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"CQ ET!"

The UFO Watchtower DXpedition.

Located in south central Colorado at almost 8,000 feet above sea level, the San Luis Valley is the highest Alpine valley in the world. This valley is bordered by some of Colorado's highest peaks, many of which are over 14,000 feet. The valley provides a beautiful vista surrounded by snow-capped peaks even in the spring and fall, with a high and dry climate and 350 days of sunshine a year.

In 1708, Juan de Ulaterra claimed the San Luis Valley for Spain. Long before his arrival, the local Indians knew the place as Peaceful Valley. The Ute Indians considered the valley a holy place, and some of the Pueblo tribes considered the valley a Place of Emergence.

Spanish farmers and ranchers have lived in the valley since the 18th century.

This high-plains valley, like the plains in the Andes, is famous for potatoes and other produce that favor this elevation and climate. This valley is also known for its "high strangeness."

Stories of supernatural phenomena abound in this naturally spectacular 50-mile-wide by 125-mile-long valley, surrounded by the San Juan and Sangre de Cristo mountains and location

of the Great Sand Dunes National Monument.

Ancient Native American traditions exist telling of the existence of underground "ant people." There is also the case of a "bilocating nun" who seems to have astral-traveled to the valley in the 17th century, converting many of the Native Americans to Christianity. The native tales of the phantasmal "blue lady" were brought back to Spain and saved Sister Marie de Jesus from being declared a witch.

Modern strangeness

Modern high-strangeness in this valley gathered public attention in 1967 with the sensational animal mutilation of Snippy the horse. The reports of strange lights and craft have continued to put the valley in the limelight, with many modern-day sightings.

In 1995, a daylight video of a huge craft "at least a mile in length" was made by a Salida, Colorado, resident and publicly shown on the Paramount Television program "Sightings." Many locals have reported seeing strange craft approach, then disappear into the mountains. Reports also abound of strange underground noises such as



Photo A. CQ ET station.



Photo B. Watchtower welcome.

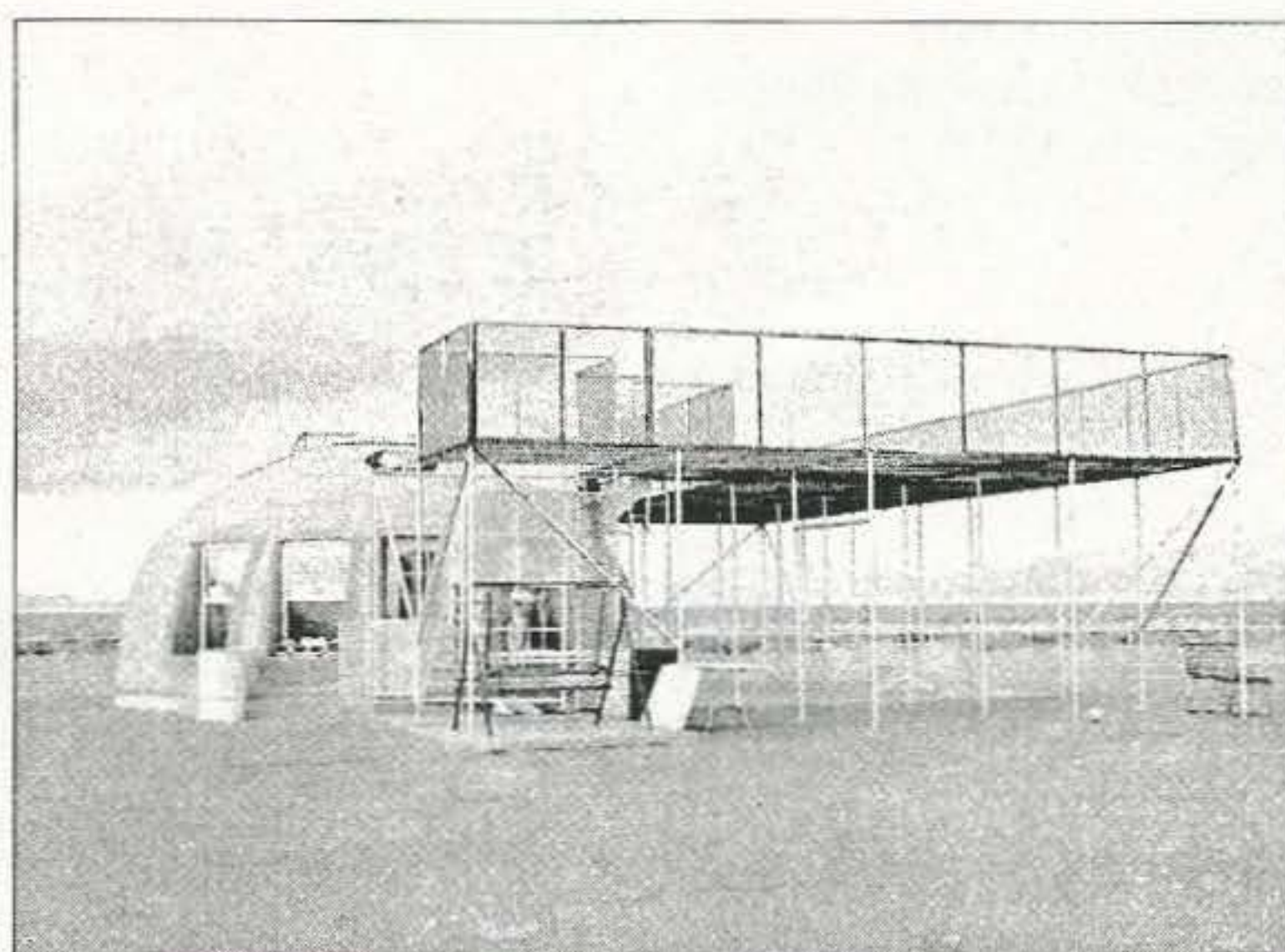


Photo C. UFO Watchtower.

humming and rumbling. In all, the "high-strangeness" of this valley has attracted the attention of researchers of and those interested in the unexplained.

Now they really will get strange

What does all this have to do with ham radio, you are by now asking yourself? If you have an interest in the unexplained, or are an "interesting QSL" hunter, then this upcoming DXpedition is for you.

Having an interest in the unexplained myself, I have decided to commence on a series of DXpeditions to the areas of unexplained happenings in the United States. The first DXpedition will be to the UFO Watchtower in the San Luis Valley of Colorado. The Watchtower is located about 22 miles North of Alamosa CO, and

about 220 miles southwest of Denver CO.

In order to check out the possibility of a DXpedition to this and other locations, I set out for a mini-test of the environment, rig, operator, and motor home. Braving snow-covered passes and high winds in early April, crossing the Colorado mountains in a motor home is no task for the faint-of-heart.

Upon arriving in the valley, the operations team — consisting of me and a friend who is presently studying to be a ham — found our way to the UFO Watchtower, which is located about two miles north of Hooper CO near, of all things, an alligator farm. Do the ETs like gator?

We set up a G5RV (a motor home is an RV, so the antenna seems appropriate), and connected it to my trusty old Kenwood 440S. Even though the test

was unannounced and we had to brave high winds and constant sandstorms, we managed 30 contacts during our weekend test. The photos show an area that is literally in the middle of nowhere, a remote area just right for "high strangeness."

The "official" DXpedition will occur over the Labor Day weekend

(September 1-3) and the frequencies listed will be used as the spot frequency plus or minus QRM. Give a call, or listen, and you may be the one to hear first-hand descriptions of any strange happenings that may be encountered!

QSL cards should be sent to my *Callbook* address and include an SASE large enough for an 8-1/2 by 11 QSL.

Where and when will the next DXpedition be? I'm thinking Roswell! Keep watching 73 for details!

Frequencies of operation

All frequencies will be $\pm$ QRM. 75 meters = 3853. 40 meters = 7237. 20 meters = 14310. 17 meters = 18150. 15 meters = 21385. 10 meters = 28510. **73**



Photo D. UFO crash at Hooper, CO.

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