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MUFON of Georgia news and research

Spring 2000

Credibility is the Key to UFO Research in Sweden

by Ralph O. Howard, Jr.
MUFON FI, ISUR Board

As most readers of Georgia Sky Watch know, MUFON of Georgia works in collaboration with ISUR (International Society for UFO Research) to investigate UFO reports that come in to individual investigators, MUFON referral, ISUR's website, and from other sources. In November 1997, an interesting report came in to the ISUR website from an individual in Sweden who stated that his brother had videotaped three UFO events one afternoon in August 1997, at his home in Vanersborg, Sweden.

MUFON of Georgia Investigations Director and ISUR FI Jim Clifford responded to the e-mail contact and got in contact with the witness. After the witness sent in a videotape, knowing my "Sweden connection," Jim asked me if I knew of a UFO group in Sweden, and if we could get their assistance to investigate the case in person and "on the ground." (My "Sweden connection" is my wife!)

So, I enlisted my "invisible college" to get involved and help out (doesn't every good FI have one?). First, my wife carefully interviewed the witness in Swedish via telephone, allowing me to at least develop an impression of the witness and verify a few key details. Next, a Realtor friend who has a machine that copies European-VHS video to US-VHS video, created five tape copies for study. Once these tasks were complete I forwarded everything we (ISUR) had on the case to Mr. Clas Svahn, current Chairman of UFO

Continued on page 2

State Director's Message

by Tom Sheets

We seem to have made it to 2000 without any formal disclosure from our government regarding the UFO phenomena, which is no real surprise. There are however certain things currently going on that will influence our activities, some things by a little, other things by a lot. Attorney Peter Gersten of CAUS (Citizens Against UFO Secrecy) is currently battling in federal court with his suit against the government regarding the existence of various triangular shaped craft in our skies. Reports from early February indicate he is doing well, and the judge thus far seems to be seeing it our way, but I don't expect a whole lot to come out of this. If

Continued on page 4

Calendar of Events



- April 7-9, 2000 12th Annual Ozark UFO Conference
Eureka Springs, AR, (501) 354-2558
ozarkufo@webtv.net
- July 14-16, 2000 MUFON 2000 International UFO
Symposium, St. Louis, MO
Hotel Rsv: 1-800-822-3535
- September 23-24, 2000.. 37th Annual National UFO
Conference, Corpus Christi, TX
(361) 937-2381
- October 14, 2000 MUFON of Georgia & ISUR
sky watch. Location TBA.
- October 28, 2000 John Thompson UFO Lecture
Coca-Cola Space Science Center
Columbus State University,
Columbus, Georgia

The *Georgia Sky Watch* newsletter is an open forum for the exchange of ideas and information concerning UFOs and related phenomena. Opinions expressed by contributing writers are those of the particular author and do not necessarily reflect the views of MUFON of Georgia, *Georgia Sky Watch*, its editors or publishers.

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Your articles, letters, comments and criticisms for the *Georgia Sky Watch* newsletter are greatly appreciated.

Credibility is the Key – continued from page 1

Sweden. In the course of keeping in contact with him about this case, and talking with friends of mine in Sweden, I have learned some interesting things about their group that I'd like to share with Georgia Sky Watch readers.

Overview of UFO-Sweden

Founded in 1970, UFO-Sweden is a research-oriented group comprising about 80 field investigators (FIs) and twenty-four smaller autonomous UFO organizations located throughout Sweden. A main goal of UFO-Sweden is to make ufology into an established and respected field of research. To accomplish this, the group focuses on conducting serious competent research of UFO cases, thereby gaining recognition from the "establishment" as the professionals on the subject, and on cooperating and communicating with UFO researchers and groups in other countries. The group takes no official position nor endorses any particular theory on the nature or origin of UFO phenomena.

As with most American UFO organizations, UFO-Sweden is run on a non-profit basis. Operating funds come from subscriptions to their quarterly UFO Journal, *UFO-Aktuellt*, with a subscriber base of about 1,700 people. Every two months they issue the investigation-oriented *Rapport Nytt* (roughly, "News

on the Reports"). Finally, a newsletter is generated quarterly, in English, by their affiliated library/archives, the Archives for UFO Research (AFU).

The AFU is a crucial part of UFO-Sweden's work. It houses around 2,000 books and a large numbers of magazines and news clippings dating from 1946 to the present. There are more than 13,000 case histories archived there, along with videotapes, audiotapes, pictures, and UFO-paraphernalia. UFO-Sweden's website has an interesting write-up of AFU's early origins and current projects, including some little-known connections to APRO, but perhaps the most interesting part of it concerns a large group of military UFO records, which has the cryptic and suitable moniker "Blue and Orange Files." In 1987 UFO-Sweden borrowed and began copying these files from the Research Institute of Defense (FOA) in Stockholm. The files contain more than 2,500 reports investigated by Sweden's military since 1947. Mr. Svahn advised me that while the copying of these files for AFU's use is complete, there has been as yet no statistical study of the results of FOA's investigations. As to the quality of FOA's investigations (for example in comparison to the USAF's Project Blue Book), Svahn believes that the military investigators did a very good job up until 1965, when the responsibility for UFO investigations was transferred from the General Staff to FOA. These 2,500+ cases are in addition to another 1,500 cases from the so-called "Ghost Rocket" period (1946-'48).

Perhaps AFU's largest project is an ongoing "ScanCat" UFO database similar to UNICAT, the database established in 1983 by Dr. J. Allen Hynek and Dr. Willy Smith. Thanks to a government unemployment program under which the government pays out-of-work people for non-commercial work, AFU has been able to have more than 25 "paid assistants" working for short periods. A priority task for these workers has been the coding and entry of cases into ScanCat, which now has more than 10,500 cases.

Obviously, as a major objective, UFO-Sweden investigates UFO reports in Sweden. The group's eighty FIs are independent researchers attached to a "Rapportcentral" (investigation center), from which

they are assigned cases. Most of the investigators also belong to local groups, of which there are 24 throughout the country that are also affiliated with UFO-Sweden. Certain items of field equipment are shared among the investigators.

A major goal in this regard is to attract and train scientifically-oriented researchers, so as to gather evidence with greater scientific accuracy and knowledge. As these investigators have developed professional ties with officials of the police, military, the National Meteorological Organization (SMHI), and other authorities, the group has in recent years gained a reputation as serious and respectable. In many ways their taking on UFO case reports serves a public service function, providing both the witnesses and the authorities someone knowledgeable to turn to for help.

This working rapport with the civilian and military authorities is what I most like about their group. UFO-Sweden is routinely able to get assistance from military and civilian agencies with key information such as radar tapes, aircraft identification and

positioning data, weather data, police recordings, university staff for expertise with various disciplines, and more. There is even a "military report line" feeding reports in routinely. While these capabilities may not be unique to UFO-Sweden, from what I've seen, the closeness of the cooperation and its established presence in their nation at large may well be (although for recent years, Belgium comes to mind). And it pays off in the fact that those 5-10% of the reports remaining unexplained after thorough investigation are strong cases with reliable witnesses which are truly puzzling.

UFO-Sweden received 522 new and retrospective UFO reports in 1998; and through 10/19/99, they have received 408 reports so far for 1999. Smaller numbers have been received during the early 1990s, including 142 reports in 1992, 245 in 1993 and 468 reports in 1994. Of the 245 cases from 1993, only six (6) were judged to be "true UFOs," giving an indication of the rigor with which cases are investigated.

The Vanersborg case

UFO-Sweden's case report is currently in press, but I am familiar enough, in general, with the case to highlight it here. The witness, a 29-year old auto mechanic and test driver for a major Swedish auto manufacturing corporation, was videotaping jet airplanes from his apartment balcony on the afternoon of August 23, 1997. At three different times between about 4:55 and 5:55 local time, he observed and taped through his video camera bright, point-like objects moving rapidly along straight trajectories at various angles to the generally horizontal flight paths of the jet planes he was taping. At one point he followed the UFO as it moved upwards on a straight-line course about 45 degrees from vertical, moving very fast, across the horizontal path of the plane. The object appears as a white dot, and little else can be determined visually. At the end of this clip, which is the best of the three videotaped, the object appeared to become larger and/or move closer to the witness' position.

Further study of the videotape images by UFO-Sweden gave no additional conclusive information on the objects (Note 1). Radar tapes from the military were

Visit the MUFON of Georgia website at:

www.geocities.com/mufonga/

Investigated Georgia UFO cases can be located at:

<http://www.isur.com>

as well as links to many MUFON sites

A Must Have!!!

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consulted but didn't indicate any military activity, or any radar-verified unknowns, that could be tied to the objects. An ornithologist determined that the objects' flight characteristics do not match those of any bird; particularly, the speed is too great and there is no hint of wing flapping or any wing motion at all. Finally, in several interviews by local investigators and by Clas Svahn, the witness' sincerity and truthfulness seem evident. Just as he expressed to my wife in our telephone interview, the witness continues to say that he is perplexed by what he saw. Clas Svahn tells me that his group cannot seem to find a satisfactory answer either, and that the Vanersborg case is about to be written up in the 4th quarter 1999 issue of UFO Aktuell.

What can we learn from UFO-Sweden?

In all likelihood, each of us in this field, whether FIs, organizational leaders, or the just plain interested, can learn something from this group's successes. Since we're all involved in different ways, perhaps we should ask the following questions, both of ourselves and of the groups (MUFON, MUFON of Georgia, ISUR, and/or others) through which we seek the truth about UFOs:

- ♦ Are we objectively researching the phenomenon? Or have we committed ourselves to a solution, a theory?
- ♦ Are we making any progress in establishing professional ties with those authorities most directly involved in most of the UFO cases (police, military, civilian aviation)?
- ♦ How much of American ufology involves any scientific work at all, work that can withstand scientific scrutiny, and how much is about selling books and videotapes?

These are not easy questions, and I don't mean to imply that UFO-Sweden has all the answers. But it certainly appears to me that the path towards scientific respectability lies in the direction UFO-Sweden is going. The "American scene" in ufology is so large, as wide as the continent it seems, and the "cast of characters" so distracting, that it would be easy to miss what is being done overseas.

This is indeed a shame, as we could learn much from groups such as UFO-Sweden.

Acknowledgments

Much of the foregoing material about UFO-Sweden came from the "English" webpage accessed from their website [<http://www.ufo.se>]. Many thanks to Clas Svahn for his helpful and specific answers to my questions. My wife Susanne deserves thanks for graciously assisting with translation of e-mails and interview questions/answers.

Notes:

1. A copy of the video was also mailed to MUFON photo analyst Jeff Sainio. Sainio's conclusion (Feb. 1998) was that the objects were, most likely, birds. Anyone wishing to view or borrow a copy of the video should contact the author (RHJr1983@aol.com).



State Director's Message -- Continued from page 1

anyone (judge, attorney, or investigator) gets too close to something that our favorite uncle does not want publicized, the bottom line is that it will just not happen. We can hope for a miracle, those do happen from time to time!

What will impact MUFON of Georgia, greatly, is the appointment of John Schuessler as the new International Director of MUFON. John is a retired aerospace engineering executive for McDonnell-Douglas and a co-founder of MUFON. He has the unqualified support of the MUFON Board.

A transition committee was formed in Arlington, Virginia at the 1999 MUFON International UFO Symposium, with a January 15, 2000 deadline for recommending new organizational bylaws, as well as a five year strategic plan.

Some of the organizational operations that were scrutinized for new bylaws include:

1. Method of selection of new Board Members (The committee went to great lengths to debate the pros and cons of several methods and solicited the various State Directors for input).
2. The initial draft of the new bylaws was recognized as having a direct impact on the function of state chapters in that the selection of qualified Section Directors would be the sole decision of the State Director, as well as the selection of section boundaries.
3. Increasing the current number of general meetings and training sessions in the state chapters.
4. Increasing the PR operations in the states, such as press and media appearances, reaching out to civic groups etc.
5. Redesign of the MUFON HQ website.

Since the 'change of command' will not take place until mid-year, the final polishing of these bylaws and SOPs is now underway.

If the implementation of these bylaws takes place as described, I foresee many positive changes that will come about. Locally, if I remain in the position of State Director, there will be some changes made, as the most proactive and motivated persons will be placed in positions of responsibility as Section Directors. (All SSDs will be required to attend some general meetings, and be certified Field Investigators, more on that later).

Other Business

For those not on-line to receive our MUFON of Georgia Updates (there were about some 30+ in 1999), our November 14, 1999 General Meeting in Griffin Georgia was very successful. ASD Ausmus's computer class was very informative, even teaching a 'cyber challenged' individual like me a few things. We ran out of time in our training session during the interview portion, but I followed this up with a sample investigator's report later sent out on-line for those who were in attendance. (If you were there, and

did not receive a copy, please let me know). I will make extra efforts in the future to ensure more class room time for training, and include practical exercises like we have done in the past. There were about 75 citizens in the general meeting, and the presentations went well. Two ladies got pretty steamed when they learned that I enjoyed the 'Roswell Autopsy' TV show because it was the finest hoaxed film made in a long time!

Mark and I have already discussed the next general meeting and hope to have it somewhere on the north side of Atlanta, probably in the late Spring. We will look at having a regional meeting in the deep south again this year, possibly combined with a sky watch.

As you probably recall from the MUFON Journal, three of our FIT's recently passed their Field Investigator's exam. Kudos to Ralph Howard, Mary Dee Janssen and David Brown. At last check, Larry Thacker of Kennesaw and Olivia Newton of Lilburn and Earle Blanton Jr. of Moultrie were preparing to enter a phase of study toward this same goal.

First Case of 2000

SSD/FI Janssen of Rome Georgia has the honor of developing one of the first Georgia cases of the new year. She is pursuing an investigation which involves a law enforcement officer that observed an unknown object/craft while on duty. See other parts of this GSW for information on this case and a few others of interest.

MUFON of Georgia Web Page

MUFON of Georgia now has a page courtesy of Ms. Emma Patten, a friend to the Georgia UFO community and fiancée of our unit historian and researcher Michael Hitt. You can visit the page at:

□ www.geocities.com/mufonga/

Visit the MUFON HQ Home page at:

<http://www.mufon.com>

Current UFO Activity in Georgia

by Mark Ausmus

The past three months have produced many UFO reports from all over the state.

ROME, GEORGIA

State Director, Tom Sheets, reports, in his MUFON of Georgia Update, that SSD/FI Mary Janssen in Rome is investigating an event reported by a local police officer.

"At 4:09 AM on February 3, 2000, a six year veteran of the Polk County Police Department was patrolling Hwy. 113 about 1 mile south of the Polk/Bartow county line. He pulled off to monitor the highway traffic with his patrol unit facing south. The officer had previously observed normal air traffic headed toward Hartsfield Airport. He had also witnessed several meteors.

"As he watched the roadway, he noticed a red glow in the sky and upon looking more closely noticed it seemed to be behind a gray circular object. The object continued to come toward him, traveling from a SE to WNW direction. Silently, and at a great speed, the object came closer.

"He described the front of the object as looking like a gray cone shape, that elongated into a cylinder shape. As it went by, he specifically noticed a red glowing circle of light on the rear. He observed no recognizable engines or other features. The duration of the event was about eight seconds. The officer called in by phone and found there were no other reports incoming at the 911 center.

"Ms. Janssen has interviewed the officer and is currently doing other follow-up work on the case to promote a detailed FI's report. She found that the Rome Airport has no radar. The FAA in Atlanta has

been contacted for a check of their tapes from this time period."

TROUP-HEARD CORRIDOR: CLOSE ENCOUNTER

John Thompson reports meeting with a father and son, in January, who he describes as both being excellent witnesses. They observed a UFO at a distance of only 75-80 yards and about 10-15 feet off the ground! This close encounter he postulates ties in somehow with what folks in South Mississippi and an aircraft crew in Missouri saw. "Unless the shuttle was going to land in a Troup County pasture and has silent boosters", he jokes, "we can safely rule the shuttle out!"

The sighting occurred around 8:05-8:10 p.m., EST. "The forty four year-old father, who is a large landowner and has two years of agricultural engineering, said they arrived to meet with friends at 8:29 p.m. so he is certain on timing of earlier sighting based on how long it took him to reach friends who were several miles away. The object he said maneuvered as 'smooth as silk.' It descended, ascended and change directions several times with sparks or ashes 'coming off like in a campfire.' The sparks or ashes were not ejected. He is certain that the UFO is of manufacture and was under intelligent control and was not piloted by a human. While he believes the speed of the UFO at around 4-500 mph, after estimating the length of pasture it covered in two seconds (1000 feet) I would say it was moving at about 325-350 mph. Reaction time to do the zig-zag or "weave" in response to lights going on (truck lights) was, as he said, entirely too fast for any human to perform. It could be a cruise missile with highly sophisticated terrain-hugging, light-sensing, sensors and computer controls. After careful examination, however, I have trouble accepting this explanation. It remains a true UFO, the size of a truck, which could manipulate its own internal lighting, guidance and speed. Pinkish red light seen at end of sighting according to witnesses was not the exhaust of an engine.

"The witnesses could clearly hear coon hounds baying off in the distance, but, the UFO made no sound at only 75-80 yards.

"A thorough search was made of the property. No burn spots were found under the path of the UFO. As I told the witnesses, who signed a MUFON general case form, I consider this to be in the top ten percent of cases I've done. I hope to find more witnesses. Eight planes, presumably airliners, were seen several miles and many thousand feet higher, north of the UFO location."

Continued on page 8

PLANNED DINNER FORUM MEETING

We had previously planned to conduct a Dinner Forum in February, but will have to push it back until another month. I visited the Old Country Buffet on Buford Hwy on February 5 and spoke with the manager. He stated that his volume of business was so great that he could not set up his private room area on Saturdays or Sundays. (This is too bad, as the food appeared to be very good).

I then spoke with the Shoney's manager at our old meeting location. He advised me that they too had experienced an increase in business and had stopped reserving their room on week-ends.

I will be looking for an alternate site in a centralized location. We are open to suggestions if anyone knows of a potential facility. The more desirable sites should be near the freeway, have ease of parking, reasonable prices for good food, and possess a meeting room that can be closed off to shut out noise, and seat at least 25 people. Shoney's on Piedmont was originally chosen because it was more or less in the center mass of where most of our membership lives. I would like to stick with that plan as close as possible. While I do not want to create a longer drive for the outlying members (of which I'm one), let me misquote a famous General -- 'the easiest for the mostest' is what we want.

Send me your suggestions or comments at;

mufonga@webtv.net or (770)-460-8447
Tom Sheets



FROM THE TROUP-HEARD CORRIDOR: UNDERWATER UFO

John Thompson writes, "While videotaping a witness's testimony regarding a 'moon-shaped' UFO sighting which occurred in December of 1995, he told me of a UFO encounter that happened to a man he knows who, in the early 1970s, observed, with others an underwater UFO. This occurred in a small private lake in the LaGrange area. He said this guy and four or five others -- young men and women at a cabin party -- started seeing lights in the small lake behind the cabin. He said they went to the lake's edge and all these bright lights could be seen flashing or moving. This went on for about five minutes and then someone did something--I can't remember what as I was more interested at the time of getting his first hand story on tape--and they all thought that whatever it was underwater now knew they were watching it. The young ladies wanted to leave but the men didn't. Suddenly, this 'thing' came out of the water. It was an oval, metallic, saucer shaped UFO the size of a car.

The UFO, as told to him by his friend, had black port-holes all around it and was rotating with lights flashing. A few seconds after lifting out of the water, the UFO shot away--or that's what they remember.

On returning to the cabin they discovered 2 1/2 hours were unaccounted for. Since then, they have wondered if they could have all been abducted. They were all admittedly drinking but as the older man told my witness, they were not 'stone drunk.' Besides, he told my witness, ALL of them saw the UFO and agreed, later, on what they saw. Their perceived time lapse, in my opinion, could well be from their drinking. ■

The next issue of the Georgia Sky Watch will be published at the end of May, or beginning of June. Issue number 17 will feature Abductions in Georgia and well as the latest UFO reports.

BAINBRIDGE, GEORGIA

Billy J. Rachels, Director of the UFO Bureau in Thomasville, Georgia reports in his March 2000 *News Release* that UFOs were seen over Bainbridge in early January. In one report the "witness said she saw high up in the sky white lights in a half circle or arc in the upright position that quickly disappeared. Approximately a week later a large round red object with blue tint was called into a Tallahassee radio station morning show by several people one being between Bainbridge and Havanna, Florida.

CASSVILLE, GEORGIA

Thomas McFarland, MUFON State Director for Vermont sent a report by a couple who witnessed a UFO while driving through Southern Georgia on I-75 at 5:30 a.m. on December 5, 1999.

"The sky was a pre-dawn black. Stars were visible. The terrain is fairly flat. Suddenly the entire sky lit up with a light not unlike the brightness if a nuclear flash. The entire sky was as broad daylight, shadows were even cast." The UFO came close to the witnesses and they observed a round white light with a red fire like substance coming from the rear.

WILKINSON COUNTY, GEORGIA

The National UFO Reporting Center reports a witness observed, on December 15, 1999 at 9:45 a.m., a white cylindrical craft with no wings moving fast tree top level.

WATKINSVILLE, GEORGIA

The National UFO Reporting Center reports on November 27, 1999 at 9:00 p.m., ten friends and family were camping out when three small lights (green, orange, blue) zig zagging together. As the lights moved, they joined together to form a small shape which was a circle at one end and a star shape at the other. The object approach the witnesses at a rapid rate appearing as a rainbow colored ball which was spinning at a rapid rate. The witnesses observed the UFO change back into a star shape as it approached, and then many other shapes.

New Field Investigators

Congratulations to David M. Brown, Mary Dee Janssen and Ralph O. Howard, Jr., for taking and passing the MUFON Field Investigator's Exam.

SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

The National UFO Reporting Center reports on December 23, 1999 at 7:20 p.m., three witnesses observed a bright blue glowing egg-shaped UFO approaching their house, just over some trees. The UFO appeared to stop for a second and then shoot off to the left. The witnesses observed a "bubble" on the UFO's underneath.

CUMMING, GEORGIA

The National UFO Reporting Center reports on November 30, 1999 at 10:00 p.m., a brilliant amber disk trailing sparks was seen to move to the West. The shape was very visible and estimated to be 1/8 the size of the moon. ■

ASTRONOMICAL / SATELLITE RESOURCE

Field investigators and other interested parties please take note of the website:

<http://www.ccssc.org>

This is the site for The Coca-Cola Space Science Center at Columbus State University. This site contains invaluable information for determining satellite position data as well as a section dedicated exclusively to iridium satellites.

Sky charts can be produced for any date and time to the minute from one of 2 million locations. The sky charts look like those published every month in *Astronomy* magazine, except you can more precisely plot celestial positions using the exact time.

Current information on the sun, moon and planets can also be found on this site.