

UFO POTPOURRI

no. 361

Close Encounters of the Kutyna Kind

The United States' top military space officer helped liven up the proceedings at the Eighth National Space Symposium in Colorado Springs, Colo., with a simulated entrance from a flying saucer.

While the theme music from the movie, "2001: A Space Odyssey" boomed, a huge saucer-shaped airship hovered above the crowd. U.S. Air Force Gen. Donald Kutyna, commander of the U.S. Space Command, Peterson Air Force Base, Colo., then emerged from a puff of smoke on the auditorium's stage.

The Hystar airship was built by Hystar Aerospace Development Corp., Richmond, British Columbia, Canada, for use in logging. Kutyna nixed suggestions for an even more glitzy entrance, such as using stairs to descend from the airship to the stage.



Lt. Gen. Donald Kutyna

2 SPACE NEWS April 6-12, 1992

3-D TRACKING OF MOVING OBJECTS

A new video-memory design allows the rapid plotting of the paths of moving objects in two or three dimensions. Applications include analysis of aircraft traffic and air currents and research into the movement of birds, insects and other animals.

Colorado Video Inc., of Boulder, Colo., the maker of the system, says that although photographic time exposures have been used for this purpose in the past, the process has been restricted primarily to nighttime operation and the observation of relatively bright subjects such as vehicle headlights.

Now, short- or long-term time exposures can be made even in broad daylight by digitally processing a video signal in a manner that adds brighter or darker information to the image. The process is nonintegrating, so transient information is retained and overexposure does not occur as a function of time.

Contact: Glen Southworth; Colorado Video Inc., P.O. Box 928, Boulder, Colo. 80306; (303) 530-9580; FAX. (303) 530-9569.

Shedding light on quakes

Earthquake lights, the mysterious glowing balls and curtains of light that sometimes appear during earthquakes, may be explained by a simple phenomenon seen in chemistry laboratories.

When chemists transmit high-energy sound waves through tanks of water, flashes of light are emitted from the water, said Dr. Arch C. Johnston of the Center for Earthquake Research at Memphis State University.

This is because the sound waves compress and extend the water so that tiny bubbles are formed under pressure. When the bubbles implode, Johnston said, a number of water molecules break into atoms of hydrogen and oxygen and then quickly recombine back into water. This process releases photons of light.



Chasing the sonic boom

Q. My friends maintain that the sonic boom — the sharp sound created by an airplane when it exceeds the speed of sound — persists and follows the plane, as it flies at an increasing rate. I say that the boom is a discrete event that occurs once as the plane "breaks the sound barrier" and will not occur again until the plane hits Mach 2, 3, 4, etc. or slows down through these speeds. Who is right? — H.M., Lincoln, Mass.

A. Sorry, but although the "sonic boom" created by an airplane traveling faster than the speed of sound (760 miles per hour at sea level) appears to you to be a discrete event, it is not.

A plane flying faster than Mach 1 (the speed of sound) produces a shock wave because it is pushing the air ahead of it faster than the air can be swept aside. As the aircraft compresses the air, the air pressure rises steeply and a shock wave forms at the leading edge of the wing.

The shock wave, if you could see it, would resemble the wake created by a speedboat. As the plane passes you, the widening shock wave sweeps across the ground and produces a sharp pressure rise that your ears sense as a loud boom.

The shock wave continues to stream from the speeding plane as it flies, explained R. John Hansman Jr., a professor of aeronautics and astronautics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. So as long as the plane is traveling at supersonic speeds, it's generating the sonic boom along its path, and observers below will hear it.

The same process could be at work in earthquakes, Johnston said. An earthquake produces high-energy waves great enough to create the same sorts of bubbles in bodies of water near fault zones or in water trapped in rocks that break in earthquakes, he said. Lights would appear wherever there is water.

Most existing theories of earthquake lights talk about high electric fields generated directly in the rocks that break in an earthquake, Johnston said. But earthquake lights are most often seen hundreds of miles away from the epicenter, he said.

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BY JOHN F. SCHUESSLER

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INFORMED SOURCE

By L.M. Boyd
SPECIAL TO THE HOUSTON POST

■ Don't you imagine a traveler from outer space would be astonished by our blue sky? There aren't any blue skies out there. Or none known. In space, the overhead is black.

A-2 / The Houston Post/Wednesday,

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Red tape will delay news of Little Green Men

By Roger Highfield, Science Editor

IF SIGNS of life on other planets are ever detected, the news will not reach the mass of Mankind until a complicated process of verification and approval, in the best tradition of earthly bureaucracy, is thoroughly exhausted.

Under a set of guidelines drawn up by the world's scientists, the news must pass through a secret and Byzantine notification process before being announced by the United Nations.

The Declaration of Principles Concerning Activities Following the Detection of Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence was thrashed out by the Inter-

national Academy of Astronautics in Buenos Aires last week.

The delegates believe the first signs of alien life will not be the traditional little green men appearing from a flying saucer. They are more likely to be unusual signals among a crackling background of cosmic radio noise picked up by radio-astronomers.

Whenever these momentous signs are detected, it will be a case of bureaucracy rather than sensation. The first thing the radio-astronomer must do is to record the

alien signals then contact other scientists worldwide to verify them. Assuming the inevitable wrangling is ever resolved, the news still has a long way to go before reaching the public.

Then follows an approach to the International Astronomical Union which will send out an official notification through the Central Bureau for Astronomical Telegrams, the world clearing-house for astronomical announcements. After that, the Secretary General of the United Nations, the Institute



MARTHA CARR

Aliens From Space: What's Illegal?

Dear Martha Carr: We were having a discussion about folks like E.T. and others who arrive on Earth by UFOs.

If any of them ever wandered around in towns and places, could they be arrested as illegal aliens? Would they be arrested or whisked down to Washington, D.C., to be studied, the way some people have said space aliens have done with them?

And would it be legal to perform experiments on them and give them physical examinations?

R.C.

If anyone had asked for the alien's official entry authorization form, and it didn't have any of the right ones, very likely the police would be called and the alien would have to go to the police station, where all available information about the alien would be recorded.

All aliens (living on Earth) who come to the United States for a specific time and for specific purposes generally must have some kind of visa permitting them to come and stay for a certain amount of time, depending on what they are here to do.

E.T. and other aliens from outer space probably would not have such visas, as they would not land at airports and go through a port where registration forms are issued. So all those people who claim to have been involved with crea-

tures from outer space were dealing with illegal aliens. According to most of the national laws protecting citizens of almost all countries on Earth, I would think the kind of tests and experiments you describe would be illegal.

Richard Crenna's Close Encounter

Richard Crenna reports that he encountered an unidentified flying object several years ago:



Saucer spotter Crenna stars in UFO saga.

"I was backpacking in the mountains up in Northern California," says Crenna, "and I was out in my sleeping bag with some friends—and we looked up and saw

something that none of us could explain. It was a large object off in the distance, low and fat and glow-

ing and pulsating, kind of a bluish-orange. It fit all the traditional descriptions of [flying saucers]." How fitting then that Crenna is starring in CBS's upcoming UFO abduction-themed two-parter, "Intruders." No word yet whether he'll receive a consulting credit.

—S. Galloway

40/TV GUIDE

debate I am sure will be heated and protracted, during which time an investigative journalist will be almost bound to get wind of it." It would be up to the UN to "marshal the media circus".

The thorny question of who will take the credit for the discovery was also discussed. The glory will go to the person or group that first heard the radio signals.

If, in the circumstances, aliens do land in true Hollywood style by flying saucer, their first words are likely to be: "Take me to your committee".

High-Power Microwave Weapon Could Provide Valuable EW Tool

High-power microwave research now underway at several DOD laboratories could provide EW specialists with a new tool aimed at countering advanced threat emitters.

Although the primary focus of the program is on developing emitters that could destroy enemy weapons and equipment, a useful fallout might provide a highly effective countermeasure to advanced threat radars, including high-power radars and radars using sophisticated processing and other techniques, such as monopulse.

Since funding for high-power microwave weapon development is limited, EW application (non-weapon use) of the device might provide Pentagon bean counters with additional incentive to continue or accelerate the effort.

Initial tests of high-power microwave emitters are expected to commence late this year or early next year.