

SAUCER CENTRAL U.S.A.



By Jerome Clark

Unidentified (Frightening, Flapping and Furry) Objects

Walter Cronkite does not believe in UFOs, no matter what you read in the *National Enquirer* last December. "It's a total lie from beginning to end," he told a December 13th convention of the Radio-Television News Directors Association in Miami. He added that the *Enquirer's* reporter had not even talked with him and that, moreover, the allegation that he accepts the reality of the UFO phenomenon is "totally erroneous."

One lesson to be learned from this, obviously, is that you shouldn't believe everything you read. Some journalists are more careful with their facts than others. However, whether Cronkite (or anyone else, for that matter), wants to believe it, UFOs are here and you'd have an awfully hard time convincing those people who've seen them that they didn't observe the craft.

Take Richie Britt, for example. At 10:30 p.m. on Oct. 28, 1976, he and his father, Richard Britt, saw a strange "light" speed across the woods in front of their Lake View, S.C., home. The elder Britt watched it for a short while, then went inside to escape the cold. Richie continued to view the thing from the porch and noted that it was flashing green, red, and soft blue lights. When it moved in one direction, it revolved in a counterclockwise direction and when it moved in another it would revolve in a clockwise direction. Finally the colored lights went out and the UFO gave off a white light as it flew toward him and hovered above the porch.

Richie now could see that the object had a smooth aluminum appearance

and was the size of a large automobile. Along its lower portion ran a row of triangular windows. In the center of the upper portion was a single large window of this type. That was where the strange being stood gazing down on Richie.

It had no neck, just a roundish head which seemed connected directly to its shoulders. Its skin was smooth and pale white. It had two dark eyes and no other facial features, and its two arms ended in claws. Richie backed away and began to scream.

Hearing his son's scream, Richard Britt rushed to the porch. By the time he got there, the UFO and its occupant were gone, but Richie, as his father told the *Florence [S.C.] Morning News* (Nov. 14, 1976), "was hysterical, almost out of his mind. He kept saying 'it was horrible, don't let it get me.'" He was so terrified that he couldn't even relate what he had seen. Alarmed, the father called Dr. James Twombly, who found Richie's "emotions were uncontrollable . . . I don't think he was faking the hysteria."

Lake View Police Officer Kermit Page confirmed that "the boy was hysterical, but what he saw I don't know." That was because at that point Richie was incapable of telling anybody. It was only the next day, when his pastor, the Rev. John Wilkinson, came to the house, that Richie finally could discuss it.

That same morning—the day after the sighting—Richard Britt noticed something odd when he went out to start his wife's car. A heavy frost covered the ground—everywhere, that is, except for a 15 by 20 foot area which,

though wet, had no frost on it. This was the spot, according to Richie, where the UFO had hovered.

Another Kind of UFO

We all know about Unidentified Flying Objects. Now we may have to make room for Unidentified Flapping Objects. There certainly were enough of them last year—the biggest invasion of winged weirdos since 1966-67, when Mothman was scaring the daylights out of the God-tearing folk of the Ohio River Valley.

Early last year something local people called "Big Bird" (after the *Sesame Street* television character) swooped down on the Rio Grande Valley and made a nuisance of itself until finally, by late winter, it had gone away. Not, however, before it had attacked Armando Grimaldo of Raymondville, Tex., on the night of January 14th.

Around 10:30 p.m. Grimaldo was sitting in the back yard of his mother-in-law's house smoking a cigarette (Grimaldo assured me it was tobacco, not marijuana), when suddenly he heard the flapping of what sounded like bat wings, along with a "funny kind of whistling." Then "something with big claws" grabbed his back and knocked him off his feet. From the momentary glimpse he got of it as he glanced over his shoulder, he could see it was well over five feet tall, with a 10- or 12-foot wingspan. It had a bat-like face, leathery skin, and shiny red eyes.

Grimaldo managed to struggle to his

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been found their bodies

animal mutilations in the

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colored glow, and silhouetted by the light were three humanoid-shaped figures. There was a dark section beneath the glowing dome and "steam" or mist between this section and the ground.

It was then, with the UFO now hovering a few feet off the road that things went weirdly out of control. According to Mrs. Bowles the car began to shudder and shake, and seemed to swerve off the road as if the steering wheel were locked. We're told that Mr. Pratt's instant reaction was to grab the steering wheel as the car headed toward a roadside hedge but the car stopped without its brakes being applied. Mrs. Bowles had shut her eyes in alarm, but Mr. Pratt switched off the ignition.

At that point, said Mr. Pratt, one of the figures appeared to get out of the object, almost as though it had come through the craft's side. His companion had now opened her eyes, and saw what was happening. In the BBC-TV interview she said the "gentleman" had a silvery suit, a strange "French style" haircut (whatever that's supposed to be) with sideburns. This "person" moved toward Mrs. Bowles's side of the car (in England the driver sits on the right), and as he looked in at the dashboard Mrs. Pratt saw his eyes. They were pink, and she recoiled toward Mr. Pratt. As this happened the car's headlights became much brighter and then, without anyone touching the starter the engine of the car burst into life and began to "race." Mr. Pratt said that the bizarre being was about six feet tall, and stared at the car's dashboard, while seeming to put a hand on the roof of the car.

Suddenly the strange visitor moved back toward the rear of the car and Mrs. Bowles warned Mr. Pratt: "... he's coming round to your side." They looked behind them but could see nothing. Turning once again to the front they were staggered to see no sign of the UFO.

After recovering their composure, they continued their journey.

I do not know, at this stage, how the story got to the BBC-TV. However, a number of researchers are looking into this report on one behalf and if anything radically new turns up I'll let you know in a future column.

UFO Escorts Truck

The *Derwent Valley Gazette* of Feb. 26, 1976, reported how two truck drivers on a journey from Strahan to Dover, Tasmania, were escorted by a UFO from Nive Hill, Wayatinah, to Berridale. The incident took place on February 17th and the driver was Ron Wilson, maintenance engineer with the Victorian Canning Co. He first saw the object while they were descending Nive Hill.

The craft buzzed the vehicle for the entire three hours it took to get to Berridale.

The UFO had a brightly-lit orange-yellowish-white portion in the shape of a dome, beneath which there was a dark shape which, according to Ron Wilson, looked like a sausage bent down at one end. He also said that the UFO kept its pace with the truck, maintaining a position slightly to the front and left. At the Old Plenty Bridge on the Lyell Highway, they stopped the truck to see if the object could come any nearer, but it moved away and hovered on the far side of the River Derwent. The two drivers judged that it was about 50 feet in diameter.

When they re-started the truck the UFO returned to a position some 500 yards ahead of them. Between Norfolk and Granton the two men saw it clearly that outlined against the nearby Dromedary Hills. During the three hours the object was with them they were unable to use their radio because of heavy "static." When they were nearing Berridale, the UFO began to climb away and it eventually disappeared.

Bell Ringing for UFOs at Maydena

The manager of the Victorian Canning Co. pressed a reluctant Ron Wilson to reveal the foregoing incident because of events in nearby Maydena, Australia.

It seems that on several evenings two orange-red, glowing objects had been seen moving to the west from Abbott's Lookout. Police discounted the idea that a hoaxer had released balloons from the Lookout, which is also the site of a TV and radio relay station. It would have been impossible for the specially locked gate to be opened to let a car pass, and as the track to the Lookout from the gate is seven miles long they doubted whether anyone would walk 14 miles on several occasions just to release colored (and glowing) balloons.

So the police announced that if the objects were sighted again they would have the church bell rung.

At 10:50 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 26, 1976, the church bell began to peal, and the populace turned out in force to see two glowing objects approaching from the east. The Tasmanian UFO Investigation Center (TUFOIC) checked that no aircraft were in the vicinity, and that the wind was blowing from the west, which ruled out any chance that the objects were balloons. Several hundred people watched the pair of UFOs pass over the town on a steady course, then one was seen to do a 90 degree turn toward Scott's Peak. One witness, watching through binoculars, said one of the UFOs had the appearance of two lights at the ends of a "cage-like" structure.

Truck Driver Is Terrified

News of another close encounter in the United Kingdom, this time in Wales, was given on Nov. 27, 1976, by BBC-TV Wales. At present there are only a few sparse details, but they are sufficient to report.

It seems that at about 4:15 a.m. on November 27th a truck was paced at very close range by a UFO near Rhayader. The driver reported that a huge cigar-shaped object descended to a position just over and in front of his vehicle. It glowed a bright orange color, and had red flames shooting out from below. Despite all this there was no sound.

The truck driver stated that after four or five minutes of this nightmarish experience in the dark early hours of the morning he became so scared that he stopped the truck, jumped from the car, and ran for cover. Which brings us to a similar story from "Down Under" in Tasmania, Australia . . .

Giant "Extraterrestrials"

In mid-July came a report from Santander in northern Spain about a bizarre experience that occurred at a small place called Escalante. Margarita Cagigas (28), housewife and mother, and her neighbor, Miguel Ruisz Sampedro, were on their way to work at a place called Treló. It was 5:30 a.m. on a day not stated, but known to be only a few days earlier than July 18, 1976, when the report was published.

Suddenly the pair came upon an enormous entity walking in front of them with its back toward them. They therefore never saw its features, but said it was wearing a thing like a silvery disc on its head. Its clothing was a brightly-shining brown—which is something of a new color for such occasions. The entity proceeded on its way paying absolutely no attention to them.

Another unusual feature of this sighting was the way the creature moved: Margarita Cagigas, described by the reporter as a somewhat timid and un-talkative person and not someone looking for publicity, said that it seemed to be floating along without touching the ground, "flying like a bird."

One more for the projection-theory notebook?

Violet-Bellied "Martians" in Iran

The joker in the pack of recent humanoid reports comes from the Teheran newspaper *Etaalat* of Apr. 4, 1976.

It seems that some peasants in the Isfahan region of Iran reported seeing three "Martians with green skin like frogs" who descended from the sky during a heavy hail storm on the evening of Apr. 3, 1976.

In addition to their green skins the aliens were described as having violet-colored bellies, and as being only 3½ feet tall, but no less than 6 feet wide! A thorough investigation of this incredible story has been ordered.

Question: where was the UFO? Were these hideous squatties projections from a craft hidden in the low scudding storm clouds?

My next account is also one of a craft-less "occupant"-type creature, this time in Spain.

Argentinian Reports

After a long period without any activity being reported from Argentina, two UFOs were said to have been seen over La Cuchilla, 10 miles from the airport at Viedina, Province of Rio Negro about 600 miles southwest of Buenos Aires). The date was July 17, 1976. The two objects flew in an erratic zigzag fashion over the local airfield, and gave off a vivid orange light.

Earlier, on July 14th, four members of the National Meteorological Service saw four UFOs over Viedina Airport in the half-light of dawn. Perhaps these sketchy reports are the forerunners of a new wave of UFO visitations so predominant in South America over the last 20 years.

Exploding UFO?

A flying saucer is said to have exploded over the town of Presidente Prudente, State of São Paulo, Brazil, on August 8, 1976. The display was quite spectacular, but details were otherwise quite sketchy, and nobody seems to have inquired whether or not the object was a decaying American or Russian space vehicle.

Black Cylinders Over The Potteries

On June 30, 1976, at about 8:15 a.m., a morning of clear skies and bright sunshine in the middle of Britain's summer heat wave, Mrs. Helen Pattison was standing at a bus stop in the Staffordshire village of Knutton with her five-year-old son. A lawyer's secretary, the young mother was found by investigators to be an impressive witness.

Knutton lies in a busy industrial region known as the Potteries, and mother and son were watching an executive jet cross the sky when Mrs. Pattison's attention was drawn to a stationary cylindrical object, completely black, which floated silently in the air. The puzzled witness then saw a second, similar object emerge from behind the first and, in two jerky movements, drifted off to about two lengths behind the first object. The two UFOs then began to move away at a "snail's pace." In all they were in view for about seven minutes before fading silently into the distance. ★

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BOOK SCAN

(Continued from page 14)



sexual molestation or examination in connection with certain UFO sightings is a torrent of abuse directed toward the researcher who has dared to utter such 'sensationalistic claptrap.' In spite of charges that prurient interest is our sole motivation, researchers such as John A. Keel, Jerome Clark, and I have entered this highly charged emotional area as far as our respective reputations will permit."

What makes this chapter such absorbing reading is the amount of information—names, dates, places, diaries quoted, and so forth—that has been collected, and now published.

Equally fascinating are the interviews with those men and women who regularly and confidently "channel" information from UFO intelligences they identify as the "Space Brothers." Delving into the various types of channelling (Trance or Sleep Mediumship; Automatic Writing, Drawing, or Music; Clairaudience [clear hearing], Clairvoyance [clear seeing], Clairsentience [clear sensing or feeling]; Mental Telepathy or Thought Transference; Space Beams; Inspiration, Intuition, or Hunches), Steiger then asks: "Is an as yet undetermined *someone* systematically selecting certain individuals to be unknowing propagandists in a worldwide campaign of psychological prepara-

tion? Can it really be that aliens from other worlds seek to program these flying saucer missionaries in an effort to raise mankind's potential to believe, his capacity to love and understand? . . .

"As a result of my own investigations and the research of others, I can no longer doubt that such 'contacts' are taking place on a global scale."

In chapter 11, "New Age Prophets and the Time of Transition," Steiger perhaps touches the very core of the UFO mystery that has puzzled mankind for centuries:

"After exhaustive research into the revelatory experience and after hundreds of interviews with contemporary revelators and those who claim the UFO contact experience, I have become convinced that the transfer of thought, spirit, and power from our Other, as exemplified in the UFO phenomenon, or from infinite intelligence, to a finite human intelligence, is a vital, continuing process which observes no denominational boundaries and employs a spiritual, psychic mechanism that is timeless and universal. As I have observed, throughout the centuries our revelators and those who have undergone contact experience with the Other have been repetitiously proclaiming the same basic revelations.

"In my opinion, these precepts have, throughout history, been generically revealed in the following basic messages:

"1. There is a higher being from which man and each woman might draw power and inspiration.

"2. Man has within him all that is necessary to establish harmony with higher intelligences or a higher being, provided certain spiritual conditions are encouraged and maintained.

"3. There is a basic unity of all things. Man is one with all other man in spirit; man's soul is both universal and individual.

"4. We are entering a New Age, another progression in man's evolution as a spiritual being. Before the New Age can be fully realized, Earth must undergo a great cleansing, a great purification, which will be prefaced by cataclysmic changes within the very surface structure of the planet. Man will soon be progressing out of his old physical limitations into a higher realm that is his by right of his cosmic inheritance."

Gods of Aquarius is more, much more, than yet another humdrum book on UFOs. It's a journey to the very outer limits of our knowledge of this enigma—and beyond. Brad Steiger has written a book that is truly commendable, for it not only entertains, educates, and enlivens a field too often bogged down in minutia, but, more important, it lays the groundwork for researchers for years to come. ★

UFO BOOK SCAN

Gary Lane

One of the leading researchers, investigators, and reporters in the UFO field, John Keel, has written an intriguing and challenging book, **The Mothman Prophecies** (Saturday Review Press/Dutton, \$7.95). Unlike so many other writers who set out to contribute their thoughts and interpretations of events in the UFO field, and too often rely on other people's reports and investigations, Keel has done his own leg work, his own interviewing, and has undergone his own bizarre experiences. Also unlike so many other books in this field that roam over state, country, and continent, Keel has focused primarily on one specific community—Point Pleasant, W. Va. (and the immediate surrounding area)—and has done a masterful job of on the scene investigation.

Why West Virginia? As the author convincingly explains, this area has long been the scene of strange sightings and inexplicable occurrences, and he goes back into history to support his argument. "The Indians must have known something about West Virginia—they avoided it. Before the Europeans arrived . . . the Indian nations had spread and divided up the North American continent . . . Even the inhospitable deserts of the Far West were divided and occupied. There is only one spot (on pre-Columbian) maps labeled 'Uninhabited': West Virginia. There are strange ancient ruins in the state, circular stone monuments which prove that someone had settled the region once. Since the Indians didn't build such monuments, and since we don't even have any lore to fall back on, we have only mystery." Another reason, and a powerful one, for Keel's interest in the state, were the repeated reports of a weird flying creature called the "Mothman." Shaped like a man, only larger, the "thing" was variously described as having enormous bat-like wings (which it spread when taking off, but never flapped), and huge red eyes that were almost hypnotic in their intensity. "Mothman" was sighted so frequently, and terrified so many people, that eventually even the wire services and major newspapers around the country finally picked up the story and gave it wide circulation.

But Keel's book is much more than tracking down eyewitnesses who saw the strange apparition that soared over the Ohio valley. He gives prominent attention to UFOs, which at that time, were being seen in unusual concentra-

tions over the rolling hills of West Virginia. And, of course, among the many sightings, landings, and contactees that the author personally investigated, we get a very thorough study of the Men In Black, who were extremely active in this region during this "flap" period.

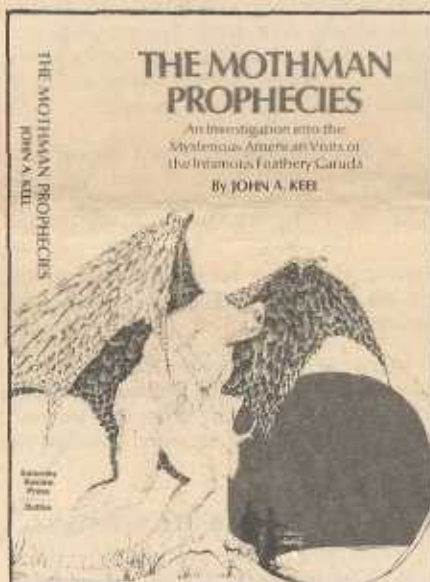
The author goes to great lengths detailing his attempts to track down these mysterious people who terrorized UFO witnesses, and gives us many odd bits of information regarding their behavior (stuttering, gasping conversation), their mode of dress (black suits, coats, caps, socks—and unusually thick rubber soles on their shoes), their physical characteristics (dusky complexions, with Oriental features, and extremely long fingers), and, in one instance, a witness who spoke to an

either loud garbled noises, unintelligible conversations in heavy foreign accents or, most often—the repeated electronic beeping that, after several days of repetition, unnerved the stubbornest people.

The author also recounts some of his own scary experiences while traveling the back roads of West Virginia. For instance, there is the occasion when he drove through a short stretch of road that he labeled a "zone of fear," a patch of a few yards that suddenly engulfed him in unspeakable terror. And when he returned, on foot this time, to test his reaction, "I was perfectly calm until I took one step too many and was back in the zone . . . the hair tingled on the back of my neck and I became genuinely afraid . . . I almost panicked and ran, but I forced myself to look around and proceed slowly. By now I had figured out that I was probably walking through a beam of ultrasonic waves." When Keel returned the next day to seek out the source, he found nothing. And then there was the time (in the presence of a witness), when he signaled a brilliantly colored UFO in Morse code to "descend," and the craft, in response to his message, slowly began to lose altitude.

The Mothman Prophecies is somewhat choppy in its flow, as if the author tried to cram in as much data within the space limitations he set for himself, and as a result the reader finds himself being given lengthy anecdotes broken up by chunks of solid information that make for uneven reading. But those solid pieces of UFO knowledge are really worth mulling over. For instance, did you know that "UFOs, monsters, and apparitions have an interesting affinity for garbage dumps and junk yards. Even the famous miracle at Lourdes, France, in 1858, took place at the local garbage dump." Or that researchers have now factually established that more UFOs are spotted on Wednesdays than any other day of the week, and that this puzzle within an enigma has been proved in studies conducted in the U.S., Spain, and Belgium. And then there is the peculiar yet weird affinity that these strange craft have for *blood* (Keel cites one reported chase where a UFO literally tried to seize a Red Cross Bloodmobile). And then there are some of the most mind-numbing contactee cases that have ever been put on paper.

But of major importance is the simple
(Continued on page 72)



MIB and said that he noticed "a long thick green wire attached to the inside of his leg . . . at one point it seemed to be indented into his leg." We also get a rundown on their cars, the ubiquitous black Cadillacs that looked brand new, often even smelled new (to those who were lured into them), and carried license plates that weren't registered with any motor vehicle bureau.

Completing this strange picture were the bizarre experiences that harassed UFO witnesses: TV and radio sets that turned themselves on; interception of mail (with tampering of reports, photos, and manuscripts); malfunction of cameras when witnesses tried to take pictures of nearby saucers; and the frightening telephone calls that came at all hours of day and night, and when answered the only thing heard were

LATE NEWS



Fortfest '78 is rapidly shaping up as one of the best yet, with a full slate of speakers on a wide range of subjects (see report in INFO Newsletter following page 8). Additional confirmed speakers are Loren Coleman, "Creatures of the Outer Edge" (the title of his new paperback co-authored with Jerome Clark, published by Warner Books), an up-to-the-minute report on unidentified creatures sighted in America; and W.G. Carnahan, Association for Pushing Gravity Research, Austin, Texas, "Progress in Gravity Research."

The international conference on Sasquatch/Bigfoot held at the University of British Columbia earlier this year has produced some surprising new support for the reality of our hairy friend. A full report will be included in INFO Journal. Noted anthropologist Carleton Coon, speaking at the conference, announced his conviction that the creature is real, as did Soviet scientists who participated. Detailed analyses of the famous film taken by Roger Patterson were reported, with the film passing all tests.

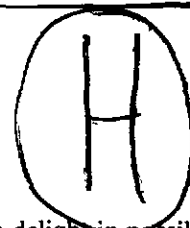
Big Bird has struck near Kansas City, Mo., where a 6' 4", 185 pound jogger was knocked sprawling--witnessed by a passing motorist--by a huge bird, receiving scratches and puncture wounds. He looked up to see a departing bird with wingspan of 5-6 feet, a white underbelly and white tail. Animal control officers in K.C. showed him photographs, and among the choices, he said, it might have been a young bald eagle or a crooked-leg hawk (which, of course, are not your everyday sparrows and are not known to have the habit of attacking man). We hope to obtain more details on this case for publication. (Washington Post (AP), 6/9/78).

INFO President John Carlson is away in Mexico, and columnist Steve Hicks' "Short Reports" was delayed by end-of-school-year activities. Their features will resume in the next issue.

1, MAY - JUN 78

The Tuscarora Mountain T-Birds

by Carl Larsen



The Highway Mour for

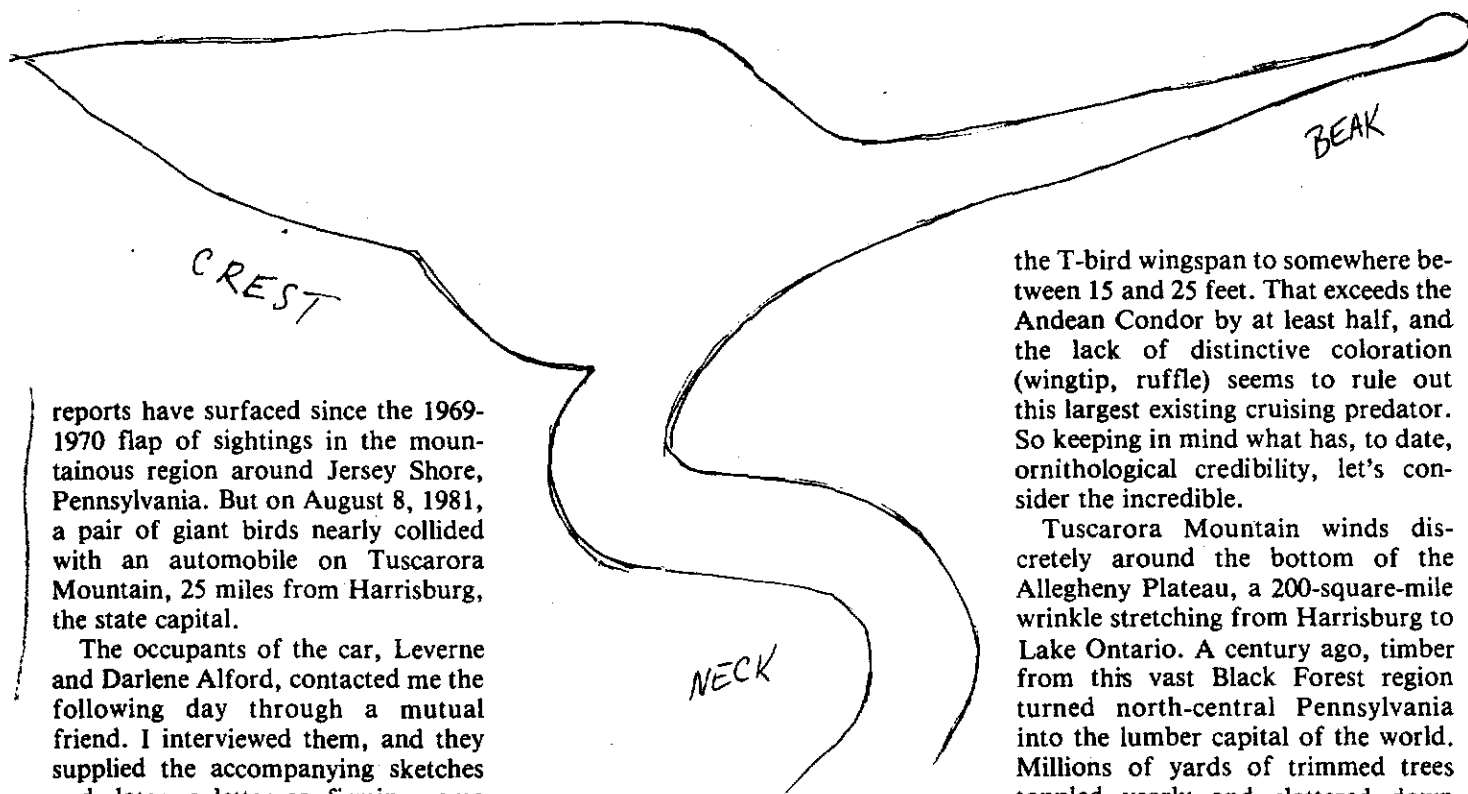
THUNDERBIRDS HAVE SOARED through Pennsylvania folklore for more than a hundred years, and there is some recent evidence for the possibility that the legendary big birds have not yet flown the coop.

Although rural rumor (e.g., "Hey, my cousin knows a guy who had a friend who saw one!") in north-central Pennsylvania would place the Thunderbird population equal to that of the American Cow, few eyewitness

Strictly speaking, birds like these could not exist in north-central Pennsylvania or elsewhere on this planet in this day and age. But the witnesses do not doubt what they saw, and their answer to the skeptics is a smile and just two words: "They're here!"

those of us who delight in possibilities but remain skeptical. (See Jung, see Fort, see the St. Louis Cardinals going en mass from first to third in the last World Series.) Estimated bird-dimensions increased with time, then began to shrink with the advent of handy, measurable environmental yardsticks like roads, and shadows thereon.

From interviews with witnesses in three separate cases, we can narrow



reports have surfaced since the 1969-1970 flap of sightings in the mountainous region around Jersey Shore, Pennsylvania. But on August 8, 1981, a pair of giant birds nearly collided with an automobile on Tuscarora Mountain, 25 miles from Harrisburg, the state capital.

The occupants of the car, Laverne and Darlene Alford, contacted me the following day through a mutual friend. I interviewed them, and they supplied the accompanying sketches and, later, a letter confirming some of the details of their sighting.

The Alford's seemed to be sane, middle-class, responsible people, both in their early thirties. Laverne works as a counselor at a youth development center, and Darlene is a housewife and former counselor at the same agency. Their close encounter—they came within two yards of a collision—with a pair of unidentifiable and oversized flying creatures left them understandably curious. Few birds of flight leave one with the impression that they were "awesome" or "overwhelming."

For some basic background and/or speculation on Thunderbirds, see *Pursuit*, Vol. 5, No. 2; Vol. 8, No. 2;

and Vol. 9, No. 2. As noted therein, the late Robert R. Lyman gathered dozens of published sightings dating back as far as 1845. His pair of books, *Forbidden Land* and *Amazing Indeed*, cover a multitude of Pennsylvania anomalies and are still available from The Potter Enterprise, Coudersport, Pa. Other references are published in the Corliss Sourcebook entitled *Strange Life*.

Legends of the Pacific Northwest Amerindians tell of Thunderbirds plucking whales from the sea and depositing scarred carcasses in the treetops. Sliding across the ages from totem to Tuscarora is easy enough for

the T-bird wingspan to somewhere between 15 and 25 feet. That exceeds the Andean Condor by at least half, and the lack of distinctive coloration (wingtip, ruffle) seems to rule out this largest existing cruising predator. So keeping in mind what has, to date, ornithological credibility, let's consider the incredible.

Tuscarora Mountain winds discretely around the bottom of the Allegheny Plateau, a 200-square-mile wrinkle stretching from Harrisburg to Lake Ontario. A century ago, timber from this vast Black Forest region turned north-central Pennsylvania into the lumber capital of the world. Millions of yards of trimmed trees toppled yearly and clattered down sluices into the Susquehanna River, to be gathered and bound at the locks. Eventually, the industry moved on to more accessible woodlands. Left were three million square acres of forest that even now are sparsely populated and have enough room between the bordering mountains to provide a sanctuary for even the shyest of feathered friends.

On August 8, 1981, Laverne and Darlene Alford left their home in Carlisle, Pa. Their destination was Lock Haven, 75 miles to the north, where they would visit the home of a well-respected local lawyer (the "mutual friend" who brought about our contact).

The most direct route was via State Highway 74 which winds over Blue Mountain and Limestone Ridge before it crosses Tuscarora Mountain. An early morning fog had drifted into the valleys but it began to clear as the Alford's ascended and neared the town of Ickesburg.

At approximately 9:30 a.m. they approached a large pile of rocks by the side of the road, known locally as a favorite nesting place for rattlesnakes. Leverne suddenly veered the car as he took sight of two giant birds scrambling for safety, urged on by the threatening noisy approach of a steel-clad monster. Like planes on the deck of some nightmarish aircraft carrier, the birds rumbled down the

highway in front of the car, gaining speed for a takeoff. Six feet before the point of collision, the nearer bird began to pull away.

During an interview the following day, Leverne estimated that the birds stood three feet from tail to beak, and that their wingspan covered the entire 15-foot width of the highway lane. But it wasn't size that impressed him the most.

"They didn't seem to have any feathers," he said. "They looked like they were covered with skin. I immediately thought of those prehistoric birds."

"They were both about the same size," he recalled, "with long necks curved in an S-shape. They were dark gray in color, with rounded beaks."

As the strange birds rose and flew directly above the highway, the Alford's followed for half a mile and Darlene was able to observe them in full-flight configuration from the passenger side of the car. She later drew the "bottom view" sketch and inked-in Leverne's penciled profile.

The birds were in view for about fifteen minutes before they had gained enough altitude to disappear from sight. The Alford's retained no im-

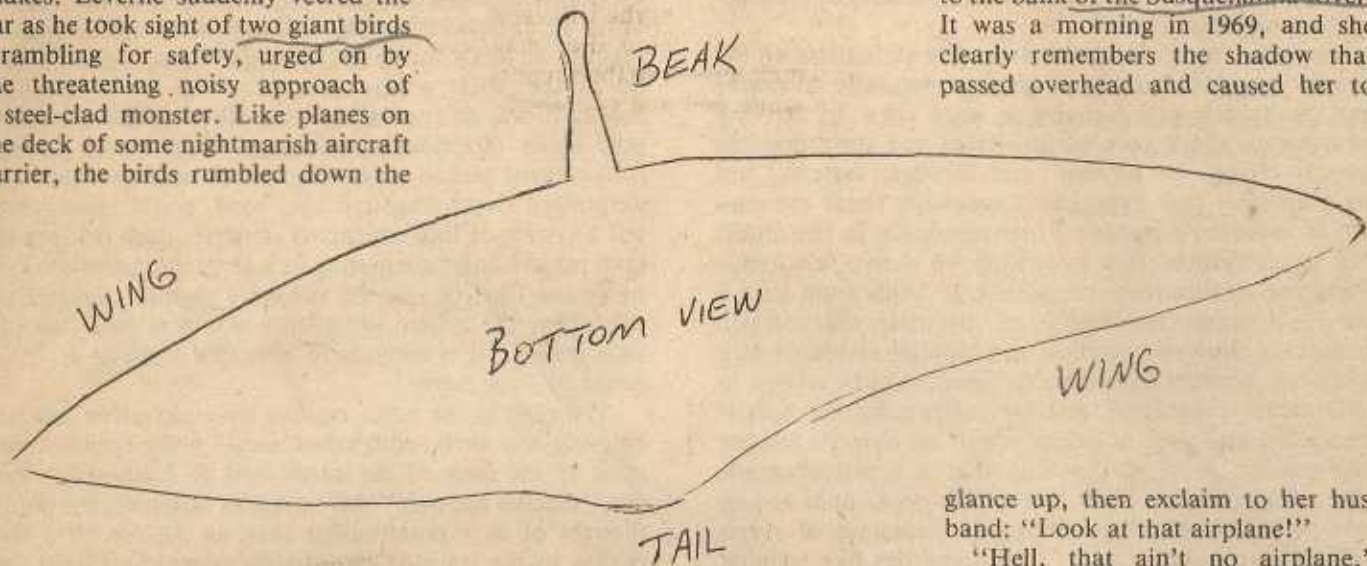
pressions of eyes or feet on the two beasts.

The sincerity of the two reporters was as convincing as all other aspects of the unusual sighting. They had, and have, nothing to prove or gain from it. Discussions with other bird-sighters, although based on encounters that had taken place in the 1969-70 flap, only confirmed or added definition to the Alford's story.

and why so many of the scientifically sanctified manage to locate tidier corners of the dusty universe in which to ply their trade.

Another survivor of the decade-old flap is Anna Mincer, who earned the monicker "Bird Lady" by publicly admitting that she saw what she saw. In a telephone interview, she recalled her first Thunderbird sighting.

She and her late husband were in their back yard, which reaches down to the bank of the Susquehanna River. It was a morning in 1969, and she clearly remembers the shadow that passed overhead and caused her to



glance up, then exclaim to her husband: "Look at that airplane!"

"Hell, that ain't no airplane," he replied. Whatever it was in the sky, it was the size of an airplane but as soundless as a cloud.

"It was mammoth. Very dark colored, nearly black. And it flew low enough for us to see that the claws were as big as my husband's hand—and he was a big man." Anna paused. "It seemed to soar along on the air currents. Then it would circle, and move back toward the mountains."

They saw what looked like the same bird later that day, and on several occasions the following year.

Awesome? Huge? Mammoth? Perhaps the Black Forest of Pennsylvania harbors a Loch Nessian nest of Pteranodons. Out of circulation a mere 65 million years, those leathery winged prototypes of the hang glider had a counterbalancing crest on the head that matches the Alford sketch, and were of comparable size.

Whatever the cause, whatever the nature of these oddities, all eye-witnesses agreed: On separate occasions, they saw something remarkably large. They saw something that flies in the manner of a bird. They saw something they could not identify.

In the spring of 1970, Susan Dolan was driving the family Jeep along a wooded stretch of Clinton County road. The time was shortly after midday, and the sun was peaking. From the trees to her left, a "thing" arose and seemed to hover over the moving vehicle before disappearing over the treetops. She was startled. The thing had caused considerable swaying and commotion among the trees.

Mrs. Dolan, a graduate of the University of Michigan and an outdoors enthusiast, stated: "It was huge. It blotted out the sun. The shadow covered the road from side to side." The paved portion of the road, as measured, is 25 feet wide.

"My husband and I have hiked all through these mountains, and I have identified birds from robins to eagles. But we've never seen anything like this," she said.

Familiar with the local Thunderbird tradition, Mrs. Dolan related the story to her family when she got home—with predictable results.

Which is one reason why more extraordinary events are not reported,

(A)

"IT SOUNDS like one of those saucer deals," said an army official at McChord Field, Chehalis, Wash., when he heard the story in early 1948. "I just can't put any stock in it at all."

His reservations were understandable. Just six months before Kenneth Arnold's report of nine disc-shaped flying objects had generated a public clamor which showed no signs of abating.

a lot of small children coming home from school at the time. They saw the man too and asked me if they could go into my backyard so they could watch him longer as he flew toward the south end of the city."

When she went out to check, Mrs. Zaikowski said, "I heard a sizzling and whizzing and there he was, just about 200 feet above my barn."

Seen Any Lately?

WINGED WEIRDIES

Since 1947 sky observers have been reporting "conventional" UFOs. But what about those that flap their wings?

By Jerome Clark and Loren Coleman

ing. Flying saucers were bad enough — but a flying man?

Still, the witness, 61-year-old Mrs. Bernice Zaikowski, who lived on a farm just outside Chehalis, was sticking to her story despite public ridicule. "I know most people don't believe me," she said, "but I have talked to some people in Chehalis that tell me they saw the man too and that he flew south from Chehalis and apparently came in from the north or west.

"It was about 3:00 P.M. on the Tuesday after New Year's Day (January 6, 1948) and there were

Stunned, she watched as a man equipped with long silver wings fastened over the shoulders with a strap ascended "very rapidly," hovered, banked and then continued in level flight. He flew in an upright position, appearing to manipulate the wings with controls strapped to his chest. There was no propeller or any other indication of what the "birdman's" motive power might be.

* * *

MRS. ZAIKOWSKI'S story might have received a fairer hearing if the hearers

MA-72



had been aware of similar sightings in the past. For example, there was a report in the *Louisville (Ky.) Courier-Journal* for July 29, 1880. The previous evening two residents, C. A. Youngman and Ben Flexner, had seen what they at first took to be the wreck of a toy balloon. But when it got closer they saw that it was really "a man surrounded by machinery which he seemed to be working with his hands." On his back were wings or fans whose flapping seemed to direct the construction's movement. When it would begin to descend the man would make the wings move faster and he then would ascend to continue flying in a horizontal position. Eventually he passed out of view in the twilight.

That same evening the Royster family of Madisonville, Ky., about 100 miles to the west and south, saw a peculiar lighted object — what today we would call a classic UFO — "hopping" southward over the city. They reported that it changed shape, from a circle to an oval, as it passed over the railway station half a mile away.

A month and a half later, on September 12, *The New York Times* drolly recounted an even more astonishing story:

"One day last week a marvelous apparition was seen near

Coney Island. At the height of least 1000 feet in the air a strange object was in the act of flying toward the New Jersey coast. It was apparently a man with bat's wings and improved frog's legs. The face of the man could be distinctly seen and it wore a cruel and determined expression. The movements made by the object closely resembled those of a frog in the act of swimming with his hind legs and flying with his front legs. . . . When we add that this monster waved his wings in answer to the whistle of a locomotive and was of a deep black color, the alarming nature of the apparition can be imagined. The object was seen by many reputable persons and they all agree that it was a man engaged in flying toward New Jersey."

Then there was the weird apparition that sailed over Mount Vernon, Ill., on April 16, 1897, in the midst of the great "airship" scare. The *Saginaw Courier Herald* reported, "What is thought to have been the mysterious airship was seen (at Mount Vernon) by more than a hundred persons. It was first observed about 8:30 o'clock and continued in sight for half an hour. Mayor Wells, who had an excellent view of the mysterious visitor from the observatory attached to his residence, says it resembled the

WINGED WEIRDIES

body of a huge man swimming through the air with an electric light at his back."

* * *

BY APRIL 1948 Mrs. Zaikowski's claims had slipped from the memory of Washington citizens. With the skies already growing crowded with discs, cigars, balls, crescents and all manner of weird manifestations there was more than enough to hold the attention of those who chose to concern themselves with such things. But the "flying men" had not made their final appearance.

On April 9 at Longview, Wash., Mrs. Viola Johnson, a laundry worker, and James Pittman, a janitor, told newsmen they had seen peculiar objects in the air high above them. "They looked like three men in flying suits flying through the air," reported Mrs. Johnson. "They wore dark drab flying suits and as far as I can judge — I'm not very good at judging distance — they were 250 feet high, circling the city.

"They were going at about the same speed as a freight train and had some kind of apparatus on their sides which looked like guns but I know it couldn't have been guns. I couldn't see any propellers or any motors tied on them but I could hear motors which sounded like airplane motors, only not so loud.

"When they first came into sight I thought they looked like gulls but as they got closer I could see plainly that they were men. I couldn't make out their arms but I could see their feet dangling down and they kept moving their heads, like they were looking around. I couldn't tell if they had goggles on but their heads looked like they had helmets on. I couldn't see their faces."

Mrs. Johnson and Pittman called to the workers still in the laundry but by the time they came outside the flying men were gone. Other Longview residents told of hearing the sounds of plane motors at the time of the sighting and some said they had seen three aircraft circling over the city at a high altitude.

Since 1948 flying saucers have dominated the air but weird flying men continue to be seen from time to time. On June 18, 1953, for example, three persons in Houston, Tex., saw "the figure of a man with wings like a bat," as one of them put it. "He was dressed in gray or black tight-fitting clothes." The "man" was seen in a pecan tree holding onto a branch and was reportedly encased in a halo of light.

Europe also has had its share of winged weirdies including, it seems, some that cavort around without heads. In the summer of

1915 four Cabeco, Portugal, children encountered an entity very much like a headless "angel" — "a figure like a statue made of snow which the rays of the sun had turned somewhat transparent." It was hovering in the air.

Four young persons in Kent, England, had an equally startling experience on the evening of November 16, 1963, as they walked home from a dance along a country road near Sandling Park, Hythe. Their report is one of the few that links winged creatures directly with their more celebrated brethren, UFOs.

The incident began innocently enough with what at first sounds like a more or less ordinary UFO report. John Flaxton, 17, was the first to notice a bright light in the sky. By the time he called it to the attention of his companions it had begun to descend. Only when it got low enough to disappear behind some nearby trees did the witnesses panic and start to run.

The light quickly reappeared closer to them, floating 10 feet above the ground about 200 feet away. "It was a bright gold and oval," one witness said. "And when we moved it moved; when we stopped it stopped."

Once it vanished behind a clump of trees. After several minutes of ominous silence strange sounds of snapping twigs

and branches announced the movement of someone or something. When the four caught sight of it they fled down the road and did not stop until the thing was far behind them.

"It" was black, of human size and — up to a point — human shape. "But," as witness Mervyn Hutchinson, 18, told police, "it didn't seem to have any head. There were huge wings on its back — like bat wings."

* * *

NOT ALL OF the flying weirdies are quite so bizarre as these. There are a number of other cases in which the strange sighting is described as resembling — and in fact might actually be — a bird, although of unusual features.

Curiously enough on April 9, 1948, the same day as the Longview, Wash., sighting, on a farm outside Caledonia, Ill., Mr. and Mrs. Robert Price saw what they called "a monster bird . . . bigger than an airplane." It had a long neck, huge powerful wings and in Price's words, "what I suppose were its feet trailing behind it." It flew out of sight in the northeast.

Shortly afterwards a Freeport, Ill., truck driver came forth with corroborating testimony admitting that he had seen the creature from a different location on the same day. "I saw the bird,"

Veryl Babb said, "but at first I didn't say anything because I thought people would laugh at me. When I read that Price had seen it I decided to report all about it."

And then a former army colonel related that nearly a week before, on April 4, a gigantic bird had passed above him at an altitude of about 4000 feet while he stood talking with Col. Ralph Jackson, head of Western Military Academy, and a farmer near Alton, Ill. He did not point it out to his companions. He said, "It looked too incredible."

"I thought there was something wrong with my eyesight," Walter Siegmund said, "but it was definitely a bird and not a glider or jet plane. It appeared to be flying northeast. Two army planes had just flown over in the same direction and I thought it was a pursuit craft following them. But from the movements of the object and its size, I figured it could only be a bird of some tremendous size."

It was a 12-year-old boy named James Trares, however, who first sighted the mysterious bird. Three months before, in January 1948, James was playing outside his parents' home in Glendale, Ill., just before sunset when he saw something that sent him scurrying inside to his mother, Mrs. J. J. Trares.

"There's a bird outside as big as a B-29!" he exclaimed breathlessly. He said he knew it was not a plane because he saw its wings flapping. The creature was gray-green in color and flying toward the sun.

On April 10, 1948, the day after the Price and Babb sightings in Caledonia, the bird appeared over Overland, Ill., and was reported by Mr. and Mrs. Clyde C. Smith and Les Bacon. They said they thought it was a pursuit plane until it began to flap its wings furiously. The creature appeared to be dark gray in color from where they viewed it in the Smiths' backyard just before noon. As it happened, it was Smith's second sighting of the day. "I first saw it when I was out in the yard that morning," he said later, "and I thought it was a type of plane I had never seen before. It was circling and banking in a way I had never seen a plane perform and I kept waiting for it to fall."

A week later, on the 18th, Chet Burke of Richmond Heights, Ill., reported that a strange bird passed over his house. But this one was much smaller than a plane and resembled an albatross, a seabird that does not fly as far inland as western Illinois.

On April 24 a more impressive report was made at Alton, Ill., where E. M. Coleman and his 15-

year-old son James gazed on an astonishing sight. "It was an enormous, incredible thing with a body that looked like a naval torpedo," Coleman said. "It was flying at about 500 feet and cast a shadow the same size as that of a Piper Cub at the same height."

Cpl. Clarence Johnson and Patrolman Francis Hennelly of the St. Louis police force got a look at the bird as it flew silhouetted against the moon that night. "The thing was as big as a small airplane," Hennelly said. "Its wings were flapping and it was headed southwest, flying at altitude of several hundred feet. I thought it was a large eagle but I've never seen one that big before."

Two days later on April 26, 1948, a St. Louis chiropractor, Dr. Kristine Dolezal, just had finished breakfasting in her second-floor apartment. About 8:40 she got up from the table and started across the kitchen. Suddenly the sounds of a nearby airplane flying low over the house broke the silence. "It sounded like something was wrong with the motor," Dr. Dolezal commented later. "It sort of roared and sputtered."

She stepped out onto the porch to see what was wrong but was hardly prepared for what greeted her. "I looked at the plane, then I glanced over the

other way," she reported. "I saw this bird just come from nowhere it seemed like. I thought, 'What is it? Is it a big bird, or what?'" As the creature came nearer it seemed inexplicably to grow larger. Dr. Dolezal at first thought her eyes were playing tricks on her but then realized it had spread its wings which previously had been folded back.

In the meantime the plane changed course and for a moment it looked as if the bird would crash into its side. But it flapped its wings lazily three times and both bird and plane vanished into the clouds.

In the May 2 issue of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch's* "Everyday Magazine," writer Dickson Terry commented, "Like others who have seen the thing, Dr. Dolezal describes it as grayish-black in color. Her description of the deliberate beating of the huge wings also jibes with other descriptions. However, where others describe it as having no tail to speak of, the thing she saw had, she says, quite an exceptional tail. It was like a rectangular box which had been sawed or divided down the center. When its wings were spread, she said, she could see ridges across them, like the ribs which show beneath the covering on the wings of a plane."

The following day instructors

at the Mississippi School of Aeronautics at Lambert-St Louis Field sighted an "awfully big bird" at an altitude of about 1200 feet.

Little more than 24 hours later salesman Harry Bradford, while in the process of turning off the Red Feather Express Highway at Kingshighway, saw the bird, stopped his car and turned a spotlight on it. The creature circled for a moment or two, then streaked northward, "I've seen it three times in the last four days and that's too much tomfoolery for a man of 50 to take," Bradford told the papers.

Apparently it was getting to be too much for other persons as well, if the letters stacking up in St. Louis Mayor Aloys P. Kaufmann's office were any indication. "Why has nothing been done about this?" one letter-writer demanded to know. "All St. Louis is upset about it. Who knows? Maybe it's a man-killing bird." Another wrote, "I don't think it's a bird — but I hope it is." Still others offered theories: it was an albatross, a blue heron, a pelican, but these "explanations" were as unlikely as the sightings themselves.

The mayor for his part passed the buck to his administrative assistant, Charles Hertenstein, who was given instructions (evidently seriously) to set a trap for

the beast. However, after discovering blue heron tracks on an island in the Meramec River on the 30th, Hertenstein, relieved, suggested this might be the explanation — although the reports had suggested a considerably larger bird than the blue heron, a common enough sight along the Illinois-Missouri border.

The next day Hertenstein's sigh of relief had turned into a groan. "Don't tell me we now have a self-illuminated flying monster," he complained. But that is precisely what three St. Louis citizens, Charles Dunn, an inspector for U.S. Steel, his wife Mary and Clifford Warden, had reported seeing the night before at 10 o'clock.

Said Dunn, "I thought people who reported seeing the thing were 'bugs' until I looked into the sky last night. It was flapping its wings and moving quite fast at about 3000 feet altitude and appeared to be illuminated by a dull glow. It looked about the size of a Piper Cub plane but there was no engine sound and it was not a plane. I could hardly believe my eyes."

At this juncture the Civil Air Patrol offered to make aerial searches for the bird whose appearances had begun to attract national attention. A man from Bowling Green, Ind., wrote Hertenstein to tell him he had seen it

or something very similar two years before and it had been the size of a 1200-pound horse. A South Dakotan thought it was a condor — “a harmless carrion-eater and very rare” — and should be treated with consideration. Albert T. Bertram, Jr., a meteorological aide with the U.S. Weather Bureau, describing his May 2 sighting, said the bird resembled the storks he had seen in Africa.

But ironically, just when public excitement reached its peak the sightings came to an abrupt halt.

To the Indians of the area the giant mystery bird was really nothing new. Their traditions are full of stories about the *piasa*, “an enormous bird with horns, terrifying red eyes, scales, a tiger’s head and a long griffon-like tail.” So when they heard the white man’s reports the Indians merely nodded their heads.

Piasa or not, the creature had not yet put in its last appearance. On March 27, 1957, H. M. Cranmer of Renovo, Pa., and a young friend watched a huge bird flying 500 feet above them. Cranmer said, “Its wing motion reminded me of a blue heron, except the bird was lighter and grayer in color. I called the American Legion and inquired if anyone had seen a big bird half an hour before. A man who had

just come in said it had flown over Westport, come down Fish-dam Run and then flown up Two-Mile Run. He said its wingspread was 25 or 30 feet.

“A week later another flew the same course. Two weeks later another flew a different course, up the Shintown Run, down Hevner Run and up Hammersley Fork stream. Each time there were several witnesses.” Cranmer reported still another sighting in the area on July 4, 1962.

In May 1961 a New York businessman flying up the Hudson River Valley was buzzed by something “like a fighter plane making a pass.” When he got a good look at it he gasped in amazement. It was a huge bird drifting lazily in the air “with scarcely any movement of its wings.” He had nothing with which to make comparisons and could not judge its size but he insisted it was “a damned big bird, bigger than an eagle. For a moment I doubted my sanity because it looked more like a pterodactyl out of the prehistoric ages.”

Just months before Floridians around that state’s Tamiami Trail had been puzzling about an enormous bird which numerous persons reported encountering. One witness, Eric Harnew, saw something at Matheson Hammock Park. “It was flapping

WINGED WEIRDIES

those huge wings and making a kind of rushing sound,” he said. A woman said it “looked like a big vulture . . . wingspread about 55 feet. Isn’t that sorta unusual?”

Another huge bird — “about as big as a Piper Cub airplane,” in one witness’s words — showed up over Salt Lake City, Utah, on July 18, 1966, and sent residents scurrying for cover. It circled the area several times before disappearing in the east.

* * *

FOR YEARS researchers have been so preoccupied with reports of unexplained aerial “constructions” that they have

ignored a mystery of perhaps even greater dimensions: unexplained aerial creatures. There are all kinds of theories about the origins of UFOs — from secret places inside the earth to interplanetary space — but none to explain where these winged men and beasts come from, unless they are “simply” a variety of UFO phenomena. In which case we’re facing all kinds of new and baffling questions!

Someday perhaps we’ll know some of the answers. In the meantime, keep your eyes open. And don’t be surprised if your “UFO” has wings that flap.



GREEN EGGS WORTH GOLD

DR. SEUSS may have been only spoofing when he wrote the delightful children’s tale, *Green Eggs and Ham*, but Clara went and laid some. Clara is the pride of the henyard in Roy Smith’s farm in Purleigh, England. Thus far Clara has laid some two dozen eggs of greenish hue. Smith recently sold one for \$108, reports the *San Diego Evening Tribune*. A dozen others are being studied

by researchers at London University and three have hatched.

Not to be outdone, Mr. and Mrs. Paul J. Woletskas of Los Angeles, Calif., report that they have several black hens that lay green eggs. Poultry fanciers speculate that the green-egg-laying hens might be of a South American strain known as Arancanas, who reputedly lay not only green eggs but pale blue, olive drab and pink ones too.





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sightings of the West Virginia Mothman nor the Texas Batman.

In "Houston Batman" (October 1953 FATE) William C. Thompson writes of the June 18, 1953, sightings of a so-called Batman in a pecan tree at Houston, Tex., which had some connection with a UFO seen overhead.

Nevertheless, congratulations to authors Clark and Coleman for proving once again there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy. —George D. Fawcett, Mt. Airy, N.C.

THE POWER OF SUGGESTION

In reply to Lewis M. Fox's letter in the April 1972 FATE the herb Gota Kola is not the same plant as Tanacetum vulgare or tansy. Gota Kola, also known as Fo-Ti-Tieng, is Hydrocotyle asiatica. Our native Hydrocotyle rotundifolia (marsh pennywort) is the form of the genus we know in America. Whether it has the

Walpole, Liberty, Mo.

MORE WINGED WEIRDIES

The article entitled "Winged Weirdies" (March 1972 FATE) is excellent but the authors did not cover the 1967

cunnary and medicinal, but lengthening man's life-span is nowhere claimed for it.

In my opinion the attainment of advanced age is a product of many factors, e. g., individual body chemistry makeup, heredity, etc., not the least of which is emotional makeup. Many, if not most, of the herbal remedies and tonics owe their success to the power of suggestion.

An old man pushes his way through the mob, shoving the old woman aside. When he tries to



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BAFFLING BIRD DEATHS

By W. Ritchie Benedict

THRESHES AND warblers reportedly began "falling like flies" over the town of Prince Rupert, B.C., Canada, in September 1971. In a three-day period some 500 birds died mysteriously according to conservation officer Andy Ackerman. Some birds crashed headlong into buildings while others simply dropped dead.

Biologist Rory Finegan speculated that pesticide poisoning could be responsible in view of the birds' behavior. But Mayor Peter Lester pointed out that while the city works department had used some allegedly harmless fungicides no pesticides had been sprayed for the previous four months. Spokesman for other public agencies and the Canadian National Railroad also disclaimed use of pesticides.

MAY-73

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INSTANT SWIMMER

SEVEN-YEAR-OLD Douglas Wood of Fort Worth, Tex., never learned to swim. But last April while their mother, Mrs. James Wood, was on the telephone Douglas and his sister Vicky went to play beside the apartment house swimming pool. Suddenly Douglas screamed that four-year-old Vicky had fallen into the pool. Mrs. Wood was frantic because she could not swim either. They could see the girl on the bottom of the pool through nine feet of water.

"Momma, I'll get her," the boy said and jumped in before his mother could stop him. Kicking his legs like a frog young Douglas swam to the bottom and grabbed his sister's hand. They both drifted to the surface and Mrs. Wood hauled them out of the pool.

"It was a miracle," she exclaimed. "The boy cannot swim at all."



SPOOKING THE BIRDS

THOMAS A. Johnson tells this story in the September 16, 1972, New York Times. He had been touring Nigeria to report on the accomplishments of a team of agricultural experts from the United States Agency for International Development who had been teaching African farm

F-73

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ANIMALS

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EXPLOSIVE GOOSE
EARLY LAST June Mrs. Al Stewart of Sheridan, Calif., called the sheriff's office in near-by Auburn to tell an unlikely story. A wild gray goose she had been feeding inexplicably exploded while flying about 50 feet above the ground, she said. Feathers and down were scattered around and the body fell onto a plowed field next to her garden.

Investigating officer Norman Karde drove out to Mrs. Stewart's home, examined the goose and determined the bird had not been shot. He theorized that perhaps the goose had swallowed a dynamite blasting cap and somehow the substance was set off. Newsmen were skeptical of Karde's report but he remained firm in his opinion that somehow the goose actually had exploded in midair.

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ANIMALS

REPORT FROM THE READERS

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on the subject of visions, out-of-the-body experiences and other psychic phenomena involving critically and/or terminally ill patients, their families and friends.

We would like to hear from FATE readers who have had such experiences or know of persons who have. — **L. Edward Durbin**, 635 Fayette St., Washington, Pa. 15301.

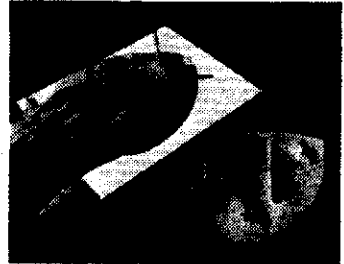
THE NONEXISTENT AUSTRALIAN
After reading a little item in your April issue ("Think-Alike Twins") I grew curious about the "Joan Sayers" who was said to be one of the twins. She was supposed to have lived in Perth, Australia, so I wrote to the Postmaster there. He replied in a nice letter saying he had tried in every possible way to locate a "Joan Sayers" but in his opinion there is not and never has been, a person by that name in Perth. — **June Strickling**, Prescott, Ariz.

MYSTERIOUSLY MISSING PHOTO
One day in 1886 a giant bird with a 30-foot wingspan was killed near Tombstone, Ariz. The bird was brought into town and photographed. The photo shows the bird nailed to the side of a barn with outstretched wings. To show its monstrous size six men are standing in front of the bird with their arms outstretched fingertip to fingertip.

The photo presumably was published in the *Tombstone Epitaph*. However, the newspaper does not have it. Also, *National Geographic* is alleged to have reproduced the photo but this source has been checked and my results were negative.

Hundreds of persons have seen the picture but no one can remember where. I would like to hear from any FATE reader who has a copy of the photo or knows of its whereabouts. — **David Weidl**, 83 Model Ave., Hopewell, N.J. 08525.

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Alverico Guajardo, 35, told police he heard something like a sandbag hit the corner of his mobile home near Brownsville. He grabbed his knife, got into his automobile, switched his headlights on, and drove around in back of the home for a better look.

Guajardo told police he spent three terrifying minutes staring eyeball to eyeball with a "strange animal" four feet tall, with eyes like silver dollars, wings like a bird and face like a bat. It had a skinny beak "three or four feet long."

"It's got wings like a bird but it's no bird," Guajardo said.

It walked — didn't fly — away.

The Lower Rio Grande Valley is full of stories about Big Bird. A Harlingen TV station showed giant bird prints photographed in a freshly plowed field. The three-toed prints were nine inches wide and 12 inches long. Two children said they saw a hairy "ape-like" creature making them.

The first week in January, San Benito policemen Arturo Padilla and Homero Galvan, in separate squad cars, saw a huge white bird with an estimated 15-foot wingspan gliding over the city.

"It was more or less like a stork or pelican type of bird," said Padilla. "The wingspan, I guess, was about like a pretty good-sized car."



Hairy celebrity Oliver was the subject of considerable nationwide publicity after New York attorney Michael Miller purchased him for \$8,000. The claim that Oliver is an immature Bigfoot seems unlikely since the seven-year-old ape-like creature comes from South Africa. (Wide World photo)

Jesse Garcia and Vanacio Rodriguez, supply specialists at Kelly Air Force Base, were checking out the stock tank at a ranch near Poteet, south of San Antonio, when they saw Big Bird standing in the water. "We were about 300 feet away from it. It looked about five feet tall. He started flying but I never saw him flap his wings. He made no noise at all," said Garcia.

The Willacy County sheriff's office said Armondo Grimaldo told them a large black bird with big eyes and a monkey-like face attacked him and tore his jacket and shirt. Hospital attendants found no trace of physical injury but Grimaldo, obviously upset, would not talk to newsmen.

So far as is known, there are no birds in the world that match all the reported descriptions of the Big Bird of Texas. And there have been no takers for the \$1,000 reward offered for the capture, alive, of Big Bird.

However, a Texas A&M ornithologist, Keith Arnold, suggests it possibly may be a jabiru, a Central American stork, which has strayed farther north than its normal breeding grounds. He describes a jabiru as having a 10-foot wingspan, a featherless head and large feet — with which to leave large tracks. These birds have massive black bills and white plumage. Their heads and necks are bare, and black and red in color.