

Searching the sky for UFOs, aliens

By Bill Hetland
Wausau Daily Herald

You've just seen "Close Encounters of the Third Kind."

You're filled with awe. You go outside, look up at the sky and wonder if there are unidentified flying objects and alien life forms drifting around.

There's nothing scientific about what you're doing. No great principles. No meaningful theories.

It's just that in your heart you're convinced there are other someones or somethings out there.

As you scan the sky looking for bright objects, you're not particularly concerned over research that shows that the planets, suns, moons and stars can't support life as we know it. Somewhere out there exist some intelligent life forms, you assure yourself.

You recall your childhood days when movies like "Invaders from Mars," "The Day the Earth Stood Still" and "War of the Worlds" expanded your sense of wonderment.

On nightly walks under a full moon you squint to find something out of the ordinary.

You're not alone — looking at the sky, that is.

Randy Olson, an assistant professor who teaches three astronomy courses at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, says a lot of people think they've seen UFOs, especially after they've read newspaper accounts or watched TV news reports on other sightings.

"There's more of a predominance of people going outside and looking at the sky after they read or heard about UFO sightings," he says.

"If you take any clear evening and look at the sky for 15 minutes, you'll see something."

After hearing descriptions from people about what they thought were UFOs, Olson says he determined that some were man-made objects like satellites or space vehicles.

"The Soviet space station is a very bright object, brighter than any star in the sky," Olson describes it as a bright, starlike object that traverses the sky in about a minute and a half.

In some cases, even weather balloons, which drift 10 to 15 miles above the Earth, are mistaken.

"Just after sunset, they can reflect very brilliantly," he says.

The planet Venus is sometimes mistaken for a UFO, he says, because it's very low in the sky and very bright, especially during the last part of April and the first part of May.

In February of last year a town of Hamburg woman said she and her husband watched a UFO move from east to west for about 10 minutes

early one morning. She said the object had two bright white lights and red flashing lights. She called the Federal Aviation Administration flight service station at Wausau, which had no reports of aircraft in the area.

The children of a Gleason family also saw what they thought was a UFO during that same month. Their report followed claims of numerous sightings in southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois.

Olson, himself, got quite a surprise when he was a graduate student in New Mexico. Looking west he saw a bright conical-shaped object increase in size.

The bright point at the apex of the cone went out, Olson says, and in 30 to 40 seconds it appeared again.

"It was a very, very strange appearance," Olson says.

It turns out that what Olson saw wasn't a UFO but a rocket launched at Edwards Air Force Base in California. Glowing exhaust gases added to the mystery.

Does Olson believe in alien life forms?

"I have a strong suspicion there are other life forms in our galaxy, but they wouldn't be running around visiting other planets."

Olson says there are two reasons for aliens not to visit Earth or other planets in our solar system.

It requires too much time and too much energy, he says.

Yes, you realize after talking with Olson and other rational scientific types that your own feelings about life "out there" are a bit off the wall.



"If you take any clear evening and look at the sky for 15 minutes, you'll see something."

—Randy Olson
Teaches astronomy at UW-Point

Still, you persist.

Over in Elmwood, a village of 1,000 earthlings near Chippewa Falls, 50-year-old Tom Weber is persistent in his goal to build a UFO landing site and research center.

As president and founder of the UFO Site Center Corp., Weber's group of nine members plans to buy two square miles of land outside Elmwood for a landing pad, a light transmitter and eventually housing and labs for up to 100 scientists.

Weber says the light transmitter would relay a visual message to extraterrestrial life: "Members of your society and our society will meet here."

Weber hopes that members of the advanced society that may have Earth under observation will see the

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Even aliens are typecast

By Lynn Howard
Gannett News Service

Sometimes, UFO field investigators will come across a case where a witness says he or she has seen, communicated with or been abducted by an alien being, according to the Mutual UFO Network Field Investigator's Manual.

Because such encounters are often complex, MUFON provides descriptions and drawings of the four most commonly reported entities.

Type 1: The most frequently reported entity is human-like or humanoid, according to the manual, which illustrates three oft-reported types of aliens. Type 1 is dwarf-like, with a large, bald skull, large, slanted eyes, pointed ears and may carry a baton-like object.

Type 2: This type is man-sized and human-like in appearance. The manual sketch of the humanoid looks strikingly similar to Mr. Spock of "Star Trek," without the pointed ears.

Type 3: Anthropoids — reported in South America — are small, covered with dark hair, have arms that dangle past their knees and claws on their large hands and feet.

Type 4: Also called Bigfoot, Yeti or Sasquatch, is large, Neanderthal or apelike in appearance, with glowing red eyes, a large nose and fang-like teeth. Neither Type 3 or Type 4 are usually associated with UFOs.

Entities may be encountered by accident, usually when a person comes upon an alien or aliens when "UFO crews are engaged in either sample gathering or in apparently repairing their craft," according to the manual. Intentional encounters involve UFOs or beings deliberately blocking a human for communication or abduction.

Types of communication are audible (either spoken or mechanical), gestures, written, telepathic or through visions.

An enchanting way to contact flying saucers

By Steve Cooper

Gannett News Service

There's a television commercial where UFOs land and all the aliens aboard look like Rodney Dangerfield. It's wrong.

They look like Shirley MacLaine.

At least, that seemed possible recently as 40 people at a UFO call-in tried to contact flying saucers through mystical, New Age chanting.

They gathered on a hilltop about five miles from the beach in Malibu, Calif. Holding hands, they stood in a spiral formation under a crystal-clear night sky and offered their chants to the stars.

Their calls were directed at UFOs and the "space brothers" who fly them. "Om. Om. Ommmmmmm."

Om, my goodness. This is no "Lost in



Shirley MacLaine



Rodney Dangerfield

Space" rerun. Most of these folks are serious.

"Just let your love go. Let it go to them. Focus it here in the center of the spiral and send it up to them. They'll show themselves," said Virgil Armstrong, of Sedonia, Ariz., a 20-year veteran of the UFO movement.

He has the kind of mind-boggling credentials that carry weight in UFO circles. He says he is a former military intelligence officer who has: met aliens face-to-face; witnessed a government conspiracy to hide the truth about extraterrestrials; and been shown that the interiors of both the Earth and moon are not only hollow, but inhabited.

Om, my goodness.

Armstrong looks more like someone ready for a voyage on the high seas than

someone looking to sail into space. Well-tanned and in his early '60s, he has neatly trimmed silver hair, a silver goatee and a single gold earring.

He stood at the center of the spiral. The night canopy was rich with stars and possibilities.

"Let's tell them we love them," Armstrong said.

One by one, people looked up and said, "I love you," until everyone had spoken. They also went through choruses of "We love you" and "I love me."

"It's very important for you to understand that, as it says in the Bible, 'Ye are gods.' That's the power we must tap," Armstrong said.

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UFOs

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message and recognize it as being meant for them.

"They're interested in us, and we suspect they're waiting for a collective response from mankind. That hasn't come yet."

Weber says he's trying to contact the aliens for the benefit of humanity, arguing that an advanced civilization would share some of its technology.

The U.S. government knows about the UFOs, Weber says, but is trying to keep the public from learning about them.

The project would take \$25 million, Weber says, and money would come from private contributors. Although fund-raising efforts have barely begun, Weber says he'd like to start construction next year and start transmitting visual messages within two years.

The Elmwood area was chosen because of the "many high-quality (UFO) sightings," Weber says. Residents reporting sightings include a former police chief and a former schoolteacher.

And the village has celebrated Elmwood UFO Days for 10 years, this year starting July 29. Weber's UFO group will have an office there.

The three-day event includes dances, parades, food tents, a softball tournament and foot races, says Village President Larry Feiler.

Weber, who owns a metal finishing company in Chippewa Falls, says he's received thousands of phone calls from throughout the world since proposing the UFO landing site earlier this year.

"At first we couldn't even put our phone down without it ringing," he says in a recent phone interview.

His proposal was reported on numerous television shows, including the CBS Evening News with Dan Rather, Geraldo Rivera and P.M. Magazine.

Weber, who hasn't seen a UFO or alien life form himself, is nonetheless convinced that we are not alone.

"I've lived my life with the belief that we aren't the only intelligent life form in the universe."

Gannett News Service and the Associated Press contributed to this report.

Chanting

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Was this a religious revival meeting or a UFO call-in? Such matters can get blurred in the New Age.

After 15 minutes of positive confessions, the chanting began. Armstrong says the sound "om" is used because it is a universal vibration that will be picked up by telepathic space brothers.

As teeth vibrated to the meditative tone, eyes turned to the heavens. Armstrong instructed the flock to call out if they spotted something.

There were a few false starts. Several people pointed at a pulsating light on the horizon. No, it was the planet Venus. Then, a light moving on the horizon. No, an airplane.

"Way up there. About 10 o'clock," said one watcher.

Sure enough, there was something moving. Faint, almost imperceptibly, a light was slowly trekking across the sky.

Though there was no way to accurately gauge altitude or speed, it didn't take but a minute for the UFO enthusiasts to eliminate the possibility it was a high-flying airplane, a balloon, a satellite or some other earthly object. To those who am-ed, it was clearly unearthly.

"They've heard us and they're turning on their lights for us. We're very fortunate they've taken time out of their busy work schedules to acknowledge us. They don't have to," Armstrong said.

In about an hour of intensive sky-watching, a half dozen similar high-flying objects were spotted.

"Jeez, isn't it great? It's all so real," said Karen Tishman, a Los Angeles legal secretary on her first UFO call-in.

The night at Malibu ended with participants generally pleased. The space brothers had been kind enough to turn on their lights, as Armstrong said. If they weren't so busy with their experiments and such, surely they would have come closer.

There was some disappointment, however, that the craft hadn't swooped down so both sides could get a good look at one another. There was no zipping and zapping of bright alien lights. Just those slow moving sparkles way up in the sky.

The slight let-down was made worse when Armstrong talked about what happened at his last UFO call-in. "They" made themselves fully known then.

"The ship came in so close you could see the windows along the side and you could see the people inside. Of course, they weren't people like us," Armstrong said to attentive listeners.

Boy, there was a truly spectacular intergalactic meeting. If only ...

Of course, some people have suspicious minds. They harbor doubts about such stories.

"You ever notice how often the incredible stuff happened last time or while you were gone or when nobody was around but the true believers? It never seems to happen the night you go. Perhaps, that should tell you something," says John Mosley, an astronomer at Griffith Observatory in Los Angeles.