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## There's a sign post up ahead — Queens?

NEW YORK (AP) — That extraterrestrial story from the Soviet Union was finally cleared up Wednesday — those 12-foot, tiny-headed guys who landed in the U.S.S.R. were just trying to get back to New York City.

"Anything's possible," said Bill Knell, a local UFO researcher who firmly believes there was an alien presence in a park in the borough of Queens seven months ago. "Absolutely, there was some type of UFO in Kissena Park."

Knell's assertions — he also said there may have been a return visit two weeks ago — came two days after the Soviet news agency Tass reported the presence of ETs in the town of Voronezh.

Since then, scientists have disparaged the report, attributing it to rising sensationalism in the Soviet press under "glasnost," or greater openness.

Neither story seemed to impress local residents, who were more concerned with Knell's presence in the park than any report of visiting ETs.

"This is my haunt. I've been coming to this park for years, and there's nothing going on here," said Julie Ford, shaking her head and laughing. "They say that tree there was burned by a UFO — it was broken by kids swinging on the branches."

Sure enough, Knell did offer the damaged willow as evidence that something had beamed down there. But he also offered a mineralogist's report that a burned oval on the ground con-

tained particles of a type of feldspar quartz found on the island of Aruba, not in Queens.

"We find this amazing," said Knell, who was joined by several other believers in UFOs.

According to Knell, five people riding a bus on March 9 saw "very bright lights" hovering near a lake in the park. Since the park is located between Kennedy and LaGuardia airports, they initially thought it was a downed aircraft, said Knell.

Based on their accounts and other evidence, Knell said, UFO investigators determined this was a legitimate sighting.

Knell thinks he knows why the people who spotted something in Queens never saw aliens or spoke with them.

"I believe they have their own agenda, and at this time it doesn't include communication," said Knell, who addressed several skeptical reporters at the site where the UFO allegedly burned the ground.

Unfortunately, that's also the site where the remnants of a downed tree were piled, killing off all the grass underneath, said park maintenance man Joe Mackey, 60.

"If there was a spot around here burned out, I woulda known about it," said Mackey, who spends three days a week in the park. "It's a figment of somebody's imagination."

Lee Abide Jr. said he first saw the object about three or four months ago.

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**RICHARD HEIDEN** via COUD—1