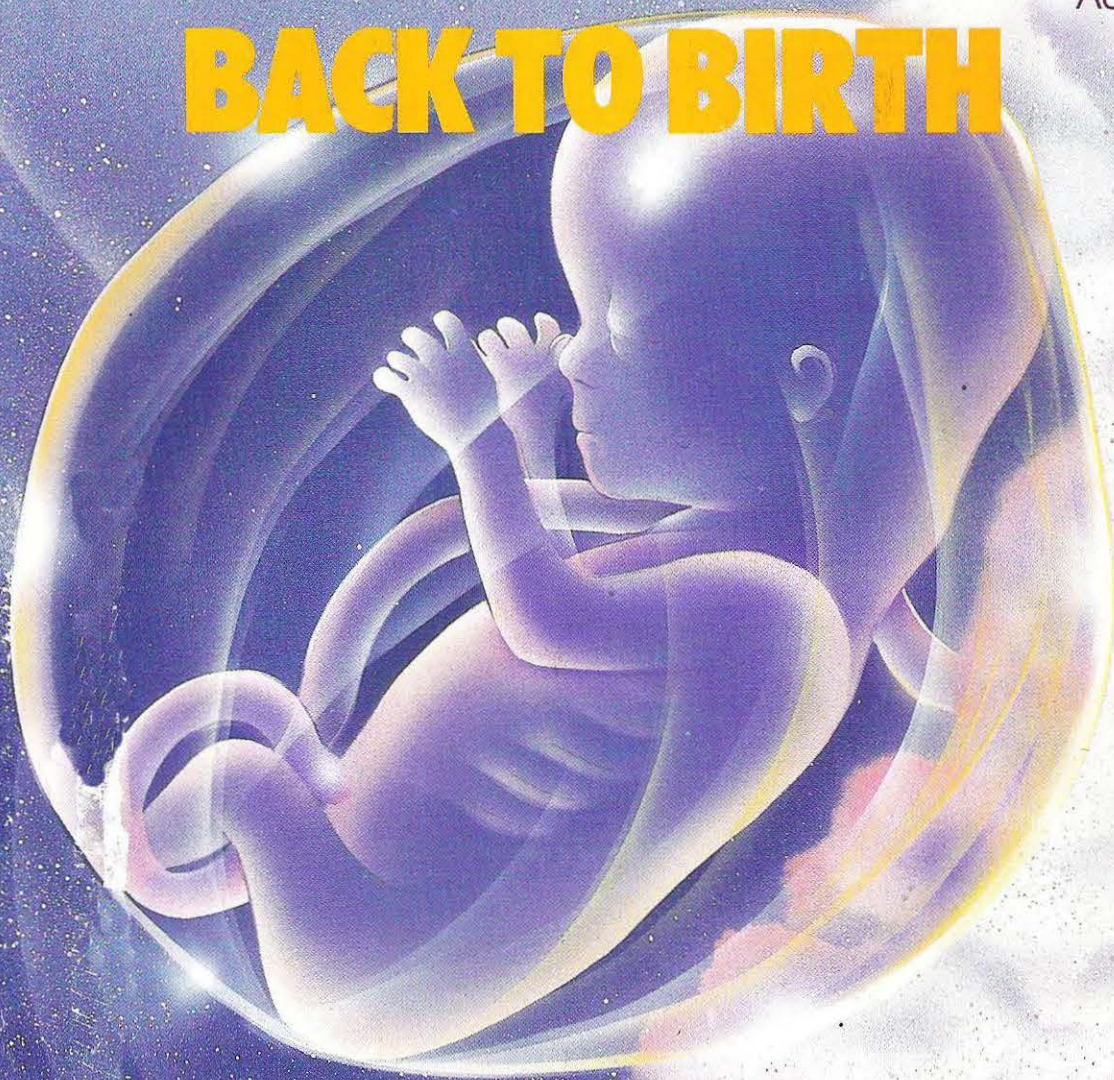


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BACK TO BIRTH



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◉The tiny
village of Elmwood in northern
Wisconsin just
may be the new hot spot for UFOs.◉

ANTI MATTER

The village of Elmwood lies nestled in a valley surrounded by the rolling hills and verdant farmland of northern Wisconsin. Life for the 1,000 inhabitants of this tiny hamlet, however, is not as uneventful as it might seem. According to Mayor Larry Feller, Elmwood has for 20 years been attracting unexpected visitors—not tourists but UFOs. Businessman and UFO investigator Tom Weber, who hopes to make contact with the craft, says town residents have reported about 300 sightings so far.

Doris Wheeler, for instance, remembers the night in 1974 when her late husband, George, changed from a confirmed UFO skeptic to a believer. Returning from his shift of police duty in Elmwood, he told Doris that a brightly lit, silent craft had soared off a hill toward his car, scaring him so badly that he dived into a ditch. A year later Doris picked up George's voice on her police radio scanner. He was at a nearby limestone quarry, he said, and he screamed, "Oh, God, it's another UFO!" Driving quickly to the spot, Doris found her husband leaning against his car, so incoherent and terrified that he had to be hospitalized.

George Wheeler later described his encounter with a saucer-shaped object that had landed on a hillside. "He said he approached the ship until a blue light flashed at him," Doris claims. "But he never recalled what happened next."

That same year, Elmwood housewife Carol Forster and her three small children were driving about three miles from home when they noticed what looked like an unusually bright star. "Suddenly it landed," Forster says. "It was two car



UFO UPDATE

lengths ahead, oval-shaped, and covered the whole road."

As word of Wheeler's and Forster's experiences spread through the community, more Elmwood natives came forward with tales of their own. "At least twenty-five very reputable people have come to me personally about sightings," says Mayor Feller. "And I'm not talking about lights in the sky."

Elmwood's citizens seem to be taking their reputation as a UFO mecca in stride. For the past ten years they've held a three-day festival each July called UFO Days. Weber hopes to raise

\$50 million for Elmwood's own UFO landing site. "Scientists will be on call," he says, in case "contact is established."

UFO skeptic and aviation journalist Phil Klass questions the real motivation behind Elmwood's interest in flying saucers: "If somebody asked me how to make a tiny town nobody has ever heard of internationally famous, I'd say, 'Announce that you're going to build a landing site for UFOs.'"

But Donald Schmitt, codirector of the Chicago-based Center for UFO Studies, insists that Elmwood is a *genuine* hot spot for UFO activity. He notes, however, that building a UFO airport is not the best way to find out who or what is behind the mysterious craft. "Money needs to be put into other kinds of serious scientific research," Schmitt explains.

Unlike Weber, Schmitt doesn't assume that whatever keeps turning up in the skies and hills of Elmwood is friendly. "We shouldn't be so quick to welcome space brothers to our world," he says. "What if they turn out to be a malevolent force?" —SHERRY BAKER