



P.I.P.E. LINE

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MUFON PUBLIC RELATIONS DIR.
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Announcing :

Recently I invited five new persons to join the P.I.P.E. Committee in order to add some fresh input and perspectives to our membership. I am very pleased to announce that Dr. Michael Swords has accepted the invitation, and has already offered some very helpful suggestions and reflections on the thrust of public information in the UFO field and the direction that we might consider taking with future projects.

In addition, Dr. David M. Jacobs and Budd Hopkins have accepted my invitation to serve our committee as advisors, since both of these individuals are already devoting the better part of their available time to UFO research, and are on extremely busy schedules.

The other two persons have not yet sent in responses to my invitation. The two are Richard Hall and Dr. Ron Westrum.

Mike Swords, Dave Jacobs, and Budd Hopkins will all be attending the 1987 MUFON UFO Symposium in Washington, and will be in attendance at our annual P.I.P.E. meeting on Friday evening.

Our committee now numbers 16 persons and stretches from Coast to Coast, covering all areas of the country, and includes persons involved with all aspects of the UFO subject and a wide variety of areas of professional expertise.

PRIDE IN EXCELLENCE

For the second year we will be presenting the award for the Most Outstanding Work in the Field of UFOlogy to the individual voted most deserving by the members of MUFON. The ballot for this purpose will be included with the April issue of the Journal. Last year's recipient of this award was Budd Hopkins, for his massive amount of in-depth and professional research into abduction cases.

If UFOlogy is to become recognized as a respectable, legitimate science, we must demand excellence and professionalism of those involved in researching the phenomenon, and must continue to recognize excellence as is the intention of this award. Please make it a point to vote and mail in your ballots promptly. Thank you.

FOCUSING THIS YEAR

As we approach our annual P.I.P.E. Committee meeting, in order to make the most productive use out of the 2 or 3 hours that we will all be together, it would seem prudent to put some forethought into the direction that we should plan to pursue in the next year and the goals we should set for ourselves and for public information nationally in the UFO field.

Many of us, myself included, have been very effective at authoring eloquent assessments of the situation and generating pearls of wisdom for us to consider. We have also spent much time discussing and considering these theses. Now, however, it is time for action. If we do not put some of these ideas into reality, they will not have had much tangible value for us.

Therefore, I would like to propose that we attempt to chart out a course involving a few realistic and practical goals or projects that we feel we should emphasize or focus upon over the course of the next year or two.

For example, it appears that it might be more practical and more beneficial to the subject itself if we concentrate our public education and public information efforts on selected groups rather than on the general public at large. These groups could include: the national media (networks, major newspapers, national radio stations); influential govt. officials; scientists and academia in general; individuals and organizations of great wealth and resources which they might be willing to contribute to further research into the phenomenon.

Perhaps we should map out specific programs or projects aimed at informing these groups about the seriousness of the UFO subject and the need for in-depth research into the phenomenon by persons in a wide variety of disciplines.

Also, it is clear that the UFO research community must be demonstrably competent, professional, objective, and well qualified. It is not an easy or pleasant task to criticize colleagues or friends, or even to suggest changes to them. However, if UFOlogy is ever to be recognized as a respectable science, we are going to have to be able to establish our own respectability as researchers first. This issue must be addressed and dealt with now.

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FOCUSING THIS YEAR (con't.)

Over a year ago, our committee proposed a policy for dealing with the media, and it was forwarded to the MUFON Board of Directors for their approval, comments, additions, deletions, etc.. The policy was not implemented because there was not unanimous approval by the board, and it was felt by some that the policy was somewhat dictatorial, and would be too difficult to enforce with a volunteer organization. This is a problem we will have to overcome or come to terms with.

It is true that we are a volunteer organization, and we need to take pains to avoid conveying a tone that is dictatorial in any policy or project we sponsor. However, the voluntary nature of the organization does not mean that we should accept anything less than professional and competent work from our ranks. If we are to offer public information on the subject that is credible and objective, then we, who call ourselves "UFologists" must be credible and objective as well.

We need a concrete program for ensuring that our researchers and those offering public information are credible, and thorough, as well as accurate. We cannot survive persons making glaring errors or using fallacies of logic in their presentations. If any of you have any thoughts on how we could structure such a program, please be prepared to share them with us at the meeting on June 26.

An additional area that we need to target in the next year is public education of our own membership. There are a couple of aspects to this situation. First of all, at a time when UFOria is booming across the country and the subject is on the top of the popularity ratings charts with the public as well as with book publishers, ironically enough, there appears to be less and less enthusiasm from our State Directors and their respective state organizations for active work in the subject than there has been in the past two years. We need these people in order to cover the entire country, and we need to re-charge their batteries and get them into the ranks of actively involved researchers and investigators. The second aspect to this situation is that in too many cases, a MUFON membership card has become synonymous with "UFO expert" and persons receiving membership cards have suddenly assumed this role, without any adequate training or preparation or knowledge of the subject. This situation needs to be corrected. Once someone has been issued a field investigator-trainee card, we need to see to it that they are then provided with some investigative training. Also, there is no logical reason for issuing membership cards to those who are simply contributing subscribers. If those persons simply received the Journal, and no membership card, some of the problem would be eliminated.

It seems then, that public information needs to begin at home, within the ranks of our own members before we attempt to tackle the public at large or those specified groups mentioned in this article.

RECOMMENDED PUBLICATION

One organization which has been receiving a great deal of acclaim for its scientific approach to the subject and to other subjects is the Society for Scientific Exploration. The publication of this organization is entitled The Explorer, and it is published twice a year for \$2.50 per copy. For further information, contact Professor W. Frederick, University of Virginia, Box 3818, University Station, Charlottesville, VA 22903

PUBLIC INFORMATION PROPOSALS

The mail has brought in some interesting items lately, and two of these involve public information projects proposed by persons outside the P.I.P.E. Committee. The first of these is from Thomas Burch, of Maryland, who has suggested that we ask the MUFON Advisory Board of Consultants to write papers stating their official positions on the UFO subject, and that these papers be published in the Journal periodically so that persons doing public information work in the field will know how these persons stand on the subject. I have informed Mr. Burch that I do not feel that the consultants will be willing to implement this plan because many of them are not actively involved in the subject, and most of them insist on maintaining an objective view on the UFO subject, and therefore, will not state their theories of hypotheses regarding the UFO subject. I did, however, promise to make the P.I.P.E. Committee aware of the suggestion and to ask for your input. If you disagree with my assessment of the situation, please let me know.

The second proposal comes from Jim Speiser of Phoenix, Arizona, who would like us to consider sponsoring a "trial to test the UFO evidence" in a mock court of law. The trial (which would be set up under strict guidelines mapped out by Jim) would be held on a university campus, and hopefully televised by a movie channel, such as HBO or Showtime. UFO proponents would defend the subject, while skeptics would serve on the prosecuting team. After the trial ended, the public would be invited to call in to a designated telephone number and cast votes for or against the subject. Jim feels confident that the vote would be overwhelmingly in favor of the UFO subject.

I will have a copy of Jim's proposal at the P.I.P.E. Committee meeting in June.

NEW ADDRESS-

Dan Wright's new address is:
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HOPE TO SEE ALL OF YOU IN WASHINGTON.