark to discern a shape. Kazmar and Furseth were joined by a Dane County sheriff's deputy, who reported seeing the same thing.

Soon after came a sheriff's deputy from nearby Green County, who also reported seeing the lights. Eventually the lights, or object, moved southwest, picking up speed until they disappeared.

This was the first of a number of citizen reports this year

of strange lights, objects and doings in the sky near Belleville, a bedroom community of 1,300 south of Madison.

Others followed March 6. Several described cigar-shaped objects in the late afternoon sky. The objects appeared to have pop can-shaped, or tank-like objects nearby, or beneath, witnesses said. According to the reports, some of the objects departed in, or were obscured by, a cloud of vapor.

This is what Lavonne Freidig says she saw from her home shortly after 5 p.m. that Friday in March. Her son, Bill, 18, summoned from the shower, said it looked more like a flock of geese to him. But she did not see any signs of wavering in the shiny khaki-tinted object she said she saw.

"It looks like military to me," Freidig said.

Harvey Funseth and Fred Gochenauer described a similar object with blinking, strobe-like lights they said they saw while driving home from their jobs in Madison. For 15 minutes, they watched the object move slowly away in the sky "like a missile taking off," Gochenauer said.

All in all, more than a dozen people in Belleville and nearby New Glarus, a tourist town, re-

ported seeing strange things in the sky between January and April.

"It seemed like they were all describing the same thing: red lights on the left, and blue lights on the right," said Michael Burke, editor of the New Glarus Postin.

Unlike those in more skeptical times in past years, those reporting such things in Belleville have not become the object of town jokes.

"That's the amazing part, nobody thinks we're crazy," Freidig said.

All these reports prompted an investigation by the Chicago-based Center for UFO Studies. But since none of the sightings was close encounters, the kind ufologists get excited about, the center sent Donald Schmitt, its Milwaukee investigator.

Ordinary UFO sightings, after all, come and go with frequency. They are the small change in the currency of ufology. And Belleville, it seems, was but a minor jingle in the cosmic pocket.

"You can't help getting a little blasé after awhile," said Jerome Clark, president of the UFO center, of the large number of sightings over the years.