

DEDICATED TO THE HIGHEST PRINCIPLES  
OF UFOLOGICAL JOURNALISM

# SAUCER SMEAR



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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE SAUCER & UNEXPLAINED CELESTIAL EVENTS RESEARCH SOCIETY

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NON-SCHEDULED  
NEWSLETTER

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Volume 57, No. 2  
February 20th, 2010  
(Whole Number 428)

FLASH! Here's the kind of UFO incident we have been waiting for, for a very long long time. According to a report sent to MUFON (not yet investigated as of this writing) a craft with two humanoid "creatures" on board nearly landed on the evening of Dec. 11th, 2009, near the little town of Monahans, in Ward County, Texas.

A small group of (unnamed, of course!) witnesses watched an oval-shaped UFO hovering about four feet off the ground, with two "strange men" very nearby. The object was between 30 and 40 feet in diameter. It appeared to be made of a highly polished material with a "small dull glow". The "creatures" were described as about four feet tall, with long skinny arms that hung down around their knees.

What we like best is the fact that, before they noticed the humans, the men (?) were busy running around gathering small objects from the ground and from the trees. This is a throwback to the good old days, years ago, when humanoids occasionally were seen gathering soil samples and such. For instance, in 1975 (?) a man named George O'Barski saw a group of "little men" who each actually had a little bucket and shovel. This happened only a mile or two from where we used to live, in northern New Jersey. The then ufological newcomer Budd Hopkins seized control of the case, and we often wondered if he contaminated it, or even made it up himself. Other than that, we found O'Barski to be very believable.

In the recent Texas case - once the creatures noticed the humans, they stared at them briefly and then disappeared behind the craft. The object then rose very quietly, hovered about forty feet above the ground, and disappeared quickly from sight, "like a bat out of hell."

We wonder if Tony Bragalia would characterize these little guys as college students? For us, this case has to be either a complete hoax or else a genuine unknown. There is no other choice.

In what may be a "copycat" report, though dated a few days earlier, an (unnamed!) Texas resident in a different area saw something very similar. A silver disc with a glow and no other lights hovered just above the ground, a platform lowered, and three beings walked out. They were not greys, and "walked like humans but were smaller." Apparently the witness was alone. There are no further details on this one, unfortunately, but hopefully MUFON will eventually enlighten us. Stay tuned!...

We try to avoid ridiculing ufologists whose ravings are too far out to even be funny.

We have heard for years about a former California practicing psychologist named Dr. Richard Boylan, Ph.D. Long ago he had his license lifted by the state - not for his ufological views (as he claimed) but for unethical conduct, such as treating a female patient to a rather sexy-sounding "candlelight massage".

New Boylan writes: "Information from a member of Star Nations Council informs us that there are 1,483 Star Nations Species who are currently operating within Earth's energy zone, and/or have operated here in the past. Needless to say, this article will not catalogue them all, but only the ones with whom Humans have had frequent interaction"

Boylan is the self-proclaimed Councilor of Earth, and apparently he is the only one who knows this is true. All those who deny Boylan's unique vision of Truth are just Cabals, which means agents of darkness. Amen!

Boylan, as a defrocked psychologist, is not qualified to objectively examine his own mental health, but a good psychiatrist just might be able to give us a useful diagnosis...

THE END OF NESSIE? Scotland's famed Loch Ness Monster, known affectionately as Nessie, may have met his/her/its death, according to a new report. In 2009 there was only one "decent" (whatever that means) sighting, as compared to multiple sightings in past years.

Gary Campbell, president of the Loch Ness Monster Fan Club, stated that such sightings are becoming increasingly rare. Says Gary, "If people start to believe the Monster is dead, it might affect tourist numbers. Whether you believe in Nessie or not, the Monster is one of the most important tourist attractions we have...But maybe Nessie is just keeping her head down."

Lost here is the fact that there could never be just one such animal. There would have to be a sustainable minimum number, such as a few dozen, at least. Thus the choices are (a) 0 such animals; (b) many. We are starting to believe that the correct answer might well be zero...

The MUFON Journal, now in its 41st year, struggles valiantly to become a UFO zine that we can all look up to.

The most amusing item in the January 2010 issue is written by a man named Mark Easter, who is described as their "Director of Public Relations".

Mark agreed to take part in a TV program, aired on the History Channel last October, titled "Alien Cover-up".

When Mark joined the production crew, the producers had already decided on the itinerary: Go to the Nevada desert to search for the crash site of an "experimental vehicle" launched from Area 51 some time ago. Then, place surveillance cameras in the vicinity of the notorious "Black Mailbox" which is near the edge of the forbidden Area 51 region. Then, top it off by placing a high definition camera at the top of "Tikaboo Peak", a small mountain near Area 51 from which details of the base's layout have been filmed many times before.

When Mark arrived to meet the rest of the crew at the famous "Little Ale'Inn" on the so-called Extraterrestrial Highway, one of the other members had with him a 250-pound pile of crash debris. This was admittedly the nose cone of a terrestrial rocket that propelled an unmanned drone from Area 51 back in 1967.

Incredibly, they took this pile of junk to a point on the desert where it was planted and then "discovered" on camera, as if for the first time. They were told to use words like "alien", "extraterrestrial" and "UFO" as they examined the debris. Eventually this "debris of unknown origin" was mailed to Rutgers University for scientific analysis.

What a shameful waste of time and energy, and what an inexcusable attempt to deceive the public! Mark Easter should be utterly ashamed to have been part of it, and the MUFON leadership has disgraced itself by letting this happen!...

In recent months there have been several interesting changes in the prospects for the long-awaited UFO Disclosure. On balance, there seem to be more developments that are negative than positive ones.

In Britain, much to the delight of skeptic Tim Printy (editor of SUNlite), the government has closed down its official UFO hotline after some fifty years. Though the expense was very small indeed compared to most projects, they apparently felt it was a waste of time and money to keep this hotline available to the general public. Most of its data which has been collected and already released is not precise enough, in general, to be scientifically valuable, but some of it is. Printy correctly criticizes over-reaction to this shutdown on the part of England's Nick Pope, who has made a career out of

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capitalizing on his short time at the official British "UFO desk" many years ago.

Then, in the U.S., the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) has made a similar move. They now ask that UFO reports be sent to billionaire Robert Bigelow's Aerospace Advanced Space Studies (BAASS), rather than to the federal agency. This is a complicated situation also involving MUFON, which we will discuss further on. Of course, the U.S. government closed down its official Project Blue Book back about 1969, bolstered by negative UFO conclusions by the Condon Committee.

On the positive side, a Net headline reads "Official UFO Study Group in Chile re-activated". This group, called (in English) the Committee for the Study of Anomalous Aerial Phenomena, will analyze UFO sightings from a scientific perspective. Although the group had never been disbanded, in recent years it had done little, due to a lack of funds & official interest. It will now have its own office and an annual budget equal to about \$100,000. The reactivation seems to be the results of efforts by one retired officer of the Chilean Air Force, named Ricardo Bermudez. We suspect that he is a hard-core saucer fan...

Back to Bigelow and MUFON: Robert Bigelow first made his fortune with a large chain of sleazy motels, and then moved on to various very expensive aerospace projects, one of which is to build a commercial tourist hotel that will exist in orbit around the Earth. (We have not made a reservation!)

Meanwhile, for the past 15 years or so, Bigelow has showed a genuine interest in UFOs and other aspects of the Unknown. He does not throw his money around wildly, but he is willing to spend what is necessary to get results.

In 1993 he started an offbeat radio program called "Area 2000", but discontinued funding after one year. Art Bell went on without him on "Coast to Coast", until he retired in favor of the current host George Noory.

In 1996 Bigelow purchased the famed Utah property unofficially called the Skinwalker Ranch. He sent out qualified scientific investigators with sophisticated equipment. They lived there for awhile and experienced weird aerial phenomena as well as utterly creepy (satanic??) paranormal activity. It seems that (a) nothing was ever proven, as the Phenomena somehow outwitted the investigators; or (b) Bigelow, for some reason, chose not to release the results, for which he has been criticized.

Another of Bigelow's projects was the National Institute of Discovery Sciences, (NIDS), founded in 1995. Here open-minded men of a scientific bent, including Jacques Vallee, investigated such things as UFOs, cattle mutilations, and crop circles. In 2004, NIDS was put into "inactive" status, supposedly because of "a lack of worthwhile cases to investigate". This excuse is utterly absurd, because worldwide there are enough such cases to keep a hundred organizations like NIDS busy, if the funding was there!

Also in the 1990s, Bigelow funded a coalition of the three top amateur UFO research groups - MUFON, CUFOS, and FUFOR, all of which still exist. However, before long Bigelow insisted on having more control over how the money was spent, and the whole thing came crashing down at a disastrous final meeting, at which one UFO researcher (= the late, highly volatile Richard Hall) "went so far out of control that he had to be gently escorted from the conference room". (This is the same Richard Hall who, not long ago, called your "Smear" editor - in print - "a steaming turd on the living room carpet".)

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**WAFER 'MIRACLE'**

The Catholic Church in Poland was investigating claims of a miracle after a communion wafer that fell into water during a mass in the eastern village of Sokolka was reported - by Prof. Maria Sobaniec-Lotowska, of the medical university of Bialystok - to have become human heart tissue. A biologist said the 'miracle' was merely bacteria growing on the bread. *D. Telegraph, 30 Oct 2009.*

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Currently, Bigelow and his Aerospace companies have a new financial agreement with (only) MUFON. Thus it would seem that UFO reports sent to Bigelow's companies via the FAA will somehow move from there to MUFON Headquarters, although critics have immediately screamed that this makes an unhealthy connection between MUFON and the government.

Be that as it may, the format of the new agreement sounds good. For the first time ever, members of a MUFON "Star Team" (discussed in recent MUFON Journals) will actually be paid for their time and effort when doing on-the-spot investigations of important recent UFO cases. But it is clear that if Bigelow is not satisfied with the results, the funding will not last long...

James Carrion is International Director of MUFON. We don't know him personally, but he seems like a very competent fellow, and he has made positive changes in the MUFON structure, including the above-mentioned new deal with Robert Bigelow. However, anyone running a (reasonably) large organization like MUFON is bound to be criticized harshly by dissatisfied members and others. After all, the membership surely includes ufological conservatives on the one hand and thinly-disguised crackpots on the other - and of course humble truth seekers such as your "Smear" editor.

James Carrion  
MUFON  
1-12-10



Recently Carrion was criticized for not accepting the claims of a man named Stan Romanek, a "professional abductee" who, awhile back, shot the well-known video of an alleged alien peaking in at him from outside a window. This man's claims are so extreme that it would be beneath our lofty editorial standards to go into them. In any case, he has threatened to sue MUFON due to Carrion's negative attitude.

None of this, however, seems to be related to Carrion's recently-announced decision to resign as International Director and take a lesser post in the organization. (He does not have the necessary time). The new director will be "a good friend and colleague" named Clifford Clift, whom we also do not know personally. Sincere wishes for good luck to him!...

Back to the topic of Disclosure: Stephen Bassett of Paradigm Research Group (a terrible title!) has apparently sponsored the last of his X-Conferences at the Hilton Hotel in Gaithersburg, Maryland. He now owes about \$16,000 to the hotel and to past speakers. Bassett's recent whirlwind speaking tour of Europe was hopefully going to solve this problem, but did not accomplish enough.

Mind you, we have nothing against Bassett, who is an intelligent man and a good speaker. But we strongly feel he is beating his head against a brick wall (figuratively) in regard to Disclosure. One thing he should keep in mind is that we could have full disclosure any time that the Phenomenon itself chooses to make itself known to us in an unambiguous way. We really don't expect that to happen, nor do we expect the Government to ever tell us a whole lot more than we already know. The reasons for this situation are long and complex.

Documentary-maker Paul Kimball, who for some reason rarely appears on the Net these days, has made this comment: "People like Bassett create a self-fulfilling prophecy, which suits them fine, as they have set themselves up as the fee-charging, conference-running prophets. For the rest of us its like watching the snake eating its own tail".

An update tells us that Bassett may merely abandon the Hilton Hotel series and move on to the prestigious National Press Club in nearby Washington, D.C. The location is easily accesible to a lot more people, and may generate a lot more publicity than usual. In our opinion he could do very well indeed if he could just put a live, articulate alien on the speakers program!...

Elsewhere in ufology, there are more dark clouds. After 19 years. Bob Brown and his family will sponsor their last UFO convention in Laughlin, Nevada this February. We have attended a couple of these, which last as long as seven consecutive days. One year we spoke at a "roast" celebrating contactee/author Col. Wendelle Stevens' 75th birthday.

The event will now be turned over to something called Open Minds Productions...

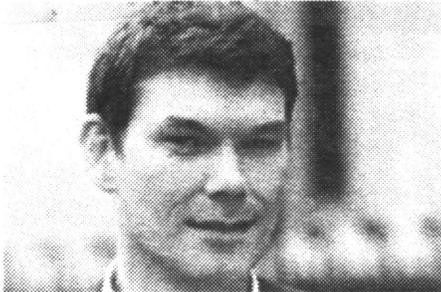
And finally, our friend Gene Steinberg, co-producer of The Paracast internet radio program, is in the grip of serious personal financial problems. Whether or not this will affect the future of the show remains to be seen. We have been on the program a couple of times, and it was a lot of fun!...

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Our old friend Matt Graeber, long-time contributor to "Saucer Smear", has an article in the latest issue of Tim Printy's "SUNlite" zine, in which he takes credit for inventing the word "ufoology", now frequently used (including by us) to ridicule the wild side of the flying saucer field.

Actually, "ufoology" was conceived at a saucer convention in Ohio, circa 1970, which we attended with our then-companion Barbara Hudson. A long-forgotten research group called UFOIL was there - the letters no doubt standing for UFO Investigators League. To Barbara, this sounded suspiciously like "YOU FOOL", and thus the now-common term was born.

Matt has already apologized for his dreadful ufoological mistake!...



Gary McKinnon may avoid extradition

Once again, we return to the saga of England's Gary McKinnon, the UFO-oriented computer hacker who, several years ago, caused much expense and embarrassment to America's military machine.

It seems that, after all is said and done, the British really don't want to extradite McKinnon to the U.S., where he would face harsh prison time. Thus the extradition has again been postponed until at least May, when a High Court judge will conduct still another hearing on the validity of the evidence.

Stay tuned!...

**MORE COLLEGE STUDENTS HOAXING THE PUBLIC??** From the UFO Newsclipping Service comes this gem from the past:

On April 27th, 1964 - just three days after the famous Socorro, New Mexico UFO landing, there appeared this headline from "The New Mexican" in Albuquerque: **FLYING OBJECT VISITS REGION; EXPERTS PLAN INVESTIGATION AT LA MADERA (N.M.)**

Not as many details are given as we would like. There was some sort of UFO landing and the ground was still smoldering 18 hours later!. The article states: "As in Socorro, there were footprints which resembled paw prints of a mountain lion around the charred area."

The story is this: About 12-30 a.m. the witness, named Orlando Gallegos, came home and saw the mysterious object sitting on the ground in a gravel area. It was about 200 feet away, and he was afraid to approach any closer. When he first spotted it, there was a ring of blue flame erupting from numerous jets around the bottom of the craft. There was no noise, and as he watched, the flames were turned off. He did not see anyone or anything moving around the craft, nor did he watch long enough to see it take off.

The witness described the object as being of bright metal, without windows, as long as a telephone pole and about 14 feet in circumference. It was egg shaped and resembled a large butane tank. Not until about 18 hours later were local police alerted. At that time the ground was still smoldering and charred over a large area. It was then that the paw prints were found, and also depressions in the ground, "similar to those found at Socorro", according to this newspaper article.

Several other UFO incidents in the La Madera area (quite near Socorro) are also referred to, with hardly any details at all. Our point is that there was indeed a UFO "flap" in the vicinity of Socorro during that short period of time.

We remember reading somewhere that famed Air Force investigator J. Allen Hynek, who visited the Socorro site, for some reason refused to look into any of the other cases. This is what may have led to the impression that the Socorro landing was unique.

UFO guru Anthony Bragalia insists that the Socorro landing was a prank by engineering students at Socorro's N.M. Technological Institute. Yet Prof. Charles Moore of Mogul balloon fame, who worked at that institution for many years, was totally unaware of alleged "hoaxing clubs" on campus or anything like it, when he met your editor at the Socorro landing site in 1997. He told us very distinctly, "If it wasn't as Surveyor, I don't know what it was"...

Seven-year-old girls  
marry frogs

Dancing in the streets after gay  
sex is declared legal in India

Independent, 3 July 2009.

In regard to the so-called "classic" UFO cases, famed offbeat author Nick Redfern writes as follows:

if the McMinnville photos were proven to be hoaxes, would ufology collapse? Nope. If the Mantell case was 100 percent proven to be non-UFO related, would ufology collapse? Nope. Same for just about any other currently unexplained case. And why is that? I'll tell you: none of those cases have been given superstar status of the type upon which much of ufology now stands or falls. That is ufology's biggest ever mistake: making Roswell a make-or-break case for the subject. I actually don't think this has even been done consciously or deliberately, however. But the fact is there will be truly massive disillusionment within ufology if Roswell falls. In fact, I do not even believe that the ETH will survive within modern-day ufology if Roswell falls - the stakes really are that high, in my opinion. But, so what? At the end of the day, it shouldn't matter if the "good old days" of ufology vanish. Getting the truth is all that should matter.

#### SOME COMMENTS REGARDING "CLASSIC CASES":

First of all, how can such cases be defined? Some are very well known within ufology, and others are obscure. We don't recall ever having read a definition, but we would call a case "classic" if the details are so overwhelmingly unexplainable that the only logical conclusions are (1) hoax or delusion; (2) a true Unknown -whatever a true Unknown may actually be. (spaceship, time travellers, secret society on Earth, astral entities, etc., etc. Name your poison!)

Several such cases have been rehashed very recently on the Net, for various reasons. Since few exciting things are happening in ufology right now, we thought we would fill Space as follows:

The oldest modern case is the 1896-1897 airship scare, in California and several other western states. No single sighting stands out, but there were dozens of sightings over large cities, and at least a few that involved the human pilot (?) speaking in English to earthlings on the ground. The possibility of ET creatures was rarely raised in those days, and those who took this "flap" seriously speculated that a totally unknown American inventor was responsible. This was never proven, but it is a very intriguing possibility.

There is a new book out (which of course we haven't read) called "The Great Airship of 1897", written by a man named J. Allen Danelek, published in 2009 by Adventures Unlimited Press. The book takes a very careful unbiased look at the evidence, and is surely worth reading...

We move on to 1942 - still well before the start of the flying saucer era. In the early morning hours of February 25th of that year, a "huge flying disc" apparently flew over the city of Los Angeles. The air raid sirens were immediately sounded and the skies were soon lit up by massive searchlights; and of course there was the sound of the military firing endless rounds of ammunition at this unknown object. After all, World War II had just begun two months earlier, and everyone was jittery to say the least!

Although this intruding object received many direct hits, they apparently did no damage at all! This object eventually made its way over nearby Long Beach before silently and calmly making its disappearance from view.

The mystery craft harmed no one, but six people on the ground died from the spent and fragmented artillery shells. Perhaps there is a moral here somewhere, if we could only find it!...

Again moving on: One evening in 1950 (?) there was a 4-hour series of related sightings in the far off land of New Guinea, by a Christian missionary named William Gill and about 37 others - consisting of his staff and other residents of the large native village they were all living in. We know that a missionary could lie or be deceived as well as anyone else, but all attempts to debunk this case (including a recent one by skeptic

Martin Kottmeyer) have been ludicrous.

A bright white light appeared to be approaching the mission station, then hovered about 100 yards in the air. It was a large, disc shaped solidly constructed object, with a wide base tapering up to a higher deck, with four legs beneath it and brightly lit panels on the sides.

Then the account goes on: "(Eventually) we saw four figures appear on top. No doubt they were human... One figure seemed to be standing looking down at us. I stretched my arm above my head and waved. To our surprise the figure did the same... Eventually all four figures waved back at us. There seemed to be no doubt that our movements were being answered."

Similar details go on and on.

Father Gill finally died just recently. All his life he stuck to his story, which was attested to in writing by the other witnesses. Gill was always willing to discuss his experience in public, when asked. This is, by the way, unlike most of the recent UFO witnesses, who, more & more often, prefer to remain anonymous!...

Now to an equally weird event which occurred in the vicinity of Hopkinsville, Kentucky in 1955. A man named Lucky Sutton was the patriarch of this rather large hillbilly clan. Their rural home did not even have indoor plumbing.

On the night of August 21st, a visitor from Pennsylvania named Billy Ray Taylor, while getting water from the nearby well, saw an immense shining light land in a small gully about a quarter of a mile away.

When the family dog began to bark a little later, both these men grabbed their guns and went outside to find out what was going on. They immediately saw a 3 or 4 foot tall creature walking toward them with hands up, as if in surrender. The creature was described as having large eyes, a long thin mouth, large ears, thin short legs, and hands ending in claws.

A bizarre shooting scene then occurred off and on for quite awhile, with the creatures always seeming to be unhurt by the bullets. (We are leaving out a lot of details.) Eventually the family got into two cars and drove to the Hopkinsville police station. When the sheriff and others later arrived at the home, all the creatures were gone, but there were many visible bullet and rifle holes in the windows and walls.

After the police left, it all started up again, and continued till daybreak. Seven adults in the home were witnesses to these events. No evidence of a hoax has ever been brought forward.

On the other hand, there is no long-term follow-up to the story. We have heard that the Sutton family moved soon after that, and apparently no serious effort was ever made to find them...

We will skip the next case on our list - the Socorro, N.M. landing in 1964. Too much has already been said about it very recently. Hopefully it will not become another Roswell, rehashed forever...

Thus our last story is the "Allagash Abduction of 1976, about which not enough has been said. By the 1970s, abduction and other paranormal overtones had often become part of the UFO experience. Why this occurs we certainly do not know; nor do we know why, in the past thirty years there have apparently been no more "classic cases".

The Allagash Waterway is in a beautiful, uninhabited part of northern Maine. Four young men - names known - went on a fishing vacation together. One night they suddenly saw a light that seemed much brighter than a star. It was a "glowing orb" hovering over the trees a couple of hundred yards away. As it moved closer it looked to be about 80 feet in diameter.

A "hollow light" then emerged from the object, engulfing the men and their canoe. The next thing they knew, they were standing on the shore again. They immediately saw that their glowing campfire was now nothing but smoldering ashes. Thus they had experienced at least a couple of hours of "missing time".

Much later (1988), after years of nightmares, etc, they all underwent hypnosis and remembered the details of being abducted and being subjected to "humiliating physical examinations" - whatever that means. The four men all passed psychiatric and lie detector tests, and the whole story was written up in a 1993 book called "The Allagash Abductions" by Raymond Fowler of MUFON.

We like this case a hell of a lot more than the much better-known Betty & Barney Hill encounter, for many reasons...

LETTERS TO YE OLDE EDITOR

Hard-core researcher ANTHONY BRAGALIA writes:

"Your headline (in the last issue) 'Lonnie Zamora Dies Suddenly at Age 76, Very Shortly After Verbal Attacks by Tony Bragalia' is reprehensible! Even for you, it is too low a blow.

Though you told me on the phone that this is a true statement, you fail to comprehend the insinuation. Many will interpret this as meaning that I had something to do with his death. I never 'verbally attacked' him and your rumor-mongering is uncalled for. Lonnie's sighting was a hoax - but one in which he did not participate."

No rational person reading our remarks in "Smear" would get the impression that we were trying to connect Bragalia's opinions to Zamora's death. It was merely an interesting co-incidence of time. - Editor.

Parapsychologist GEORGE HANSEN writes:

"Thanks for the best UFO zine in the world!"

Long-time Roswell, New Mexico resident DAVE SWINK writes:

"Jim, there is no check in this envelope because I'm going to bail on you. I'm just really burned out with ufology and am now indifferent to all of it. I've enjoyed YOU, 'Smear', 'Shockingly Close to the Truth!', etc., but just cannot imagine a return of my interest to the field. I'm happy that you and I can remain good friends. July 4th stuff (re Roswell's annual convention) will still come your way, and if I ever get to Key West we'll get together. I'm wondering if Chris Roth and Vince Ditchkus are feeling the same way too.

"I'm glad I could attend your 'last' NUFOC conference in Hollywood a few years ago, when you turned over the reins to that silly gal Lisa Davis. And now, I think, the future conferences are dead, so the NUFOC is gone, and now I'm wondering if it's time for you to hang up the newsletter. Hanging on by your fingernails doesn't seem like a good pastime for you, and spending your own money again and again doesn't sound like a real good business decision...

"I love my gal and our lots of time together. She's in her 80s and frisky; and we'll have pizza and watch a Netflix movie this evening - perfect for me."

We are glad you have found love at your age. As for "Smear", we will press on for at least awhile longer. - Editor.

Hard-core "skeptic" ROBERT SHEAFFER writes:

"Can you believe it's been ten years since civilization was going to end on Jan. 1, 2001? My, how time flies! Now everyone thinks that the world will end on Dec. 21, 2012. However, these are the optimists. Religious broadcaster Harold Camping of Oakland, Ca. is preaching that the Rapture will begin on May 21, 2011. So won't it be a funny trick on those New Agey types when the Mayan calendar runs out in almost three years, only to find out that the world had already ended a year and a half before that!"

### Questionable Judgments

\* A June Government Accountability Office report revealed that people on the U.S.'s suspected-terrorist list tried to buy guns or explosives on at least 1,000 occasions in the last five years and were successful 90 percent of the time. One suspect managed to buy 50 pounds of explosives. Federal law treats the suspected-terrorist list as "no-fly" and "no-visa" but not "no-gun." [New York Times, 6-21-09]

### **A PROFOUND SCEPTIC**

Commenting on the appearance of a bright fireball in the sky above Texas on 15 February, Detective John Foster of the sheriff's department in Williamson County stated: "We are fairly certain that whatever happened, happened." *Feedback, New Scientist, 21 Mar 2009.*