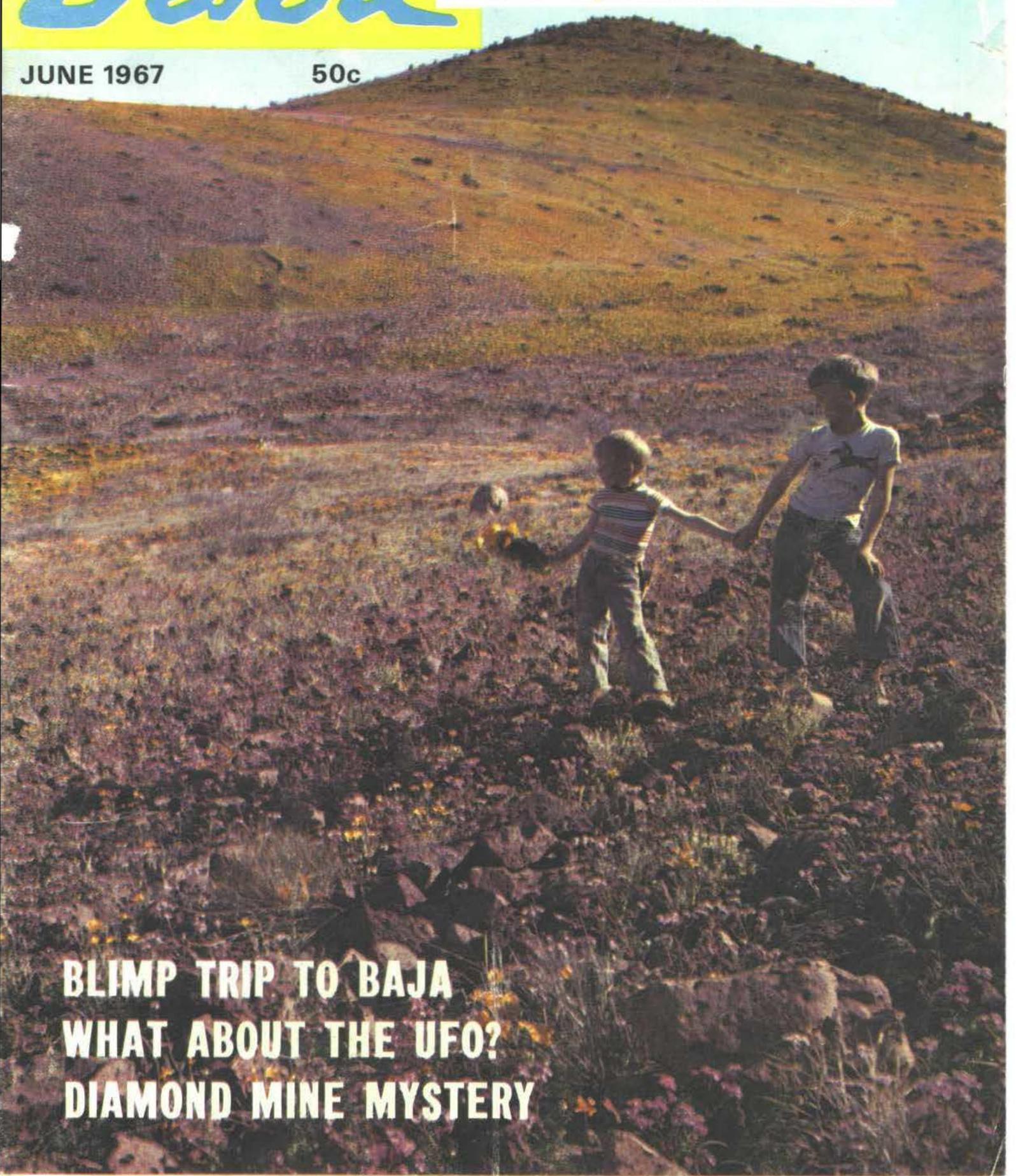


Desert

WESTERN TRAVEL / ADVENTURE / LIVING

JUNE 1967

50c



**BLIMP TRIP TO BAJA
WHAT ABOUT THE UFO?
DIAMOND MINE MYSTERY**

Desert

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JACK PEPPER
Publisher

CHORAL PEPPER
Editor

ELTA SHIVELY
Executive Secretary

MARVEL BARRETT
Business

AL MERRYMAN
Staff Artist

JACK DELANEY
Staff Writer

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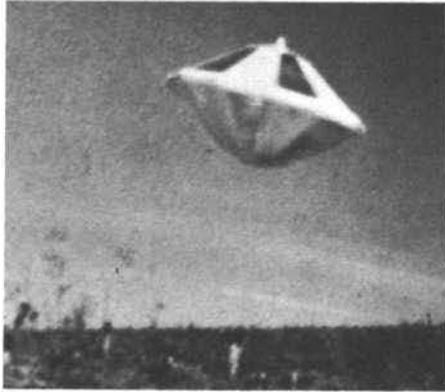
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THE COVER

With Old Man Winter refusing to leave the desert areas we are beginning to wonder if there will be any wildflowers this year. Just to remind you what they look like, however, the cover is Wild Heliotrope and Poppies by Chuck Abbott, Tucson, Arizona. Chuck took the photograph near Clifton, Arizona last spring.

IS IT OR ISN'T IT A **UFO?**

BY STANLEY B. DEMES



The above photographs were provided by the Amalgamated Flying Saucer Society of America and all were taken by Dr. Daniel Fry. The one in center was taken near his home in Merlin, Oregon; other sightings occurred near Joshua Tree National Monument.



LIKE THAT glowing television set in your front room, the UFO is finding a secure place in American life. Annually there are thousands of columns of newsprint devoted to UFO sightings. What is a UFO? It is an unfamiliar object flying in peculiar (if not impossible) aerodynamic fashion above our earth. A UFO may be cigar-shaped, saucer shaped, or completely round. It may be multicolored like the cathode ray tube of an operating color TV, or it may shine like an effulgent coin.

Before launching into a sympathetic, yet slightly skeptical, probe of California Mohave desert sauceriana, certain questions and theories must be presented. Unfortunately, no question can be answered; no theory proven.

Are flying saucers real, fakes, or just games Nature plays? Wernher Von Braun, the famous German-American missile man, feels that about two percent of the 6,000 flying saucer sightings occurring in the last 10 years have not been explained away as balloons, meteorites, planets, jet planes, swamp gas or hoaxes. Von Braun states, however, that two percent unexplained sightings is no reason for him to believe in flying saucers. The Air Force is quite enigmatic about flying saucers. They talk around the subject. Air Force reports put out by Project Bluebook

(their UFO analysis group in Dayton, Ohio) merely states they are not a threat to our national security.

Many important people take the other side—they are convinced that UFOs are real. The famous German rocket scientist, Herman Oberth, says they are real. Further, Barry Goldwater, former senator from Arizona, is quoted in a publication put out by the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena as saying, "Flying saucers — Unidentified Flying Objects — or whatever you call them, are real."

Let's imagine for a moment that UFOs are real—where do they come from? Saucer enthusiasts primarily think they come from Mars or Venus. A few think that there are saucer bases on the moon. The recent discovery by Lunar Orbiter II of a geometrical arrangement of lunar pillars seems to strengthen this argument. Other saucer devotees maintain that flying saucers are spacecraft from distant planets far from our solar system. This supposition is supported by recent astronomical and statistical findings. Planetary systems have been discovered adjacent to Tau Ceti and Epsilon Eridani, two stars thought to be similar to our sun.

As interesting, was a discovery by Carl Sagan, a Stanford geneticist. In 1962, using complicated statistical techniques, he proved that "Earth was visited by an extra-terrestrial civilization at least once during historical times." Another fas-

cinating reflection on extra-terrestrial life is presented by Stephen Dole of the Rand Corporation. He believes that the habitable planets of other galaxies would look like ours—they would have mountains, deserts, rivers, oceans, glaciers, and the like—but they would not have human creatures on them. Such beings would in all probability be intelligent, but they would have evolved differently from man as we know him.

Contrary to popular opinion, flying saucers are not a modern day phenomenon. Peaks of flying saucer activity were discernible in the 1882-1886 period, as well as in 1887, 1906 and 1909. Modern times arrived for our supposed space vehicles in 1947. In that year Kenneth Arnold sighted 10 circular discs spinning along at speeds up to 1000 miles an hour in and out of the peaks of Mt. Rainier. Later, our fabulous Mohave desert became a prominent arena for these real or imaginary craft. Here is the Mohave's saucer drama as told by the people who saw these strange objects in the desert sky or, in rare cases, communicated face-to-face with interplanetary crew members.

A sinister Mohave flying saucer story occurred around 1955 at Edwards Air Force Base during the dead of night. One of the base guards saw a small group of saucers sporting multi-colored lights land and get speedily ushered into a hanger that the guard had never seen open be-

fore. Disturbed, the man went to base authorities and told them what he had seen. On every occasion he was greeted with inscrutable faces and terse replies of "you have seen nothing." Finally, the agitated man resigned his job and left the base muttering in a uncomplimentary fashion about secrecy in government. This saucer encounter was told to me by an ex-intelligence officer. He seemed serious when he spoke to me, but most intelligence officers have a keen sense of humor. Was he kidding?

The *Proceedings* of the College of Universal Wisdom (located in Yucca Valley) of 1956 tells us of a memorable saucer experience. On Friday, June 29, thousands of people from Yucca Valley to Claremont, California, saw a doughnut-shaped object hovering at an altitude of 25,000 feet. Gene Miller, who operated the Banning, California airport, said he had intercepted a radio communication from Norton Air Force Base giving pilots the go-ahead to shoot the object down.

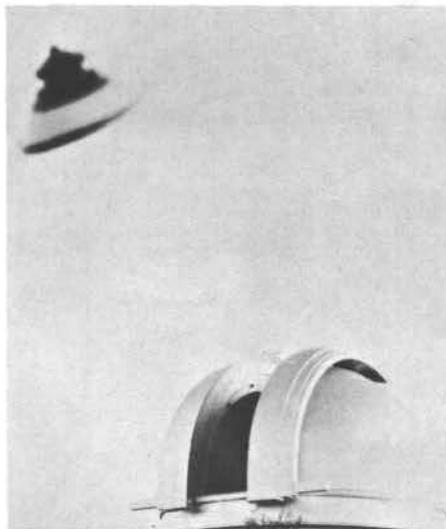
The *Los Angeles Times* of June 28, 1960, recounts the saucer story of Captain E. L. Remlin and First Officer, David Stewart, both United Airliner pilots. Eight miles north of Baker they spied a cylindrical object flying at 20,000 feet, its speed much exceeding that of the aircraft. The two pilots were dazzled by the brilliant colors of the spacecraft—a bluish center surrounded by a bright orange.

The *Santa Ana Register* of May 1, 1964, carries a saucer announcement with a Las Vegas byline. Mr. and Mrs. Gus Biggs and Mrs. Lorene Ayres of Fontana watched from their moving car a smooth, brownish, dome-shaped object land in the desert 10 miles west of Baker. Mr. Biggs stopped the car and they raced to catch a closer view. However, the saucer vanished into thin air leaving only a large depression in the ground.

From the *Los Angeles Times* of August 3, 1952 comes this incredible story. Pauline Watts, the supervisor of the Indian Ground Observation Post, saw two bright metallic objects. They were incredibly fast and appeared smaller than Air Force bombers. The two objects darted around for awhile but streaked away in a straight up direction when a bomber threatened too close.

Typical flying saucer fare is hashed up by the *North Bay Nugget* of April 17, 1952. An Air Force Technical Sergeant is quoted as seeing near Nellis Air Force Base 18 circular, dull-white objects flying in zig-zag fashion at 40,000 feet. The sergeant estimated that they were speeding at 1200 miles an hour. Base officials

This impressive UFO sailing over Mt. Palomar was homemade by Sam Hicks and created in his photographic darkroom. See his explanation on this month's Letters page.



confirmed that no balloons had gone up that day.

George Van Tassel, owner of Giant Rock Airport, tells of this UFO incident which occurred in the latter part of April, 1956 on the Twentynine Palms Marine Artillery Range. A marine private was doing guard duty at an ammunition dump when he spied a brilliant white light hovering over the dump. The marine reported this event to the commander of the guard, who personally confirmed the sighting. The commander and several enlisted men watched the light for about two hours. During an interim when they turned their heads to greet another curious marine comrade, the light vanished without a trace.

Added piquancy to the Saucer pudding comes from those who claim they have chatted with disc personnel. I recently interviewed Carl Anderson, a Fullerton resident, regarding his claim. Carl is a short, pleasant man employed as an electrician in the Navy Yard at Terminal Island. His face is honest appearing and glows, like his beloved saucers, both from conviction and merriment. Carl climbed aboard a 200-foot Saucer the night of February 14, 1960, only 7½ miles north of Giant Rock. Visit authorization came from Carl's good friend (and outerspace-man), Kumar, who incidentally and literally is Carl's favorite Martian. For approximately two hours and 20 minutes the two creatures—one human, the other extro-human, conversed within the saucer. For the first two hours the Fullerton resident bombed the saucer pilot with questions. Carl was especially concerned with the propulsion system, a nuclear reactor

which transformed an exotic fuel into powerful electromagnetic forces. Kumar showed his Fullerton friend the lever which controlled the polarity of the spacecraft. A shift to the positive pole would send the ship careening into space; a movement toward the negative would send the ship earthward. The final 20 minutes of the earthman's stay, Kumar developed a message he wished Carl to deliver to scientists at Heidelberg University. Just what the message is Carl would not disclose.

A pleasant interlude occurred during the interval when the two friends were talking. Nirvana, a lovely Venusian Princess seven feet tall and wearing gossamer booties, served Carl and his friend nectar in a sparkling crystal goblet. So graphic was my interviewee's description of this maiden from outerspace that I became all but intoxicated with nectar and cheesecake.

Some may doubt Carl's story, but even the skeptical must turn green with envy at the good fortune Carl's interplanetary encounter brought him. For one thing, it brought him a trip to Europe; for another, it brought him temporary fame as a guest speaker at an international UFO convention in Wiesbaden, Germany. German newspapers gave Carl lots of publicity. It was obvious, as Carl noted, that Europeans are far more sympathetic to UFOs than Americans.

George Van Tassel, Yucca Valley's dean of flying saucer worshippers, mentions this saucer landing in his book, *The Council of Seven Lights*. It occurred in the wee morning hours at Giant Rock airport. A spaceman routed George out of his warm bed to give him a tour of his spaceship. George tried to tell his wife of his singular good fortune, but apparently the interplanetary visitor had placed a spell over her; she couldn't be awakened. For 20 minutes George and his visitor chatted in friendly fashion in the glowing interior of the space craft. Only a few questions had been asked and answered before the pilot seized George by the arm and told him he must leave. This the intrepid airport owner did reluctantly. Hardly had George stepped from the saucer when the reason for his speedy exit was made clear. The roar of jet planes sounded like thunder in the distance.

I have since learned that George has actually flown in a flying saucer to our neighboring planets. More power to him!

UFO enthusiasts almost universally proclaim the Adamski Interplanetary contact at Desert Center as the most spectacular. It is vividly described in *Flying*

Saucers Have Landed, a book co-authored by George Adamski, Southern California's famous saucer expert. Adamski's adventure came as a glorious addendum to a picnic served up about 10 miles from Desert Center. George and his guests, Betty Bailey and Dr. and Mrs. Williamson, first saw a cigar-shaped craft. It was orange on top, the rest was gleaming silver. Later, George wandered into the desert captive of a telepathic command transmitted by the space people. A few minutes of walking brought the dynamic mortal to the foot of a low hill. He could barely distinguish the small scout saucer, the top of which peered down at him from a saddle connecting two adjoining hills. Then Adamski saw him, a blond humanoid type, almost saintlike in demeanor. The blond pilot told his marveling companion that he was from Venus. He further revealed that the people of his home planet were much concerned with Terra's promiscuous nuclear testing. The Venusian also explained to Adamski why so few saucers had landed. The space vessels rarely landed because they did not wish to frighten earth people who might, in their hysteria, wreak vengeance on the saucernauts. When Adamski pressed his benevolent visitor to let him photograph him, his request was disallowed. A request to take a ride in the spacecraft was similarly denied. In his eagerness to climb aboard Adamski had touched the outer rim of the airship's forcefield. His right arm showed scars from this encounter with electromagnetic might four months later. The spaceman then took off, leaving behind a set of footprints which bore an undecipherable message.

Any discussion of flying saucers in the Mohave must, of course, have something to say about Giant Rock and its attendant airport. (DESERT, March, 1967.) Why? Because in the shadow of this huge boulder many saucers have cavorted in the past and will probably cavort again in the future. At Giant Rock friendly George Van Tassel daily manages his private airport and two days a year, usually in October, hosts a giant rally of saucer enthusiasts within the confines of his airport. The faithful joyfully sit on desert boulders and listen avidly to such guest speakers as the inimitable chief Standing Horse who relates the story of his trip Alpha Centauri, and Carl Anderson's stirring (if a little weird) "I was teleported into a flying saucer." This interesting free convention lasts two days, during which time George Van Tassel wends his way through a maze of trailers

from his restaurant to his 7-story hollow rock, loving every minute of it.

Most people who follow desert trails do not see flying saucers. Ken Harris, who has hunted Indian relics all the way from Joshua Tree to Twentynine Palms has never seen one. Tom Hutchenson, who has a cabin in Joshua Tree and a penchant for running there when the smog gets bad, has never seen one. The editor and publisher of *Desert Magazine*, Choral and Jack Pepper, who do a lot of desert wandering, have never seen one either. Personally, I have tripped across the desert pavement off and on for 15 years and I haven't seen a saucer. This doesn't mean I don't want to see one. I do, if there are any to be seen.

If, however, you are lucky enough to see a saucer-like object in the desert sky, don't panic—just rush to the nearest Air Force base and tell them your story. They will fill out a form and send it to Major Quintanella, Commandant of Project Bluebook at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. The major and his staff will try to determine what you have seen. If it puzzles them, they will send your report to the University of Colorado where a team of scientists led by Dr. Hynek, an astronomer professor pilfered from Northwestern, will re-examine your facts in an attempt to find an answer. Perhaps your incident will go down in history as one of the 2% that cannot be explained by natural means. □

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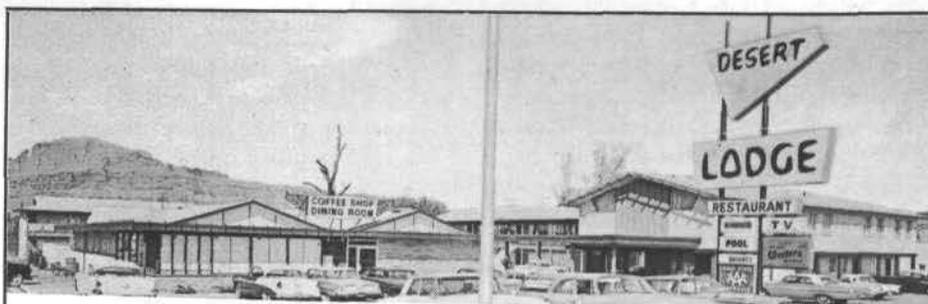
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LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

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Re Military Garden . . .

To the Editor: Although I can not speak for the Marines or Navy, and won't even go to the trouble of speaking officially for the Air Force, I nevertheless feel Lee Dufur's article on "The War Department's Private Garden" in the April issue should receive some comment.

The opening statement about a Pentagon official flying over this area has been of great interest to our historian here, inasmuch as it had always been our belief that in 1933 it was General Hap Arnold who sent a party to the desert to find a barren area suitable for a bombing and gunnery range. Sergeant Harley Fogleman was the man who found this place, and we thought he'd done it on foot. We also have had no record of fences here at Edwards, and there certainly isn't one now, much less resplendent with barbed wire. As a matter of fact, there is a state highway that runs through the center of the base; most people accelerate when they see our "Garden".

Maybe Dufur should meet folks like Effie Corum Pelton. Our large hangar sits on the property her family homesteaded here in the early 1900s. Effie likes us, probably because she took the trouble to visit Edwards before forming her opinions. It's a shame more people don't do the same.

WILLIAM P. CAMPBELL, Captain, USAF
Chief, Public Information Division,
Office of Information,
Air Force Flight Test Center

Editor's comment: The Western desert lover appreciates the protection provided by our armed services and certainly does not resent any military installation being actively used and occupied. What we do resent are the vast areas closed to the public which are not being used for military purposes today, but have not yet been declared safe for civilians because there may still be live shells in the area. We believe this land should be cleaned up and released so smog-bound citizens of certain metropolitan areas will have more room for week-end sojourning in uninhabited, natural areas. Edwards Air Force Base, obviously, does not number among the regions tied up by the War Department and not currently occupied nor used by it. C.P.

Wee Folk for Wee Horses . . .

To the Editor: The article by Choral Pepper about those little horses is true, no doubt, but, "dammit", they belong to the "wee folk" so why not let them alone? They need these horses. I anger every time I read or hear of such outrageous action of humans toward the wee folks.

I've spent years amongst them. I know of what I speak. How come you never have anything in your magazine about these wee ones? There's a big group of them at Bullhead and another right here in Joshua Tree. They are as real as we humans are. For over 20 years I've lived with them. I'll aid you as I may if you are brave enough to believe this and bold enough to write about them. I've met groups all over California.

MYRTLE REES,
Joshua Tree, California.

Editor's Note: This is a story I've gotta do!

Happy . . .

To the Editor: I have had occasion to read the stories on Lake Powell and on Yuma in the Desert Magazine for April and find them most interesting and worthwhile. Right now, as you know, Reclamation is in controversy with some preservationist organizations who seem to have a habit of damning all dams and all dam builders without consideration of the merits of water conservation and utilization for the future of the West. Your stories offer a refreshing rebuttal and will be most valuable among the wide circle of readers of Desert.

FLOYD E. DOMINY,
Commissioner,
United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation,
Washington, D.C.

Unhappy . . .

To the Editor: Since you are so fond of Lake Powell, I suggest that you make a trip to the upper end of Lake Mead where you can enjoy camping amidst the silt, mud, and unesthetic effects of the draw down in that area. This ultimately will occur on Lake Powell. Articles like yours extolling this type of reservoir make it harder for those of us who are working very hard to prevent the same catastrophe from occurring in the Grand Canyon of the Colorado.

F. T. DARVILL, M.D.,
Mount Vernon, Washington

Barking up the Wrong Fig Tree . . .

To the Editor: I read the article in the March issue about Fig Tree John. It suggests that he lived at Palm Springs the last years of his life, but how could he be in two places? I was postmaster at the town nearest to the Indian reservation and saw him coming to town regularly in his buckboard for supplies. According to my information, he was 116 when he died. We were told then that his uniform was one he had from the days when he served as a scout for General Fremont. I appreciate the very good picture of him in your magazine. I remember seeing him dressed like that.

I was well acquainted with his son John and until recently I possessed two basket trays and a large olla, which had belonged to Fig Tree John. His son climbed up Santa Rosa Mt. to their summer home where these things were buried, and brought them to me. He made two trips to get them. I valued these things very much. Several years ago I offered them to a museum, but they were not interested, so I gave them to two people who appreciate them.

MRS. SUSIE K. FRY,
Leucadia, California.

Do-It-Yourself UFO . . .

To the Editor: An interesting letter for UFO watchers appeared in your April issue of DESERT. Hence, I would like to offer the following information: How to make your own UFO.

An attractive do-it-yourself kit for making flying saucers can be assembled for practically nothing, and the parts are readily available. The basic kit can be improved upon in so many ways that a little ingenuity and imagination can

make almost anyone a recognized authority in this particular field of flight.

I first began making flying saucers about 10 years ago. When I made my first one, I had no real conception of what they were like, other than vague newspaper and magazine stories with pictures of airborne blobs and blips. So I consulted a friend who had made an exhaustive study of UFOs and who had acquired a remarkable collection of photographs. After close scrutiny of his pictures, I felt sure that much could be accomplished—at least in the field of photography—to capture more clarity and detail of these elusive subjects.

I began with a common electric light fixture of the type which fits flush against the ceiling. The rim of the bowl was enclosed in a bright, brass ring. I inverted the fixture so the opaque bowl was above the brass rim, then fastened the ventilated top of a Coleman gasoline lantern to the top of the bowl. This was done by running a one-quarter inch bolt, eight inches long, through the fixture and the lantern top, then tightening the nut until both were clamped solidly together. Next, I drilled a small hole through the ornamental nut which originally fastened the ventilated top to the lantern, and suspended the unit from the end of a bamboo pole with a fine, steel wire. A ranch hand swung the object about vigorously for me while I photographed it from various angles.

This type of flying saucer does not cause the headlights of an automobile to dim, nor make magnetic compasses misbehave. Also, it makes no noticeable difference in desert mineral deposits, radios, or the performance of transmission lines. Further, I've yet to receive the first report of one causing unusual, radioactive depressions.

But after years of witnessing the results of hypo droplets and developer stains carelessly slopped on photographic paper, and seeing most of these darkroom misadventures labelled as UFOs, I've decided the above method of creating flying saucers is a more educational and enjoyable pastime. I'm also convinced that swinging a home-made flying saucer from a bamboo pole is every bit as invigorative and healthful as swishing around with a butterfly net.

SAM HICKS,
Temecula, California.

Editor's Note: Because of his work as Erle Stanley Gardner's ranch foreman and as owner of a Wyoming ranch of his own, Sam Hicks probably sees more of the night skies than 90% of our population. He is a trained observer and has spent all of his life out-of-doors. Sam Hicks has never seen a flying saucer. Like most of us, he is understandably skeptical. C.P.

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