

Omni

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WINNING THE DERBY: HIGH-TECH FORMULAS THAT REALLY WORK

PLUS

THE MAHARISHI EFFECT: STUDENTS WHO TAP THE UNIVERSE**PETER HAGELSTEIN: CREATING ONE OF THE MOST
TERRIFYING WEAPONS IN HISTORY****REEF MADNESS: CAN WE SAVE THE WORLD'S OCEANS?
AND A NOVELETTE BY ROBERT SILVERBERG**

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ANTI-MATTER

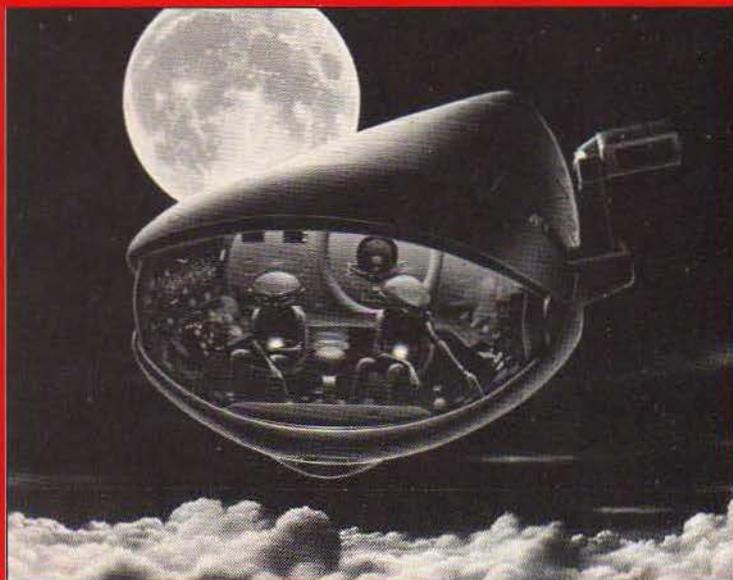
While relaxing by the lake at a private girls' camp north of Burlington, Vermont, on Lake Champlain in the summer of 1968, two teenage camp employees spied a bright, starlike object in the southwestern sky. According to Michael (a pseudonym), the object suddenly descended, releasing three small discs of light.

The objects, says Michael, executed a bizarre aerial ballet before one of them crossed over the lake, entered it, emerged, and came toward the dock. Adds Michael, the UFO's dome was transparent, revealing two entities inside. The two witnesses

never discussed the incident with each other. Michael's young companion, Janet (also a pseudonym), apparently didn't recall the encounter at all. Both of them left for home when the camp closed a few weeks later.

The sequel to this encounter didn't come until 1978, when Michael contacted the Center for UFO Studies (CUFOS) in Evanston, Illinois. CUFOS, in turn, put him in touch with Walter N. Webb, a UFO researcher and assistant head of the Charles Hayden Planetarium in Boston. Their meeting launched a five-year investigation into the case. It didn't take them long to locate Janet, now married and living in the Southeast. She remembered the bizarre lights over the lake, especially the one that approached them, but little more. Several months later she and Michael met briefly in Boston under Webb's supervision but exchanged no information on the encounter.

To further explore the incident, Webb had two clinical hypnotists work with the witnesses in separate sessions.



UFO UPDATE

During his sessions, Michael described flying through space before finding himself inside the UFO, standing before its occupants. He also described Janet lying on a rectangular table on the far side of a lower deck. The UFO-nauts, Michael said, were five to five and a half feet tall, with large and elongated heads, thin limbs ending in three-fingered hands, and light greenish clothing.

"Perhaps the most striking convergence of detail," explains Webb, "was an instrument panel viewed by each abductee on the wall beyond their examination tables. This device was depicted

in enough detail to furnish rather convincing evidence, in my opinion, of a shared abduction experience."

A different opinion on the case has been offered by Robert Baker, professor emeritus of psychology at the University of Kentucky. "Both knew exactly what the meeting and hypnosis sessions were all about." What's more, Baker states, the young people could have been engaged in a romantic tryst at the lake and "invented" the UFO story to cover up the meeting when they were discovered. It is also possible, Baker says, that Michael is "extremely imaginative and fantasized a UFO encounter by the lake. Later, under hypnosis, he might have converted the imagined encounter into a UFO kidnapping in his mind."

These views have drawn considerable fire from Webb. "Extensive background character checks," he says, "revealed Michael and Janet to be honest, credible persons who did not perpetrate a hoax or suffer some sort of fantasy, either individually or collectively."—D. SCOTT ROGO