



## In This Issue

# Resolving Arnold - Part 2: Guess Again

by Martin Kottmeyer

One problem that stands out in any attempt to make the Arnold case a True-UFO is the drawing in the Air Force files. The shape of the object in the top view is roughly similar to a shoe heel. Not only is it not round as all good flying saucers ought to be, it is for most practical purposes unique. Only one or two other cases even come close -- the 1947 Rhodes photo and perhaps the 1993 backdated recollections of Frank Kaufman concerning Roswell. The distinctiveness calls into question whether it should be considered part of the UFO phenomenon at all.

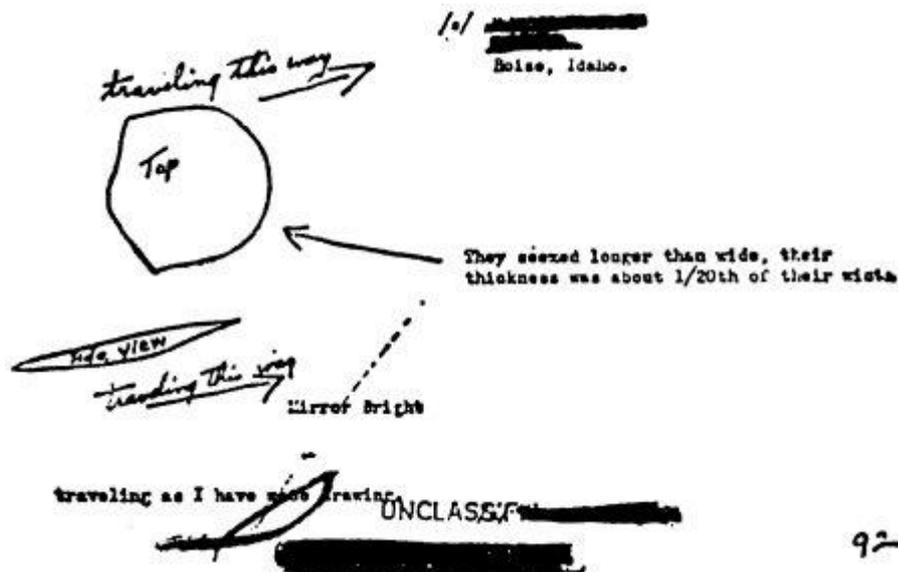
J. Allen Hynek also offered an argument which should be addressed here since it is repeated by both critics and proponents of the case unaware it is partially erroneous. Hynek asserts that the eye cannot resolve objects that subtend an angle appreciably less than 3 minutes of arc. If we accept that Arnold was right in saying the objects were 25 miles away and that each object's length was 20 times its width, then a bit of trigonometry would put their size as 2000 feet in length. This being between a third and a half mile, it is simply too bloody huge to believe. Such a titan-size fleet would blot out the sun and a fair portion of sky to people beneath its flight path. How could only one person 25 miles away see this and everybody closer in miss it?

*For those readers who don't know the Arnold story, here's how it first appeared from the Associated Press:*

PENDELTON, Ore., June 25 (AP) -- Nine bright saucer-like objects flying at "incredible speed" at 10,000 feet altitude were reported here today by Kenneth Arnold, a Boise, Idaho, pilot who said he could not hazard a guess as to what they were.

Arnold, a United States Forest Service employee engaged in searching for a missing plane, said he sighted the mysterious objects yesterday at 3 P.M. They were flying between Mount Rainier and Mount Adams, in Washington state, he said, and appeared to weave in and out of formation. Arnold said he clocked and estimated their speed at 1,200 miles an hour.

*As Martin Kottmeyer has related to us in an earlier article ("The Saucer Error," May, 1993, V. 1, #4), the news release actually got it wrong; the objects were not saucer-shaped, but rather Arnold had said the objects "flew erratic, like a saucer if you skip it across the water." He said the objects "were not circular," but the reporter apparently misunderstood and thus arose the term, "flying saucer."*



This is the drawing of Arnold's objects from the original report in the Air Force files. *Source: Brad Steiger, Project Blue Book, Ballantine, 1976.*

Hynek then takes a different tack. Accept the 25 miles for distance and accept Arnold's 45-50 estimate of length and the subtended angle is about 80 seconds (1 minute, 20 seconds) of arc and that is below the third minute resolution limit. Hynek understood that to be impossible.<sup>23</sup> That judgment was too severe. Texts I have consulted generally put the limit of visual acuity at around 1 minute of arc. With increases of luminosity even that limit lowers.<sup>24</sup> Since Arnold's sighting happened in full daylight and the objects were highly reflective by his own account, the conditions for resolution were optimal. It is perhaps worth adding that there are different types of visual acuity which can make it possible for the eye to detect wires as fine as 1/100 minute of arc. Deciding which form of acuity is applicable in this real-world situation isn't automatic. The detail of the report involving Arnold seeing the objects silhouetted against a snow suggests a practical analogy to the question of the limits of acuity in sunspot watching. In that situation, science shows the average person can detect sunspots as small as 27 seconds (roughly ½ minute), of arc. Hynek's calculation of 80 seconds thus would not be sufficient grounds for rejection of Arnold's report.

It seems only fair to add that Arnold offered another measure of the objects, sizes worth pondering. He compared the angular size to the span between the engines of that passing DC-4 noted earlier which Arnold estimated as 15 miles distant. This gives a visual span of 2' 40", which is still better in terms of resolution plausibility while still being in the ballpark of being consistent with the other set of figures. They are still both tiny images, but not impossibly tiny. While this strengthens the credibility of Arnold as an observer and allows a more believable size to the objects to be assumed if the 25 miles distance is accepted, the paradox of the single observer status of the case stays relatively intact. We are still dealing with a five mile long chain of objects swooping past a national landmark in broad daylight at speeds in excess of 1,200 m.p.h. People closer in had to have taken notice of such a spectacle. If nothing else, the cascade of sonic booms generated by supersonic craft would be impossible to ignore even if everyone's attention was riveted elsewhere. Before we bestow the label of True-UFO to Arnold's objects, a serious search for an alternative must be done.

The absence of a large population of corroborative witnesses near Mount Rainier seems sufficient grounds for wondering if the event was much more localized than Arnold surmised. A critical look at the distance estimate is both warranted and necessary. One must almost certainly accept the objects passed in front of Mount Rainier's snow field as Arnold claimed. The angular velocity of the objects indicated by Arnold's clocking of the objects between Mount Rainier and Mount Adams is .8 degrees per second. .

At that speed it would take nine seconds to cross the face of Mount Rainier at the 9,200 foot level indicated by Arnold's report. This is too long for a spurious observation related the fleetingness of the phenomenon. This would rule out explanations based on distant sky phenomena like a train of meteors, Campbellian mirages, or density-shifting space animals.

What of distances closer than Mount Rainier's vicinity? It has been pointed out that Arnold spoke of the objects having "swerved in and out of the high mountain peaks." This would seem to put a lower limit to the distance if one could first determine which peaks they swung around and if they were broad enough to have a transit time to regard the observation as secure. Arnold was slightly more specific in later recountings of the event. In *The Coming of the Saucers* he said they momentarily disappeared "behind a jagged peak that juts out from Mount Rainier proper."<sup>25</sup> In his memoir for the First International UFO Congress he says, "When they turned length-wise or flat-wise to me they were very thin and they actually disappeared from sight behind a projection on Mount Rainier in the snowfield."<sup>26</sup> These are not exactly the same thing, but they give a fair indication of what to look for on the geological survey maps.

Arnold estimated the crafts were at an altitude of 9,200 feet plus or minus 1,000. The task at hand is thus to locate some feature extending above the 8,200 foot level. This yields a neat little surprise. There are no such peaks between Mount Rainier and Mount Adams. The closest thing I could find was Pyramid Peak which stands only 6,937 feet tall in front of Mount Rainier's base. There is a sharp little projection called Little Tacoma which sticks out around the 10,000 foot level, but it is on the wrong side of the mountain to be seen from Arnold's flight path. It would be badly stretching things to suggest he got either his position or altitude that far wrong.

Normally one prefers early accounts to later ones, but the Congress memoir may provide the clue to what happened here. When the object turned flatwise, the optical thickness likely dropped below the ½ minute resolution limit and briefly dropped from sight. The rough surface of the mountain provided opportunities for an illusory correlation of the disappearance to some feature of the mountain. The disappearance seemed to be caused by an intervening feature where none in fact existed. With no firm lower distance estimate, the way is opened for the objects being closer to Arnold than he had surmised.

Return to Arnold's report: "They flew like many times I have observed geese to fly in a rather diagonal chain-like line as if they were linked together." That is what they certainly seem like. Geese do fly in chains. A number of nine makes sense. The arrangement of the leader being higher than the others, unlike military formations, is sensible for geese who take advantage of the downdraft turbulence of others in the formation for easier flying. Geese chains do undulate like kite tails. They do present a basically flat side profile when seen edge-on.

From above they have a bilateral symmetry like the heel drawn by Arnold. In his Congress paper he however emphatically denies this idea, -- but they were not geese!"

He does not explain the reasoning. If the 25 mile distance estimate is the root of it, we could simply shake it off. Other objections do suggest themselves however. 9,200 feet is a bit high for geese to be flying. As an experienced pilot, Arnold surely saw geese too often to be puzzled by their appearance. He speaks of the brilliant flashes of light reflected on the objects just before that quoted denial; maybe they were unusual in some way. The pulsation rate perhaps was subliminally felt to be wrong. Perhaps he felt he should have been able to see the necks and couldn't. They aren't on the drawing.

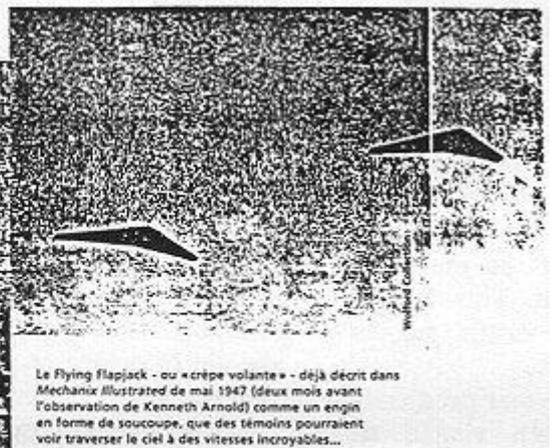


Perhaps it was a different type of waterfowl. Swans would clear up most these objections. They normally migrate at night and birders complain "details of their flights are seldom observed."<sup>27</sup> When flying, it is known they travel exceptionally as high as 10,000 feet to take advantage of calmer air at that altitude and Arnold commented on the smoothness of the air he was travelling in at the time. Birds generally travel higher than their normal textbook rates in mountainous regions. The geometry of the encounter involves a shallow viewing angle and a flight path running parallel to the path of the objects -- he turned the plane to get a better look out the side window -- thus making identification optimally unlikely. An intersecting path or a higher viewing angle and the flapping wings would have cleared things up. Swans would be more reflective than geese. They "move deceptively fast."<sup>28</sup> The neck would be slenderer and harder to resolve than geese as the image approaches acuity limits.

Will swans fit the established angular sizes and velocities? Arnold's clocking of the objects have them passing through an angle of roughly 80 degrees in 102 seconds. The plane was traveling at about 100 m.p.h., according to Arnold's Congress memoir. Swans travel roughly 50 m.p.h. Since they were traveling on parallel paths the relative velocity had to be 50 m.p.h. or 150 m.p.h. In the first situation, the angular velocity means the swans had to be close to a mile away. At that distance, the torso of swans (about 2-foot long) would subtend an angle of roughly 100 seconds (1 minute, 40 seconds) which fits in the ballpark of the observed figures calculated earlier. The situation of the 150 m.p.h. relative velocity would put the swans 3 times farther away and an angular image down around 30 seconds and thus doubtful. We can thus say a plausible case can be made for a fit in at least the first eventuality.

Given the smaller size and velocity, the single witness status of the event falls into place. The DC-4 pilot wouldn't have a prayer of seeing a flock of swans 14 miles away. Ground observers would likely miss swans two miles up. The few that might notice them might never make the connection they had anything to do with Arnold's "saucers." If somebody did make the connection, would he overcome the reticence of saying the guy was that far wrong?

That heel shape that Arnold drew could still be a source of sane objection. Even granting swans and heels are both bilaterally symmetrical, it is a stretch to call the match compelling. I suspect there is a different explanation for the heel shape. There was a plane of the era called a Flying



Le Flying flapjack - ou « crêpe volante » - déjà décrit dans *Mechanix Illustrated* de mai 1947 (deux mois avant l'observation de Kenneth Arnold) comme un engin en forme de soucoupe, que des témoins pourraient voir traverser le ciel à des vitesses incroyables...

Flapjack, which has a significant resemblance to Arnold's drawing. It was the fastest naval aircraft of its time. We can safely say Arnold was not looking at a Flying Flapjack in reality. There weren't nine of them around. They didn't fly quite so erratically. The relevant officials denied they were in the right place at the right time. But, they weren't secret.

It had been featured on the cover of *Mechanix Illustrated* a month before Arnold's experience. As a pilot, Arnold likely heard of the craft and it influenced his depiction of the objects on some level of mind. Just as people nowadays "fill in" perceptions of stars, ad planes, and the like with their knowledge of what saucers should look like, Arnold may have filled in his perception of waterfowl with knowledge of what fast planes were then looking like.

We know from the Project Blue Book files that the 1947 Rhodes photo, which, as noted earlier, was one of only two similarly-shaped UFOs in saucer history, involved a photographer/model-builder who knew of the *Mechanix Illustrated* cover and suggested the involvement of Flying Flapjacks in the ongoing mystery.<sup>29</sup>

The likelihood of ornithological misinterpretation may be enhanced by an incident that happened a month after the big event. While en route to Tacoma to investigate the Maury Island mystery, Kenneth Arnold encountered a cluster of twenty-five brass-colored objects that looked like ducks, but displayed a terrific rate of speed. "I was a little bit shocked and excited when I realized they had the same flight characteristics of the large objects I had observed on June 24," he wrote. They also appeared round to him. He turned his plane to follow them, but they disappeared to the east at a speed far in excess of his airplane. He concluded, "I know they were not ducks because ducks don't fly that fast." Maybe so, but he later learned that several farmers in the vicinity "observed what they thought was a peculiar cluster of birds that morning." Ted Bloecher, a historian of the 1947 saucer flap dryly commented, "Understandably, Arnold did not report this sighting to the newspapers, nor to the Air Force."<sup>30</sup>

It might be pleaded that this second incident is less relevant than it strikes at first blush. It may less indicate a proneness to make a certain class of errors than the fact that Arnold could have been overwrought and desperate to find more proof of what happened to him in the midst of harsh media and public opinion. Such conditions did not exist during the first sighting. Yet, the fact remains we do have a troubling repetition under conditions where independent witnesses exist who put a rather mundane slant on stimuli Arnold hypes as extraordinary.

One last issue begs to be brought up. Arnold was an experienced pilot and it could be pointed out that the average pilot would have ignored sufficiently geese-like phenomena once he was satisfied they did pose a collision threat. If they were the tiny image, so close to the limits of acuity, that calculations indicate they were, why did Arnold so over-react? One feature of the case invites notice as a possible psychogenic factor. Arnold wasn't in the vicinity of Mount Rainier by accident that day. He was searching the area to locate a large marine transport, a C-46, which had gone down and crashed a month and a half earlier. The families of the victims had put up a \$5,000 cash reward for anyone who could locate the crash site so the bodies could be recovered. This involvement of a mass death suggests certain possibilities.

One is that the feat predictably exists that if death visited this place once, it might well do so again. If Arnold was of a paranoid cast of mind to begin with, such a consideration could make him keyed up to over-react to the slightest stimulus -- a variant of a haunted house situation. A second possibility is that Arnold was jazzed up by the prospect of getting that money, but on another level of mind his superego was aware of the ghoulish nature of his search. His conscience might have induced twinges of self-loathing which manifested in fears of supernatural punishment -- the fear of collision initially, but also manifest in concern the objects were secret weapons. Still later, after the encounter and the publicity, he feared they could be used to carry atomic bombs and threaten life on earth.<sup>31</sup> Here the psychology of paranoia colors the emotionality of the event and pushes what was fundamentally trivial into a higher level of significance. The undercurrent of Cold War tensions modeled on the surprise of the secret superweapon sprung on Hiroshima a couple years earlier would find in Arnold's paranoia a seed to grow a new fear for the culture to embrace.

I am hopeful it is not personal conceit that lets me think prior skeptics were wrong in their solutions and that this is, finally, the correct one. It is simple logic that we can't all be right and that is assuredly disconcerting if one hopes that skepticism should lead to a conclusion that reasonable men can consider reliable and consensual. Some skeptics, I am tempted to warn, were governed by an *idée fixe* idiosyncratic to each which led them to apply solutions too repetitively in their work. So far as I can discern, I have no particular obsession with birds. I feel this solution is painfully banal and devoid of poetry or grandeur. It just seems to me it fits the most facts with the fewest loose ends. Only the historical importance of the Kenneth Arnold case makes the matter of its solution of any interest.

Reject it and no larger consequences to our understanding of the flying saucer phenomenon seems to follow. Accept it and advocates will say, "So what? We didn't consider it a classic anyways."

After 50 years though, aren't you glad we made the effort?

## Notes

23. Steiger, Brad, *Project Blue Book*, Ballantine, 1976, pp. 34-6.
24. Geldard, Frank A., *The Human Senses*, John Wiley, 1966 pp. 83-7. Woodworth, Robert S. & Schlosberg, Harold, *Experimental Psychology*, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1965, pp. 382-6.
25. Arnold, Kenneth, *The Coming of the Saucers*, Amherst, 1952.
26. Arnold, Kenneth, "How It All Began" in Fuller, Curtis G., *Proceedings of the First International UFO Congress*, Warner, 1980, pp. 17-29.
27. Aymar, Gordon C., *Bird Flight*, Dodd, Mead, 1936 p. 51.
28. Heintzelman, Donald S., *North American Ducks, Geese, & Swans*, Winchester Press, 1978, p. 2. Kortright, Francis E., *The Ducks, Geese and Swans of North America*, Stackpole, 1967, p. 42.
29. Project Blue Book microfilm roll #1, National Archives.
30. Bloecher, Ted, *Report on the Ufo Wave of 1947*, 1967 p. III-14
31. Project Blue Book microfilm roll #1, *ibid*.

## Addendum

Bruce Maccabee challenges the single witness character of the Kenneth Arnold classic in a paper titled *True UFOs: Fantasy or Reality?* He recounts a report by a prospector named Fred Johnson who saw several objects on the same day around the same time of the afternoon. Maccabee is impressed by the fact that Johnson was working on Mt. Adams, which is a reference point in Arnold's report and thus also puts him the same general locale. The objects were traveling on a southeasterly path which is in general agreement with Arnold's objects' trajectory. The prospector was working at about the 5,000 foot level and they flew over at an altitude not too far above him. This is vague, but consistent with Arnold's  $9,200 \pm 1,000$  foot estimate. He also spoke of their speed as "greater than anything I ever saw."

There are, however, differences. There seem to be only six or seven objects instead of nine. Arnold emphasizes he couldn't make out any tail on them in the original Air Force report and in his UFO Congress memoir he exclaimed, "I couldn't discern any tails on them, and I had never seen an aircraft without a tail!" He adds, "I kept looking for their tails." Johnson apparently found them. He reported "an object in the tail end" that "looked like a big hand of a clock shifting from side to side." One could ascribe such differences to two or three objects breaking formation for unknown ends and Johnson possibly being closer to the objects than Arnold. The corroborative value is however reduced by such assumptions.

Maccabee notes a further feature of Johnson's account that lends it a historical uniqueness -- a physical effect. While the objects were in view the needle of his compass wavered from side to side. Menzel dismissed this effect as caused by a trembling of the hand engendered by the excitement of the sighting. Maccabee counters an experienced prospector would realize his compass would wobble if he didn't hold it steady. This sounds fair only out of the context of Menzel's discussion. He discounts this observation because faith in its validity would imply an immense magnetic field, which proponents of the ETH (Extraterrestrial Hypothesis) had argued was proof of a magnetic drive operated by extraterrestrials. Menzel believed such a notion was pseudoscientific mumbo-jumbo. Having encountered talk of magnetic drives in my reading of early ufology, I must agree. It is far easier to believe the prospector erred than that such a motive mechanism powers alien aeroforms sightseeing above the earth's surface. An alternative psychological mechanism incidentally could be at work here. The hand might have been making small movements in synchrony with the swaying clock hand feature being observed by the witness.

This happens below the level of awareness and has been known to some psychologists as the phenomenon of rhythmic entrainment. It underlies other phenomena like Ouija board pendulums and subtle body cuing experienced in social interactions.

The number of the objects, as in the Arnold case, would seem to favor an ornithological explanation of Johnson's visual observations. The swaying clock hand at the tail end recalls the swaying motion of the stilt-like legs which trail behind certain waterfowl. In this instance, birds like herons, cranes, storks, or ibis seem plausible. The absence of prominent flapping or erratic motion is an obvious objection, but gliding flight is possible with favorable wind conditions, lifting currents along mountain ridges, or a descending trajectory. Long necks are curled in S-shape in some species which would subvert identification if they are being seen from rearward angles. The impression of speed follows from errors in the assumptions regarding size and distance, which are notoriously fallible

There is another candidate for corroborative witness in Loren Gross's, *Charles Fort, The Fortean Society & Unidentified Flying Objects*. Details are very scant. A member of the Washington State fire service was on lookout at Diamond Gap, just south of Mount Rainier. At 3 o'clock, the same time of Arnold's sighting, he observed "flashes in the distance quite high up in the east." Like Arnold's objects they "seemed to be going in a straight line and made a strange noise, higher pitched than most airplanes make." Whistling swans sing only in flight and the notes are loud, striking, and, though varied, can include a high flageolet note. This account is perilously lacking any information on which to evaluate any kind of interpretation of it. One warning must be posted to anyone hoping to argue this buttresses the position that Arnold's objects are True UFOs: why did this guy report hearing a high pitched noise and not a sonic boom?

## A Few Words on Roswell

by David Bloomberg

As the Chairman of REALL, I am asked a number of questions. Recently, most of these have revolved around Roswell, the Air Force report, etc. It's time for me to state exactly what my views are on Roswell:

I don't care.

That's right. I just don't care. I can't bring myself to care about a 50-year-old military SNAFU that has been conclusively shown to be meaningless -- except to a few ufological conspiracy theorists who ignore any evidence that contradicts their worldview. Frankly, I think the Air Force report did nothing to help, but rather only confused the situation more.

Now I know that I should care, at least a little bit, because I have taken it upon myself to be our media watchdog, and the media has taken up the 50th anniversary of the non-event at Roswell as a great way to reel in readers/watchers. But even so, how many times can we say the same thing? Art Levine, writing for *U.S. News & World Report*, has written the only article I've seen which seems to mirror my viewpoint. In the July 14 issue, he talks about the disservice done to the public by the media, who have failed to make it plain that "one side of [the Roswell] debate consists of sheer hooley." He notes (and I agree) that the Roswell non-event's 50th anniversary probably shouldn't have rated "much coverage at all, given that the UFO event in question never happened."

He points out that the witnesses who keep telling their tales can't keep them straight: "many of Roswell's key witnesses have changed their stories several times and have been caught telling falsehoods." This is something that I've known for quite a while, as have other skeptics who keep up with UFO stories. Unfortunately, the media has done a less than stellar job of getting the information out to the public -- probably because telling the tale of an alien spacecraft crashing and our military covering it up seems a lot more interesting than talking about a few people in the middle of nowhere who are telling tall tales to get some attention.

But the Air Force played right into the hands of the believers. For whatever reason, it seems they didn't want to come out and say, "These people are lying," even though that much is obvious and

has been proven. Instead, they came up with a cockamamie story about dropping dummies several years after the non-crash in Roswell. Now all the believers are hooting and hollering about the Air Force report, and I have to agree with them, at least as far as being skeptical that the dummies caused the alien body reports! As the caption under a photo in the Levine article says, "The Roswell 'mystery' is simple to explain: Many witnesses are telling false stories."

Even some former true believers have been forced to admit that there is nothing here. Kent Jeffrey, the main force behind getting more than 20,000 signatures on a petition asking President Clinton to make public all information about Roswell, has come out and said that the evidence shows that nothing otherworldly crashed at Roswell. He is already being attacked as a debunker-in-disguise by some believers and has responded, in part, by stating, "With regard to reversing my stance, it is important to remember that the objective of the Roswell Initiative has been to find the truth, not define it. Unfortunately, the truth turned out to be different from what I thought it might be, or hoped it would be. However, now that I am absolutely certain that the debris recovered from Roswell was not that from an extraterrestrial craft, I feel an obligation to get that information out as well. Not to do so would be less than forthright and less than honest." So when even the biggest promoter of Roswell concludes that nothing happened, why should I care about it? I have too much other REALL-related work to do. Which is more important, the State Board of Education passing science standards without mentioning evolution, or a 50-year-old thoroughly debunked UFO case?

A famous skeptic (don't recall which one) once noted, "For ufology, it will always be 1947." Indeed, if this continues to be true -- and I certainly haven't seen a change -- the entire fringe of believers in alien visits to Earth can be virtually written off. In other words, call me when they come up with something interesting.

*Side note: Some of you may be wondering how I can say that I don't care about Roswell, a 50-year-old case, while we are featuring part 2 of a discussion of Kenneth Arnold's 50-year-old sighting in this very same newsletter issue. First, let me say that the cases are somewhat different in that the Arnold case has not been definitively solved, while Roswell has. Second, Arnold's sighting is the one that started the whole frenzy of "flying saucer" sightings, and that alone makes it more interesting (at least to me). Third, and perhaps most important, **even if I didn't find the Arnold case of interest, we don't just publish articles here based on what I like; if somebody submits a good article and it's relevant to REALL, we'll probably publish it!***

## Therapeutic Touch Tidbits

**Compiled by David Bloomberg from the May/June issue of the National Council Against Health Fraud Newsletter**

Over the past couple years, we've mentioned Therapeutic Touch (TT) a few times in this newsletter. Essentially, practitioners of TT (which, contrary to its name, doesn't actually involve any touching) claim to be able to detect a human "energy field" that they can modify to help a person heal. TT has made inroads in the nursing field even though there is no good evidence that it does anything. For example, in a 1994 report, a University of Colorado Health Sciences Center scientific jury noted, "there is virtually no acceptable scientific evidence concerning the existence or nature of these energy fields. There is no ongoing research, nor even any ideas about how such research might be conducted."

In addition, the National Therapeutic Touch Study Group (NTTSG) has published a 180-page document *Survey of Therapeutic Touch Research* and has made it available for \$20 (NTTSG, 711 W. 9th St., Loveland, CO 80537-4669, 970-667-7313). This survey documents everything from the claims made by TT practitioners (TTPs) to why TT is a pseudoscience.

While TTPs haven't been doing much to test themselves, the Philadelphia Association for Critical Thinking (PHACT - the Philadelphia local skeptics group) and the James Randi Educational Foundation have proposed a test that would reward a successful TTP with a million dollars.

This test doesn't even require that the TTP heal somebody merely that they prove they can detect a human "energy field". The TTP must determine whether or not a subject's arms have been inserted into fiberglass sleeves (it's a blind test; the TTP cannot see whether or not there is a person there). Randi asks, "This is something they claim to be able to do every day in their practice, so why not come to Philadelphia and show us?" Indeed, why not? Well, as of May 21, the last of three interested TTPs "bailed out" after originally saying they would take on the challenge. One TTP did take a similar challenge (as reported in a recent issue of Sceptic magazine) and failed.

I recently found out that St. John's Hospital, in Springfield, offers TT. I plan to send a letter and a copy of Randi's test to the hospital and ask for their comments. If anybody is interested in helping out on this project, please let me know.

*Anybody interested in joining the National Council Against Health Fraud may request an application from: Membership Chairman, P.O. Box 1276, Loma Linda, CA 92354-1276. Membership is \$20/year (\$10 for students). You may also check them out on their web page at [www.ncahf.org](http://www.ncahf.org).*

## From the Chairman

I hoped to have some news on the new Illinois educational standards that I mentioned in the last issue, but as we're going to press, the Board of Education is meeting in Chicago to discuss them (I should certainly have something during our meeting on the 5th).

One way or the other, it seems this battle will be temporarily over; if the new standards don't specifically mention evolution, we will certainly start pressing for that change the next time they are reviewed, but that won't be for three years or so; if they do include it, then we've at least won this part of the battle but will likely have to help fend off creationist attacks on those standards. Meanwhile, I plan to engage a new battle with an unscientific practice being promoted at St. John's Hospital here in Springfield. See my "Therapeutic Touch Tidbits" article in this issue and please let me know if you'd like to help out on this project. There is a lot we want to do with REALL, but a few of us can't do everything by ourselves!

And on a similar note, elections will be held at August's meeting. I don't want this to scare anybody off (we've never forced anybody into a position), and, indeed, we will have a very interesting talk as the main focus (see below), but we are looking for anybody who is interested in doing more for REALL. If you can't make the meeting but still want to help out, please give me a call or send me an e-mail!

So just what is this interesting presentation I mentioned above? On Tuesday, August 5th, at 7 p.m. in the Lincoln Library, Rich Walker will be taking **A Skeptical Look at the Illinois Lottery**, as well as diving into some other interesting points about cause and effect, correlation vs. causation, decision-making dilemmas, and several related topics. As anybody who has ever seen one of Rich's presentations knows, he'll definitely keep you thinking!

Our meeting last month, featuring *Illinois Times* staff writer Jeff Ignatius, was quite a success! We had a good turnout and a great discussion. I plan to ask Jeff some follow-up questions, but didn't have time to do so yet. All in all, I think our differences boil down to the following: He thinks we underestimate the intelligence of people who read articles and/or watch news shows; we think he underestimates the impact of the media on those people. This may be oversimplifying it a bit, but I hope to go into more detail next issue.

## From the Editor

This 12-page newsletter is a bonus for our readers. Because Part 2 of Martin Kottmeyer's review of the Arnold case was extra long, we decided to expand this issue instead of cutting back other news and features.

In a conversation I had recently with Steve Egger, a REALL board member and a serial murder expert who has just published his second book on the subject, he mentioned that we had not heard a word from any psychics about the whereabouts of the late Andrew Cunanan, who was found dead after a nationwide manhunt in July. So what are their excuses now? Hope you enjoy this issue, and, as always, we at REALL look forward to hearing from you.

## In Short

- In Case You Missed It
- News from James Randi: Court Denies Geller's "Petition for Contempt"
- Exclusive! Alien Spaceships Attacked First World Skeptics Congress!

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### In Case You Missed It

by Bob Ladendorf

Recent news and sources of interest, with brief summaries and a rating of the content: 1 = Pro-skeptical; 2 = Leaning skeptical; 3 = Neutral, presenting sides equally; 4 = Leaning paranormal or pseudoscience; 5 = Pro-paranormal or pseudoscience.

- **"Willing to Believe: American Fascination with UFOs have never been more intense."** Amy Harmon, *New York Times* News Service. (Springfield, Illinois) *State Journal-Register*, June 29, 1997, p 17. Reviews the history and 50th anniversary of the Roswell UFO allegations. **Selected quote:** "Scientists and skeptics — the late astronomer Carl Sagan most prominent among them — have warned that the embrace of pseudoscientific ideas like alien visitations and abductions threaten to undermine the critical thinking by an educated public that a democratic society requires." **Rating: 3**
- **"Air Force report likely to 'feed the frenzy' of cultists."** Bill Hendrick, Cox News Service. Sidebar to the *State Journal-Register* article mentioned above. Discusses UFO enthusiasts following latest Air Force denial of the crash of an alien spacecraft at Roswell. **Rating: 4**
- **"The Outer Limits."** Laurie Beasley. (Los Angeles) *Daily News*, July 6, 1997, Travel Section, p. 1. Reporter travels from L.A. to Roswell for the 50th anniversary. **Rating: 3**
- **"The Roswell Files"** Jane Robison. (Los Angeles) *Daily News*, July 6, 1997, p. 1. Satirical article about Roswell, alien sightings and government conspiracies. **Selected Quote:** "The aliens never died. They escaped to Southern California and created a little family business called — Disney." **Rating: 1**

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### News from James Randi: Court Denies Geller's "Petition for Contempt"

Just so that you folks will be kept up-to-date on the current legal situation re me and the "psychics"....

Several months ago, at least one "psychic" posted messages to newsgroups, including sci.skeptic, alt.paranormal, and alt.paranet.psi that I was under contempt of court charges brought by Uri Geller. Not surprisingly, the psychic was unable to forecast that those "charges" were rejected by Judge Harris of the United States District Court for the District of Columbia. I also note that the psychic did not update his postings, advising readers of Geller's loss.

In December, 1996, Geller filed papers in the D.C. Court alleging that I had violated a court order by making comments on the Howard Stern show that Geller said he "had nothing" financially. Geller claimed that such a statement violated a Protective Order entered by Judge Harris during the Geller/CSICOP/Randi litigation. (You may recall that this is the same litigation that resulted in substantial sanctions being imposed by the court, and upheld on appeal, against Geller.)

In the Petition for Contempt, Geller asked the court to fine and jail me (he used the expression "incarcerate, because that's lawyer talk), and award Geller damages.

In response to the Contempt Petition, we noted that Geller's Petition had no basis in fact or in law; that in Geller's initial deposition -- unprotected by an protective order -- he himself admitted lack of financial resources under oath. Further, the protective order itself that was signed by Judge Harris back in 1993 was drafted by Geller's lawyer was directed solely at CSICOP, not me. Interestingly, it was that same lawyer who filed the Contempt Petition.

In a one-line Order, Judge Harris denied Geller's latest abuse of judicial processes and attempt to limit free speech, for the reasons stated in my Opposition to the Petition.

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## **Exclusive! Alien Spaceships Attacked First World Skeptics Congress!**



*-- Photo by Bob Ladendorf*

A Springfield, Illinois, skeptics' group newsletter has revealed that three alien spaceships abducted 13 attendees of the First World Skeptics Congress in Amherst, New York, last year. A cover-up ensued until this photo was released. More later. *Source: Winkandanod News Service.*

## **Masthead Information**

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The Rational Examination Association of Lincoln Land (REALL) is a non-profit educational and scientific organization. It is dedicated to the development of rational thinking and the application of the scientific method toward claims of the paranormal and fringe-science phenomena.

REALL shall conduct research, convene meetings, publish a newsletter, and disseminate information to its members and the general public. Its primary geographic region of coverage is central Illinois.

REALL subscribes to the premise that the scientific method is the most reliable and self-correcting system for obtaining knowledge about the world and universe. REALL not not reject paranormal claims on a priori grounds, but rather is committed to objective, though critical, inquiry.

*The REALL News* is its official newsletter.

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**REALL**

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