

Using scientific methods

Engineer seeks UFO studies

The age-old debate over whether aliens have visited Earth might be resolved if UFO sightings are investigated by more scientific methods, says a space specialist at Johnson Space Center's Mission Control.

James Oberg, 34, an engineer and a space science writer, says "ufology" — the study of reported unidentified flying objects — needs the rigorous scientific investigation that Einstein applied to his famous theories in physics, the Associated Press reports from London.

A more scientific approach to UFOs, he said, might prove that aliens have indeed visited the planet.

Unfortunately, he said, UFO witnesses who may look "honest, sober and intelligent" resort to fraud, advertising tricks and other hoaxes to gain respectability for theories many consider out of this world.

Oberg, also a member of the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal, recently won \$2,200 for publishing his opinions on UFOs in an essay contest sponsored by a weekly British journal published in London, the New Scientist.

The essay, which appeared in this week's edition of the journal, accused ufologists of using "illogical persuasion" to justify their sightings, including "all the traditional tricks of the Madison Avenue advertising executive's trade."

"No theory can be considered scientific until it can be formulated so as to be disprovable," Oberg said.

Some ufologists, however, claim that "the universe is so large that other civilizations must exist out there,"

Oberg wrote. Others use the argument that "most Americans now believe in UFOs."

But, Oberg insists, despite many unexplained sightings, not one UFO report provides conclusive evidence of space visitors. Such sightings can generally be explained as "bizarre coincidences," faulty perception and memory on the part of the witness, unpublicized military activities or just plain ignorance.

As for those sightings allegedly reported by astronauts, Oberg says, "they are for the most part frauds and hoaxes conjured up by unscrupulous writers and UFO buffs — several blatant photographic forgeries have been identified in these stories — or misunderstandings by citizens concerning the meaning of ordinary space jargon."

Although he is skeptical of UFO sightings, Oberg admits that should a UFO finally prove to be an alien being, the result would be "a major scientific breakthrough, perhaps one of the most important in human history."

Cass Deputy Sights UFO

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A Cass County Sheriff's deputy has drawn a picture of a puzzling unidentified flying object (UFO) seen flying at treetop level near Cass Lake.

Deputy Melvin Dick reported seeing a glowing red, green and yellow object Saturday night moving slowly at treetop level near Cass Lake. Dick saw the object about 9:30 p.m. while on routine patrol, according to Sheriff Louis Chalich.

Chalich said Dick described the UFO as a large aircraft-type object, with red, green and yellow lights.

The object, flying at treetop level, was spinning and moving slowly, Dick reported. It was headed west, but then made a 90-degree turn and flew north.

Other witnesses also saw the object, Chalich said.

Dick radioed ahead to Beltrami County, and the object was also seen there, Chalich said.

Chalich said he heard rumors that the object was followed as far as Red Lake.

UFO's glow 'enthalls' city

MANILA — A disc-shaped UFO with flashing lights sailed over the city of Legazpi on the main Philippine island of Luzon, the Daily Bulletin newspaper said yesterday.

Residents of the city in Albay Province, 220 miles southeast of Manila, were "enthralled" at the colors emitted by the UFO before it disappeared over the eastern horizon, the newspaper said.

A radio station manager was quoted as saying the UFO had an "unearthly" glow and appeared to be "about the size of a man's fist."

On May 20, in another recent sighting, an American scientist claimed that he and hundreds of villagers saw a UFO land in the southern Philippines at the country's highest peak. Sightings of UFOs have been reported by villagers in wide areas of the central and southern Philippines since last month — but military authorities, who have ordered investigations of the sightings, have not announced any findings.

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BY

JOHN F. SCHUESSLER

P. O. BOX 58485

HOUSTON, TEXAS 77058

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