

Sturrock UFO Panel's (Alleged) Findings Praised By CUFOS Official

Mark Rodeghier, scientific director of the Center for UFO Studies (CUFOS) and one of the pro-UFO investigators selected by Dr. Peter Sturrock to brief his nine-man "independent" panel of scientists, praises what he calls "the panel's generally positive conclusions," in the Fall issue of CUFOS's International UFO Reporter (IUR). The favorable comments of another of the panel's pro-UFO briefers, Michael Swords, also appeared in IUR. Swords is a former editor of the Journal of UFO Studies, published by CUFOS.

Rodeghier wrote: "*The UFO community has been fighting for years to gain just the simple recognition from science that the UFO phenomenon is worthy of scientific study....The panel might have concluded that UFO sightings are not worthy of scientific study....So the panel's generally positive conclusions are gratifying...*" In reality, the panel's conclusion on this issue, as reported in the Journal of Scientific Exploration (Summer 1998), published by Sturrock's Society for Scientific Exploration was the following: "*Whenever there are unexplained observations, there is a possibility that scientists will learn something new by studying those observations.*" No experienced skeptics were allowed to brief the panel on possible prosaic explanations for these cases [SUN #53/Sept. 1998].

The press release issued June 23 by Stanford University (for publication June 29) was **misleadingly headlined: "SCIENTIFIC PANEL CONCLUDES SOME UFO EVIDENCE WORTHY OF STUDY."** This resulted in a front-page story in June 29 edition of The Washington Post which bore the headline: "**PANEL URGES STUDY OF UFO REPORTS.**" The subhead read: "*Unexplained Phenomena Need Scrutiny, Science Group Says.*"

BUT RODEGHIER AND SWORDS OMIT PANEL'S MOST SIGNIFICANT CONCLUSION

Rodeghier believes the cases presented to Sturrock's panel provided "*the best evidence for UFOs,*" and the briefers "*were among the best and brightest,*" with most having advanced degrees. Not surprisingly, neither Rodeghier nor Swords in their IUR articles reported the Sturrock panel's most significant conclusion--that it was "**NOT CONVINCED THAT ANY OF THE EVIDENCE INVOLVED CURRENTLY UNKNOWN PHYSICAL PROCESSES OR POINTED TO THE INVOLVEMENT OF AN EXTRATERRESTRIAL INTELLIGENCE.**" (Emphasis added.)

Swords and Rodeghier, like Sturrock and many pro-UFOlogists, blame the lack of progress in "solving the UFO mystery" on disinterest of the "scientific community," which in turn they partially blame on the conclusions of Dr. Edward U. Condon, a respected scientist who headed the University of Colorado's UFO investigation in the late 1960s. This "neglect" could be overcome quickly if the past 50 years had yielded any scientifically credible evidence that even one UFO might be an extraterrestrial craft.

Both Swords and Rodeghier strongly endorse the idea that an ET craft crashed near Roswell in mid-1947, and challenge the alternative Project Mogul balloon explanation for the debris found on the Brazel ranch. IUR editor Jerome Clark has strongly endorsed the claim that Travis Walton was abducted by a UFO for five days in 1975. If either one of these cases is as strong as they claim, it seemingly offers impressive evidence of ET visitations. YET NEITHER CASE WAS PRESENTED TO STURROCK'S PANEL FOR ITS JUDGEMENT.

WHY?

GENESIS OF THE STURROCK UFO WORKSHOP

Sturrock's UFO Workshop was the result of his meeting in December 1996 with the very wealthy Laurance S. Rockefeller, who has had a long-standing interest in UFOs. Sturrock expressed the view that *"this [UFO] problem will be resolved only by extensive and open professional scientific investigation, and that an essential prerequisite of such research is that more scientists acquire an interest in this topic."* Rockefeller not only agreed to fund a UFO Workshop but proposed that it be held at his estate near Tarrytown, N.Y. Hired limousines picked up attendees at New York airports and brought them to the huge Rockefeller estate, where they enjoyed luxurious quarters and meals during the four-day workshop which began Sept. 30, 1997.

According to the original plan, the panel of nine scientists would have two months to weigh the evidence they had heard and study written reports prepared by the briefers, and would then meet with Sturrock in San Francisco--as they subsequently did--to render a panel report. However, on the last day of the workshop in Tarrytown, according to Swords' account in IUR, *"Sturrock announced that the verdict was in: The press release and the final meeting report would state that the opinion of the panel, based on their readings and our discussions, was that the UFO phenomenon was a subject of legitimate scientific interest and research."* By a happy coincidence, the "independent" panel of scientists--two of whom are members of Sturrock's society--quickly reached the conclusion that Sturrock and generous host Rockefeller hoped the panel would reach.

According to Rodeghier's assessment in IUR, *"Conceivably, the most significant observation of the panel was that 'it is desirable that there be institutional support for research in this area.'" Rodeghier commented: "Even a modest level of funding would have an immense effect on our research."* (The Fund for UFO Research [FUFOR] says it has raised and spent some \$700,000 for UFO research. Wealthy Las Vegas businessman Robert Bigelow reportedly contributed \$100,000 for UFO research to FUFOR, CUFOS and MUFON--with the prospect of larger future contributions. But he terminated the funding after one year because of disappointment over the results. Rockefeller has made generous contributions to promote UFOs.)

Sturrock Ignores Own Advice To Other Scientists To Investigate UFOs

Although Sturrock has long urged physical scientists to investigate UFO cases and has himself been interested in UFOs for more than 20 years, so far as is known Sturrock himself has investigated only one UFO case--the Ubatuba, Brazil, incident involving pieces of magnesium reportedly dropped by a UFO. (The magnesium fragments underwent extensive laboratory analysis for the University of Colorado, which found no evidence of ET origin. SUN suspects the magnesium fragments came from burning flares dropped by a Brazilian aircraft.)

If "institutional support" is needed for effective UFO research, SUN suggests that Sturrock propose that Stanford University--where he is a professor of physics--create a UFO Research Center and that he seek Rockefeller's financial support for such a center. To help convince Stanford University to create a UFO Research Center, Sturrock can show them the conclusions of his "independent panel of leading scientists." If Sturrock is unsuccessful at Stanford, perhaps some of the other panel members will try to get their universities to do so. Even if Rockefeller were to generously agree to underwrite the total cost, SUN doubts that any major university will be willing to create a UFO Research Center.

If any members of the Sturrock panel truly believe that UFO research might yield new scientific knowledge, we should expect them to enter the field--at least as a spare-time hobby. Based on SUN's earlier conversations with three panel members, we seriously doubt that they intend to engage in UFO research. French panel member Francois Louange previously has worked with GEPAN/SEPRA--France's small UFO investigation agency--to evaluate UFO photos.

The Truth Isn't Out There

This was the headline of an editorial commenting on the Sturrock Workshop panel report which appeared in the July 1 edition of the New York Post. Highlights of the editorial follow:

"Panel Urges Study of UFO Reports" ran the front-page headline in Monday's Washington Post. According to that Post, an independent scientific review directed by a Stanford physicist said that UFO sightings need serious study. The implication: The UFO industry has now received intellectual backing of serious scientists. But the sad fact is that The Washington Post has been taken for a good long ride by one of the more superficially respectable organizations....the "Society for Scientific Exploration" [SSE]. The group has put out [i.e., published] papers on "Atlantis and the Earth's Shifting Crust," "The Message of the Sphinx," "Reincarnation and...Birthmarks," and one of our favorites, "Severe Birth Defects Possibly Due to Cursing"....The SSE's UFO platform is based on a big lie. That lie is that scientists have never taken UFO claims seriously for fear of ridicule--or because of a government conspiracy right out of "The X-Files." The truth is exactly the opposite....And despite the successful efforts of the UFO industry to convince millions of people otherwise, there is no--repeat no--credible evidence of space aliens visiting the Earth in suspiciously Hollywoodesque flying saucers...."

Misleading Headlines For Sturrock's 1977 Astronomers-UFO Survey

More than two decades earlier, Sturrock and Stanford University obtained similarly misleading headlines for the results of his survey of members of the American Astronomical Society (AAS) on their interest in UFOs. The Christian Science Monitor headlined its April 27, 1977 story: "PROBE UFO RIDDLE, SAY ASTRONOMERS." The New York Times headlined its article: "FURTHER STUDY OF UFOs ENDORSED IN A SURVEY." The National Enquirer headlined its April 27 story: "ASTONISHING 80% OF ASTRONOMERS BELIEVE UFOs SHOULD BE INVESTIGATED."

Although 52% of the 2,611 AAS members polled by Sturrock responded, 48% were not sufficiently interested to spend five minutes filling out the two-page survey. The key question, which was the cornerstone of the press release issued by Stanford University, was the following: "Do you think the UFO problem (check one): (A) Certainly deserves scientific study; (B) Probably deserves scientific study; (C) Possibly deserves scientific study; (D) Probably does not deserve scientific study; (E) Certainly does not deserve scientific study." (Emphasis added.) **Three of the five choices seemingly indicated that the respondent believed the UFO problem deserves scientific study. But if a respondent checked "Possibly deserves scientific study," they believed that "possibly" the UFO problem did NOT deserve scientific study.**

According to Sturrock, 23% checked "certainly deserves," and another 29% checked "probably deserves," while another 27% selected "possibly deserves." But the press release approved by Sturrock and issued by Stanford University began as follows: "A survey of trained observers of the skies, all members of the American Astronomical Society (AAS), indicates that most of them feel UFOs (unidentified flying objects) deserve further scientific study....four fifths feel that the UFO problem 'certainly...probably...or possibly...deserves scientific study'..." This statement prompted the misleading headlines. Although the press release reported that 53 of the respondents indicated that they themselves had had a "UFO sighting," the press release did not mention that only seven of the AAS members (including Sturrock and Dr. J. Allen Hynek) indicated that they were actively engaged in UFO research. The significant "bottom line" of the Sturrock survey was that barely one quarter of one percent (0.27%) of the AAS members believed the "UFO problem" was of sufficient importance to justify their devoting their personal time to try to resolve the issue. Although the AAS has held several dozen national conferences since Sturrock's survey, AAS has never scheduled even a single session on UFOs.

When Dr. J. Allen Hynek created CUFOS in 1973, he cited "a growing number of scientists, engineers and other professionals generally associated with universities, laboratories and industry," whom he claimed were interested in UFOs. Hynek said that CUFOS would provide "an avenue whereby the interests and talents of these scientists and other professionals can be focused and brought to bear on this challenging problem. A significant number of them have become actively associated with the Center [for UFO Studies] and have volunteered their talents and facilities." One of those scientists was Dr. Peter Sturrock. But nearly a decade later, in the spring of 1982, Sturrock announced the formation of his Society for Scientific Exploration (SSE) of anomalous phenomena. One rationale Sturrock offered for creating SSE: "If anybody wanted to know the facts about the UFO phenomena....there's nowhere that you can go for reputable information." (Seemingly, Sturrock did not believe that CUFOS qualified.)

Sturrock's SSE has now had 15 years to correct this "deficiency," but has it done so? The Spring 1997 issue of SSE's Journal of Scientific Exploration carried a very favorable review of "Top Secret/Majic," Stanton Friedman's book proclaiming the authenticity of the MJ-12 papers. This endorsement of Friedman's book was authored by Dr. Robert Wood, a member of SSE's Council.

In 1983, in my book "UFOs: The Public Deceived," I ventured the following assessment: "I predict that Sturrock will be no more successful than Hynek in his efforts to arouse the interest of truly outstanding scientists in UFOs. Sturrock assumes that they have ignored UFOs because the subject has not been treated in respectable scientific journals. Sturrock, like Hynek, will discover that it is not where, or how, the UFO evidence is presented. It is the intrinsic lack of scientific credibility of the evidence itself." SUN predicts that Sturrock's most recent "independent" scientific panel report will be no more successful than SSE's efforts during the last 15 years.

Giant UFO Over Mexico City: Proof Of ET Visitors Or A Clever Hoax?

The dramatic 30-second video of a giant saucer-shaped craft in broad daylight on Aug. 6, 1997, flying low over a western suburb of Mexico City, was first shown to the U.S. public on April 6, 1998, in a cable TV program titled "Danger In The Skies: The New UFO Threat." If authentic, this single video offered incontrovertible proof that we are being visited by ET craft. Small wonder that a still photo from the video was featured on the cover of the November 1997 issue of the MUFON UFO Journal, and several frames were printed inside with a very brief account about the genesis of the video. Tom King, director of Arizona Skywatch, was quoted as characterizing it as the "Best UFO video on the planet," but a footnote by associate editor Dennis Stacy cautioned that the video had not been authenticated. The April 1998 issue of the MUFON UFO Journal carried a lengthy article by Dr. Bruce S. Maccabee, describing his analysis of the video, with ambivalent views as to its authenticity.

The date that appears on the UFO video is Aug. 6, 1997, but it was not until nearly two months later, on Sept. 28, that the video was made public when it was broadcast two days after being received by Jaime Maussan, a well-known Mexican TV anchorman who produces TV shows on UFOs telecast in many Latin American countries. The video tape was accompanied by a letter by the cameraman who said he wished to remain anonymous because he was an illegal immigrant. Maussan asked viewers to help him locate the site at which the video was shot, which they did based on several tall apartment buildings visible in the video.

When Maussan visited the highly populated area, he was able to find more than a dozen persons who claimed that they had seen the giant UFO on Aug. 6--although there had been no UFO reports prior to Maussan's TV program showing the video. One woman claimed that she had suffered skin-burns caused by the UFO, Maussan reported in a paper given June 28 at the 1998 MUFON conference in Denver. Another witness reported that cats and dogs "went crazy" in the UFO's presence and that "a parrot that had never talked before started talking."

Maussan admitted that some of these witness tales might have been "contaminated" by seeing his TV show. However, Maussan's star witness was a 13-year-old girl named Cassandra whose description of the giant UFO matched what appeared on the video. When Maussan asked if she had seen his TV show, she said she had not. Maussan said that he is confident that "she told me the truth." Maussan's on-site investigation enabled him to determine that the UFO video had been shot from the fourth floor balcony of an office occupied by an American company that provides counsel to other American companies which plan to operate in Mexico. During an interview with Maussan immediately following his MUFON conference talk, SUN asked if he had contacted the American company office to try to learn the identity of the UFO video cameraman whose letter said he had used the office manager's camera. Maussan replied that the office manager refused and threatened to call the police unless Maussan left immediately. Maussan sought to explain this action by saying that even if the video were authentic he believed that "many American companies don't want to get involved with the UFO phenomenon."

Maussan's attempted explanation did not make sense to SUN. IF the video were authentic it would solve the 50-year-old UFO mystery and could bring in millions of dollars in revenue. So we asked Maussan for the name of the American company, explaining that we would contact the company's president to seek his aid in identifying the cameraman. Maussan said he did not remember the name but would supply same when he returned to Mexico City. On July 4, shortly after returning home, I wrote Maussan to remind him of my Denver request. When more than a month elapsed without any reply, I wrote Maussan again on Aug. 11. More than two months have since elapsed without any reply from Maussan.

Sainio's Analysis Shows Mexico City UFO Video Is A Hoax

Jeff Sainio, a former Wisconsin state director of MUFON, has applied his expertise in computer graphics to the analysis of UFO photos and videos--often in collaboration with Bruce Maccabee. Although Sainio's analysis of the many Polaroid UFO photos taken by Ed Walters in the late 1980s, like that of Maccabee, failed to find any evidence of a hoax, Sainio's analysis of the Carp, Canada, UFO video challenged Maccabee's endorsement [SUN #20/Mar. 1993]. Both men had tackled the Mexico City UFO video, but only Sainio "hit paydirt."

Sainio details the results of his painstaking analysis which revealed that the Mexico City video is a clever "double exposure" hoax created by computer, in an article published in the October issue of the MUFON UFO Journal. One indication of a hoax: because the camera was hand-held, as the cameraman panned (seemingly) to follow the motion of the UFO there was expected smearing of the imagery of the apartment buildings in the foreground. But there was no corresponding smearing of the UFO imagery. "This indicates the UFO wasn't in the video when the camera was shaking, but was added later," according to Sainio. Another indication: as the camera pans, the viewing (aspect) angle to the buildings changes slightly (1.6 deg.) and should change similarly with respect to the UFO, but it does not, according to Sainio. This is difficult to detect because of the wobbling motion of the UFO. A third indication of a hoax: the altitude of the UFO, measured relative to protuberances of the nearby building, changes differently than it should if caused solely by camera "bounce" during panning.

Sainio acknowledges that considerable effort was required by the hoaxer to superimpose the UFO imagery on the background. The hoaxer may have expected the UFO's pronounced wobbling motion would obscure the subtle flaws detected by Sainio. His article concludes with the following sage advice for UFO investigators: "Be suspicious of anonymous reports. Note oddities in the case; here, a daylight sighting of a huge craft in one of the most crowded cities in the world, but no witnesses until after televising the video. 'Expert' opinions are meaningless unless they can give repeatable, measurable procedures by which they reached their opinions." (Maussan said the authenticity of the Mexico City video had been endorsed by Jim Dileto, Phoenix, Az., who claims expertise in photo analysis.)

UFO-Lawyer's FOIA Suit Seeks Government Info On UFO-Abductions

"UFO-lawyer" Peter Gersten, director of Citizens Against UFO Secrecy (CAUS), filed a Freedom Of Information Act (FOIA) request in mid-September seeking information on "UFO-abductions" from four federal agencies: Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Department of Defense (DoD) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). In the FOIA action, Gersten makes the following claims: *"During the past 30 years, thousands of American citizens have openly stated they have been abducted, unlawfully imprisoned, and physical (sic) and sexual (sic) assaulted by strange and similar appearing 'creatures.'* *These unusual perpetrators have been described by the victims as small, white or grayish appearing humanoids with no hair, almond-shaped eyes and a small nose and mouth. [Gersten fails to mention that some of the ETs are reported to resemble giant insects or lizards.]*

"The sheer volume of such remarkably similar reports is alarming evidence of a continuing conspiracy involving a threat to our national security as well as an obvious violation of human rights...both of which come within your agency's purview and jurisdiction. CAUS is interested in obtaining all information your agency possesses on this extraordinary subject. CAUS is particularly interested in the nature, origin, purpose and extent of these unlawful activities as well as the identification of the perpetrators. CAUS is in the process of obtaining hundreds of affidavits from eyewitnesses and intends to obtain judicial review if it believes its request is being unlawfully denied."

SUGGESTED FBI RESPONSE

SUN suggests that the FBI remind Gersten that because kidnapping is a federal crime, it is responsible for investigating claims of abduction and taking appropriate legal action. Further, that not one of the "thousands of American citizens" claimed by CAUS has filed a formal complaint with the FBI seeking the agency's intervention. Further, that if CAUS's abductees will formally file such a complaint, the FBI will carefully and thoroughly investigate the alleged incident. But the FBI should remind Gersten to inform his "abductees" that if FBI investigation shows their claim to be false, the person making the false claim can be fined up to \$10,000 and sent to prison for up to five years, according to federal statute. (More than a decade ago, SUN offered to pay \$10,000 to each and every "UFO abductee" who formally filed such a claim with the FBI if subsequent FBI investigation confirmed the claim. When we last checked, no "UFO abductions" had been reported to the FBI.)

Last spring Gersten/CAUS filed an FOIA suit against the U.S. Army, seeking information that could confirm the (wild) claims made by former Lt. Col. Philip J. Corso in his book "The Day After Roswell" [SUN #49/Jan. 1998; SUN #52/July 1998]. On Sept. 15, the Asst. U.S. District Attorney, Richard Patrick, filed a motion to dismiss the Gersten suit, with Gersten subsequently filing a dissenting motion. U.S. District Court in Phoenix has scheduled oral arguments for May 10, 1999. Gersten hopes to fill the courtroom with supporters and perhaps have a demonstration of pro-UFOlogists outside prior to the hearing. While this could bring Gersten the publicity he seeks, SUN doubts that it will have a favorable influence on the presiding judge. (Corso will not testify, having recently died of a heart attack at age 83.)

CAUS VIDEO REVEALS THAT GERSTEN DOES NOT BELIEVE CORSO

"Extraterrestrial Contact: Proof Beyond A Reasonable Doubt," a video produced last summer by CAUS, does provide proof beyond a reasonable doubt that Peter Sturrock made a very wise decision NOT to invite Gersten to brief Sturrock's panel of scientists. The CAUS video format is that of a mock trial in which "witnesses" present evidence to a jury. Gersten selected Travis Walton (who claims a UFO abduction in 1975) to play the role of the presiding judge. The video is available in two versions. One, 45-min. long, sells for \$20. The more interesting "Director's Cut" version, which SUN purchased for \$25, is roughly two hours long.

Because Gersten believes that "crop circles" offer the strongest evidence of ET visitations, "crop-circle expert" Colin Andrews is the principal "witness." Others included Bruce Maccabee and Richard Hoagland, who describes what he claims are ET-built structures on the moon. In the Director's Cut version, Andrews resists repeated pressure from Gersten to characterize crop circles as the creation of ETs. In discussing a British video which shows a ball of light over a crop circle, Andrews emphasizes that he suspects the video might be a hoax. This prompted Gersten to say: "I don't believe Corso, if anybody asks my personal opinion. But I don't feel an obligation that I have to go out [indistinct]. I'll put Corso on the [witness] stand. I'll bring a lawsuit." At the May 10 hearing, SUN suggests that Gersten be called as a witness and asked under oath if he himself believes Corso's crashed-saucer claims.

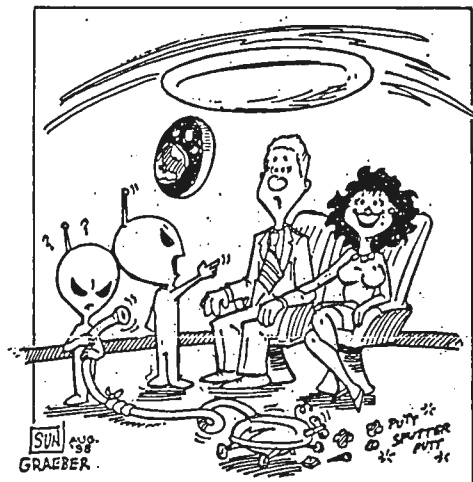
Gersten is trying to expand CAUS from essentially a one-man operation into a national, perhaps even international, network by absorbing local UFO groups and UFOlogists who have "dis-affiliated" from MUFON (Mutual UFO Network). (During the last several years MUFON's membership has declined nearly 20% to around 3,500.) Gersten's stated objective is to build a network whose members can investigate UFO reports in their area but some observers suspect that he hopes to exploit discontent within MUFON.

MJ-12 Refuses To Allow Clinton To Reveal The Truth About Lewinsky

From a highly placed usually UNreliable source, SUN has learned that President Clinton was being truthful when he testified under oath that he could not remember ever having sexual relations with Monica Lewinsky. MJ-12 would not allow the President to reveal that the incidents occurred on a UFO and that ETs had erased his recollections. MJ-12 reportedly rejected Clinton's impassioned pleas because it would reveal the government's long-time UFO coverup and its knowledge that UFO abductions really do occur.

According to SUN's usually UNreliable source (SUUS), ETs decided to upgrade the capabilities of their hybrids by obtaining sperm and ova from leading world figures. President Clinton and First Lady Hillary Rodham were their first choice. At the time of the President's first abduction, Ms. Lewinsky chanced to be in the President's Oval Office, so the ETs mistook her for Hillary Rodham and beamed both of them up to the UFO hovering over the White House.

ETs later discovered their mistake and were about to return Ms. Lewinsky when they also discovered that their sperm-extraction machine was broken. Ms. Lewinsky offered to "fill the void" and did so. Later, the ETs followed their traditional practice of erasing all recollections of the incident from the memories of the President and Ms. Lewinsky. The ETs were so pleased with the hybrids created with the President's sperm that they decided to repeat his abductions.



"Mr. President, you will not remember that we used Ms. Lewinsky because our sperm-extraction machine was busted."

Although ETs had since repaired their sperm-extraction machine, they felt that Ms. Lewinsky was achieving such a "bountiful return" that she should continue in that role, so she was abducted again also. Because ETs erased all memories of the incident, both the President and Ms. Lewinsky could honestly testify under oath that they did not recall having any sexual relations. Later, when their memories returned, the President requested MJ-12's permission to reveal the truth rather than admit he had lied under oath. But MJ-12 rejected the President's request and he was powerless to overturn their decision. (Rumor has it that Clinton has asked the ETs to abduct his nemesis--Independent Counsel Ken Starr--together with Ms. Lewinsky.)

NBC-TV Network To Air Two-Hour Pro-UFO Show

Useful insight into the "slant" of a two-hour TV show on UFOs which will be aired next year on the NBC network, and the "bottom-line strategy" that motivates the company producing the show, comes from pro-UFO researcher Rob Durant via his recent filing on the Internet. Durant, a recently retired airline pilot, was approached early this year because the TV show producer hoped that he might help to arrange a TV interview with the pilot of a Swissair 747 who had reported a near collision with a "UFO." The incident occurred on Aug. 9, 1997, shortly after 5 p.m., while the airliner was flying at 23,000 ft. near New York City, enroute to Boston. The TV show producer contacted Durant who had been in contact with the Swissair pilot, Capt. Phil Bobet. Capt. Bobet said the UFO was moving very fast and he described it as being long, cylindrical, and white in color. The incident occurred near the peak of the Perseids meteor shower. Meteor-fireballs invariably are reported to be very much closer than they really are. For example, on June 5, 1969, two airline crews and a military pilot reported that they had nearly collided with several UFOs near St. Louis. Thanks to an alert photographer in Peoria who managed to get a photo, the objects were identified as meteor fragments whose flight path was roughly 125 miles north of St. Louis [SUN #46/July 1997].

In response to Durant's query about the thrust of the TV show, he reports the following: *"The working title is something like 'UFOs--Confirmed.' The general editorial slant is reflected in the title, meaning that they intend to take a positive position on the issue of UFOs as a serious topic. What I [Durant] found interesting was the insistence that this was being done because of marketing studies that showed (1) great success with UFO topic programming in terms of drawing audiences, and (2) an understanding that the public already believes in UFOs and wants that belief reinforced. Consequently, from the television entertainment business vantage, putting on a skeptical show did not make sense to the producers or to the ultimate authority, NBC....This is intended for prime time viewing, and will almost certainly be preceded by much advertising. Because of the belief that it will draw a very large audience, it will be run during a special 'sweeps' rating period....I was told that the Sturrock Panel would be covered." (Emphasis added.)*

SHORT SHRIFT:

* A giant interstellar spacecraft from the planet Myton in the Pleiades, carrying 1,000 ET scientists, will land on Earth by the year 2001, according to the Unarius Academy of Science, El Cajon, Calif. (UNARIUS = UNiversal ARTiculate Interdimensional Understanding of Science) A featured speaker at a recent Unarius Academy of Science conference was Jerome Clark, editor of CUFOS's IUR. Clark recounted the early history of belief that earth is being visited by ETs, but offered no opinion on the Unarius prediction.

* Surprise, Surprise, Surprise: Nearly three years have elapsed since a UFO reportedly crashed near Varginha, Brazil, and two of its occupants reportedly were captured by the Brazilian army. Details of the alleged incident were reported at MUFON's mid-1996 conference by A.J. Gevaerd, head of Brazil's largest UFO organization. The incident was endorsed by several major UFOlogists. Stanton Friedman: "The case looks very good indeed..." John S. Carpenter: "It's a darned good case. I'd say it may be equal to Roswell." Dr. John Mack: "It is an extraordinary case." In mid-1996, Gevaerd predicted "fantastic surprises" before year end [SUN #41/Sept. 1996]. But there have been no surprises, fantastic or otherwise.

NOTE: Opinions expressed in SUN are those of its editor--unless otherwise noted--and do NOT necessarily represent the views of any organization with which he is affiliated--or his spouse. We thank DR. GARY POSNER for help in proofreading.

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