

## COMMUNITY NEWS

# UFO group: Is something out there?

By Todd Nilson

TRIBUNE-REVIEW

On Jan. 21 of this year, a Pennsylvania caseworker, driving along Route 30 outside Bedford, encountered a brilliant light that dropped down from the sky and hovered over his car. The cigar-like object levitated noiselessly and flashed a beam of light over the road before it streaked back into the skies a moment later.

Who would believe it?

According to Stan Gordon, founder and director of the Pennsylvania Association for the Study of the Unexplained, his organization takes reports about many similar cases each year.

"We're kind of open-minded skeptics," Gordon said of PASU.

Approximately 10,000 cases of low-level unidentified flying object sightings, creature reports, unusual animal killings, unexplained photographs and other anomalies are kept in PASU's files, dating back to the early 1940s.

Formed by Gordon in 1981, the association is affiliated with the Mutual Unidentified Flying Object Network, based in Seguin, Texas.

Anyone can report unusual incidents to PASU without fear of ridicule or publicity, Gordon said. The association was formed to make the public aware that UFO sightings continue to occur and to collect legitimate scientific data about UFOs.

### FIELD INVESTIGATORS

The association is comprised of 120 members who specialize in

science, chemistry, engineering, technology, the military and medicine, to name a few. The members act as field investigators for its 24-hour Greensburg hotline.

"In general, most UFO sightings reported can be traced to a natural source. Bright stars and planets, meteors, space debris, a passing blimp, lights on aircraft, and even NASA high altitude experiments often provide an explanation," Gordon said.

"But every year, UFO sightings occur for which no easy explanation is apparent, and these are the cases that make us wonder just what is occurring."

Gordon founded and directed the Westmoreland County UFO Study Group in 1970, the Pennsylvania Center for UFO Research in 1975. He is internationally recognized as an authority on the subject of UFOs and "Bigfoot," and has been a regular guest on national radio talk shows and television news and special report programs.

PASU investigates reports of Bigfoot, the eastern Mountain Cougar — supposedly extinct since 1890 — and other strange

occurrences, but specializes in the study of UFOs.

Gordon is an electronics technician who has studied UFO reports and phenomenon for 30 years. Hearing stories about Bigfoot and UFOs on late night radio shows when he was 10 years old originally got him interested in the paranormal. Gordon noticed that many of the stories he heard were very similar.

He's been reading books on the subject ever since.

Several large, filled bookshelves occupy Gordon's UFO workroom. Radio equipment, Bigfoot casts, maps and collected UFO residues are also prominently displayed.

### KECKSBURG INCIDENT

"Then when this thing in Kecksburg happened, that really got me going," said Gordon, referring to a reported UFO crash on Dec. 9, 1965, near Kecksburg, in which the U.S. military arrived and hauled the debris away. PASU is still investigating the incident and looking for witnesses who saw either the military cleanup procedures or wreckage before the military got there.

"The government said it was a large meteor," he said. "At this point, we know *for sure* that it was not a meteor."

PASU is not the first Pennsylvania group Gordon has organized, but it is the most successful thus far. The organization is not listed in the phone book, but re-

ceives reports from police and various other organizations.

"The only thing we don't do is ghosts and hauntings," Gordon added.

In spite of all his interest in unexplained phenomenon, Gordon says he has never seen a UFO or Big Foot.

"It keeps you skeptical," he says with a shrug.

Last year was the biggest year for sightings in a long time, Gordon said. While about 90 percent of UFO sightings can be explained, nearly 40 percent of the 1988 sightings could not, he said.

"We had reports from August 1987 steadily through February 1989," he said. In 1988, for the first time, PASU had UFO sightings during every month.

Gordon quickly pointed out that the sightings were "not just lights in the sky," but that close range incidents were more common than usual.

### STATE SIGHTINGS

Also, based on sightings from the past five to six years, PASU has discerned some details common to many Pennsylvania sightings. For instance:

— Sightings are sometimes accompanied by localized power failures apparently caused by UFOs flying or hovering near power stations or lines.

— UFOs sighted in Pennsylvania tend to be metallic and cigar-shaped, triangular, rectangular or boomerang-shaped instead of

**STAN GORDON via COUD—I**  
PASU

S. GORDON

the more traditionally accepted "flying saucer" description.

— More people have been injured by UFOs in recent years. Often, the encounters are accompanied by partial memory loss. A Harrisburg policeman last year received microwave radiation burns after sighting a UFO.

— Some UFOs can appear and disappear or change their physical appearance.

— Recently, more sightings have taken place in populated, urban areas, between 1 and 5 a.m., when few people are likely to be around. At Greengate Mall, several police officers observed a cigar-shaped object pass over the nearby power station as the power momentarily blinked out.

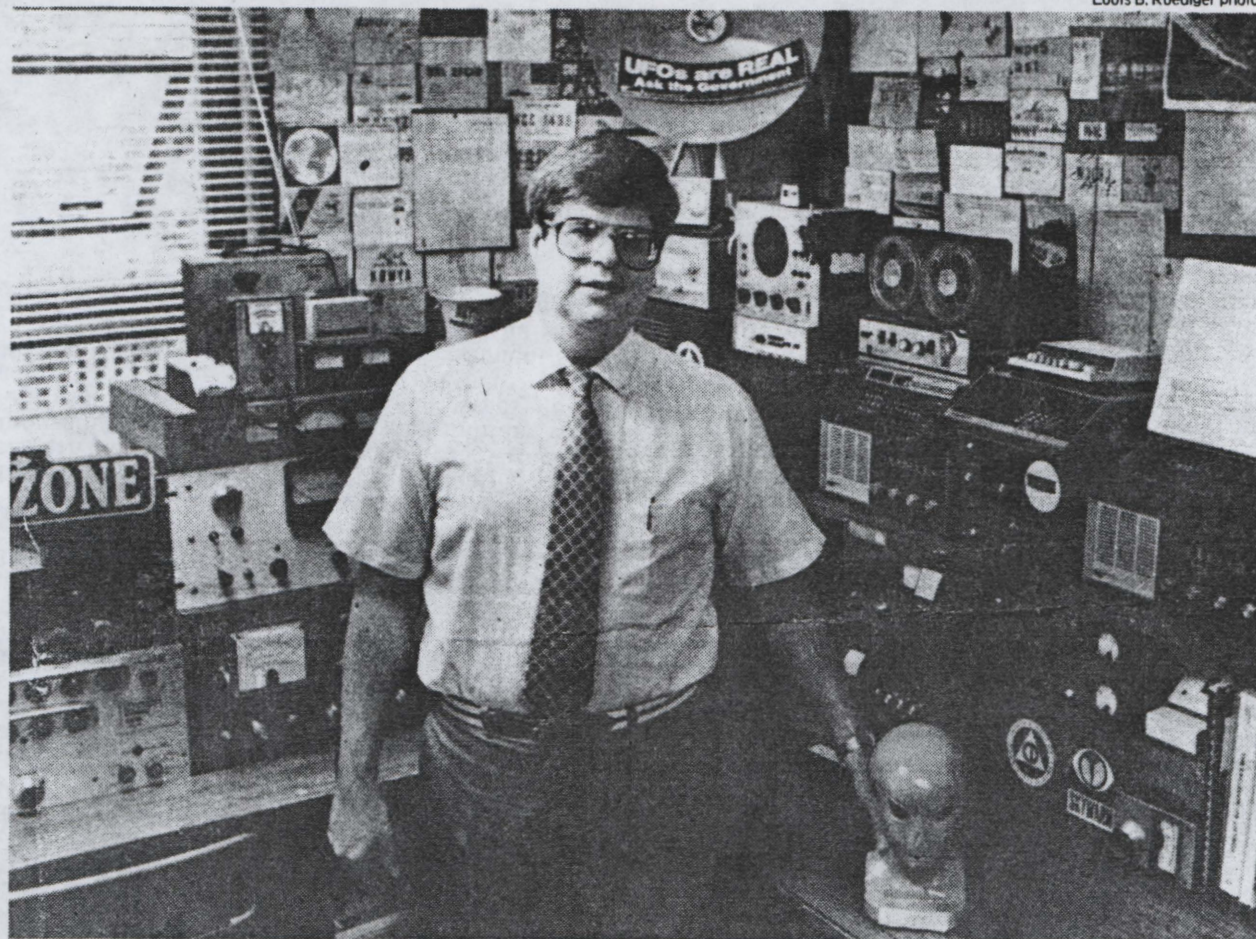
— Increasing numbers of sightings involve the UFO hovering near to witnesses then taking off at a high rate of speed after using some form of searchlight.

— Most cases involve the testimony of multiple witnesses — some who are trained professionals at observation — not single witnesses, as many skeptics argue.

But just what are UFOs? "We don't know," Gordon answers quickly. The hypothesis that they are extraterrestrials visiting the planet is only one explanation, he said. They could be from underwater or even from another dimension, he offered.

"I believe we're dealing with more than one origin for all of these objects."

Louis B. Ruediger photo



Stan Gordon, at his well-equipped monitoring post, has been tracking UFO sightings for 30 years

## Display on UFOs planned

By The Tribune-Review

The Pennsylvania Association for the Study of the Unexplained is sponsoring a UFO display Saturday in Westmoreland Mall to mark the fifth annual National UFO Information Week.

The mall display will be open to the public from 10 a.m. to 9:30 p.m., and will include recent and historic government documents and reports concerning UFOs, UFO photographs, alleged residue from UFO landings and free literature.

Casts of Pennsylvania "Bigfoot" tracks and

sighting information about black panthers and the extinct Eastern cougar will also be available for visitors to examine. Stan Gordon, director and founder of PASU, will be present at the display the entire day to answer questions and receive UFO reports.

Gordon hopes the event will make people aware that UFOs are still being reported and that he will receive reports from people who might not normally tell about their close encounters.

"There's a much higher number of cases we never hear about (than those we receive)," Gordon said.