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visited Northwest Florida this past weekend at MUFON's request to study the photos and talk to principals in the case.

Maccabee lives in Maryland. Apart from his work with the Navy, he is well known in UFO circles for rigorously analyzing purported UFO photos and films.

In a telephone interview Tuesday, Maccabee said some of the Gulf Breeze photos could have been faked — but, he thinks, not all of them.

"At first glance I assumed it was a fake, but after looking at it I'm not so sure," he said. "I've had difficulty figuring out how they would be done."

Maccabee said his talks with Ed, the photographer, convinced him the photos probably were genuine.

"Ed doesn't have knowledge of these photographic techniques," Maccabee said. "It's one thing to say it (faking the photos) can be done, and another thing to know how to do it."

Andrus and other MUFON investigators favor Maccabee's assessment. The case "appears credible," Andrus said.

Despite repeated requests to MUFON representatives, the Daily

News has been blocked in its attempts to examine the photos and interview Ed.

The UFO sightings came to light last November, when Ed entered the Sentinel's office with five color Polaroid photos he said he had taken Nov. 11. Duane Cook, the newspaper's editor and publisher, ran three of the photos in the Sentinel's Nov. 19 issue.

The photos show a glowing round object, flattened at the top and bottom, with a band around its middle and a towerlike projection on top.

After the photos appeared, other Gulf Breeze area residents said they, too, had seen strange things in the sky. The Sentinel has published a steady stream of UFO stories since then, once devoting an entire front page to the topic.

And Ed, according to the Sentinel and MUFON investigators, has continued to take more UFO photos — at least 17 in all.

At one point, on the night of Jan. 24, editor Cook accompanied Ed to a spot east of Gulf Breeze and saw Ed take a snapshot of the mystery object. Cook said he was videotaping Ed at the time and didn't actually see the UFO himself.

Cook said last week the photos and his adventure with Ed have led him to believe the UFOs are alien spacecraft. "It's more likely that than anything I can think of," he

said.

That view is enthusiastically promoted by the MUFON investigators. Besides the Texas-based Andrus, those involved in the case are Don M. Ware of Fort Walton Beach, MUFON state director; Charles Flannigan of Pensacola, lead investigator; and R.E. Reid, also of Fort Walton Beach, another investigator.

Budd Hopkins, author of a recent UFO book called "Intruders: The Incredible Visitations at Copley Woods," came down from New York earlier this month and endorsed the Gulf Breeze sightings.

UFO buffs aren't alone in following the case.

The Miami Herald plans to publish what it calls a "tongue-in-cheek" account of the Gulf Breeze UFO hubbub in Tropic, its Sunday magazine. The Orlando Sentinel also has sent a reporter to Gulf Breeze, and the tabloid National Enquirer has expressed interest in Ed's photos.

Pensacola's WEAR-TV (Channel 3) plans to run a series of reports on the UFO affair. A spokesman said Tuesday that segments are scheduled to air tonight, Thursday and Friday on the station's 6 p.m. newscast, and half an hour will be devoted to the subject at 8:30 p.m. March 4.

Photos disputed

Experts disagree about authenticity of Gulf Breeze UFO

By LEE FORST Daily News Staff Writer

A series of alleged UFO photographs taken in the Gulf Breeze area has drawn nationwide attention, but experts are split on whether the photos are genuine.

Since last November, the weekly Gulf Breeze Sentinel has published numerous reproductions of the photos, which reportedly were taken with a Polaroid camera by a Gulf Breeze resident identified only as "Ed."

The photos show a bright, circular object against the night sky. Ed also is said to have a videotape showing the object in flight.

The case, taken as a whole is extremely convincing," Navy physicist Dr. Bruce Maccabee said after examining the photos.

But a second expert, who wants to remain anonymous, examined five of the photos and declared them phony.

Walker H. Andrus Jr., director of the Mutual UFO Network, said Tuesday that the second expert had told him the photos he studied "have to be a hoax."

The Daily News also interviewed the second expert, who denounced the photos as fakes. He spoke on the condition that he not be named or quoted.

In addition, the Sentinel showed the photos to a local photographic retoucher in December and received a lukewarm reply. The photos hadn't been doctored, the newspaper quoted her as saying, "but they do look a little fishy."

Andrus' Mutual UFO Network, or MUFON, is a civilian organization that investigates UFO sightings. Maccabee, the physicist,

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hour of the program was then filled with interviews of the witnesses by Rivera and questions from the audience.

On the second half of the show, Tom Weber, a Chippewa Falls businessman who is heading up a fundraising project to construct a sophisticated research facility in Elmwood, was kept on the set to discuss his goals with two UFO investigators and the eyewitnesses signing similar to the one experienced by Forster.

They also discussed a recent UFO sighting in Australia," Forster said. Forster said that after arriving late at the studio last Wednesday, the group was not allowed a scheduled briefing which would have better prepared them for the experience in front of the cameras. They were hustled through the make-up department shortly after their arrival, and did not even have time work with a studio-based hair stylist.

"Inwardly, I think we were all pretty nervous," Forster said. "But Cerralbo was very professional with

us. He made us feel comfortable and really put us at ease."

Feiler agreed. The village mayor said he was initially concerned that the people of Elmwood would be made to look foolish by the big city television staff, but was pleasantly surprised to experience just the opposite.

"We're really trying hard not to make this a dog and pony show," Feiler said Monday morning. "I tried to make it clear to Cerralbo's producer that we don't want to have people thinking of Elmwood as a joke."

Feiler said his position as a village president has made him aware of the fact that as the UFO center begins to materialize, it will have a large effect not only on the Elmwood community, but on Pierce County as a whole.

"We don't want to jeopardize the image of the village, and it is so important that we do this thing right," Feiler said. "The interest in the project has been tremendous and we have received phone calls from Canada, Australia and South Africa."

Feiler added that the landing center was not devised as a means of pro-

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New York journey was rocky but 'Geraldo' sincere

ELMWOOD—Despite being faced with cancelled and delayed airline flights, a lay-over in Chicago and a limousine ride that dumped them at the studio door with little time to prepare for an hour long television spot about the proposed UFO center in their town, five Elmwood area residents came away with a positive feeling about their session with ABC talk show host Geraldo Rivera.

"It was the first time I had ever flown," Carol Forster said Friday morning. "I had never been to New York before either."

Forster, along with Elmwood Mayor Larry Feiler and residents Doris Wheeler and Roger Weber were all flown to Rivera's studio after he learned of their connection with Chippewa Falls businessman Tom Weber. Weber and others recently announced they hope to turn two square miles of Elmwood acreage into a landing zone for aliens.

The 60-minute taping of "Geraldo", filmed before a live audience, was to be aired locally at 10 a.m. today — Wednesday — on KSTP-TV, channel five.

"I'd never watched his (Rivera's) program before, so I didn't know anything about him," Forster said. "He had a very dynamic personality and steered the show along very well to keep it moving. He had a lot of energy and told jokes to the audience when they would cut away to a commercial."

Forster had a close encounter with what she believes to be an alien craft while driving outside Elmwood with her three children in March of 1975. Since then, she has said little about the frightening experience.

"It's been 13 years of turning people away," Forster explained. "I wanted to protect my children from ridicule and had a difficult time talking about the experience."

"But I also felt a responsibility to the people of Elmwood and when given only 24 hours to think about whether or not I should go to New York, I decided to go," she said.

Forster said the program was taped with an opening segment of cartoons concerning UFO's and what would happen if they landed. The first half

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