

# MAIL BAG

Correspondence is invited from our readers, but they are asked to keep their letters short. Unless letters give the sender's full name and address (not necessarily for publication) they cannot be considered. The Editor would like to remind correspondents that it is not always possible to acknowledge every letter personally, so he takes this opportunity of thanking all who write to him.

From Dr. P. Guérin

Dear Mr. Bowen,—Among the anti-saucerites, fashions change periodically. At the outset, they used to say that observers of UFOs had seen natural objects or natural phenomena in the sky, which however they had observed badly and interpreted badly. Then, when the close encounters became more numerous, or at any rate became better known, it was necessary to find something else: and so now it had to be hallucination (collective hallucination if needs be) on the part of the witnesses, who moreover frequently had to be drunk as well. However, the huge number of eyewitnesses, both at close as well as far range, now obliges the heirs of Dr. Menzel to revert to their original "explanation" of known objects or known phenomena incorrectly observed. But now they have introduced a variation: they now say the sightings are being made correctly by the witnesses and that then, during the interval separating these visions from the oral report that the witness makes of them, a distortion creeps in, wherein the UFO makes its appearance. The said UFO is thus a sub-product of disquiet in the face of the world situation, which creates anxieties in the unconscious.

The anti-saucerites, who thus "explain" how it is that the sightings of UFOs obey the laws of optics and the laws of atmospheric absorption — since there are real objects or real phenomena at the basis of the reports — are consequently returning, though with a variation, to the first attempts to whittle down the sightings — attempts that Menzel had set up as dogma. In particular, the anti-saucerites are once more on the look out for atmospheric phenomena, such as haloes, photographic effects, or optical effects (camera lens flares), etc..

I write this letter to you with this in mind. For I deplore the fact that, in the last issue of FSR (Vol.22, No.1, 1976) the anti-saucerites may, alas, find some excellent justification for their neurotic frenzy to explain everything away. For, without any critical spirit, this issue in fact presents them with at least three photographs which have all that is required to rejoice the hearts of Dr. Menzel and his heirs. In the picture at the bottom of page 4, the light patches are obviously reflections in the lens of the camera

(they are — as they should rightly be — completely in line with the Sun, which is up above, to the right of the picture, and the line passes right through the centre of the field.) On page 6, the two photos may very well (in the absence of any indications as to the position of the Sun in the photographic field) be explicable as the luminous condensations of a solar halo or parhelion seen through the fine ice crystals of a slight mist or a diffuse cirrus cloud. Anyway, there is the wherewithal there to gladden the MUFOB folk. As for me, I am saddened.

Yours sincerely,  
Pierre Guérin

Astrophysicist, Chief of Research,  
National Centre for Scientific Research  
30 June 1976.

From Dr. David Jacobs

To The Editor,—I thank Colin Bord for his kind words about my book, *The UFO Controversy in America*, (FSR, Vol.21, No.6) and for pointing out several errors in one paragraph about George Adamski. I have asked the publisher of the paperback edition to correct these and other errors. Part of the confusion came about because I misread Adamski's phrase "seven loaded films" to mean seven rolls of film rather than seven single negatives.

Mr. Bord says that I have made Adamski seem like an idiot. This was not my intention. Adamski was far from being an idiot. Indeed, he was a very clever and shrewd fellow. To suggest that he was anything less is to denigrate his ability to tell a splendid tale, inspire confidence and trust, and make money from these talents. I certainly would not want to take away credit where it is due.

Mr. Bord complains that I did not write about Adamski objectively. I take issue with this. I treated him as the evidence overwhelmingly indicates UFO researchers should treat him — as a person who fabricated a hoax. To believe anything else about Adamski is to launch oneself into the subjective realm of the "will to believe" which has no place in UFO research.

Sincerely,  
David M. Jacobs  
Department of History, Temple  
University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.  
June 6, 1976.

The Knutson photograph

Dear Sir,—I would like to thank Mr. S. Conway of British Columbia for providing additional information on the Knutson photograph (FSR, Vol.22, No.1). However, it does not change my opinion of it.

Mr. Conway quotes a number of interesting sightings occurring in the Surrey area where the picture was taken. These may be quite extraordinary but they have no bearing on the reliability of Knutson's alleged sighting of a UFO. Each case must be judged on its own individual merits and not on the basis of other sightings happening within weeks or months.

A point on witness sincerity. I had mentioned the Alec Birch photo in my previous letter (FSR, Vol.20, No.6). Here is a case of a fourteen-year-old schoolboy fooling everybody for an entire decade, including a variety of "experts." He was very sincere. The fact remains that the photo was always a hoax and was accepted by UFO researchers as evidence of the existence of extraordinary machines in our skies. Also, the photo would, possibly, still be considered unknown if Mr. Birch had not exposed himself. Here is the problem. Is David Knutson only sounding sincere? A lie detector test may resolve this problem.

Mr. Conway also mentions that the photo shows two UFOs. If he is referring to the dot above and a little to the right of the disc in my copy of the picture (FSR, Vol.20, No.4), then he is weakly defending his case, indeed, as the dot looks like a dust speck to me. Remember, the picture is taken through a window which may have been spotted with a few specks of lint. As a matter of fact I see *three more UFOs* in the photo, two a little less than ¼ inch from the right edge and 1 7/8 inches from the bottom and one 1/8th inch from the left edge and 2 1/16 inches from the bottom.

In conclusion, Mr. Conway is convinced of the validity of the case but has ignored my criticisms in my other letter. I am convinced of the validity of these criticisms and would want these answered before I would take the Knutson case seriously.

Sincerely,  
Barry Greenwood  
6 W. Hancock Street, Stoneham  
Mass, 02180, USA  
July 5, 1976