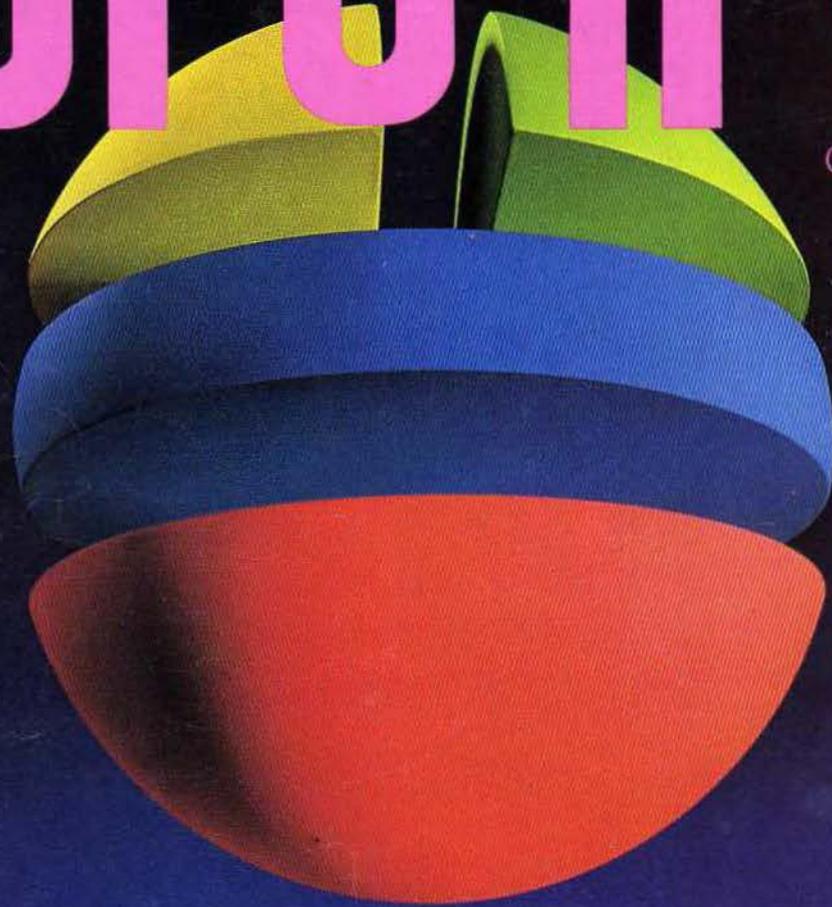


SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

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**LOVE, WORK, & PLAY
IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

**FEATURING: RONALD REAGAN, GERARD O'NEILL, RAY
BRADBURY, JOHN NAISBITT, AND STANLEY MILGRAM**



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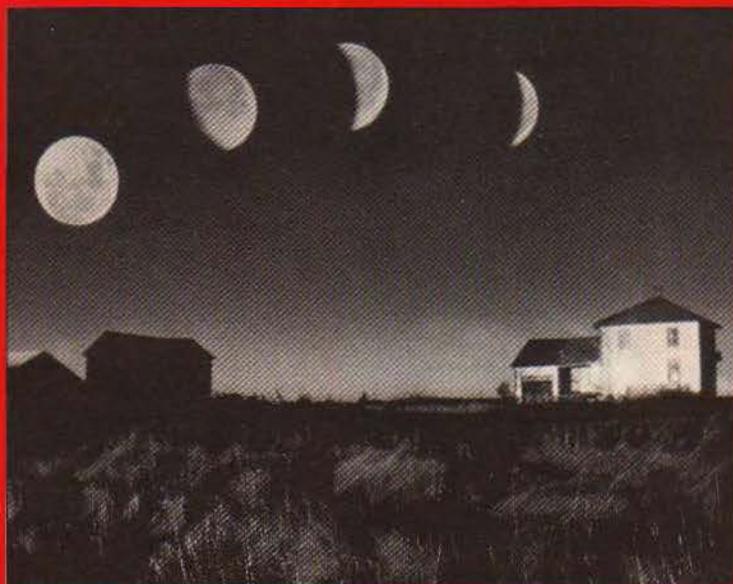
ANTI MATTER

Ronnie Johnson still recalls the evening of November 2, 1971. He was feeding the sheep, he says, when he heard a rumble "like a washing machine going out of balance" and looked up to see a strange craft with bright lights descending on the backyard of his farmhouse in Delphos, Kansas. He, his dog, and his sheep were unable to move, he reports, until the craft rose back into the sky.

Had the Johnson story ended there, it would not have been taken seriously. But when researchers came to investigate, they found broken and blistered trees, burnt soil, and an odd ring about eight feet in diameter marking the spot where the craft had supposedly hovered. Laboratory analysis indicated that the ring soil had a different chemical makeup from the surrounding dirt. And a series of photos showed the ring glowing in the dark.

Moreover, Johnson soon claimed that his parents, Durel and Irma, had also seen the craft. Over the months and years, the three said that the ring soil was numb to the touch and that it repelled all water and snow. Their sheep were giving birth early, they said, Ronnie had suffered nervous problems, the post office was opening their mail, and even their electricity had begun to fluctuate.

Though the sighting occurred more than a decade ago, it is one of the most hotly debated issues in ufology today. Walter Andrus, international director of the Mutual UFO Network, says Delphos remains the "best landing-trace case on our records," while UFO debunker Philip Klass calls it "one of the least impressive hoaxes I've ever encountered."



UFO UPDATE

Klass, in fact, aired his suspicions in a recently published book, *UFOs: The Public Deceived*. His doubts started, he says, when Johnson and his parents chose to "grab their Polaroid and go to the local newspaper" after the supposed incident instead of checking in with a doctor or hospital first. Klass also claims that photos of the glowing ring were fakes, created by shooting with a flashbulb at dusk. The ring itself, he says, was identified by a French laboratory as a type of fungus called fairy rings; and he suggests that the ring was present *before* John-

son's alleged close encounter. But Johnson, now twenty-eight, insists that "it ain't no hoax. I gotta laugh at what that guy [Klass] says. We've had about two hundred scientists come down here and say they'd never seen anything like this before. I was fifteen when it happened. Even if I'd of wanted to do a hoax, I couldn't of. And I wouldn't of either."

Vegetation recently started cropping up on the ring soil for the first time in years, Johnson adds. His parents still live at the farm, while he and his young wife have moved to a house nearby. He hasn't been back to view the mysterious ring in more than two years, he says, although he frequently farms in the area. Johnson notes that he's seen UFOs "a couple of times" since the infamous 1971 incident, but he's neither watching nor waiting for their return.

"All I can say is, it made a believer out of me," he sighs. "I try not to think about it that much anymore. . . . It's not like I'm going to jump off my tractor and go over and stare at that damn ring."—CASEY McCABE