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Notre Dame's Brown wins Heisman Trophy

—Sports, D1



Top speller has 'incentive' to win

—Valley, B1

THE HERALD MAI

14th Year No. 335

Hagerstown, Md. Sunday, December 6, 1987



Photo by Kevin G. Gilbert

Eerie light bathes the faces of Sharon Munshour, left, and Jamie Weish in this simulation of a UFO experience

Close encounters of the local kind

Area residents relate experiences with UFO sightings

By TERRY TALBERT
Staff Writer

It happened on a summer night a long time ago, but as far as the Sharpsburg resident is concerned it could have been yesterday. She recalls the time — 7 p.m. She remembers it was getting dark.

She and her husband were inside their home when they noticed the room getting brighter. "It was like a truck had parked outside and was shining its headlights into the house," she said.

About that time, her young son "came flying in and said there was something outside." She and her husband went out to look.

In a clearing between trees on a lot directly across the street they saw two very bright lights, "like eyes," coming from an object. "It was making a very soft noise," the woman said.

As their son ran inside to get a camera, the woman said she and her husband watched as the object "took off in a vertical position and disappeared."

The woman's husband warned her not to report the incident. "He said 'people will think you're really funny.'" She didn't report it, and has only talked about it twice since then — for the second time last week.

She spoke on the condition neither her name nor occupation be used.

What did they see?

What did the woman, her husband and her

son — who is now grown — see on that long ago night? She doesn't know. She finds it difficult to put into words. "I don't know how to explain it. Whatever it was, it was weird. We were so astonished, you know... awestruck is a good word to describe how I felt. We were so shocked."

She said it was hard to visually capture what the brightly lighted object was in the brief time they had to watch it. "The image to me was of a small but fat plane of some sort. It was just phenomenal," she said.

The woman said that despite their curiosity, her family decided against going over to look at the lot across the street. "You get frightened," she said. "We stayed in and didn't want to venture out."

This woman is one of six area residents who discussed their personal experiences with unidentified flying objects. All either have worked, or are now working, in responsible positions in their communities.

Four of the people spoke anonymously. They said they feared public ridicule, loss of credibility — or both — if their names were revealed. Two others allowed their identities to be used.

Here are their stories:

Large circular object

A Hagerstown resident recalls he was about 17 when he had his experience several years ago. He was driving along a road below Smithsburg when overhead he saw a large circular object lighted with red lights.

Please turn to UFOs, A5

For many seeing UFOs is believing

It will free man from his remaining chains, the chains of gravity which still tie him to this planet. It will open to him the gates of heaven. — Werner von Braun, U.S. Army Ballistic Missile Agency, on the meaning of space travel, Time, Feb. 10, 1958.

By TERRY TALBERT
Staff Writer

UFOs. Are they real?

For six Tri-State residents, and other ordinary people who have witnessed extraordinary things, the answer is yes. For them, seeing is believing.

Many researchers who investigate reports of UFOs also believe they are real. They say while the majority of sightings are of natural phenomenon, some simply can't be explained away.

On the other hand, there are the doubters and the skeptics. And the scoffers who crack jokes about little green men and Martian spacecraft, and assume that if you've seen a UFO, you must be nuts.

Please turn to DEBATE, A4

Reagan, Gorbachev try again

INF accord just the beginning

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, building from the wreckage of the Reykjavik summit, meet this week to sign a historic arms treaty and explore possibilities for a bolder agreement to cut the most dangerous nuclear weapons by half.

Amid hints the two sides have narrowed some differences, Reagan and Gorbachev will hold eight hours of White House talks during five meetings over three days, beginning Tuesday.

It will be the first superpower summit in America since 1973, when Richard Nixon played host to Leonid Brezhnev.

For Reagan and Gorbachev, it will be their third meeting within 25 months, after encounters in Geneva in 1985 and Reykjavik in 1986.

"It's going to be a fascinating

time and a White House Baker. "It's to say that my years in meeting has to the survival

Experts say some agreements on his defense plan home in the 1 to research, Star Wars, 1 out some del

Reagan's address yesterday "a completely meeting goals of the allies and ad peace."

Please

Bush: history look fondly on

WASHINGTON (AP) — Vice President George Bush says he believes Lt. Col. Oliver L. North will be viewed as a national hero for his role in the Iran-Contra affair because the Marine officer "believed passionately in something."

"Ollie stood up there, took the heat, and the American people in every bar in Chicago and every bowling alley in Texas and every little home said, 'hey, this guy believes in something, and I can identify with it,'" Bush said.

In a wide-ranging interview with British television journalist David Frost, however, the vice president repeated his view that the United States should never seek to trade arms for hostages.

Bush said the arms-to-Iran initiative got out of control because the apparatus within the government to review policy decisions "broke down."

The interview with Frost was being broadcast over U.S. television stations this weekend as well as being published in the latest edi-

'Ollie: there, to and the people I Chicago bowling and eve said, 'He believes and I call, ''

tions of U Report.

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A4

The Herald-Mail
Sunday, December 6, 1987

From A1

Debate

Continued from A1

Washington County Regional Airport manager Leigh Sprowls expresses the feelings of many who aren't convinced UFOs exist. "I'm a great believer in what I see, not what other people see," he said.

The fact people who see UFOs are often subject to ridicule, has kept many from talking about their experiences. And even when they're willing to share their stories, most insist their names be withheld.

A Pennsylvania State Police Trooper talked about his story only on the condition of anonymity. He summed up the fear many people have of talking about UFO sightings.

"I'm not the type of guy to jump to conclusions," he said. "I'm a member of the state police, and I am a pretty credible person. But I'm afraid if I let you use my name, I'll lose my credibility in court cases."

Nuclear physicist Stanton Friedman, who has lectured extensively on UFOs in this country and in Canada, is a former skeptic who has studied sightings for the past 30 years and is firmly convinced UFOs exist.

Friedman said that after his lectures (including a recent one at Hagerstown Junior College), he asks for a show of hands from those in the audience who have seen UFOs. "Usually, I find that 15 to 20 percent have seen one," he said. "When I ask how many reported it, I find it's about one in 20. It's my experience that sightings are common, and reports of them are much less common."

Friedman has a name for the fear of ridicule that stops some from reporting sightings. He calls it "the laughter curtain."

He also has theories about why some refuse to believe UFOs exist. One common reason, he said, involves ego. Some people just can't accept that another civilization on another planet may have opened Von Braun's gates of heaven.

"Flying saucers take man out of the center of the universe," he said. "Some people can't handle that idea."

Both Friedman and another physicist involved in UFO research, Dr. Bruce Maccabee of Silver Spring, blame the U.S. government for reinforcing the attitudes of those who scoff at UFO sightings.

Maccabee is a civilian researcher who works for the Navy. He has been involved in UFO investigations since his interest in the subject was piqued by a large number of reported sightings in the mid-60s.

"One of the problems in UFO research for years has been that the government has not treated the subject forthrightly and as a result the ridicule factor has grown," said Maccabee. "Conventional science agencies are not funding research, so it is dependent on volunteer labor — and part time work. This is not a part time problem."

The U.S. government joined the debate over the existence of UFOs 40 years ago after the reported crash of an alien spacecraft in New Mexico made national headlines.

In the 1950s, the Air Force, in Project Blue Book, investigated UFO sightings, many of which were occurring near military installations. Critics of the now-defunct project said the government suppressed some of its findings. They say Blue Book was little more than a cover-up.

Today, three decades later, the official government line on UFOs remains unchanged.

According to Department of Defense spokesman Major Randy Morger, "Our stance remains the one taken at the closeout of Blue Book. In a nutshell, it was found that while there were incidents that couldn't be explained, given the facts that investigators had, overall there was no evidence to indicate that if UFOs do exist they are any danger to our national security. As a result, we summarily dropped interest in the subject."

Morger said there is no U.S. government agency investigating UFO sightings, either overtly or covertly, a statement Maccabee flatly says he does not believe.

So, there is no governmental group to which people can report sightings. Tri-State area police agencies said that when they get calls about UFOs they file them away or refer the people to private researchers, because there's no one else they can report them to.

But private researchers say sightings continue despite the lack of "official" interest in them.

John Lutz, a Baltimore resident, heads Odyssey Scientific Research. He and fellow volunteer researchers have investigated UFO sightings in the Tri-State area since 1963. He said 15 to 20 percent of the reports have been filed by police officers.

Lutz said many sightings in this area, especially in the late 1960s and the 1970s, have occurred in the vicinity of Camp David in Frederick County, and Fort Ritchie in Washington County. A barren boulder field off of Fort Ritchie Road has been the site of several tree-top level UFO sightings, he said.

"There were at least 10 sightings in the vicinity of Camp David or at Fort Ritchie or Site R (the Underground Pentagon) in the 1970s," Lutz said. He said on one occasion he was driven from Blue Ridge Summit, Pa., by military personnel to an underground location where he was permitted to interview officers who had reported seeing a UFO. He said he was blindfolded during the trip.

Lutz said that over the years there also have been several sightings near a microwave tower on a road that runs between Gambrill State Park on Rt. 40 and Rt. 77, and in the Hazelton area in Pennsylvania.

A spokeswoman for Fort Ritchie said there had been no UFO sightings there to their knowledge, and she had no files on UFO sightings

kept there. A spokesman for the park service at Catoctin Mountain Park where Camp David is located said to his knowledge there had been no sightings in that area.

While Lutz said there has been a sharp drop in UFO sightings in this area in the past decade, a fellow researcher in Pennsylvania said there has been a recent upsurge in UFO reports from western parts of that state, and from some areas in West Virginia and Virginia.

Stan Gordon, of Greensburg, Pa., is an electronic technician who is the state's director for the international research group Mutual UFO Network. In 1981, he also founded the Pennsylvania Association for the Study of the Unexplained, a private research group that investigates UFO reports.

"Sightings are much more common than people realize," Gordon said, adding that he has never personally seen a UFO. "There has been a massive wave of reports in Pennsylvania and some parts of West Virginia since August, and in Virginia since September. A lot of these have been what we call high-quality cases."

Gordon said his group investigates hundreds of reports each year, and most turn out to be explainable. "Most have a logical and natural explanation," he said. "Eighty-five to 90 percent of the cases have a logical explanation." It's the other cases, the ones that can't be explained away by comets or airplanes or blimps or swamp gas — the ones that come from credible witnesses — that intrigue Gordon and other private researchers.

For them, UFOs are no laughing matter.

Prison

Continued from A1

been scheduled for demolition under a renovation plan.

"This prison will be here for many, many years," said Michael Quinlan, director of the federal

Bureau of Prisons. "We are planning to continue renovating the cellhouses."

The 85-year-old prison, which once housed gangster Al Capone and was considered one of the toughest in the federal prison system, was undergoing a \$63 million renovation when detainees took it over.

The disturbance started began

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PICK ANY FROM OUR TRI

From A1

UFOs

Continued from A1

"I pulled over to the side of the road and watched it for a few minutes," he said. "It was very strange. It hovered. I saw smaller objects come off of the bigger object. They were all circular shapes, and had red lights blinking off and on in unison."

"I watched the smaller objects come off and head out very quickly... toward Fort Ritchie. They were too quick to be any type of aircraft. I watched them go out and then come back to the (larger) vehicle. It was close overhead. There was no noise. You couldn't hear anything. It was all visual."

The man said that after the smaller objects disappeared into the larger craft, it accelerated and disappeared from view. He doesn't know what he saw. But he said it was "something you don't forget."

Trooper saw UFO

A man who has been a Pennsylvania State Police trooper for seven years said that back in 1973 he saw a UFO at 10 p.m. on a Wednesday night in Bradford County, Pa. He was 17 years old, and was with two friends at the time of the sighting. "It is a vivid memory," he said.

It all started as a kind of joke. "I had a friend who was a nut," the trooper said. "He couldn't spell 'cat,' but he could take a computer apart and put it back together again. He used to say, 'Come over to my house. The UFOs have a trade route, and every Wednesday they come over my house.'"

Finally, one Wednesday, the trooper and another friend took the computer whiz up on his offer and went to his home. "We were watching the night skies when we saw a circular flat round object, with a flashing red light centered on its top come between two mountains in front of us," he said. "It came horizontally, hovered, and then flipped up vertically, so its top was toward us, and it came right toward us."

"It was about 150 yards away from us. It was 60 to 70 feet in diameter. There was no noise. It floated up and away at no more than 15 to 20 miles an hour, and wasn't seen any more. We were able to observe it for six to eight minutes." The trooper said he went back to the site after that, but never saw anything again.

Who to call for UFO info

The following are private UFO researchers area residents can contact either for information on UFO studies or to report a sighting:

• John Lutz, of Odyssey Scientific Research, is interested in hearing of recent or old UFO sightings. Write him at: Odyssey Scientific Research, P.O. Box 3562, Baltimore, Md. 21214.

• Dr. Bruce Maccabee is the chairman of the Fund for UFO Research. For more information on this organization, write: Fund for UFO Research, Box 277, Mount Ranier, Md. 20712.

• Stan Gordon is head of the Pennsylvania Association for the Study of the Unexplained (PASU), and the Pennsylvania representative of the International UFO research group Mutual UFO Network.

For free information on UFO research, send a self-addressed envelope to: Pennsylvania Association for the Study of the Unexplained, 8 Oak Hill Ave., Greensburg, Pa. 15601.

To report a UFO sighting, call PASU's 24-hour UFO hotline at 412-838-7768.

Three bright lights

Hagerstown city police Lt. Richard Mumma was a 30-year-old officer when he visited with his father, brother and friends at his dad's big stone home near the reservoir in Hagerstown one summer night 10 years ago.

The group was standing in the driveway of the home, talking, when they saw three bright white lights in the sky. "They were very bright, shiny circular objects," he said. "They stayed in one place for quite a while. We were looking west toward Hancock, toward Sideling Hill. They looked like they were close to a barn about one-quarter mile away, but we couldn't be sure."

"While we were watching them, two of them took off. There was one left. Then it took off. We watched them I know for 15 minutes. We knew we were watching something unusual."

Amber light in the sky

About 15 years ago, a Williamsport resident was in her home one night when her husband called her outside. She remembers it was 9 p.m., because she looked at her watch to mark the hour.

Outside, the neighborhood was illuminated with an amber light. "There was a real bright light in the sky that was shining down," she said. "It was amber. It was a beautiful color. I'll never forget that light. It was coming down from a round ball of light that just stayed at the same place in the sky."

The woman said she and her husband, and neighbors who had seen the light, watched as the beam —

which widened as it got closer to earth — gradually became more pale and narrowed until all that remained was a vertical shaft of light that came straight down from the source.

"It was just like you had a light bulb, and someone was turning the dimmer switch," she said. "It (the amber light) got lighter and lighter and lighter. It narrowed until it just came straight down, and then the light just went out. You know, like you flick a switch to turn off the lights at home."

Zooms in front of car

Ann Robinson is in the public affairs office at Fort Detrick in Frederick County. She was with a male friend this October near Harpers Ferry, W.Va., when the two of them saw something they couldn't identify.

"It was at night," she said, "and we were driving on a back road, when all of a sudden a real bright light zoomed in front of our car, at the treetop level, and disappeared behind the trees in a wooded field. It was really strange, scary. It was really weird."

"It was driving, and we both saw it. It was pretty good sized, yellowish in color, and very bright. It was shaped like a round, flattened out basketball. I remember, we kept driving but looked back to see if a fire had started where we saw it disappear."

Robinson said she didn't know what the object was. She said it didn't have a tail, like a comet.

"I have no idea what it was, except maybe some sort of meteorite," she said. "I guess maybe it was some type of falling object... I guess."

Summit

Continued from A1

He said the two superpowers are separated by "deep fundamental differences" in philosophy but must work together "to reduce the risk of war. This summit meeting and treaty represent just that — steps taken together to ensure the peace."

Meanwhile, Senate Republican leader Bob Dole of Kansas, who on Friday had criticized Reagan's harsh statements about conservative opponents of the missile treaty, released a statement decrying "strident comments by some fringe groups personally assailing President Reagan."

Reagan earlier in the week had said that critics of the INF treaty were people who had accepted "the inevitability of war," and Howard Phillips, head of the Conservative Caucus, retorted that the president had become "a useful idiot for Kremlin propaganda."

Dole said yesterday that "in my view, those kinds of ridiculous personal attacks should never have any place in the political dialogue and certainly not when directed at the president of the United States on the eve of the summit."

On his first-ever visit to the United States, Gorbachev will arrive tomorrow, flying here from Moscow with a brief stop in London to

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In... W... W... W...

Bush

Continued from A1

shooting down by the Japanese while running bombing missions in the South Pacific during World War II, and the death of his preschool daughter, Robin, to leukemia.

He believes many people have come to conclude, mistakenly, that he has no strong views. This, Bush said, could be traced to the fact he has served as vice president for nearly seven years.

"Some of it may be my recent job," he said. "If you're a supportive vice president, you sublimate your own priorities and your own passions for a team."

He and President Reagan disagree somewhat on the abortion issue. Bush said that he would allow abortions in instances of rape, incest or to save the life of the mother, while Reagan would allow it only to spare the mother's life.

He has in the past failed to handle criticism very well, Bush said, adding that he is working to improve that.

"In 1984, I let a lot of criticism get to me. I wasn't as relaxed as I should have been. I take something personal when some guy asked me some ugly question. That's one thing I've learned in this job — try better at that. I still got a long way to go."

Bush stopped short of calling North a national hero — as Reagan had done not long after the Iran-Contra affair unraveled.

valley m

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