

APR 14 1988

NEW ENGLAND NEWSCLIP AGENCY INC

Local conference to explore history of UFO abductions

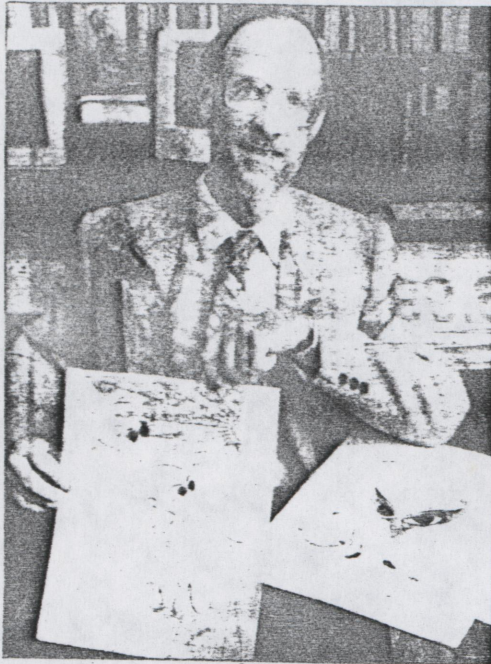
By Arthur Myers

Are people being abducted aboard UFOs and examined? Any reader of the comic strip "Bloom County" would say "Sure, look what happened to Steve Dallas," a character in the strip who was kidnapped recently by "aliens."

Public awareness of presumed abductions of humans by alien beings has been growing apace. Movies such as "Close Encounters of the Third Kind," and constant accounts in newspapers and magazines and on TV have fueled speculation that we have visitors among us from somewhere else — other planets, other dimensions?

A two-day public conference on UFO abductions will be held at the Best Western TLC Hotel in Waltham on May 6 and 7, with well-known writers on the subject such as Budd Hopkins of New York City, author of "Intruder," and Ray Fowler of Weymouth, a scientist and author of "The Andreasson Affair." Other speakers will be people who say they have been abducted, and who will tell of their experiences. The conference has been organized by Psi Symposium, a group, connected with the Unitarian-Universalist Church, of people interested in unexplained phenomena.

For hard-nosed skeptics, perhaps the most significant speaker will be David Webb, a scientist who lives in Burlington



DAVID WEBB, a space physicist who lives in Burlington, holds up some artist renditions of aliens that are based on descriptions given by people. — Staff photo by Ann Ringwood.

'Right now we're in kind of a low point of activity, although there is a constantly sustained number of sightings and contacts. The year 1973 was probably the last time we had a major wave in this country.'

— David Webb, a Burlington space physicist

and who is a space physicist working on a U.S. Air Force contract at nearby Hanscom Air Force Base. Webb is a member of the American Astronomical Society, the American Physical Society, the American Geophysical Union, and other prestigious scientific groups. He has worked on NASA space science programs including the Orbiting Solar Observatory and the Skylab spacecraft. He has published more than 30 scientific papers.

He has also written an intriguing report entitled "1973 — Year of the Humanoids," with the subtitle, "An Analysis of the Fall 1973 UFO/Humanoid Wave." For Webb is one of an unexpectedly large number of professional scientists who take the UFO/abduction phenomenon very seriously indeed.

Webb is no newcomer to research on UFO abductions. He began doing it as a teenager in Ohio in the 1960s, primarily through the influence of his elder brother, Walter, who is now assistant head of the Hayden Planetarium in Boston. He maintains a computer-based catalog of over 2,300 case references to Close Encounters of the Third Kind, a categorization that means actual observation of unknown beings, including several hundred abduction re-

ports.

In spite of the seemingly increasing public interest in UFOs and the beings who presumably ride in them, Webb says, "Right now we're in kind of a low point of activity, although there is a constantly sustained number of sightings and contacts. The year 1973 was probably the last time we had a major wave in this country. An incredible number of sightings were reported that year, and also a number of abduction cases. Everywhere



ALIENS ABOUT THREE FEET TALL and dressed in silver suits is how most abductees describe the creatures flying the UFOs. There are also accounts of more human-like aliens standing five feet tall and less frequent accounts of giant aliens as tall as eight feet. — Staff photo by Ann Ringwood

around the country sightings were reported.

Another large wave of which he is aware, Webb says, was in 1954 in France. Has he himself ever seen a UFO, or an alien? "I've seen strange lights in the sky," he said, "but nothing spectacular, no close encounters."

But hundreds of people he has talked to do describe such experiences. "There is a regular pattern to the reports," he said. "There are three general classes of aliens they talk about. Probably the most frequently observed are small beings, about three feet tall. Often they have silver suits, with a dome over their heads. There's a class of hairy dwarfs that were seen in the 1950s and 1960s in South America.

The second class would be the more human-like, about five feet tall. These are the ones that are typically involved in the abduction cases — not in every case, but frequently. They are described as having gray skin, catlike or Asian type eyes, and large, hairless heads. Then there's a third class, a much smaller class, of giants, described as seven or eight feet tall."

Most abductees tell of being spirited aboard a space craft and released after a couple of hours and an exhaustive physical examination. The experience is often blocked out of their conscious minds, either by themselves or by the aliens. But it is sometimes remembered. Some of these recollections are aided through hypnosis, but many abductees who recall their experiences have not undergone hypnosis. There are many support groups for people who believe

they have been abducted, on the order of Alcoholics Anonymous or Gamblers Anonymous, for it is a frightening experience that leaves emotional scars, even when it is not fully recalled.

Where do the aliens come from?

"I'm a physical scientist," Webb said, "and I prefer to have some evidence before hypothesizing, and we don't have a whole lot of evidence as to where they do come from. But I

Most abductees tell of being spirited aboard a space craft and released after a couple of hours and an exhaustive physical examination.

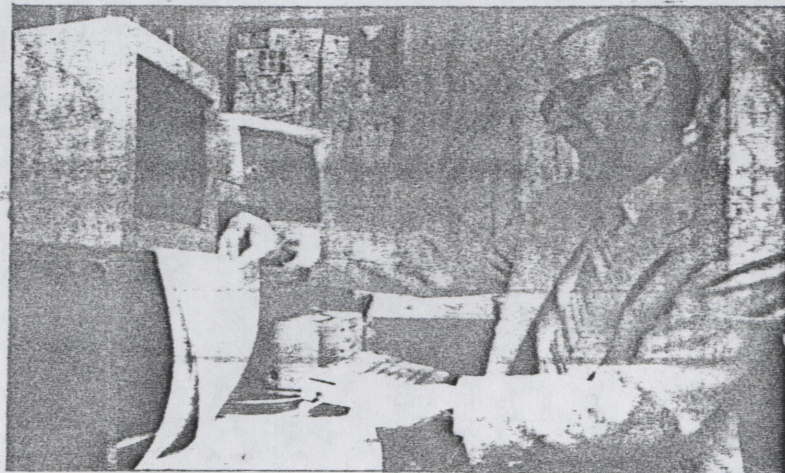
think astronomers would agree nowadays that there are millions of star systems within our galaxy alone. Many could have planets with intelligent life, and some could have life that has developed space ships. In a few hundred years, I think, we ourselves will be almost unrecognizable as far as our technology is concerned — if we survive. So it doesn't take much of a leap of understanding to arrive at the conclusion that there are many civilizations out there, and some of them might be able to travel between the stars. It's entirely possible that we could be being visited by many different civilizations, and monitored by them, for that matter.

As a researcher one of the reasons I believe there is something to the abduction phenomenon is that reports tend to repeat a lot. Not only what the aliens look like, but the environment of the inside of the UFOs: white light, curving walls, a single, sparsely furnished room, a table, a medical examination. The air often seems cold, heavy, sometimes there's a mist, and it's a little hard for the abductees to breathe on board, although it's breathable by both groups."

According to reports from abductees, the communication, what there is of it, seems to be done by telepathy.

"Those of us who have been in the field for a long time," Webb said, "have been hoping for a breakthrough. I guess the most obvious breakthrough would be if the government would admit there's something to it. Maybe not just our government, but other governments, in Europe and so forth. Certainly people are aware of it now. I think if the government came out with whatever they have people would accept it."

The conference will begin Friday evening, May 6, at 8, at Best Western TLC Hotel, Route 128 and Totten Pond Road, in Waltham. It will continue Saturday, from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. The full conference, including lunch Saturday, is \$75. Registration may be made by sending check to Psi Symposium, 117 Stanley Road, Swampscott, MA 01907. Registration can be made separately for Friday night or Saturday, \$15 for Friday and \$60 for Saturday. Tickets will be sold at the door, if space is available. The price Saturday, without lunch, is \$50.



DAVID WEBB looks through a printout from his computer that holds over 2,300 case references to Close Encounters of the Third Kind. — Staff photo by Ann Ringwood