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UFO UpDates Mailing List

Re: Re: Walt's Woes - The Decline of MUFON

From: Beverly Trout <btufo@netins.net>
Date: Mon, 24 Aug 1998 18:07:19 -0700
Fwd Date: Tue, 25 Aug 1998 09:59:13 -0400
Subject: Re: Re: Walt's Woes - The Decline of MUFON

Dear List -

Yes, MUFON membership is down drastically in the last few years. And yes, there are fringe elements who want to infuse MUFON with muddleheaded (their own preferred category) reasoning. Which behooves the rest of us to get in there and pull our weight so that MUFON can constantly move in a questioning direction rather than letting the fringe look at the UFO enigma for what they want it to be, instead of what it is!

As to the editorship of MUFON Journal, my own considered opinion is that we'd be losing membership faster if a change had not been made. I fielded many complaints in my own state, and heard the same story from other state directors. The MUFON JOURNAL is different now and with Dwight Connelly as editor, positively so.

At the all-day meeting of State Directors in Denver in June prior to the MUFON Symposium, I was impressed with the quality of the reports and the quality of the reporters. I sensed a vitality I'd not seen before, i.e. a volunteer mentality heavily weighted in favor of putting MUFON information (privacy protected, of course) in accessible location and form. And I'd bet the follow-up will be substantial.

Dropping one's membership, in my opinion is NOT the solution. No organization is perfect and Walt Andrus does not have an easy job. A big help can occur at the state level. My hope is that state directors will not only be astute individuals, but that they will also study their own state organization and assign case investigations to those who can be trusted to exercise objectivity. And if they don't have enough objective investigators, that they will somehow be able to jump into the breach and see that interesting cases are probed...and followed up. I strongly feel that state directors must keep their fingers on the pulse in order to run an effective program in their state. I become concerned if state directors refrain from interacting closely with the investigative process.

How we interact with the media needs examination. If media is bent on inserting a giggle factor, I refuse to interact as a resource person. My standard statement goes like this as I respond to requests from print, TV and radio media: "If you plant to sensationalize or trivialize this subject, I want no part of it." And I mean it. I would rather nothing be published than to give the UFO subject such publicity! Although I realize that a reporter or producer could blindside me, so far it's worked. And we've been getting very good media coverage in my state and on a frequent basis.

Public and media respect for MUFON should not be underestimated. I realized long ago that MUFON gives me an umbrella of UFO respectability in my State. And when I speak before organizations and groups, I strive to add to that respectability by injecting circumspection into my comments, and by presenting substantive information, pointing to documentation obtained through FOIA, etc.

In summary MUFON is "respectable" and should not be underestimated; state directors need to be involved and on the look-out for fringe members who should not be involved in case investigations; interaction with media should be informative, but circumspect as well as when speaking before groups and organizations. (BTW, this does not mean that I avoid the abduction phenomenon. It does mean that I need to know a lot about it and so be aware of the warts, blemishes, and perception gaps which can attend this experience. And I say this as an abductee with both conscious experiences and some memories recovered under (very light) hypnosis...with a psychiatrist.)

So far, Walt Andrus has been able to hold this sometimes unruly organization together. It behooves those of us who don't want to over-conclude, who do want to be objective (hopefully) to 'hang in there' with MUFON.

Bev Trout
Iowa MUFON State Director

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