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UFO fascination quite logical says researcher

Ryan Alan Contributing Writer | Fosters Daily Democrat

It just makes sense that many remain fascinated with the subject of UFOs, said Kathleen Marden.

"The idea that we are being visited by an extraterrestrial civilization presents the greatest social, scientific, military and political challenge ever to face the earth's population," said the Stratham UFO researcher, author and lecturer.

Five government studies have been conducted since the 1950s, she added.

"There are more than 3,000 physical trace evidence cases from 64 countries, more than 3,000 UFO sightings reported from 40 countries, combined radar-visual sightings, clear photographs and video footage that have been validated by scientific investigation, thousands of close encounter reports and dozens of abductions that have been investigated."

There is a remarkable similarity of evidence from throughout the world, she said. "Furthermore, highly respected political figures, astronauts and military personnel have disclosed the body of evidence that UFOs are real," Marden said.

Hampton's John Oswald, who moved to the Seacoast 40 years ago to investigate its plethora of UFO sightings, will speak at 4 p.m. Merchant said Oswald has documented almost 500 reported sightings, compiled 22 journals and accumulated almost 300 hours of taped interviews. "He is truly amazing," Merchant adds.

That's why it is important to bring attention to the subject through a festival like this, suggest Marden and fest organizer Dean Merchant of Stratham. "There is a tremendous amount of interest in UFOs at the present time throughout the world," Marden said. Many countries have opened their UFO files and several prominent figures have come forward to state that some UFOs are extraterrestrial, she added.

The festival's afternoon panel discussion at Exeter Town Hall opens from 1-2:30 p.m. with Peter Robbins' look at "Why We Need to Take UFOs Seriously."

Marden said he is one of the best-known and most respected investigative writers and public speakers in the world with regards to the serious study of UFOs. He has been involved in the field for more than 25 years as a researcher, investigator, writer, lecturer, activist and author. He was a research assistant on the United Nations Secretary General's 1978 UFO report, and he is employed by the city of Roswell, N.M., as public relations representative, conference coordinator and consultant on UFO related tourism.

Dr. Ted Yoder of Barrington, N.H., a retired UNH professor, will discuss "UFO Secrecy and Our future" from 2:30-4 p.m. In 1997, Loder attended a closed Congressional briefing on UFOs held in Washington, D.C., appointed as a representative of the governor of New Hampshire. During those briefings, Marden said, he met a number of top-secret military witnesses who described events they observed first hand to members of Congress and the Senate. He has briefed NASA and other scientists on UFO topics.

Marden praise's Merchant's efforts. "He has worked extremely hard to give this gift (the festival) to everyone," she said.

There are still UFO sightings reported all over the world, Merchant reminds — from Finland to Franconia Notch, Zimbabwe to Beijing and Siberia to South Hampton, N.H. "Outer space is looked at as the last frontier," he said

"Scientists tell us that the universe began with a big bang from a sub-atomic particle. We walk about on a bit of dirt with a molten core beneath our feet and the edge of space is just 73 miles above us, with many mysteries beyond."

As each of us grasp to fully understand our consciousness there are certain collective universal questions, he reminds, one of which is "Is there life elsewhere?"

Merchant: "Two of the great minds of our time, Stephen Hawkins and Carl Sagan, believe that there is. Until it can be proven one way or the other, people will always continue to question it."

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