UFO POTPOURRI

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GEOLOGISTS SEE UFO

Writing in the book Basin and Range, author John McPhee tells about the UFO he and Dr. Kenneth S. Deffeyes saw while driving down out of the mountains in the southwestern United States. His report begins on page 165. They had been hurrying down the mountain road when they nearly collided with a large Black Angus standing in the middle of the road. That is when the sighting began, as follows:

"We moved slowly after that, and even more slowly when a white sphere materialized on our right in the moonless sky. It expanded some, like a cloud. Its light became so bright that we stopped finally and got out and looked up in awe. A smaller object, also spherical, moved out from within the large one, possibly from behind it. There was a Saturn-like ring around the smaller sphere. It moved here and there beside the large one for a few minutes and then went back inside. The story would be all over the papers the following morning. The *Nevada State Journal* would describe a "Mysterious Ball of Light" that had been reported by various people at least a hundred miles in every direction from the place where we had been. "By this time we decided to get the hell out of ther," a couple of hunters reported, "and hopped in our pickup and took off. As we looked back at it, we saw a smaller craft come out of the right lower corner. This smaller craft had a dome in the middle of it and two wings on either side, but the whole thing was oval-shaped." Someone else had said, "I thought it was an optical illusion at first, but it just kept coming closer and closer so that I could see it wasn't an illusion. Then something started coming out of the side of it. It looked like a star, and then a ring formed around it. A kind of ring like you'd see around Saturn. It didn't make any noises, and then it vanished."

"Now we're both believers." said one of the hunters. "And I don't ever want to see another one. We're pretty good sized men and ain't scared of nothing except for snakes and now flying saucers."

"After the small sphere disappeared, the large one rapidly faded and also disappeared. Deffeyes and I were left on the roadside among the starlighted eyes of dark and motionless cattle. "Copernicus took the world out of the center of the universe," he said. "Hutton took us out of a special place somewhere near the beginning of things and left us awash in the middle of the immensity of time. An extraterrestrial civilization could show us where we are with regard to the creation of life." Thanks go to Barbra Schuessler, Univ. of Arizona

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Researchers considering anti-gravity as possible counter to natural force

By Donald Smith
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — When the pendulum swings, the University of Maryland's physics building shakes.

But not so much that students would notice as they walk by the gray basement room where Ho Jung Paik is conducting his experiment measuring the gravitational effects of the huge lead ball.

"It's an extremely small motion," says Paik. "You wouldn't feel it walking down the hall. But it affects our instruments."

Paik, a Korean-born physicist, is among a worldwide community of scientists who have devised a Wizard of Oz inventory of exotic devices in their attempts to solve what many consider the ultimate mystery of the physical universe: gravity.

Gravity is the weakest and least understood of the four known natural forces.

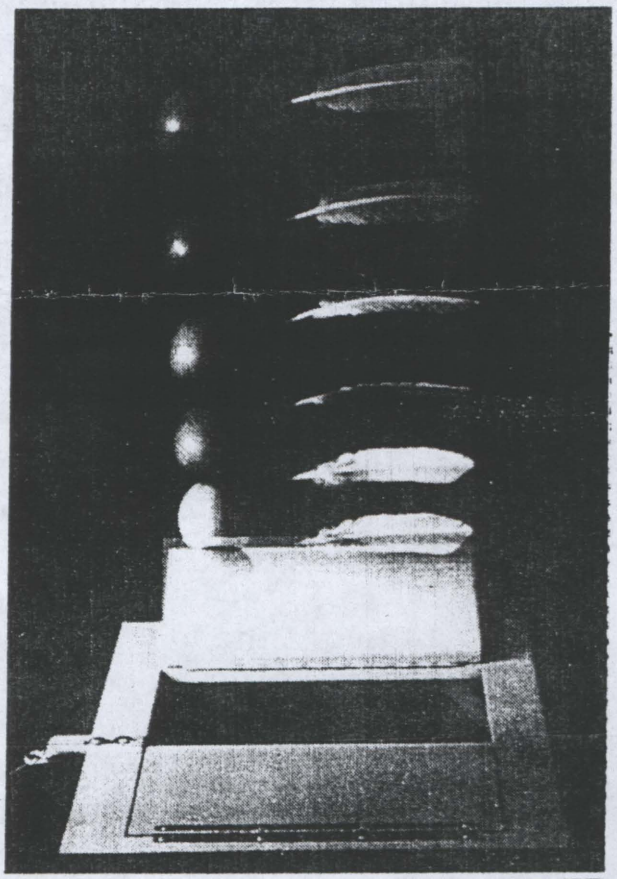
People have discovered how to manipulate the other three forces: electromagnetism, which provides energy for light, heat and kitchen appliances; the strong nuclear force, which binds together atomic nuclei, and the weak force, which causes radioactive decay.

Puzzling results from an experiment in an Australian mine have accelerated the decades-long, worldwide hunt for a fifth natural force — a force that seems to counteract gravity.

Geophysicist Frank Stacey and colleagues at the University of Queensland detected an anti-gravity force using a sensitive meter to measure gravity at different depths in the mine. The force had the strength of only 1 percent of gravity and a range of a few hundred meters. Similar tests in other boreholes and mines have substantiated these results.

The search for gravitational waves — predicted by Einstein's general theory of relativity — has preoccupied scientists increasingly in recent decades. In visualizing the universe as a continuum of space and time, Einstein believed that when massive events occur, such as giant stars exploding and collapsing into black holes, they set off gravitational ripples in the continuum.

Detecting such ripples, along with other gravitational phenomena, requires unimaginably accurate measuring devices. LIGO, the National Science Foundation's $230-million Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory, is designed to measure movements as small as one 100-millionth of the diameter of a hydrogen atom.



National Geographic/AP

Some researchers think a fifth force, sometimes called hypercharge, counters the effect of gravity.

The first two LIGO observatories are now under construction in Washington state and Louisiana. Others are planned, including one sponsored by a consortium of European nations.

An understanding of how gravity relates to the other, better-understood forces would be the ultimate payoff for most scientists.