

**ENDANGERED SPECIES: A LAST LOOK?**

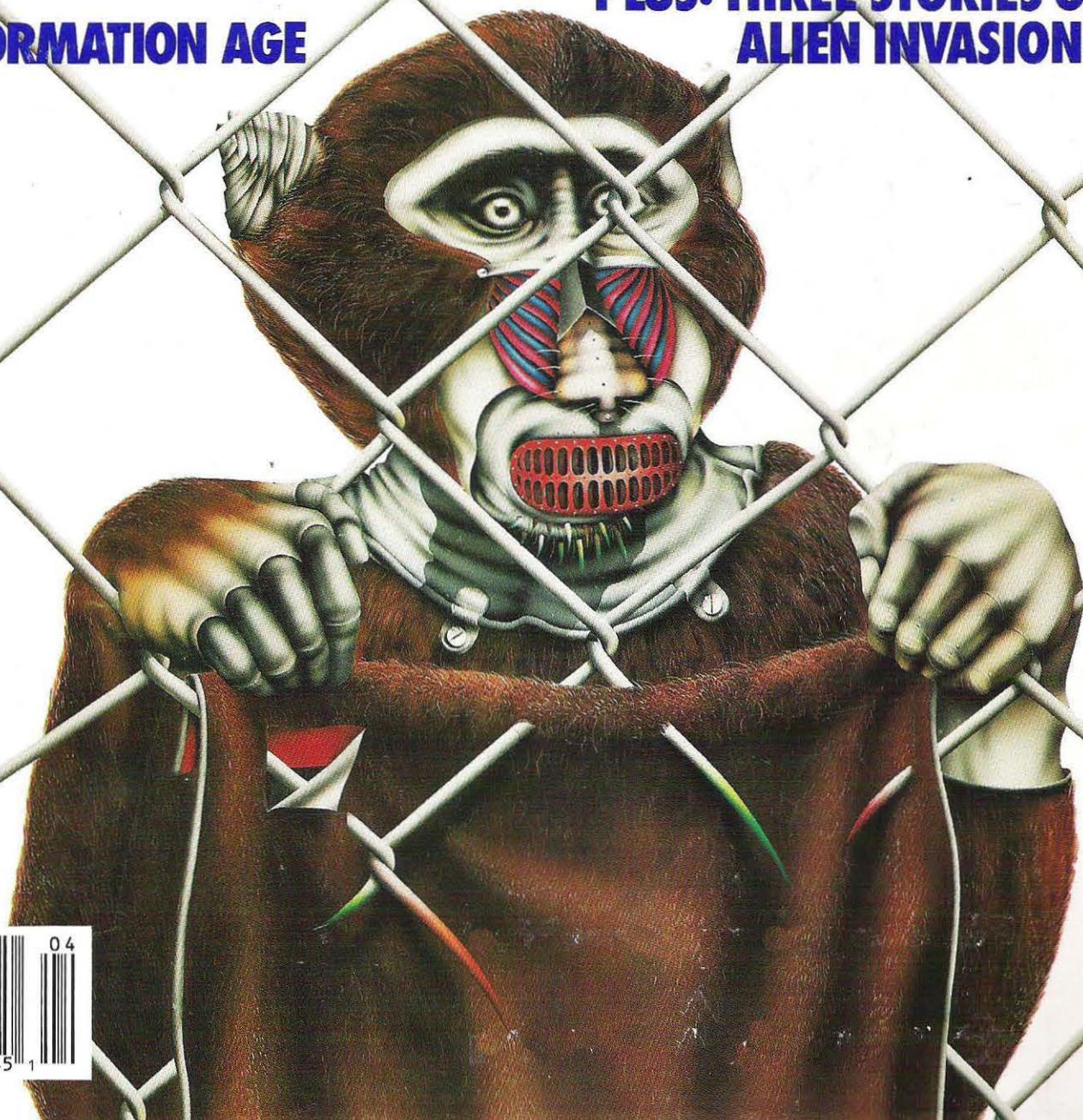
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# Omni

APRIL 1991

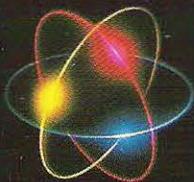
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# ANTIMATTER

## UFO UPDATE:

Is the urban borough of Queens, known as the home of the New York Mets, also a hotbed of UFOs?

The urban borough of Queens in New York City is home to the Mets, La Guardia and Kennedy airports, and almost 2 million people. But is it also a hotbed of UFO activity? According to Bill Knell, spokesperson for a Long Island-based organization called Island Skywatch, the answer is yes. In fact, although many people consider UFOs a phenomenon of back country roads and deserted mountaintops, Queens has had several UFO sightings over the past couple of years.

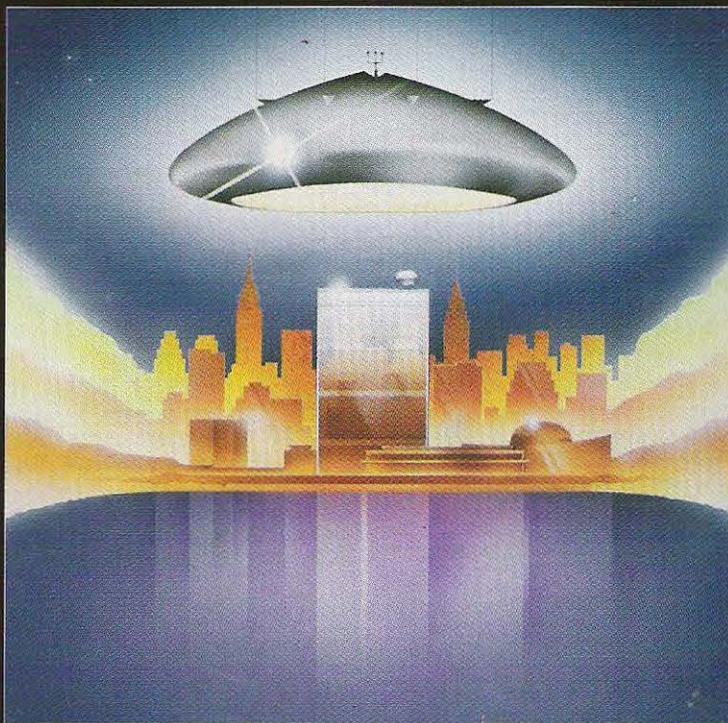
One Queens UFO, says Knell, has even "left concrete evidence behind." The sighting in question

took place about two years ago in March on a cool, clear, smog-free night. Passengers on a Q65 bus spotted red and white pulsating lights floating over Kissena Park Lake. According to Knell, "The passengers first thought that the lights were a helicopter or downed airplane. But after the bus driver stopped for a closer look, no helicopter or plane could be seen."

The next day Bill Knell was called to the scene to determine what the passengers had truly seen. After conducting three weeks of taking soil samples and interviewing park rangers, he concluded that aliens really had visited the park.

The first bit of evidence, Knell says, includes so-called landing circles—two barren, gravel-covered areas in the middle of a lawn near the lake. Knell also discovered a dying willow tree that was burned on the side facing the circles. Finally, after taking a compass to the iron lampposts that face the circles, Knell claimed that they were "all heavily, even abnormally, magnetized."

Evidence in hand, Knell alerted the media. The resulting news stories eventually prompted the New York City Parks



Department to call on resident astronomer Greg Matloff to investigate the site himself.

Going through the park with care, Matloff agreed that the willow tree was dying but found no evidence of burn marks. Matloff then asked some park rangers to test the magnetism of the park's lampposts. His conclusion: "All of Kissena's lampposts have the same degree of magnetic charge as the ones facing the circles." This, he believes, "is because they're made of cast iron, and the electrical charge running through each lamppost turns it into an electromagnet." Matloff agrees that the

gravel within the circles is found nowhere else in the park. But he says the gravel probably comes from New Jersey. Still, if the circles have a terrestrial origin, why wasn't the parks department aware of their presence until Knell "discovered" them? Matloff explains, "I can personally attest from a recent jog through Cadman Plaza Park in Brooklyn that bare patches larger than the ones considered here are the rule, not the exception, in New York City parks."

Still, according to Bill Knell, the book on the Queens UFO isn't closed. For instance, he declares, two attempts to seed the circles with grass have failed. To resolve the issue, the parks department finally sponsored a UFO program that drew a rare SRO crowd to Kissena Park.

"We were surprised at the numbers and at the types of people there," says ranger Mary Anne Edler. "We had everyone from UFO followers to people who looked like they just walked out of a heavy-metal concert to families whose houses face 'the UFO park.'" Even now, a week doesn't go by when the rangers aren't asked directions to the UFO landing site.—ALLEN SALZBERG