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UFO UpDates Mailing List

Re: 'Self-Proclaimed Leaders Of Ufology'

From: **Jenny Randles** <nufon@currantbun.com>
Date: Fri, 30 Jul 1999 20:44:22 +0100
Fwd Date: Sat, 31 Jul 1999 00:06:53 -0400
Subject: Re: 'Self-Proclaimed Leaders Of Ufology'

>To: UFO UpDates - Toronto <updates@globalserve.net>
>From: Jerome Clark <jkclark@frontiernet.net>
>Subject: Re: 'Self-Proclaimed Leaders Of Ufology'
>Date: Thu, 29 Jul 99 11:51:47 PDT

>>From: Jerry Black <blackhole60@hotmail.com>
>>To: updates@globalserve.net
>>Subject: 'Self-Proclaimed Leaders Of Ufology'
>>Date: Thu, 29 Jul 1999 07:02:01 PDT

>Hi, Jerry,

>>I would now like to refer to remarks you made about my comments
>>concerning the "self-proclaimed leaders of ufology".

<snip>

>>As you stated, Mr. Jerome Clark, your organization does not have
>>the time or money to really get into investigating current cases
>>out there in ufology, besides the fact of putting your opinion
>>of cases in your monthly journal. So I am not accusing you of
>>not doing a good job of investigating current cases, because as
>>you have told me: you are not doing "any" job of investigating
>>current UFO cases. You are simply making small reports in your
>>journal which are merely opinions.

>Actually, not. IUR, which I'm sure you don't read or you
>>wouldn't have typed the above nonsense, carries investigative
>pieces as well as insightful analytical overviews. For example,
>the current issue (available from J. Allen Hynek Center for UFO
>Studies, 2457 West Peterson Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60659 --
>thanks for the opportunity to put in the plug) carries a 14-page
>investigative review, by Bill Chalker (prominent, well-regarded
>Australian ufologist who has never to my knowledge proclaimed
>himself to be a "leader" of the field), of apparent biological
>evidence associated with an abduction case. The same issue
>carries two first-rate analytical essays by Mark Cashman
>("Behavioral Classification System for UFO Occupants") and
>Thomas E. Bullard ("Abductions and Researcher Bias: How to Lose
>Your Way"). I happen to think we're putting out the best UFO
>magazine in America, and a lot of people agree, if we can credit
>the comments and letters we get from readers who appreciate our
>sober, balanced, informed approach.

Hi,

Let me chip in here to defend the IUR and Jerry Clark - as it
may carry some weight with the other Jerry given that I am not
(and would never wish to be) a leader of ufology. Not even a
leader of British Ufology. Heck, not even a leader of ufology in
Dove Holes. Politics in ufology is one of the reasons for our

various problems and we are served best by researchers and investigators (both inside and outside of groups) doing a good job and publishing it through the handful of excellent magazines. There are not that many. But there are some.

There are only three UFO associations I have ever been directly involved with. My local team (now called NARO and of which I have only ever been, or wanted to be, an ordinary member), BUFORA, which even though I have no current role (I am not a council member let alone a leader) I have been on council from time to time in the past, and CUFOS - although I am not overtly in any way with the group, only as a contributor to the magazine, but I am associated in the very real sense that I utterly support its ideals, sober approach to the subject and - most importantly - its professional output. This includes the superb (and unrivalled) Journal of UFO Studies for in depth analysis and the IUR, which under Jerry's editorship has been and is, in my estimation, the best UFO publication we have got. This is why he and the IUR and CUFOS have had my complete backing.

As you have seen from the discussions in this list, Jerry and I do not agree on everything. We disagree as often as we agree, in fact. But we share a common approach to the problem and I have utmost respect for the extensive work he has done that has contributed so much. ufology has benefited from his documentation of cases, historical research and skilful editing (not to mention his own writing - of which the encyclopedia project has to rank amongst the two or three most important pieces of UFO literature we have ever had). All across four decades (which means Jerry must have started very young!) (Sorry, Jerry, I first read one of your articles in FSR when I was at school and its only recently I figured out that you cannot have been much out of there yourself)

Although he has never used the term of himself or even hinted at it, I regard Jerry as a leader of ufology - and thus take note of what he says on any issue - but I mean a leader in the sense that he guides us through example not through self proclamation or ego. I doubt he would even dream of thinking himself by that description.

You might think this is flannel, or the old pals act. It isnt. There is no other organisation I would defend like I do CUFOS (regularly on interviews over here) and very few ufologists I would support openly in this way. The remarkable thing is that so many of the others are associated with the IUR and CUFOS. If Jerry Black is unaware of all this fine material dating back 25 years and is not reading the IUR then I am sorry, but its a loss I would suggest that he rectify.

Of course, ufology has its own version of what you might term the ego has landed. The media inevitably focus on the people they think will give them the biggest story and that usually means those with the most positive (or even outspoken) views. Its how life is. The loudest get heard and the wisest keep their mouths shut. But as Jerry C notes many of those you may not see often on TV are still out there making their voice heard by other routes. I dont get on TV much myself these days, much less than a few years ago as new blood has come along like Nick Pope and gets most of the interview requests, but its not a cause of despair. I have had my share of appearances and still do them from time to time, but am happy these days to say no more often than I say yes.

Age brings the wisdom of holding ones council I guess.

So we all do what we do best in our own way and for some thats banging a drum on TV, for others its writing books and for others still just getting on with the job pleases them most such as case investigation or pressing the government to wake up or come clean. The difference is between the UFO organisational structure, which by its nature requires a hierarchy and leadership system to function, and so attracts that kind of personality to lead, and ufology, per se, which involves the groups, of course, but is more than just groups. Jacques Vallee, for instance, told me quite categorically once that nothing of much value emerges from groups. I think thats an over reaction, but it has a degree of truth. He, of course, has steered well away from the UFO hierarchy but it has not stopped him contributing in his own way.

Ufology, as a movement, is much more a team of equals working in loose partnership, disagreeing, of course, but working towards a common goal. The internet well illustrates that. There is no hierarchy here. It doesn't matter two hoots whether you have written 100 books, made 1000 TV appearances and received the award for the years most voluble UFOlogist, or whether you saw a UFO last night and are about to read your first book. Equanimity rules and we all have our say. That's how it should be.

The real essence of ufology does not require leaders. In fact they would get in the way. In the UK right now a few of us are trying to forge a UFO community that is not a group. It will have no members, no leaders, no committees, no conferences, no lectures, no money. It will just be a loosely forged alliance of like minded UFOlogists getting on with researching the cases we think will contribute most to our knowledge. It will not be distracted by the things that too often can dominate some groups (not all groups I should emphasise) - that is power politics, membership numbers and finance.

The media does not always reflect ufology as it is in its entirety but I dare say the same is true of any area of life. So we just have to forget about any perceived unfairness and get on with the job. That's what really matters, not how often we appear on Sightings, surely?

Best wishes,
Jenny Randles

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