

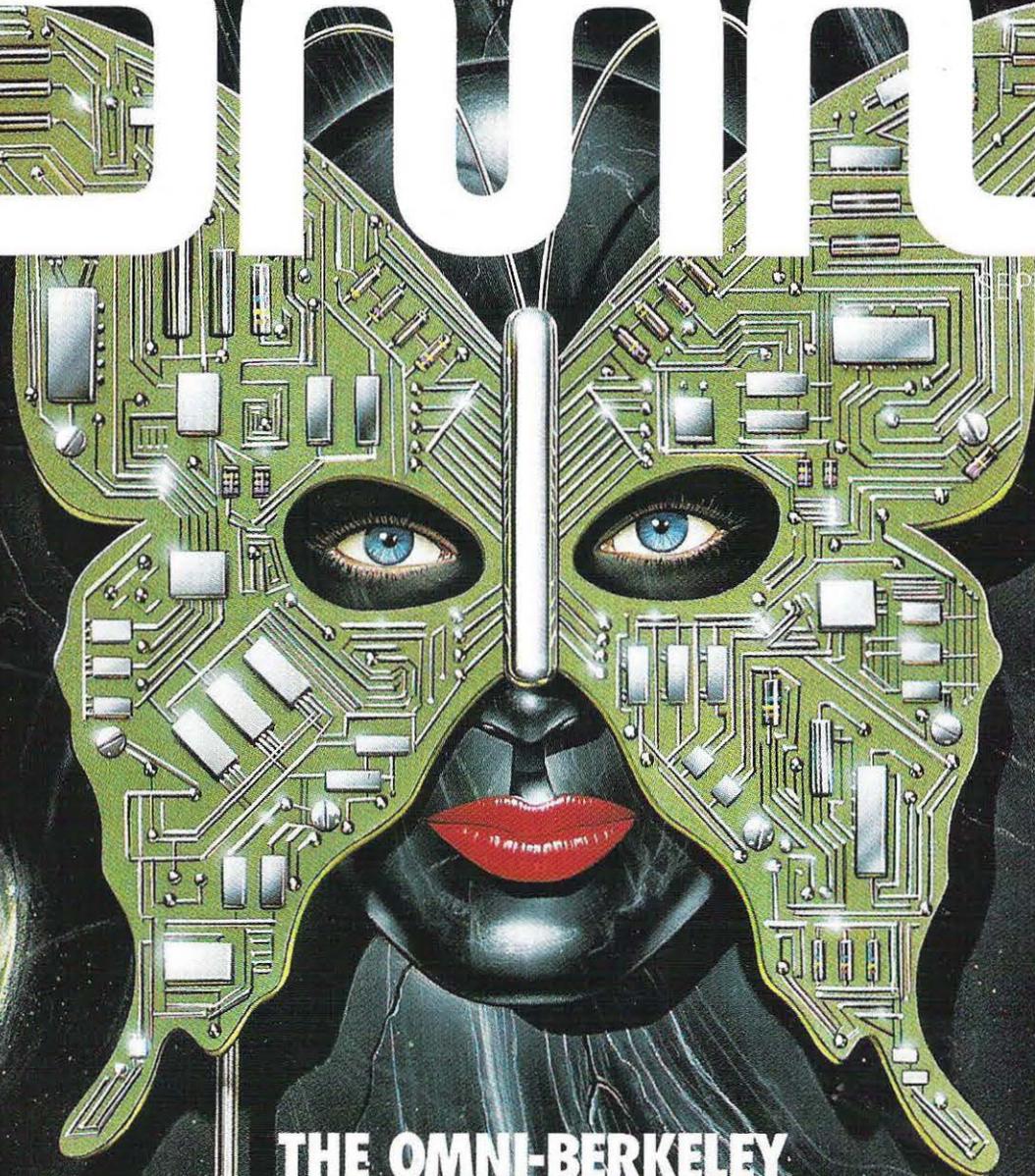
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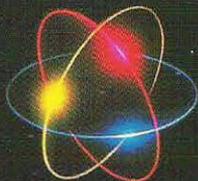
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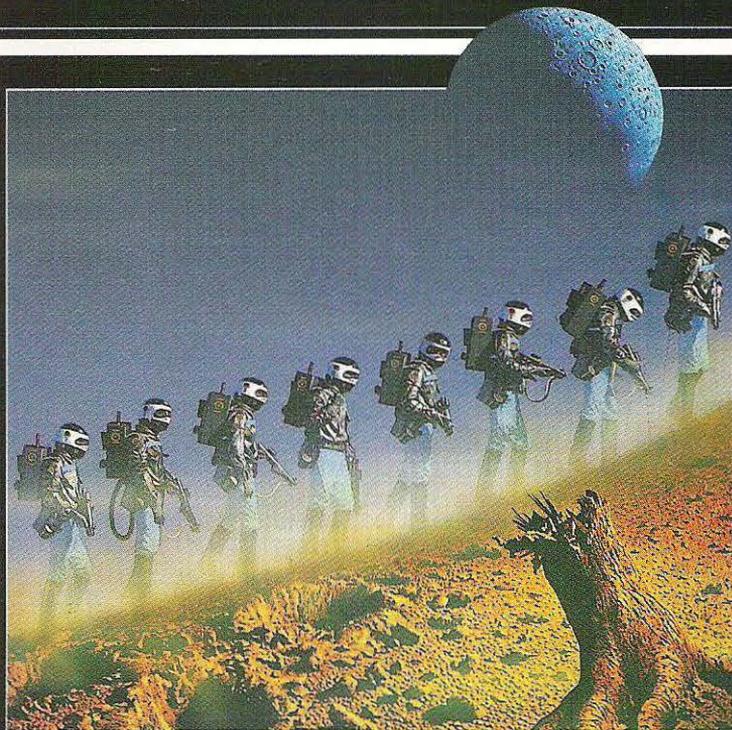
## HELP WANTED:

Amateur psychologist, meteorologist, and Renaissance person to hunt down UFOs

So you want to be a UFO investigator. You'll need a compass, tape recorder, and Geiger counter. A pair of tweezers would help as well. This is the gospel according to the *MUFON Field Investigator's Manual*, published by the Mutual UFO Network in Seguin, Texas. Still interested?

Dan Wright, deputy director for investigations at MUFON, says he's looking for a few good volunteers with science, engineering, and aviation backgrounds, although anyone with enthusiasm and common sense is welcome. Wright, who has an M.A. in political science, runs the investigator network from Michigan. He reviews all completed case reports—about 15 a month—and evaluates the quality of research. Then he provides critical feedback to the investigator, his local supervisor, called the state director, and to Walt Andrus, who heads MUFON from Seguin.

Wright says a UFOlogist needs to be a Renaissance person. He or she should know something about weather, conventional aircraft, the celestial sky, and "the psychology of people during an interview." The novice UFOlogist doesn't just go out and dig into cases, though. First his local supervisor will put him through a training course using the investigator's manual. It contains chapters on equipment, commonly reported phenomena, assessment of testimony, and other tricks of the trade. The trainee studies, participates in classes, and eventually takes a 100-question exam. "It shows the person's strong and weak areas," says Wright. Then he is ready to go out on cases with an experienced



UFOlogist. After his apprenticeship, he graduates from trainee to full investigator. The training varies in quality from state to state, admits Wright, "but to one extent or another they all conduct formal sessions."

Of course, the UFOlogists' activities have become more specialized since MUFON opened its doors in 1969 with a handful of investigators in a few Midwestern states. Now MUFON has more than 3,000 members worldwide, 800

investigators in the United States, about 150 Ph.D. consultants, and another 150 research specialists with master's degrees. The analysis of photos and the computerization of UFO case reports, for instance, are activities that qualified volunteers may pursue.

Philip Klass, aerospace technical journalist and longtime UFO skeptic, favors investigator training but argues that you can't teach skepticism from a handbook, "unless that handbook gives great emphasis to skepticism." He feels the wrong incentive system is built into UFOlogy. Investigators become famous and get awards not for finding prosaic explanations for cases, he says, but for failing to find an explanation. They are sincere but often don't try hard enough because they are looking for "the Rosetta stone that will unlock the UFO mystery," he says.

Even so, Andrus is busy rewriting the fourth edition of the investigator's manual, which will run about 200 pages and contain a generous portion on abductions. Of course, he also needs people who can use a compass and tweezers. "There's a lot to do," says Andrus, "and it's all important."—PAUL McCARTHY