

Lights leave residents of Tier blinking

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Colorful blinking lights have left at least two Conklin residents wondering exactly what was in the cloudy Southern Tier sky early last night.

The reports follow sightings Sunday by law enforcement personnel in Chenango County of bright lights in the sky. Police were between routes 12 and 12B shortly after 7 p.m. when the sightings were made.

Last night's reports occurred about the same time, but police, weather officials and even residents were at a loss to explain what they saw.

"My first impression was that it was a falling star," said M.A. Malloy of Bradley Avenue in Conklin. "But the lights on it began to flicker; it almost looked like it had prongs on it."

Malloy, who saw the sky-riding object about 6:30 p.m., said the object had bluish-green lights and remained in one spot for several minutes before moving on. Before the object was out of sight, she telephoned her next-door neighbor, Richard Stank.

"It definitely wasn't a star," Stank said last night. "But I don't know what it is."

Stank said his son was able to take at least three pictures of the object. The photographs, he said, could be developed as early as this week.

Stank said the object had "three lights in a circle that moved around a center light." From his home, the object appeared to be the size of a dime, he said.

"The light seemed to be twinkling on and off," he said. "It was bright and glowing."

Sherburne police Chief William Excell, who reported seeing a bright flash on Sunday, said no sightings had been reported to his agency yesterday. An investigation, he said, is not planned.

Excell said he had no clues as to what he saw Sunday. "Maybe it was a meteor. It looked like a falling star, maybe bigger," he said. "But I'm sure it wasn't a plane."

National Weather Service officials said no sightings were reported by late last night, but helicopters practicing maneuvers could have been mistaken for the lighted objects.

"Unusual" astrological conditions this year may also be a contributing factor, said forecaster Jim Malinosky.

"The evening and morning stars will be more pronounced," he said. "It has to do with rotation and alignment of the stars and the planets."