

Aging Arkansas

by Dixie Clark

NLR resident collects accounts of UFOs

New tales about unidentified flying objects and alien intruders have brought a long-simmering debate to a boil again, Edward Zeigler said in his article,



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"What's Behind Our UFO Mania?" in the August issue of *Readers Digest*.

The modern debate between UFO believers and skeptics has been steadily heating since 1947 when veteran pilot Kenneth Arnold reported observing disc-like objects near Mount Rainier in Washington. Zeigler said news accounts of that incident first used the term "flying saucer."

UFO skeptics point to the lack of tangible evidence and to human gullibility in refuting reports of extraterrestrial Earth visitors. But UFO believers say there is no proof either way. An estimated 70,000 UFO sightings have been reported during the last 40 years with many more unreported, Zeigler said.

North Little Rock resident

Fillman Bledsoe, 75, believes in UFOs. In fact, Bledsoe reports having been within 10 feet of one UFO and within 50 feet of another in separate sightings.

His own experiences and those of other UFO believers are detailed in a book, "Far Star," which he has spent the last 15 years researching and writing.

"Far Star" is a collection of accounts by people, such as an editor at the *Arkansas Gazette* and a North Little Rock couple, who have actually encountered UFOs.

Many books are being written about UFOs, but very few deal with why the government has chosen to cover up the existence of such objects, Bledsoe said.

"Far Star" is unique in that it is one of the few books that discusses the reasons for the government cover-up of UFOs although sightings have been documented in congressional hearings, he said.

The North Little Rock author's love of mystery and intrigue goes beyond UFOs. He once spent 12 years searching for a man, with the search culminating in a London, England, cemetery. His greatest experiences have been hunting for



Fillman Bledsoe

sunken Spanish ships in the Bermuda Triangle.

Bledsoe, who has been reading and writing since he was 4, is the author of four other books. His first, "Treasure Hunting: A Treasure Hunter's Guide," sold more than 10,000 copies. His

other books are "Treasure Hunting Tips," "Treasure Hunting Far and Wide," and a not yet titled book set for release later this year.

When not delving into intrigue and research, Bledsoe spends his time with, and working for, children. During his early years as a charter member of the North Little Rock Kiwanis Club, he was instrumental in establishing a program to supply poor children with clothing and shoes. Because of its success, Bledsoe's program was adopted by other Kiwanis Clubs.

Bledsoe has four children - Mike, 29, who owns Mike's Metal Detectors in North Little Rock; Maria Kvaternik, 29, of Monticello (Mike and Maria are twins); Sue Carson of Dallas; and Leslie Bledsoe of North Little Rock.

"I hope to be able to make my greatest contribution to children (with "Far Star"), Bledsoe said. He plans to share profits from the book with St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis.

"I hope to personally hand Danny Thomas a check for this wonderful institution and the great work they do there for children."