

**THIS MONTH: CLOSE ENCOUNTER WITH A NEW COMET**

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# OMNIBUS

MAY 1990

## **ROBO-BUGS**

**AND THE WORLD'S  
SMALLEST MACHINES**

**THE KILLING FIELDS:  
SETTING THE STAGE  
FOR FUTURE EPIDEMICS**

**PLUS:  
A LITANY OF  
NOVEL-  
SOMETIMES  
NASTY-  
WAYS TO  
REMOVE  
FACIAL HAIR;  
A HEAVY-  
DUTY SPORTS  
QUIZ; AND A  
GUIDE TO  
THE IDEAL  
HOME OFFICE**



\$3.50



•The tireless Vallee  
visited country after country, interviewing  
witnesses, collecting metal  
fragments, and sifting through police records. •

## ANTI MATTER

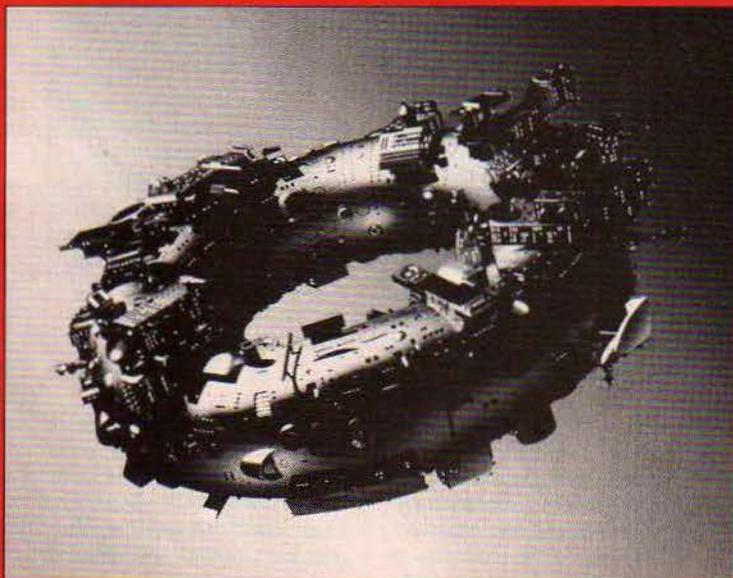
In 1980 Jacques Vallee, one of the world's best-known UFO researchers, stopped appearing at UFO conferences. "People thought I was off on some philosophical mountain," he says. "But I'd just decided I could spend my time best by investigating UFOs in the field."

After a decade of field investigations, Vallee is back. Just about a year ago he published *Dimensions* (Ballantine), which traced UFOs through recorded history and showed they have always been part of human experience. And in a sequel called *Con-*

*frontations* (Ballantine), published this spring, he attempts to correct what he says is a dearth of careful research and reliable scientific data in UFO investigations today.

"Most UFO books rely on hearsay," Vallee declares. "But I wanted to meet the original witnesses and personally visit the sites." As promised, *Confrontations* describes Vallee's stunning array of hands-on case studies. In Costa Rica, for instance, he was given a piece of silvery metal from a supposed UFO and eventually had it broken down element by element under a scanning ion mass spectroscope. In France, after discussions with countless witnesses and investigators, he calculated the "duration, distance, trajectory, sound, and luminosity parameters" of a series of UFOs.

The spate of evidence he has gathered with so much care, Vallee says, has convinced him that UFOs are not necessarily extraterrestrial at all. For instance, witnesses recall UFOs appearing out of nowhere. And while witness-



## UFO UPDATE

es report humanoid creatures, Vallee believes that extraterrestrial visitors may not resemble us so closely at all; in fact, he says, the chance of such a resemblance is "very remote." As an alternative to the extraterrestrial hypothesis, Vallee suggests UFOs may be *interdimensional* vehicles "that manipulate dimensions from anywhere or any time."

After reading Vallee's new book, Jerome Clark, vice president of the Center for UFO Studies in Chicago, commends the research. "I like the nuts and bolts of his work," says

Clark. "The detail in these cases is new, startling, and important. When he's functioning as the scientist that he's qualified to be [Vallee is a trained astrophysicist and a computer scientist], he does a good job."

The problem, according to Clark, is when Vallee goes outside his scientific training. "His interdimensional hypothesis is worthless," Clark opines. "To prove his flaky theory, he's been highly selective with his evidence."

UFO skeptic Robert Sheaffer isn't thrilled even with the science. "Vallee accepts people's stories at face value, and he's not well versed in witness reliability," Sheaffer says. "Normally, when a scientist finds a contradiction, he knows something is wrong. When Vallee finds a contradiction, he thinks it's profound."

None of this deters Vallee. "Twenty years ago I believed in the extraterrestrial hypothesis," he says. "But now theoretical physics has invited us to look beyond the fourth dimension."—MARK TEICH

## CONTACTEE

If you've ever encountered a UFO, *Contactee* is for you. Edited by UFO photographer Ellen Crystall, this recently launched newsletter is written by and for people who have had close encounters with UFOs. The eight-page quarterly already has a small but devoted core of 150 subscribers, Crystall says. "And if they've had a close encounter of the third, fourth, or fifth kind [seeing, communicating with, or boarding an alien craft], I write them special letters when they subscribe."

According to Crystall, who has seen many UFOs herself, cover stories are written by subscribers describing their own first-person investigations of UFOs. A Hot Spots column lists areas of high UFO activity. Other columns focus on UFO photography and gripes about the state of UFO research around the world today.

The newsletter, Crystall adds, is the voice of her new organization—also called *Contactee*—whose members do UFO field research worldwide. "I don't want the members of *Contactee* to have cake and coffee in somebody's living room," she says. "I want to see them conducting their research out in the field. Let's go see the ships. It's the only way we'll make contact and learn what's really going on."

What do other UFOlogists think about Crystall and her new publication? Harley Rutledge, a physics professor at Southeast Missouri State University, has enough faith to be on the *Contactee* board



of advisers. But he does have some doubts. "I think she's brought some information to the public. But to me, one of her photos looks like firecrackers going off."

Mark Rodeghier, scientific director of the Center for UFO Studies, is less impressed still. "I don't feel she is qualified," he says, "or that her photos and data are very reliable."

But Crystall intends to persist. The aliens are out there, she says, operating high-tech ships and building mysterious installations underground.

"People used to tell me, 'Shhh, don't tell anybody,'" she says. "But since I've had all these sightings, why not let others know?"

—Mark Teich

*"A snake came to my water trough on a hot, hot day, and I in pyjamas for the heat, to drink there."*

—D. H. Lawrence

## SNAKE PIT

*Pravda* recently carried a story that could make you think twice about napping outdoors.

The Soviet newspaper claimed that an eleven-year-old girl from Azerbaijan, near the Caspian Sea, grew sleepy after picking tomatoes in the sun and took a snooze in the fields. When she woke up, she was choking.

Rushed to a children's clinic in nearby Baku, the girl was given 3.5 pints of a salt solution to drink. The youngster soon recovered, according to *Pravda*, after vomiting up the cause of her distress—a 25.6-inch Caucasian cat snake.

Assistant reptile curator Dennis Herman of the Atlanta Zoo says the chance of a snake slithering down a person's throat is highly improbable. "There are several incidences of people waking

up in the morning with a rattlesnake coiled on top of them. To a snake, that's just a warm spot," he says. "But it's hard to believe a snake would survive in someone's stomach, where acids would digest it like any other meat."

Emory University Hospital gastroenterologist Stanley Riepe adds that although the story of the Soviet girl sounds bizarre, it's physically possible to swallow a snake.

"We do endoscopies with lighted flexible tubes, so we know individuals can easily swallow something the size and length of a snake," he says. "But it seems unlikely that you could do it and not be aware of it. I have to wonder if the girl had a seizure or whether she was totally conscious the whole time. Most of us have some gag reflex, and I can't imagine that a snake going down her wouldn't gag her to some degree."—Sherry Baker