

What's up? Sky was the limit for excited phone callers

By Pati Nash
Staff Writer

Rockland County had visitors in the sky last night.

Police officers, between numerous phone calls from anxious residents, said the large, slow-moving object was probably a small group of ultra-light aircrafts flying in formation.

But some excited callers from New City, Piermont, Garnerville and Congers scoffed at the explanation that the UFO was simply motorized hang-gliders with flashing, colored lights.

"That's the easy excuse to avoid a panic," said Bill Maher, who lives on Main Street in Garnerville. "Myself and my wife saw it. It was moving very slow, with no noise or anything like an engine. It scared the heck out of me."

An astronomy-buff from New City was not scared by the sighting, but he too did not believe the official's theory on the craft.

"I personally think if they (the police) went into the newspaper saying there was a UFO in New City all hell would break loose in the county," said Eric Verga,

who lives in the New City Condominiums. "I'm not scared, it kind of fascinates me."

A Clarkstown police officer said the calls began shortly after 9 p.m. last night.

He went outside with a pair of binoculars and could see that the object was actually three or four separate crafts with white, red and green lights.

A group of 20 people stood outside in Piermont, watching the craft make it slow course to roughly the New York-New Jersey state line in Norwood, N.J. and turn around to make its trek back up.

Based on phone calls from area residents and police reports, the craft flew in a straight line south from Garnerville until it hit the Congers area, when it turned and hovered over Palisades and New Jersey. It then turned around and headed back north, following the Hudson River.

Groups of people parked in cars along Route 9W, waiting for the chance to see the UFO make its northern journey.

Phone wires buzzed with numerous people calling over all Rockland to check whether friends and rela-

Please see **CALLS**, back page

JIM RIECKEN

... they
come and ask for a lot (of money)
but I don't give a lot because I like

With about \$182,000 in grants,
Colman gave money to 25 organiza-

said. "Next year, I'd like to see
an effort to establish day
centers."

CALLS/From page A1

tives had also seen the UFO, said many of the roughly two dozen callers.

Other, more ambitious types, followed the course of the craft on the ground. Thomas Brizzolara of Congers, his wife Nancy, and 8-month baby David hopped in the car and followed the craft along Route 9W.

"We thought it was a blimp, but there was another plane up in the

sky and it shined its lights on it. The red lights turned green, and the thing split up!" he said. "It was really wierd. This was my first UFO chase... now we're home having coffee. It was a very nice evening."

It was not a nice evening for the Stony Point police, who also handled numerous phone calls. An officer there also told people not to worry, based on the rash of similar

ultra-light sightings last summer.

Police said they worry about the safety of the small aircrafts flying above the county, but some area residents maintained that the least thing to be concerned about.

"It was absolutely not ultra-lights," said an unidentified caller from Pomona. "I don't believe that one bit. I saw other airplanes, and this thing dwarfed it in size. It was flying much higher."

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