

Halifax, Nova Scotia

# Glasnost brings headless aliens, huge hairy creatures to U.S.S.R.

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The Associated Press

MOSCOW — Headless aliens from space invade Russia!

"Huge hairy creature" terrifies villagers in the Volga valley!

Possible UFO lands in Moscow!

Although President Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms haven't dented supermarket tabloids, glasnost has changed the Soviet media.

The change is evident on late-run television. It used to be a showcase for morally uplifting and dull movies about building communism.

Now, six days a week, as part of the breakfast TV program 120 minutes, grey-haired mystic Alan Humak waves his hands on camera to cure viewers from Minsk

to Vladivostok of what ails them.

Soviets with heart disease are requested to watch the self-described journalist on Tuesdays. On Fridays, Chumak will help viewers get rid of allergies. People with stomach bugs or bone and muscle aches should tune in on other days.

But the afflicted don't even have to watch the program to get help. Leave the set on, and a jar of water, juice or massage cream placed by the TV screen will be "charged" by Chumak's gestures and can be used later for treatment.

Earlier this summer, after about a month on the air, Chumak was pulled off 120 Minutes by broadcast executives, who said they wanted to make sure his treatment brought positive re-

sults.

They must have been convinced — the man in his mid-50s was back on TV waving his hands within a week.

It's not just television that has changed. One of the daily newspapers carrying odd stories belongs to the party itself.

Socialist Industry, with a circulation of one million, is an organ of the party's Central Committee and has a mandate to report on the Soviet economy. But often it makes space for stories that have nothing to do with either socialism or industry.

On Tuesday, there was an account of invaders from space landing in central Russia's Perm region.

Milkmaid Lyubov Medvedev told the newspaper, "At about

4:30 in the morning, I was going to the farm when I saw a dark figure seemingly riding a motorcycle. But when I looked closely at the figure, I noticed there was no motorcycle, but just something resembling a man, but taller than average with short legs."

The creature had "only a small knob instead of a head," Medvedev said. "I was frightened to death . . . then it became fluorescent and disappeared."

Beekeeper G. Sharoglazov saw two egg-shaped fluorescent objects as big as aircraft hovering at a height of about 250 metres. Last month, others also saw aliens with no heads, the paper said.

It was Socialist Industry as well that informed Soviets on Thursday of the huge, fleet-footed

hairy creature that terrified residents of the Kirovo settlement in the Volga basin.

"I saw the creature pretty well," said resident R. Saitov. "It was about two metres tall, its body covered with dark brown hair and it had shoulder-length hair. Being a veterinary surgeon, I can say the creature was neither a man nor an ape."

Saitov and a friend tried to approach the creature after spotting it on the other bank of a pond, but it bounded away at astonishing speed when they pursued it in a car.

The official Soviet news agency Tass picked up the newspaper's story for national and worldwide distribution, headlining it Huge Creature Sighted in Volga Region; Men Give Chase.

ROBIN SELZ via COUD-I